

2012

# Beyond the narrative: A case study analysis of housing policy change in a midwestern state

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**Beyond the narrative:**

**A case study analysis of housing policy change in a midwestern state**

by

**Jennifer Roberts**

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF COMMUNITY & REGIONAL PLANNING

Major: Community and Regional Planning

Program of Study Committee:  
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Ames, Iowa

2012

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank all the many people and organizations that have helped me make this research possible, without their support my ideas would never have taken flight. First, I would like to thank the Housing and Community Development Division of the American Planning Association for providing me with a research grant. Without their funds I would not have been able to accomplish this research. I would also like to thank the Weir family and the ISU Women's Club for their contribution to my education and research through the 2011 Murray B. Weir and ISUWC scholarships. To those whom I interviewed and who were brave enough to talk to me about uncomfortable issues, giving me their time and even more importantly their perspectives. To my family, boyfriend, and friends; who listened to and supported me while I was grappling with this project. I'd also like to thank my committee for providing me with direction and thoughts even after my fifth research proposal. Finally, I would like to thank my advisor, Jane Rongerude, without whose advice and encouragement I probably wouldn't have made it to the initial interview. Thank you all, I couldn't have done it without you.

## **Abstract**

In recent decades, federal housing policy has attempted to address problems associated with concentrated poverty through programs that promote geographic mobility and the dispersal of low income households. However, while cities such as Chicago are redeveloping public housing communities and dispersing poor households, some Midwestern communities are preemptively passing legislation that would prevent a diaspora of low income migrants from moving to their communities to obtain housing assistance. Specifically, some public housing authorities are creating jurisdictional waiting lists that give preference to applicants residing in their jurisdiction, effectively reducing the ability of out-of-jurisdiction residents to receive housing assistance in their community. Ultimately this preference poses challenges to the concept of mobility, if one community is displacing its low-income residents and the receiving communities are making it more difficult for entry, where are these households able to go?

This study examines four rural/small housing authorities within a single Midwestern state which have adopted jurisdictional preference policies. It poses two questions: 1) What is the relationship, if any, between the adoption of jurisdictional preference policies by housing authorities and the presence of a community perception that there is an influx of low-income migrants from Chicago? And 2) How does this phenomenon fit into the larger context of mobility and dispersal-oriented housing policy? Using interviews with housing authorities and affordable housing organizations as well as content analysis of government documents and newspaper articles, I investigated Narratives of migration related to housing assistance in each community. Key findings reveal that the ‘Chicago’ Narrative, the perception that there is a movement of low-income migrants from Chicago, is present within the communities and organizations and has significantly affected the regulatory and political environment in which they operate. This environment relates to community support, political context, and administrative duties. These factors combined with portability issues and funding shortfalls, have contributed to the adoption of jurisdictional preference policies. Although this can be seen as an effort to give primary preference to jurisdictional residents in a landscape where the poor are allowed ever increasing mobility and choice in residence, it also gives some insight into how the organizations themselves are adapting to the reality of a more mobile cohort of low income households.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the past several decades, the federal government has used many approaches to address the role of housing policy in the national effort to alleviate poverty. Strategies have included the dispersal of low-income households, promotion of geographic mobility, and the reliance on market-based solutions to reverse the physical, economic, and social effects of concentrated poverty (Goetz 1993; Goetz 2003; Souza Briggs et al. 2010; Turner 1998; Varady and Walker 2003). They have included dispersal-oriented programs such as HOPE VI and mobility-oriented programs such as the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program (Goetz 2003; Hackworth 2007). In addition, the federal government has diminished its role in the administration of housing assistance by further decentralizing that housing assistance and giving local public housing authorities (PHAs) more control over their programs (Goetz 1993). Despite the broad scope of these changes, we know very little about how PHAs are adapting to these policies on a local scale.

Dispersal and mobility programs assume that low-income people can easily access new housing markets in new locations, if only they would try. Yet, within the past ten years some housing authorities have adopted jurisdictional preferences, policies that base preferences for program waiting lists on jurisdictional residence. These policies place applicants who reside within a housing authority's jurisdiction above applicants that live outside of that jurisdiction. The adoption of these policies is also part of a national trend concerning waiting list preference adoption (Norquist 2003; National Low Income Housing Coalition [NLIHC] Report 2004). This study looks at four separate housing authorities in a Midwestern state that have adopted jurisdictional preference policies and examines the factors that influenced policy change in those communities.

Within these communities, there exists a Narrative that I refer to as the ‘Chicago Narrative’. This Narrative centers on an in-migration of households from the major city in the region, Chicago. The Chicago Narrative tells a story of a perceived migration to these communities of low-income individuals from Chicago looking for housing assistance. As a part of this Narrative, the Chicago Housing Authority’s (CHA) *Plan for Transformation* and its affect on the supply of affordable housing in Chicago is seen as the catalyst of the migration. The Chicago Narrative begins with the migrant’s origin in Chicago’s low-income neighborhoods, includes their motivations for moving to the new community, and ends with the controversy surrounding their presence within these communities and occasionally their movement back to Chicago. The presence of this Narrative has preceded the adoption of jurisdictional preference for all the PHAs in this study, suggesting that the two were related. Therefore, this research sought to investigate the existence of this relationship, understand if and how it influenced policy adoption, and finally to place this problem within the overarching context of national housing policies that place a premium on geographic mobility.

To investigate these issues, this study posed two questions: 1) What is the relationship, if any, between the adoption of jurisdictional preference policies by housing authorities and the presence of a community perception that there is an influx of low-income migrants from Chicago? And 2) How does this phenomenon fit into the larger context of mobility and dispersal-oriented housing policy? To answer these questions, I used interviews and content analysis to investigate the factors surrounding policy adoption and their connection to the community controversy around this in-migration. In addition, the adoption of these policies alongside a Narrative that claims low-income households from Chicago are migrating to smaller communities for housing assistance provided me with an opportunity to study how this local

policy change fit within the larger context of national mobility and dispersal-oriented housing policy.

In the following chapters I provide an overview of my research methods, including a discussion of why I chose to look at this problem from the housing authority's perspective, my methodological process, and the communities that I studied. Also I provide a brief history of mobility-oriented and dispersal-oriented assistance and the theoretical and political context in which it developed. This chapter helps to put the evolution of geographic mobility and dispersal in a national context of desegregation, devolution, and market oriented assistance while highlighting the issues that occur with receiving communities at the tail end of these policies. In the next chapter I provide a background of the race and class issues that set the stage for Chicago's *Plan for Transformation*; providing the place-based context to the Chicago Narrative and informing the community perceptions that come in the chapter afterwards.

The Community Perceptions and Program Integrity chapter places the community controversy surrounding this perception of a Chicago migration in the context of race, class, and crime as well as the implications of this controversy for housing authorities and their program integrity. In the next chapter I explain the portability process and its relationship to funding in order to provide the administrative component of this Narrative and elucidate the complications of a decentralized yet national program. Finally, I explain the national origins and mechanics of jurisdictional preference, and then provide an analysis of jurisdictional preference in the frame of both the Chicago Narrative and an Out-of-state Narrative. Finally, I discuss the findings of this research: that the Chicago Narrative represents the social factors at play in policy change and the Out-of-state Narrative represents the administrative justification for that policy change. I then go on to discuss future research areas, and overall implications of this research for housing policy.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

In this chapter I provide an overview of my methodological approach to this research, how I came to study this problem in the first place, and the safeguards I used to ensure validity. I begin by outlining the process that occurred before collecting data in the field and how I came to the decision that an administrative perspective was important. Then I go through a detailed account of my research design, process, and methods. Finally I end with a discussion of the measures I took to ensure validity, and the assumptions that were present within this research.

### Chapter 2.1: Overview and Background to Research Approach

At the outset of this research I understood that an investigation into the Chicago Narrative and its relationship to policy change necessitated an analysis of data that incorporated the housing authority's perspective. However, this research did not ultimately begin with an investigation of policy adoption, but began with an investigation of the Narrative itself. I began the research process by reading articles, comments, and stories about the Chicago migration and then began to investigate Chicago's *Plan for Transformation*. After reading scholarly literature on the *Plan for Transformation* and the HOPE VI program, I set out to quantify the movement of low-income households from Chicago to smaller receiving communities. The quantitative data collected would have been used to address whether the *Plan for Transformation* was pushing public housing households into communities in this Midwestern state. To address a migration of these households, I began the process of identifying data that could be used to track this movement. I looked into determining movement through program applications, identifying need through program waiting lists, and even looking at migration data to assess displacement through gentrification.

Through background research on migration studies (Fitchen 1995; Foulkes and Newbold 2005), I had determined that IPUMS migration data was best suited to analyze migration flows into the study area. Therefore I collected in-migration data for the state studied for the years 2005-2009 using the variables MIGPLACE1 and MIG1 (Migration statistics for 1 year), and controlling for households in poverty (POV Poverty < 99) and school attendance (SCHOOL). Controlling for poverty was important due to the nature of the Narrative that had developed, that the households moving in from Chicago were primarily low-income families. The initial analysis of IPUMS migration data excluding non-poor and student migrants showed that the largest amount of individuals moving into the state were from five areas; Sioux Falls, South Dakota (3,936), Cook County, Illinois (3,507), and Rock Island, Illinois (2,508), Omaha, Nebraska (2,255), Phoenix, Arizona (2,039), and Northwest Central Arkansas (2,080).

Although this cursory analysis provided some insight into this phenomenon, there were issues with the IPUMS data consistency over time. Specifically, there were issues regarding types of data (MIG1, MIG5) being available only for certain years, yet discontinued in others. Also, for migration data that specifies original PUMA location rather than just state migration, data is only available from 2005-2009. This created a reliability issue, since according to document and interview analysis the migration in question started approximately 3 years before 2005 in 2002. Therefore there is a potential for this gap in data to be missing a period in time where the migration was much more substantial than the time period the data captured (2005-2009). Also, according to the IPUMS website, one of the major limitations of the data is that it takes estimates from 1-5 % of the population which makes it very difficult to study subgroups of a population, such as low-income individuals from Chicago. Therefore, the quantitative portion of this analysis remains difficult at best and comes with significant reliability limitations.

Gathering this data led me to the conclusion that data on migration patterns is often difficult to assess and analyze in a systematic and specific way. Yet through this process of identifying measurable data, I found a different question. At first this question presented itself in the form of a barrier to my study, but ultimately shaped a proposal for research that went beyond quantification. Having looked at many other potential data sources in an attempt to answer whether this migration from Chicago was occurring, I turned to the application forms that housing authorities use for their HCV programs. On most of these forms, housing authorities have clients write down their address, since notifications often are sent through the mail. I believed that these addresses might provide a baseline data source that could be used in combination with the migration data, and could triangulate the number of households that were applying to the study area's programs from Chicago.

However, since all of the housing authorities in the study area had adopted jurisdictional preference, households from Chicago were moving to the communities before they applied for housing assistance. This meant that the addresses on these forms were local, and thus this data source would not be representative of the migration. After discovering this, I began to look for scholarly articles on jurisdictional preference and found one that was written from a legal perspective but not through a policy lens. This was surprising since many of the housing authorities in the state being studied had adopted this preference. Eventually I began to look at local newspaper articles, housing authority documents, and online comments that mentioned this preference and noticed a relationship between the adoption of the preference and the Narrative of this Chicago migration I had set out to investigate. This is what ultimately led to my research on the adoption of jurisdictional preference, and the necessity of including a research design that looked at these issues from an administrative perspective.

Often academic research that evaluates housing policy and the effects of housing policy on individuals uses a perspective that comes in at the tail end of the administrative process. Current academic research misses an important piece of the problem when it focuses on individual outcomes, federal policy, or market factors alone. Understanding why a program or policy works or does not work necessitates research that investigates a program's administrative process and capacity. The more I looked at research that evaluated household outcomes and the ability of housing programs to affect those outcomes, the stronger I felt that understanding the administrative process was relevant. Applicant and client turnover, low-income mobility, and the stability of households both affect and are affected by the administrative capacity of programs. For these reasons I have chosen a research design that incorporates the housing authority's administrative perspective, so that I may better understand how organizations administer their programs in a changing context of community, policy and poverty.

## **Chapter 2.2: Design, Data Collection, and Analysis**

Academic research regarding public housing authorities (PHAs) rarely considers how local policies are formed or how PHAs engage in the daily task of providing housing. Also, PHAs differ in how they administer programs which makes it difficult to generalize from data based on local practices and procedures. In order to address these problems, my research design included a multi-site case study. Both Marshall and Rossman's *Designing Qualitative Research* as well as Robert Yin's *Case Study Research* identify situations in which a case study is appropriate. These situations include when a researcher's study focuses on a set of decisions, contemporary events, when local context is important; and when a researcher is studying an organization, program, group, or society.

To fully understand the adoption of jurisdictional preference as well as the context in which it occurred, I used a qualitative case study approach to identify the relationships and underlying factors of policy adoption that could not be quantified. To investigate the research question, I needed to address perceptions and stories that surrounded the Chicago migration and determine if they had a relationship to policy adoption. To collect this kind of data I utilized qualitative methods such as interview and content analysis to provide the richness of detail needed to understand the relationship between the Chicago Narrative and policy adoption. When context is important, such as in studies regarding local policy adoption, case studies are often used as an approach because they help researchers understand the factors that influence these decisions (Yin 2000).

In this case, an explanatory case study approach was used to investigate the relationship between the Chicago Narrative and local policy decisions. Within the explanatory model, documents, interviews, and archival records are collected in order to posit an explanation of policy change (Yin 2000). For the purposes of this research I analyzed an explanation of policy change identified through the analysis of interview statements, newspaper articles, and PHA documents. To accommodate an interpretive research perspective, I made the study design flexible and open to change once the initial data was collected. Although the research process was iterative and the explanation of policy change was revisited when new information came to light, the focal point of this study remained on the housing authorities and the main unit of analysis remained the adoption of jurisdictional preference policies.

For the sampling procedure, I used a purposive method to select participants for the interviews as well as the case study communities. Communities for this study were chosen based on a combination of criteria including the adoption of a jurisdictional preference policy and

media controversy regarding community perceptions of a Chicago in-migration. In order to encompass the range of communities in this state, a larger city with a university was selected along with two small industrial cities and a rural community. A total of four communities were identified for further study: Carrington, Church City, Farmville, and Mariett. To protect the confidentiality of the institutions and individuals contacted for this research, I do not directly identify the communities or the state but instead provide fictional names.

For the interviews I identified an affordable housing organization if there was one, along with the housing authority for that jurisdiction. I conducted interviews with affordable housing officials and organizations in each of the four communities and conducted content analysis of newspaper articles, community documents and studies, and policy statements. I conducted interviews with housing professionals in two of the case study communities. In order to understand the policy and the Narrative, individuals with knowledge of housing practices, policy, and markets were needed to gain a perspective of the underlying community context or framework that influenced policy adoption. Therefore, I chose individuals for the focused interviews based on their connection to affordable housing within the community and or their knowledge of the community fallout regarding the Chicago Narrative. My interview protocol is included in the appendices at the end of this document.

For the interviews I crafted the questions to assess the role of the organization in providing affordable housing, the process used to administer housing or housing assistance, address migration patterns or changes in clientele in recent years, and community perceptions. For the housing authorities it was important to get a sense of how they administered their waiting list, and their reasons for adopting the jurisdictional preference policy. These questions helped me to gain an understanding of the adoption of the policy and how it ordered the waiting list. To

understand their sense of the migration while avoiding leading questions, I used interview questions that addressed the mobility of clientele and specifically national mobility. The questions addressing community perceptions of this Narrative were asked at the end of the document to avoid leading. This method worked quite well as most interviewees naturally came to the subject of community perceptions before I had a chance to ask them.

I used analysis of the interviews and documents to understand the parameters of the Chicago Narrative in the housing organizations, authorities, and the community, as well as this Narrative's relationship to the housing authorities, the administration of housing assistance, and their adoption of a jurisdictional preference. The interviews were also accompanied by archival research of newspaper articles and community documents. The interviews followed a semi-structured format so that I could pursue leads and keep the design flexible, while at the same time providing a baseline for the parameters of the inquiry. After the housing authority and affordable housing organization data was analyzed I revisited the research focus and collected any other potential sources of data to address gaps in the research. As a result of this process, a rival Out-of-state Narrative came forward early on in the research.

After conducting background research on the Chicago Narrative it became apparent that individuals and housing authorities were using the phrase "Out-of-state" to describe low-income in-migrants that were from outside of the state, but not specifically Chicago. This Narrative could include Chicago, but was not specific to any particular city. I pursued this Narrative and treated it separately from the Chicago Narrative, addressing similarities and differences through data analysis. The Chicago Narrative as it was defined by this study encompassed the stories, community perceptions, newspaper articles, and statements that related to the migration of low-income individuals from Chicago to the receiving communities that were studied. It conveyed a

belief that Chicago households were migrating to these communities in a large number, and that they were coming to these communities for housing assistance. The Out-of-state Narrative related to the broader phenomenon of a migration of low-income individuals that may have migrated from out of the state but not specifically Chicago. The perceptions encompassed by this Narrative were that these households were not from this state, but were not always identified as being from Chicago.

The differences between the Out-of-state Narrative and the Chicago Narrative were important to the findings of this research. They illustrate the two worlds that the housing authorities operate in: 1) the surrounding community and 2) the administrative and financial realm. Therefore it was important that these Narratives were built and analyzed separately to discern possible variations between them. This was accomplished through wording of interview questions that did not identify Chicago but simply asked general process and community perception questions, and separate coding for statements related to the Out-of-state vs. Chicago Narrative and analysis of language in those codes.

For the data analysis, I used a template approach to coding and the development of key themes (Marshall and Rossman 2010). This approach involved a predetermined template through which codes were generated and meanings were identified. Although I used an inductive method for generating codes and this framework was not rigidly defined, there were still a certain set of questions that directed analysis. These questions included: What are the parameters of the Chicago and Out-of-state Narrative? Do these Narratives affect the housing authority processes and management of their duties and how so? Do these Narratives affect the communities and how so? Do these Narratives affect jurisdictional preference and how so? And what are the differences between these two Narratives, if any?

The inductive portion of my analysis involved the generation of each code after an initial read-through of the interview transcripts and cursory document analysis. If there were categories or codes that did not appear directly relevant but were points of focus for the interviews they were created under new categories. Once this data had been coded I analyzed it again within the parameters of the code, investigating links between the evidence to create key themes and concepts. I then used these themes and concepts as a starting point to flesh out the Narratives and examine their relationship to the adoption of jurisdictional preference. These Narratives were then interpreted into a story of policy change; illustrating the complex relationships between national context, local context, mobility, race, politics, poverty, and the increasingly complicated role of affordable housing providers in all of these issues.

### **Chapter 2.3: Methodological Rigor and Assumptions**

To assess the rigor and assumptions of qualitative research, one needs to discuss the dimensions of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These areas are meant to provide qualitative research with a firm grounding in the scientific process. These dimensions relate to the quantitative dimensions of validity, generalizability, reliability, and objectivity, respectively. These four components are used to ensure that qualitative research is performed in a manner that confirms its validity and allows researchers to generalize their research to outside audiences. For the purposes of this study, I used ASA guidelines to inform my research process and the measures taken to address these four dimensions of validity. The following sections detail the efforts I took to address these four areas.

#### ***Credibility***

The dimension of credibility in qualitative research refers to the ability of the researcher to address multiple constructed realities and make them credible to the originators of those

realities. In essence, this dimension requires the researcher to understand and negotiate the subject's viewpoint and adequately represent the research from that perspective. Therefore, in order to gain a firm understanding of housing authority policy, processes, and the environment in which a housing authority operates, I spent approximately three months volunteering my time at a local public housing authority.

This was done prior to my research and provided an administrative background for the study that I was to undertake. The housing authority resided within the same state as the housing authorities that were included within this study, providing a similar context to inform the background of my study. This housing authority was not included as a part of my research since I had developed relationships with the individuals at the PHA and wanted to avoid bias. However, this experience helped me to understand the administrative processes and policies that were relevant to this research. Working within this housing authority, I came to understand how PHAs are funded, how housing choice vouchers are administered, how the portability process works, as well as daily administrative tasks and challenges. This enhanced the credibility of my research by providing a glimpse into the administrative culture of housing authorities, and how administrative and funding concerns can influence practices and policy.

To further address credibility I used multiple interviews within a housing authority if it was possible. For two of the housing authorities there were interviews with three separate individuals, for one housing authority there were two separate interviews, and one of the other housing authorities I was only able to obtain permission for one interview. At all of the affordable housing authorities there was at least one elite interview with an individual that was in management. This was done so that I could gather an accurate and reliable overview of the administrative process and the adoption of jurisdictional preference. I also utilized interviews

from separate sources, outside of the housing authority. To address the Chicago Narrative as it existed within the affordable housing community and within the larger community I needed many different perspectives to increase the reliability of the data and assess the consistency of the Narrative across individuals as well as sites. As was mentioned earlier, interviews with affordable housing organizations and private market providers were also used to corroborate housing authority statements about the Chicago Narrative and address community controversy surrounding that Narrative.

I also used the triangulation of data sources and methods to enhance the validity of my research analysis. With interviews being the primary source of data, the document analysis was used to corroborate events, community perspectives, concepts, and timelines that were elucidated within the interviews. Housing authority statements and perspectives that came out through the interviews were critically analyzed against statements made in newspaper articles, the community realm. I used these different sources of data to triangulate the research, flesh out the gaps within the Narrative, and identify relationships and linkages between the adoption of the policy and the Narratives. These measures were taken to enhance the reliability of my data, and provide me with multiple checks of the data from many different sources.

### ***Transferability***

The dimension of transferability represents the researcher's ability to provide details and salient dimensions of the research to the audience, so that this research may be generalized to outside audiences and their context. This dimension also refers to the ability of the researcher to create a study that can be reproducible at a different time or place. Although this study works to address this dimension it must be understood that this case study represents a very specific phenomenon that is unique to the region. The research questions for this study, the policy change

being studied, and underlying assumptions influencing that policy change represent a confluence of events and factors that are best represented by a case study approach. The city of Chicago and its *Plan for Transformation* not only represent a major city within the region, but as this research will demonstrate, they also represent an exemplary case of a place that is as unique in its history of race, politics, and housing policy as it's transformative Plan.

In addition, the Chicago Narrative that has developed within the communities studied and that Narrative's relative influence on jurisdictional preference adoption is unique to a particular geographic context and point in time. This makes the question of reproducibility and transferability to other studies rather difficult and highly contextual. Another issue with the study's reproducibility deals with the anonymity of the research participants that were interviewed. Since some of the communities within this study are very small, identifying those communities or describing them in a way which could lead to identification could put research subjects at risk.

However, in an effort to accommodate reproducibility I have provided my interview protocol(see Appendix B).I have also provided a rich description of my process and the decisions that were made about this process within the previous chapter. Although this research does represent a specific point in time and is placed in a context unique to the Midwest, it is also situated within a national context of mobility and dispersal-oriented policy that enhances its generalizability. The administrative issues with portability and the implications of national mobility are representative across the United States in an era of housing policy that equates social and economic mobility with geographic mobility. Therefore the complications of mobility that are revealed within this research, and the methods used to obtain these findings, may further inform future studies dealing with mobility, administrative process, and receiving communities.

Specifically the interview questions identified within the protocol, that address this mobility through intuitive process questions.

### ***Dependability and Confirmability***

The dimensions of dependability and confirmability represent the methodological rigor of the inquiry and interpretive process the researcher used to conduct their study. In order to ensure the dependability and confirmability of the study I underwent a review of my research methods, instrument development (protocol), and design before entering the research field. This review was performed by my research committee and major advisor for the study. I also underwent review through the Institutional Review Board, for which my research was deemed exempt. It was through the IRB process and through careful consideration with my committee members that a decision to provide the communities studied with fictional names was made. I kept detailed notes and drafts of the process as I developed the research proposal as well as the interview protocol. These drafts were often reviewed by my major advisor and then my committee until the final research proposal was crafted and field study began.

Once I began the interviews, I would take notes after each interview and write them down on sheets of paper. All of the interviews were recorded with a digital recorder to ensure that I had full copies of each interview that was conducted. Interview participants also signed consent forms, with one copy taken for their records and one copy taken for my own records. After each interview or set of interviews I would also spend approximately five minutes reflecting into a digital recorder, permanently documenting my thoughts about the interviews so that they would be available for retrieval later on in the study. I would also debrief with my major advisor, as well as other members of my committee to gain their perspectives on findings, conclusions, and the overall direction of the research. Once the data collection was completed and initial findings

were identified, I held many debriefings with my major advisor to discuss the conclusions and implications of those findings in written form as well as active discussion. Through these processes I have ensured the dependability and confirmability of the research within this study.

### *Assumptions*

Since my research design is qualitative and my research questions are based on the perception of a migration from Chicago and out of state, there is an underlying assumption that this migration is in fact occurring. Due to the volume of newspaper articles regarding this topic, the housing authority statements, and portability and waiting list records that I received from some, not all, of the housing authorities; I believe there is enough evidence to determine that this underlying assumption is valid. However the scale of this migration, given existing data available on migration, does not point to a large scale migration of low-income individuals from Chicago. Due to the highly variable nature of portability and waiting list records, the fact that I did not get those records from all housing authorities in this study and the inconsistency of migration data over time; I do not feel comfortable to make solid claims about the scale or significance of this migration.

However, at this time, I do not feel that an in-depth quantitative analysis that assesses the scale of this migration is neither necessary nor possible. For the purposes of this study I am analyzing the underlying assumptions that influenced the adoption of jurisdictional preference rather than evaluating the validity of those assumptions. In order to understand the adoption of this policy for the housing authorities studied, I first needed to address why they were adopted in the first place. The next step in this research would be to evaluate these policies, which is more appropriate for future study. This will make for a more grounded and in-depth analysis of the social context in which this policy was developed, and provide baseline assumptions to be tested

by further quantitative analysis. Therefore, for the questions being investigated in this study, the research design outlined above was most appropriate.

#### **Chapter 2.4: Community Context: A Look at the Case Study Sites**

The communities that were selected as a part of this study constituted a range of sizes, settings, and income variation. Therefore, a brief overview of the communities and the housing authorities that reside within them is necessary. Secondary data from the 2010 U.S. Census and *ACS 5 Year Estimates* offers a look at population change, industry, and income distribution to get a sense of the economic setting in which these communities are set. A look at the housing authorities within these communities will also be provided in this section as well as the context of affordable housing need. The definition of a rent burden, or paying too large a portion of income toward housing, is housing cost over 30% of an individual's yearly income (Wilson and Schwartz 2006). The conventional gauge of housing affordability in an area, one of the driving factors for housing assistance programs, is rent as a percentage of income (Wilson and Schwartz 2006). The median rent as a percentage of income for the area will provide a very basic look at housing assistance need within these communities and if it has changed in the past 20 years. The tables on the next page represent key economic information for all the communities at a glance, with more detailed summaries and analysis within the following sections.

**Table 1: Unemployment and Poverty for Communities, State, and U.S.**

Source: 2010 ACS 5 Year Estimates

2010	Carrington	Church City	Farmville	Mariett	State	U.S.
<b>Unemployment</b>	4.2%	7%	6.9%	6.1%	5.3%	7.9%
<b>Poverty</b>	27.6%	15.1%	18.4%	11.7%	11.6%	13.8%

**Table 2: Median Gross rent as a Percentage of Income for Communities 1990-2010.**

Source: 1990 Census Summary File 3, 2000 Census Summary File 3, 2010 ACS 5 Year Estimates

Median Rent as a Percentage of Income				
Year	Carrington	Church City	Farmville	Mariett
<b>1990</b>	25.8%	22.4%	24.6%	21.5%
<b>2000</b>	29.3%	21.9%	20.2%	21.5%
<b>2010</b>	37.1 %	26.2%	26.3 %	27 %

***Carrington***

Carrington was the largest city that was a part of this study with a population of 67,000 inhabitants, which was up 9.1% from the year 2000 (U.S. Census 2010). The unemployment rate in Carrington for 2010 was 4.2%, the lowest unemployment rate across the communities (ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010). The largest industry in Carrington was educational, health care, and social services at 41.4%, most likely due to the large university residing within the community (ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010). The second largest sector was retail and trade with a percentage of 11% (ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010). The individuals living below the poverty line for Carrington in

2010 was at 27.6% of the population, compared to the state level at 11.6%, and the nation at 13.8% (*ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010*). Carrington has the largest amount of individuals living below poverty for all the case study communities. The graphs on the next page show the income distribution for Carrington in comparison to the United States.

**Figure 1. Carrington household income distribution in comparison to U.S. income distribution.**

Source: *2010 ACS 5 Year Estimates*

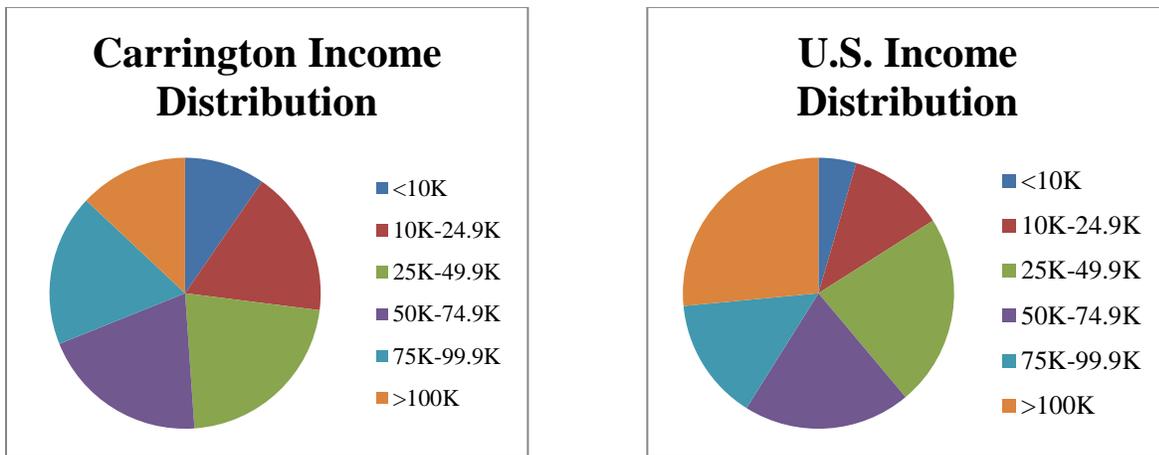


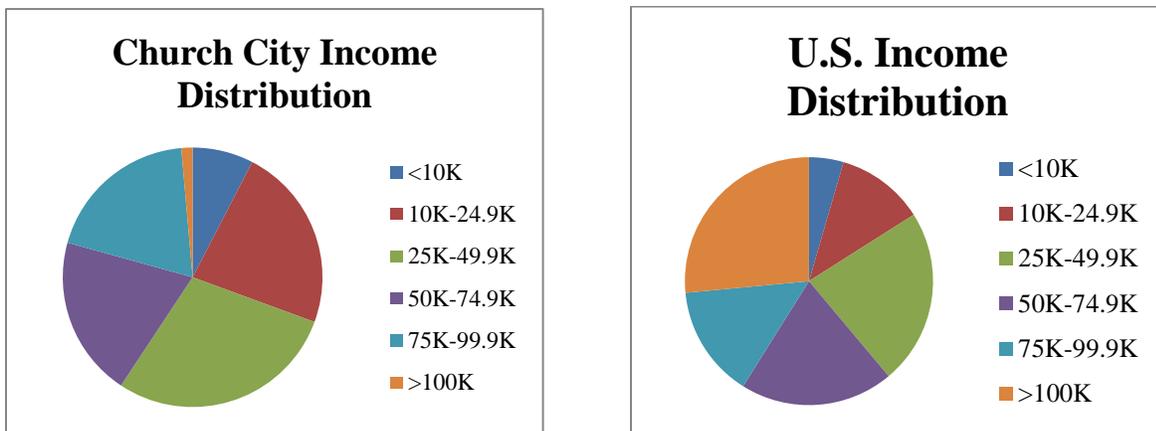
Figure 1 demonstrates an income disparity between the United States and Carrington that is representative across all communities in this study. Approximately half of the city's income is below \$50,000 a year and it has a larger portion that is below \$24,000 in comparison to the United States. However, Carrington also represents the community with the largest percentage of individuals making \$75,000 a year or more in this study. Table 1 shows a large increase in rent burden for Carrington, with the median rent as a percentage of income for the area ending at 37.1% in 2010. Therefore need for affordable housing in the community has been rising as individuals are paying a larger percentage of their income towards housing. Combined with the large percentage of individuals below poverty for Carrington (27.6%), suggests a higher potential

demand for affordable housing assistance within the community. The Housing Authority at Carrington currently administers 1,213 housing choice vouchers for the area and operates approximately 81 public housing units. Carrington has a wait list time that ranges from two to five years.

**Church City**

Church City was the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest community in this study with a population of approximately 28,000 people, down -3.7% from the 2000 census population (U.S. Census 2010). The unemployment rate for the area as of 2010 was 7 %, which was the largest unemployment rate for the communities within this study coming in just below the national average at 7.9% (ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010). The largest industries in Church City were educational, health care, and social services at 27.5%, followed by the manufacturing industry at 16.3% (ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010). The individuals below the poverty threshold for 2010 consisted of 15.1% of the population, with state levels at 11.6%, and the nation at 13.8% (ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010). Figure 2 once again compares the income distribution of Church City with the United States.

**Figure 2. Church City income distribution in comparison to U.S. income distribution**  
 Source: 2010 ACS 5 Year Estimates

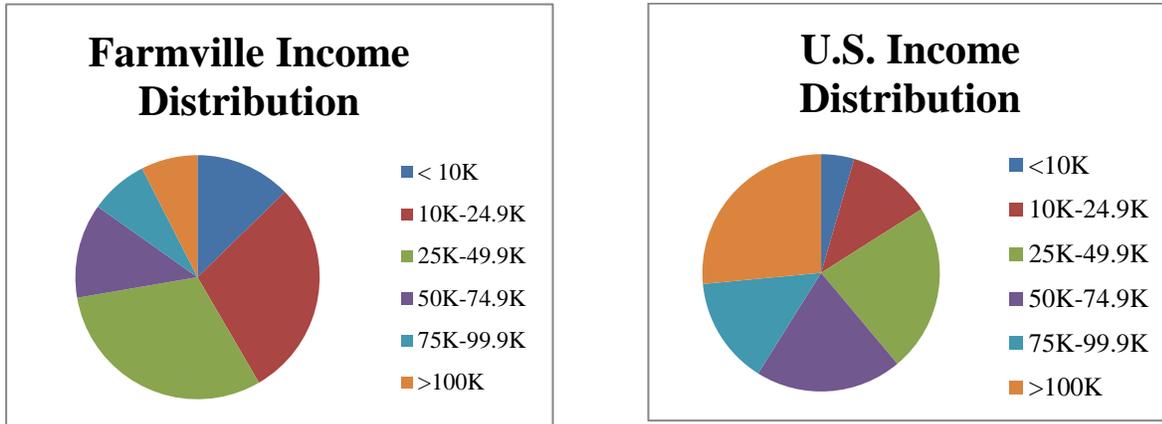


Over 50 percent of Church City's income is below \$50,000 dollars a year with a very small percentage of individuals making over \$75,000 dollars a year. The rent burden has increased slightly from 1990 to 2010 however the increase is not as substantial as Carrington; which could be indicative of a more stable and consistent housing market in Church City. As a part of its housing programs Church City currently administers 435 housing choice vouchers for the area and does not operate a public housing program, making it one of the smaller housing authorities that participated in this study. The average wait time for the Church City housing authority waiting list varies from nine months to eighteen months. Table 1 displays median rent as a percentage of income for Church City indicating a slight drop from the 1990 number at 22.4% to the 2000 number at 21.9%, and then back up to 26.2% in 2010. This indicates some degree of variability in rent as a percentage of income for Church City, yet still remaining below what would qualify as a rental burden.

### ***Farmville***

Farmville is the smallest town within this study, with a population of approximately 7,600 down -2.0 % from its 2000 population count (U.S. Census 2010). According to the 2010 ACS 5 year estimates the unemployment rate was at 6.9 %. Farmville's primary industry was manufacturing with 26.4% of the employable population in that field, followed by educational, health care, and social services at 18.8% (*ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010*). The individuals living in poverty for the town of Farmville was 18.4%, compared to the state at 11.6%, and the nation at 13.8% (U.S. Census 2010). Figure 3 displays the income distribution for Farmville and the United States.

**Figure 3. Farmville household income distribution in comparison to U.S. income distribution.**  
 Source 2010 ACS 5 Year Estimates

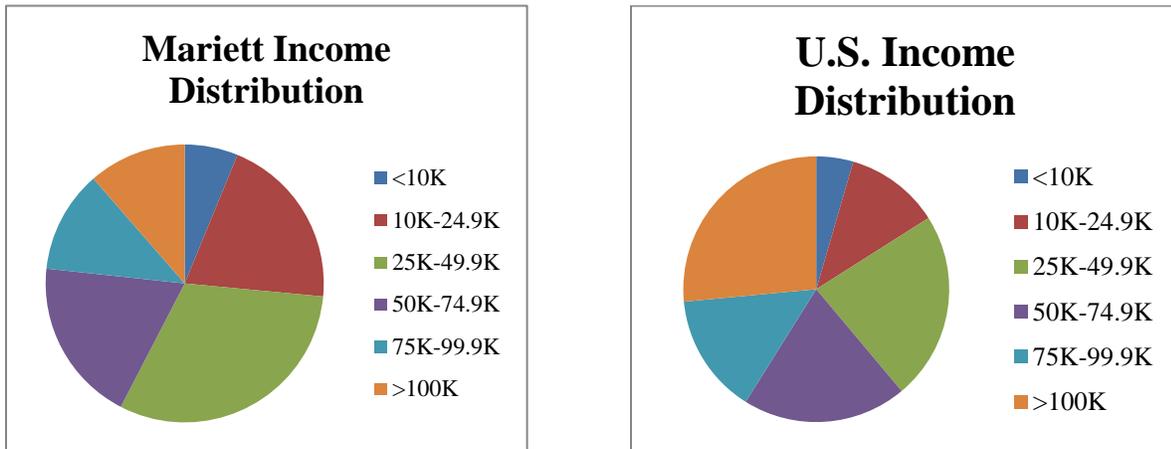


These graphs indicate a large income disparity between Farmville and the United States with the lion's share of Farmville's income represented as fewer than \$50,000 dollars a year. Farmville also has the smallest amount of individuals making \$75,000 dollars or more across the case study sites. Since Farmville was the smallest community in the sample, the town also has the smallest housing authority that participated in this study. The Farmville Housing Authority currently administers 197 vouchers for their jurisdiction, and has less than 150 public housing units. The waiting list for housing assistance in Farmville varies from approximately 2-4 months to a year. Currently the median gross rent as a percentage of income for the PHA's jurisdiction is at 26.3% (indicated by Table 1), which is up from both 1990 (24.6%) and 2000 (20.2%) indicating a rise in the overall jurisdiction's rent burden (*ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010*). Once again, the rise in rent burden was not as substantial as it was in Carrington. However the large decrease in the rent as a percentage of income followed by a sharp increase suggests some variability in the housing market and economy within the community.

**Mariett**

Mariett is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city in the study with approximately 57,000 people residing within the community, down -0.1% from the 2000 census population estimates (U.S. Census 2010). The unemployment rate for this city in the year 2010 was 6.1% (*ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010*). The largest industries for Mariett were educational, health care, and social services at 27.8%, with manufacturing and retail following at 14.2% and 14% respectively (*ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010*). The percentage of individuals living in poverty for the town of Mariett was 11.7%, compared to the state at 11.6%, and the nation at 13.8% (*ACS 5 Year Estimates 2010*). Mariett has the lowest percentage of individuals living below the poverty level, with its percentage closest to the state and national averages. Figure 4 displays income distribution for the city of Mariett in comparison to the United States.

**Figure 4. Mariett household income distribution in comparison to U.S. income distribution.**  
**Source: 2010 ACS 5 Year Estimates**



Once again over 50 % of the income made in Mariett is below \$50,000 dollars a year, however Mariett does have a large amount of individuals making over \$75,000 dollars a year and is second only to Carrington in this regard. Mariett’s rent as a percentage of income remained

relatively stable from the year 1990 to 2000, increasing dramatically from 2000 to 2010. This change in rent as a percentage of income alludes to a rise in the need for affordable housing; however it still did not rise over 30%. The housing authority for Mariett currently administers 900 housing choice vouchers for its jurisdiction and does not manage any public housing units. The wait list time for Mariett housing authority programs is approximately six months to two years.

### *Similarities and Differences*

The communities in this study are largely similar in the fact that they have a higher percentage of individuals living in poverty than the state and the nation. The primary industries represented by the communities include health and educational services, manufacturing, and retail with income distribution varying but not radically different across the communities. Most communities experienced population decline since 2000 with the exception of Carrington, the largest community. The communities that stand out the most are Carrington and Farmville; representing the two ends of the population spectrum, large variations in rent as a percentage of income, and the highest amount of individuals in poverty. The wait list times also vary between housing authorities; however wait list times can vary from year to year and are very hard to approximate an average. This is due to several competing factors including: local market conditions, amount of turnover on the program, and waiting list preferences. Although these communities vary, the Narratives that were investigated as a part of this study remain similar across the case study communities. As will be discussed later in the community perceptions section, many of the communities were also similar in their racial and ethnic make-up and it was a component of the community reaction surrounding the Chicago migration.

### **Chapter 3: Mobility, Dispersal, and Displacement: Understanding the National Context of a Changing Landscape of Poverty**

The past 20 years have seen not only a wave of policy experiments in dispersing the poor, but also dozens of studies of dispersal's impact. The verdict is in – and for the most part, it is negative. Policies that relocate the poor outside of high-poverty neighborhoods usually fail to improve their economic situation or health and often disrupt their social support system, creating new difficulties to overcome. It is difficult to know whether to blame the failure on the policy's implementation, its translation from social science diagnosis to policy, its underlying theory, or the political dynamics of recent years. Yet, underlying all these factors is a common problem, the inability to understand and respect the lives of those who live in poverty. (Goetz and Chapple 2010, 229)

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the origins and development of mobility-oriented and dispersal-oriented policies as well as the theoretical framework that informs current housing policy. I begin by discussing the origins of the tenant based rental voucher and then provide an overview of the devolution of the role of the federal government in housing programs. Then I provide a background to the theoretical framework that guides deconcentration focused literature and policy. Finally I discuss the HOPE VI program and its role in the displacement of low-income households, and the communities that receive them.

#### **Chapter 3.1: The Deconcentration Doctrine and the Evolution of Mobility**

For the past forty years housing policies that focus on low-income households have embodied a philosophy that can be summarized by the title of Edward Goetz's most recent article; "You Gotta Move. (2010)" However, the development of mobility-oriented housing policy and specifically the national mobility of the housing choice voucher did not occur overnight. It took many years of disinvestment and segregation to create geographically isolated areas of extreme poverty to invoke the deconcentration direction in housing policy. This direction was articulated and supported by the deconcentration doctrine, assuming that geographic mobility of low-income households allowed them greater access to areas of economic

opportunity. Mobility-oriented housing policy has evolved within a political context that has been defined by a move towards market-oriented housing assistance, decentralized federal authority, decreasing funding, and increased local purview over housing programs. This direction in federal housing policy has set the stage for the creation of the Hope VI program and its record on displacement through dispersal; raising questions about where displaced residents are locating to and if these neighborhoods provide them with the better opportunities that are assumed through these policies.

In the United States, public housing environments have commonly been conceptualized as environments of poverty and crime. However public housing did not start out this way, with most projects having been developed to ease market pressure from a housing shortage that started in the late 1930's and continued on through postwar America (Hackworth 2007). Many political leaders saw public housing as a way to house returning veterans and their families from WWII as well as the working poor (Hackworth 2007). However federal regulations levied on housing authorities through the 1949 Housing Act had set strict income limits for public housing units in which rents were set 20 percent lower than the rest of the housing units within the surrounding neighborhood (Hackworth 2007). Over time these regulations helped to shift the tenantry of public housing from middle class to extremely low-income residents, fostering the income segregation necessary to justify disinvestment in neighborhoods where public housing resided (Hackworth 2007).

Public housing in the United States has also had a long and sorted history with race, with a considerable percentage of minority populations residing within America's public housing developments (Massey and Denton 1993). Often public housing was built in African American neighborhoods that had been razed for urban renewal and was used to house displaced families

(Massey and Denton 1993). This trend was also accompanied by federal housing programs designed to promote suburban expansion, while at the same time cities were practicing exclusionary zoning to keep minorities out of the growing suburban neighborhoods (Massey and Denton 1993). This produced a situation from which many low-income African American residents could not escape and led to an increasingly segregated environment for public housing residents in most American cities. These factors coupled with institutional barriers to residential mobility such as discriminatory lending practices, neighborhood “redlining”, and selective siting of public housing were accredited with the creation of the dismal conditions of the American “ghetto” (Massey and Denton 1993).<sup>1</sup>

By the 1960’s a growing movement aimed at deconcentration through desegregation began to develop, and was finally articulated through the Kerner Commission report in 1968 (Massey and Denton 1993). This report marked the beginning of what would ultimately become labeled as deconcentration, with its charge that the 1960’s urban riots boiled down to one primary cause: segregation (Massey and Denton 1993). This report was followed with numerous proposals to integrate low-income minorities back into the rest of the city and end discriminatory practices (Massey and Denton 1993). These proposals ultimately developed into the 1968 Fair Housing Act, which banned discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, and resulted in court ordered remedies such as Chicago’s Gautreaux ruling in 1969 (Massey and Denton 1993). The Gautreaux case identified that the Chicago Housing Authority had been discriminating in its site selection for public housing, placing developments in neighborhoods that were overwhelmingly African American (Massey and Denton 1993). The outcome of this case eventually led to the

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<sup>1</sup> Urban Renewal was primarily a practice of clearing slums that were disproportionately made up of minorities, oftentimes minorities would be relocated to public housing that was selectively sited in minority neighborhoods. This helped to bolster the concentration of poverty, making it easier for discriminatory disinvestment to create the places of inopportunity that HOPE VI was determined to reverse.

establishment of demonstration programs such as the Gautreaux Assisted Housing Program and eventually the Moving to Opportunity program, which provided rental assistance along with placement counseling and incentives for African American families to move to primarily white, higher income neighborhoods (Varady and Walker 2003).

Just two years after the Gautreaux decision, President Nixon introduced an experimental program that would ultimately evolve into the housing choice voucher (HCV). This program was called the Experimental Housing Allowance Program (EHAP) and from 1971-1980 it tested the viability of a tenant-based housing subsidy program in 12 locations throughout the United States (United States 2001). EHAP was introduced in a period of growing federal decentralization and the emergence of a market-oriented ideology that low-income consumers should be allowed to use and add purchasing power within the marketplace (Karger and Stoesz 1993). This ideology was expanded through the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 with the authorization of the “certificate” program which not only provided rental assistance, but allowed households to take that assistance with them, essentially following the family (United States 2001).

The 1974 Housing and Community Development Act also provided some of the first evidence that lawmakers were beginning to recognize the benefits of a larger cross section of incomes in public housing developments. This ideology would become expanded on in later years to include both low- and middle-incomes and provide the rationale behind HOPE VI and its replacement of public housing with mixed income developments.

While it is expected that housing agencies will continue to give particular attention and priority to very low-income families, the committee expects that in the long run we would have more housing developments which are not occupied solely by the very poor, but by a cross section of lower income households, representing a variety of household types. Experience has demonstrated that a cross section of occupancy is an essential ingredient in creating economically viable housing as well as a healthy social environment (United States 1974, 40).

This legislation was not only seen as a way of promoting economic diversity but it also began a transfer of low-income housing management and production back to the private industry. Through this act, the Federal government began gradually shifting its housing “risk” and “profit” (United States 1974) to the private housing market and local housing providers. This transfer was not the only evidence of a shift in federal involvement. In this act Nixon also introduced the Community Development Block Grant expanding “State and Local responsibility for planning and executing development activities.” (United States 1974, 52) By decentralizing and deregulating assistance, the federal government began to remove itself from the business of housing production. This move away from federal housing production and toward the geographic mobility of tenant-based subsidies fell in line with the integrative goals of the Fair Housing Act, and created growing support for desegregation through mechanisms aimed at deconcentrating poverty (Massey and Denton 1993, 214). Evidence of this ideology can be seen in the following quote from a housing authorization funding proposal in 1983.

Certificates allow families to choose where they want to live rather than forcing them into certain buildings. HUD’s research shows that, while the population in new construction projects mirror the racial composition of surrounding neighborhoods, (in some cases perpetuating segregation), families have used certificates to move to less segregated neighborhoods. Because rent levels are subject to negotiation between prospective tenants and their landlords, tenants are treated like other families shopping for housing. (U.S. Department of State 1983, 209)

Although this quote represents a rather simplistic view of private market housing, it facilitates a better understanding of how desegregation policies became deconcentration policies.

The dawning of the Reagan era came in amongst a growing distrust of “social welfare” programs and their expenditures, as the budget of housing programs was reduced by \$24 billion from 1978-1987 (Goetz 1993; Karger and Stoesz 1993). The public housing developments that had been built in the previous decades became shining examples of “social welfare” failures, and many began to argue that public housing was an outdated and failed model (Hackworth 2007; Popkin 2004).<sup>2</sup> By the 1980’s, the rental certificate program authorized in the 1974 Housing Act had expanded rapidly and was growing in popularity with congress, state, and local governments (United States 2001). This popularity among lawmakers resulted from the small expense of the program in relation to households served, greater housing choice, added purchasing power, and dispersal of low-income residents (United States 2001). The success of the rental certificate demonstration programs were key components to the Reagan ethos, arguing that the private realm had the capacity to adequately house low-income residents and individual choice should be a primary factor in housing location (Newland 1983).<sup>3</sup>

From the 1980’s onward new programs have emerged with residential mobility and deconcentration at the core of their design such as the Moving to Opportunity program and the HOPE VI program. The implementation of these policies has been framed in a series of literature and research aimed at evaluating the benefits of mobility and promoting deconcentration as a solution to the poverty of troublesome public housing environments. Among this literature was William Julius Wilson’s *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), and later works including Jargowsky’s *Poverty and Place: Ghettos, Barrios, and the American City* (1996). This literature articulated the already developing deconcentration goal with arguments that industry deconcentration,

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<sup>2</sup> In Hackworth’s book he demonstrates the rollback of public housing and rollout of Neoliberal policies (later to be encompassed in HOPE VI) as a response to the federal commission’s report on “severely distressed” public housing; recognizing that the original model was a failed one. This point is also outlined in (Popkin 2004)

<sup>3</sup> This is also mentioned in Hackworth’s (2007) argument that the Section 8 voucher was a neoliberal measure designed to promote “self-sufficiency” through market-oriented assistance.

economic and racial segregation, and deindustrialization had led to an out migration of the working class and had left behind a concentration of impoverished minorities in the central cities.

Although residential mobility policies were well on their way to becoming fixtures in U.S. housing policy by the time William Julius Wilson wrote *The Truly Disadvantaged* in 1987 this book began the academic discussions that would lead to the establishment of the deconcentration doctrine. Deconcentration literature continued to grow through the 1990's and in 1998 The Urban Institute came out with an influential article: "Moving out of Poverty: Expanding Mobility and Choice through Tenant-Based Housing Assistance" published in *Housing Policy Debate*. This article not only expanded on the idea that residential mobility can alleviate inner-city problems such as high unemployment and teenage pregnancy, it also promoted the rental voucher program as a facilitator of this mobility. With increasing evidence of the success of rental vouchers to deconcentrate poverty and move low-income households to "better" neighborhoods (Katz et al. 2001; Turner 1998; Varady and Walker 2003)<sup>4</sup>, mobility programs were being held up as the answer to the poverty question and public housing developments were denounced as a mistake.

### **Chapter 3.2: New Federalism, Hope VI, and Displacement**

As Janet Smith (2000) mentions in her article "The Space of Local Control in the Devolution of U.S. Public Housing Policy" the housing policies of the Reagan era persisted

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<sup>4</sup> Many articles support this (See Bibliography) including: (Katz et al. 2001), (Turner 1998), (Varady and Walker 2003) through analysis of the MTO, Gautreaux, and Section 8 programs, however there are caveats to this theory of betterment through mobility that show less desirable results and that moving to better neighborhoods may have little effect on employment. However researchers also mention barriers such as landlord prejudice and requirements, housing market factors, and abandonment of social networks documented by: (Galvez, 2010; Devine et al. 2002; Basalo and Nguyen, 2010; Kingsley et al. 2003; Carlson et al. 2011).

through both the Bush and Clinton administrations, promoting the idea of a smaller federal role in social policy and consequently, housing programs.

Under the Clinton administration, the rhetoric of Democrats' *new new* federalism is not unlike that of the Republicans. The common thread uniting both sides is the assumed benefits of concurrently scaling back the federal government's involvement in social welfare programs while significantly increasing 'local control' over policy implementation. The assumption here is that decentralizing the responsibility for public housing - giving local government and public housing authorities more control- will yield more effective results and be more efficient (Smith 2000, 2)

The Clinton administration was primarily characterized by its merger of the Certificate and Voucher Programs in The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA) in 1998, as well as its budgetary reforms and the reorganization of the HUD administration (United States 1998). Through the QHWRA act the Clinton administration phased out the certificate program and created the housing choice voucher (HCV) program (United States 2001). This act also repealed the federally mandated preferences for PHA waiting lists and allowed them to administer local preferences such as jurisdictional preference (Hunt et al. 1998). Through this act, PHAs were given the authority to order their waiting lists based on local policy, embodying this movement to a decentralized system. This act also furthered the ideologies of program accountability, economic self-sufficiency, and dispersal of concentrated poverty through the implementation of self-sufficiency programs attached to assistance and the installment of the HOPE VI program as a permanent fixture in federal funding (Smith 2000).

Through the decentralization of federal housing assistance and facilitation of market-oriented programs that are reliant on local housing markets, local PHAs have become even more important to the housing policy arena. As will be seen throughout this study, PHA's often have many issues to contend with that intersect, both at the national and local level. Quercia and

Galster (1997) portray the current situation of local housing policy best when they say that “PHAs are about to enter a brave new world....”

PHAs will be asked to reinvent themselves in the most drastic way since the [housing] program began. The shift toward a tenant-based subsidy approach to public housing can be expected to force PHAs to compete with private sector... To be successful in such competition, PHAs are expected to act more like entrepreneurial market participants: to change their management practices, the type of tenants they house, and the type of developments they operate... Therefore, PHAs are likely to serve higher-income tenants in their public-private ventures of the future. (Quercia and Galster 1997, 565-566)

This housing policy environment sets the stage for the reinvention of the public housing system embodied by the HOPE VI program and outlines the new model that it is replaced with: less regulated housing authorities pushed to become more competitive and efficient in a private market setting, more attuned to local politics and funding, and the intention of integrating the poor into mixed income neighborhoods through dispersal and mobility-oriented policies.

The decentralization of the federal role combined with increasing support for deconcentration created an environment in which the HOPE VI program would have the regulatory flexibility to drastically reduce public housing units and clear valuable urban land for less acrimonious purposes. The beginning of the HOPE VI program evolved amidst growing doubt of the efficacy of the public housing model. The physical and administrative structure of the system had gradually been deteriorating over the past 30 years as a result of underfunding and these problems were articulated with the National Commission's negative report on Severely Distressed Public Housing (Goetz 2003).

By the early 1990's it had become apparent that radical change would be needed in order to address the social issues that had become synonymous with public housing neighborhoods. These factors, combined with an increasingly disinvested stance towards welfare and social service provision by the federal government (Bennett et al. 2006; Goetz 1993; Hackworth 2007),

led to HUD's first steps toward reinvention and the HOPE VI program that would change the face of the nation's public housing system (Bennett et al. 2006). Congress approved what would become the HOPE VI program in 1992, awarding nearly 5 billion in grants to qualified PHAs from 1993 to 2002 in an effort to stimulate programs that aimed at dispersing concentrated poverty (Bennett et al. 2006). This program outlined revitalization in the three areas needed to overhaul the public housing system: the physical structure of the system, management of the system, and social/community services to address tenant needs (Bennett et al. 2006). Although these fundamental goals did not radically change through HOPE VI's evolution, the regulatory structure encapsulating how these goals would be approached and implemented did.

At the onset of the program there were several regulations in place that made an overhaul of the public housing system very difficult. Many politicians and housing officials saw the regulatory structure as one of the biggest barriers to the success of public housing and advocated for a more 'entrepreneurial' (Bennett et al. 2006) approach to the reinvention of public housing. This led to several regulations being repealed; including the federal "one for one" replacement rule stating that all public housing that was demolished would be replaced (Bennett et al. 2006). Other measures were also adopted, including the ability for PHAs to allow new properties to be owned and managed privately while still using public money such as operating subsidies and capital funds (Bennett et al. 2006). This newly loosened regulatory structure allowed room for the public-private partnerships and privatized administrative structure that would come to dominate Chicago's *Plan for Transformation*. However, many researchers contend that this regulatory structure has resulted in projects that are led by development interests and the displacement of low-income residents (Alexander 2009; Bennett et al. 2006; Goetz 2003).

Housing scholar Edward Goetz's book *Clearing the Way* gives a telling account of the Hollman Project in the St. Paul/Minneapolis Region. Goetz assesses the HOPE VI program and links it to a growing body of deconcentration literature and its effects on the involuntary displacement of low income residents into the surrounding Twin Cities metro area. In his study of the Hollman project, he finds that most residents relocated within the metropolitan area and none went outside of the surrounding counties. Janet Smith, Larry Bennett, and Patricia Wright are other researchers that have provided a perspective on the displacement of residents in their book *Where are the Poor People to Live?* (2006). In this book they describe the *Plan for Transformation*, the political and regulatory context it was developed in, and the resident's struggle to maintain their housing in the midst of demolition. They document the plan's movement forward despite tight rental market conditions and concerns from the residents that the permanent reduction of public housing units would create a shortage of affordable housing within the city. Through their work, Bennett et al. bring up an important question about public housing redevelopment in Chicago, where are the poor people supposed to live?

These researchers provide insight into the influence of national housing policy on the displacement of low-income individuals and allow a glimpse into the underlying factors influencing poverty dispersal and mobility. The displacement of low-income households and disruption of their social networks has become a serious concern in many HOPE VI developments (Bennett et al. 2006; Goetz 2003). Also, there are concerns within HOPE VI literature regarding the communities that these individuals are being displaced to and their ability to successfully incorporate into these new communities. However much of this research focuses primarily on displacement to the surrounding metropolitan region; leaving out the story of

residents that are dispersed across state lines. This issue is taken up by the Chicago Narrative, which is studied within this research.

### **Chapter 3.3: Receiving Communities and the Perception of Crime**

Throughout Hope VI literature one finds a wealth of studies looking at the neighborhoods that displaced public housing residents are relocating to (Brook et al. 2005; Fauth et al. 2004; Galvez 2010; Kingsley et al. 2003) These studies primarily focus on the movement of individuals that are relocating with housing choice vouchers or relocating to a different public housing development. Some of these studies have found that when households move from public housing to other communities there is an increase in stability indicators including: less exposure to violence and disorder, health problems, diminished alcohol abuse, and also that public housing residents were more likely to be satisfied with their new neighborhood when compared to their previous environment (Brook et al. 2005; Fauth et al. 2004). However the news on relocation outcomes is not always so rosy and these positive results are often mixed with less desirable findings. In fact other researchers have pointed out that even though voucher holders are not concentrating in extremely poor neighborhoods, many are still moving to neighborhoods with moderate to high poverty (Galvez 2010; Kingsley et al. 2003).

Researchers have found that there are barriers to the entry of these households into middle income neighborhoods. These barriers include difficulty with landlords, affordable housing supply, and an apprehension to move away from family and social networks (Kingsley et al. 2003; Mclure 2010; Varady and Walker 2003; Turner et al. 2000). Barriers to relocation also present themselves in the form of community opposition. In her review of recent research, Martha Galvez (2010) notes that some studies on relocation outcomes are showing a disappointing picture of receiving neighborhoods. Discrimination based on income, race, and

previous location (public housing residents) are significant barriers to the successful relocation and integration of families into their new neighborhoods (Galvez 2010). She noted that a study by Ross (2005), found that although overall incidence of discrimination has decreased since 1989, many African American and Hispanic households still experienced discrimination in the housing market. The social manifestation of these patterns of discrimination are best represented by the recent public debate sparked by Hannah Rosin's *Atlantic Monthly* (2008) article "The Great American Murder Mystery" and its linkage between crime patterns, HOPE VI, and section 8 households in Memphis, Tennessee.

In the article, Rosin attributes rising crime within the suburbs of Memphis to the relocation of displaced public housing residents. The link between crime and housing choice voucher households is a subject that has long been debated in academic circles as well as in receiving communities. However, as the critics of Rosin's piece pointed out in a recent *Shelterforce* article "Memphis Murder Mystery? No, Just Mistaken Identity," this link is often exaggerated and based on pre-existing stereotypes (Briggs and Drier 2008). While several scholarly articles have been dedicated to pointing out the fallacies of these broadly based assumptions (Briggs and Drier 2008; Ellen et al. 2011; Turner et al. 2000), the truth is that these arguments are often the rallying point behind community opposition to affordable housing programs. These assumptions are often carried on within receiving communities nationwide and are exemplified by the Chicago Narrative examined in this study; creating significant opposition to the goals of residential mobility and efforts to deconcentrate poverty.

## **Chapter 4: Race, the *Plan for Transformation*, and the Quest for Affordable Housing**

This Plan contemplates much more than the physical transformation of public housing. It envisions a new role for the CHA. In the past, the CHA was primarily an owner and manager of public housing. In the future, the CHA will be a facilitator of housing opportunities. (Plan for Transformation 2000, 4)

This chapter provides a brief overview of the history and development of the Chicago Housing Authority's *Plan for Transformation*, and its subsequent displacement of low-income individuals. In this chapter, the historical context of Chicago's public housing communities provides a picture of communities entrenched in both race and class issues. The development of the *Plan for Transformation* came about in the midst of a troubled agency that needed a drastic new approach to both the communities' and its own revitalization. However the unequal power structures that helped create these communities remained largely present in the development of the plan. As a result, some residents have been displaced or lost, risking it all and traveling ever farther to find a place they can afford to live. This is embodied in the Chicago Narrative, an account that resembles the story of a place, more than the migration itself.

### **Chapter 4.1: Chicago and Housing: A History of Segregation**

As housing policy has changed over the years, so too has the geography of opportunity and disinvestment within American cities. The public housing environments that developed over the past 40 years had become places of despair, disinvestment, and tragedy and Chicago was one of the worst examples. By the early 1990's, stories about children being pushed from high rise towers or gang warfare in the streets had become a familiar part of the news in Chicago (*Mariett Newspaper* 10/19/95; 4/8/96). In 1986 the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) was put on HUD's list of 'severely troubled' public housing agencies (Bennett et al. 2006). By this point in time it had earned a notorious reputation for mismanagement and had some of the most crime-ridden

housing developments within the country. However this reputation had not been earned overnight nor can it be directly attributed to the CHA alone. It was the culmination of many years of social and physical exclusion of extremely low-income households by the city, its inhabitants, and the federal government itself.

The period of time between the “Great Migration” of southern African Americans to Chicago and CHA’s developments today is filled with racial tension and segregation. From approximately 1910-1970 there was a period of migration in which southern African Americans moved to northern industrial cities like Chicago (Tolnay 2003). This movement was mostly driven by the need for cheap labor within industrial cities and the expansion of war industries during WWI and WWII (Tolnay 2003). The first wave of African American migrants to Chicago occurred between the years of 1890 and 1930, a period of time in which the black belt was created (Hirsch 1998). The black belt was a racial boundary, geographically separating the African American neighborhood from the white neighborhoods (Hirsch 1998). Residential segregation during this period of time eventually culminated in the 1919 Chicago race riot in which white residents went into the black belt, killing at least one person within the African American neighborhood (Hirsch 1998). African Americans retaliated by attacking white individuals that happened to be in their neighborhood, and by the end of the riot approximately 23 African Americans and 15 whites had been killed (Hirsch 1998).

By 1930 Chicago’s black ghetto had been clearly defined with two thirds of African Americans living in census tracts where 90% of the population was black (Hirsch 1998). As the second wave of migration hit in the 1940s-1960s, white communities in Chicago became fearful of encroachment and implemented structural segregation through residential measures and redlining practices to keep them separate (Tolnay 2003). These measures were informal and

formal, and were carried out through local real estate practices such as restrictive covenants that prohibited sale of homes from a white household to an African American household (Hirsch 1998). They were also implemented through Federal Housing Administration mortgage loans that encouraged white flight to the suburbs, while at the same time denying those same loans to central city African Americans (Hirsch 1998). Neighborhoods that were in racial transition were often occupied by speculators that raised rental prices for African Americans wishing to live on the outskirts of the ghetto, holding back the encroaching black belt. Although these efforts reinforced the already strong lines of African American isolation, the greatest bulwark of segregation presented itself in the form of slum clearance in African American neighborhoods and the construction of high rise public housing in those neighborhoods.

The severe level of white on African American discrimination became painfully evident to the CHA when they sought to house returning veterans during a substantial housing shortage, and as a consequence had to move some of the existing African American families already in public housing units to units in white neighborhoods (Bennett et al. 2006). A series of incidents followed in which white mobs would harass and even attack African Americans at their homes (Bennett et al. 2006). With the increasing shortage of housing available to both African Americans and whites, overcrowding grew worse for African American neighborhoods (Hirsch 1998; Hunt 2009). This led to plans for urban renewal, demolishing housing in primarily African American neighborhoods and rebuilding public housing in its place (Hirsch 1998).

Blatant racism and city politics led to selective public housing construction throughout the 1950's and early 60's in which the primarily white city council would only consent for the CHA to build public housing in black or transitioning neighborhoods (Bennett et al. 2006; Hunt 2009). This concentrated public housing in the southwestern portion of Chicago and led to an

increasingly isolated population of poor African Americans within this area (Hirsch 1998). By 1969 a judge had ruled this selective siting discriminatory in the landmark Gautreaux case mentioned in the previous chapter (Bennett et al. 2006). This court decision preceded a series of race-based policy decisions that would shape CHA priorities and ultimately the *Plan for Transformation* in terms of racial integration and eventually income integration.

By the late 1980s Chicago had become the national poster-child for the failure of public housing. The structural segregation in the decades preceding public housing construction, and the selective siting of those developments in African American neighborhoods, had produced environments of isolated poverty for many of the city's minority residents (Bennett et al. 2006; Hunt 2009). On the next page is an excerpt about these environments from the *New York Times* reported in 1987:

The illusions end on Damon Street, all of them: liberal, Reaganite, black solidarity, beneficent government, the innocence of man. Here are the Henry Horner Homes, 19 10-story buildings, red brick outside and cinder block inside, erected with Federal public housing money and managed by the Chicago Housing Authority...Dominant authority is exercised by the gangs: organized groups, led by men of 30 or 40, organizing and recruiting down to the age of 8...The gangs engage in regular and constant warfare for control of the drug and vice trades. They are armed with pistols, rifles, automatic weapons and occasional grenades. Firefights may erupt at any time. Children dodge machine-gun crossfire as they leave the school. (Willinsky 1987, 1)

This excerpt demonstrates the loss of control over the conditions of these communities by CHA and gives insight into the public sentiment regarding Chicago's public housing system.

This loss of control ultimately ended with housing authority being taken over by HUD in 1995 until their finances and administration were back in order (Hunt 2009). However, this paradigm not only presented itself within Chicago, but was identified as a national issue related to public housing systems around the country. As the *Plan for Transformation* began, all eyes were on the project to see whether the demolition and redevelopment of public housing

communities could revitalize the city's subsidized housing and provide better opportunities for its residents. Today there are advocates of HOPE VI throughout the country that hail the *Plan for Transformation* as a model for successful subsidized housing and neighborhood revitalization. This advocacy was reflected in this research when one of the interviewees mentioned that they had been to a conference where former HUD secretary Henry Cisneros was "just praising" the *Plan for Transformation* (Housing Advocate 08/17/11).

#### **Chapter 4.2: The Plan for Transformation**

After the CHA was cited for mismanagement of public housing properties (Bennett et al. 2006; Hunt 2009; Massey and Denton 1993), a drastically new approach to the administrative and management structure of Chicago's redevelopment was needed. With the growing federal support and momentum for public-private partnerships offered through HOPE VI and QHWRA, the CHA began its move away from public housing development and management responsibilities. This movement was culminated in the *Plan for Transformation*, hallmarking new approaches toward redevelopment with public private partnerships, mixed income development models, and strategies to leverage private investment.

When the CHA submitted a plan for review to HUD, they realized that the HOPE VI grant was an opportunity to redevelop the urban landscape and change the role of the housing authority from a housing "manager" to a housing "facilitator" (*Plan for Transformation* 2000, 4). As a precursor to the *Plan for Transformation*, HUD had mandated that all public housing properties that had failed the Section 202 cost test must be demolished rather than renovated (Bennett et al. 2006). The Section 202 test was a concern for many public housing residents who believed that buildings near a stronger market were more likely to be demolished and end up being replaced with fewer subsidized units than their traditional counterparts (Bennett et al.

2006). This concern, among others, was addressed by the CHA in the form of resident participation, stating that residents would be able to work and negotiate with developers on the developments to mitigate concerns about inadequate replacement (Bennett et al. 2006).

This led to the establishment of what the CHA calls “working groups”, in this model, these working groups consist of key stakeholders to the project. These stakeholders include elected resident councils, the CHA, private real estate management firms, the Gautreaux plaintiff’s council, and various planning departments for the city of Chicago (CHA FY2000). These groups have been identified by CHA officials as responsible for the development of strategies and proposals for the redeveloped mixed income communities (Email correspondence with CHA official 2011). These working groups, along with the Central Advisory Council, are the primary vehicles through which resident participation is incorporated into the policy and procedural decisions (Email correspondence with CHA official 2011).

However this arrangement did not always work out in the residents’ favor and there are some researchers that have questioned the efficacy of Chicago’s participatory model given its sorted history of racial and class marginalization. In Alexander’s article “Stakeholder Participation in New Governance: Lessons from Chicago’s Public Housing Reform Experiment,” she not only talks about the collaborative process of the stakeholders, but she also touches on how “complex race, class, and gender dynamics continue to be obstacles to successful public housing reform in Chicago” (Alexander 2009, 149). Alexander points to the fact that the residents within Chicago’s public housing are largely poor, black, and female; and experience many intersecting lines of “structural and social oppression...” (Alexander 2009, 149). The conflicting power structures that result from this dynamic do not just disappear once all the project stakeholders sit down to a table. This is evidenced by the composition of the new

developments, of which many original residents have not returned (Vale and Graves 2010). Growing numbers of working, middle, and upper class residents are moving into former public housing neighborhoods, comprising a larger portion of the mixed-income developments (Alexander 2009; Vale and Graves 2010). So the question that comes to mind when faced with this situation is: What happened to the residents?

### **Chapter 4.3: From a ‘big city’ to small town America: The quest for housing**

The Chicago Housing Authority has been successful in deconcentrating poverty, increasing tenant employment, streamlining its processes, revitalizing the areas surrounding public housing communities, and bringing investment back into public housing neighborhoods (CHA FY2010; Vale and Graves 2010). The CHA has been able to accomplish this feat on such a large scale primarily as a result of the loosened regulatory structure and stricter tenant restrictions such as the imposition of work requirements and rejecting tenants that had recently filed bankruptcy or had debt delinquency greater than 1,000 dollars (Alexander 2009; CHA FY2010; Vale and Graves 2010). Although this regulatory structure has been an integral part of the ability for the plan to leverage private investment, it has also resulted in further marginalization of a population that has historically been at a disadvantage. In a city like Chicago, where land is an increasingly valuable commodity and physical improvement means higher property values, one of the consequences of this success is increased gentrification (Goetz 2011; Wyley and Hammel 1999).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Goetz (2011) “Gentrification in Black and white” in which he examines patterns of both direct and indirect displacement in Hope VI projects, identifying race as one of the determining factors. He concludes by saying that Hope VI projects have directly and indirectly contributed to African American displacement through demolition and gentrification.

Also see Wyley and Hammel’s (1999) work entitled “Islands of Decay in Seas of Renewal: Housing Policy and the Resurgence of Gentrification.” Within their work Wyley and Hammel discuss how the resurgence of mortgage capital crossed with reinvestment oriented housing and banking policies and has placed increasing pressure on underdeveloped areas of the inner city. This has created the “Islands of Decay in Seas of Renewal” in which they propose that public housing developments and neighborhoods are the islands of decay in a sea of renewal and

Alexander notes that the rapid pace of demolition ahead of the slow pace of redevelopment shows the housing authorities' priority for removing the blighted high rises over the provision of safe and adequate replacement housing for former residents (Alexander 2009). This priority of removal was not only demonstrated through demolition, but was also representative of the relocation process. Although there were relocation services provided in the beginning years of the plan, they were often disorganized and usually outsourced to private companies that placed residents in dangerous situations (Turner and Rogel 2004; Vale and Graves 2010). These criticisms coupled with an abnormally high attrition rate (the loss of residents through death, eviction, and unknown) have led a few researchers to question the consequences of inner city revitalization (Goetz 2011; Vale and Graves 2010).

Developing Government Accountability to the People (DGAP) is a social justice website that monitors the city and its performance in equity issues concerning many areas of operation. This website provides some stark perceptions concerning the Chicago Housing Authority and the city's relationship to the condition of affordable housing within the area. The website has recently given the city an 'F' on its performance in the housing sector, which is a result of analysis of policy, local news, and equity issues concerning low-income and working class individuals (DGAP 2010). The statement quoted on the next page accompanied the housing grade established by the group:

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gentrification. Promise of revitalization creates a circling the wagon effect in which developers and private investment capitalize on the income mixing and redevelopment opportunities that the HOPE VI program provides for them; reclaiming valuable urban land and expanding the potential for closing the rent gap. This theory provides an understanding for how the stage was set for the 'higher and better use' of these areas, and subsequently the displacement of low-moderate income people through secondary effects of housing policy.

While the City espouses a priority on affordable housing, its housing policies still seem to primarily benefit developers. In some cases, affordable housing practices have benefitted individuals who have turned the affordable housing opportunities into profit-making ventures, and have done so with impunity. The city has done an appalling job of replacing the scores of public housing units that have been destroyed; leaving thousands of residents and former residents without the housing they were promised. (DGAP 2010)

All of these factors have contributed to a bleak outlook for low-income residents of Chicago that are faced with task of finding affordable housing in a city that has effectively dismantled it. It is no surprise then, that through their quest to find affordable housing some low-income residents have expanded their search. For the communities that were a part of this study, there is a perception that these displaced households have expanded their search for affordable housing to their communities. This is where the Chicago Narrative begins, with the quest for assistance. When an official was asked about why they thought low-income households were moving from Chicago to their community, this is what they had to say:

I think the need there is so great. That is part of the problem...Nine months to a year, that's nothing to them compared to what they'd have to wait on the waiting list there. Because a lot of them will ask, especially if they port back to that area, they're like, 'Do I have to wait on their waiting list for assistance?', and I'm like 'Oh no, it will mean that you have a voucher through us you're just going to get assistance right away.' Because they say 'I'd wait forever to be able to get that assistance.' (Housing Official 08/09/11)

An article published in a local newspaper mentions Chicago's expansive dispersal, with its reach extending beyond Illinois to the surrounding Midwestern states (*Mariett Newspaper* 08/15/2005). This movement is noted as being comprised not just of displaced public housing residents, but "low-income residents squeezed out of a tight market [Chicago] by people with vouchers..."- CHA spokeswoman Jennifer Chatlani (*Mariett Newspaper* 08/15/2005). Coupled with the recession and a rising need for housing assistance, the Chicago Housing Authority finds itself with a daunting waiting list. As of right now, the CHA waiting list is 40,000 applicants

long with a wait time of up to 8-10 years<sup>6</sup>, most housing authorities in this state have waiting lists that are three months to five years long. When officials in the study were asked about the causes of the Chicago migration, they often mentioned the decreasing chances of receiving assistance in Chicago.

I would say closed waiting lists, and the huge wait for, maybe the areas that they were coming from, so they moved to areas with shorter waiting lists. (Housing official 8/16/11)

The promise of assistance along with better opportunities for employment, education, and an escape from violence is an attractive option to Chicago's low-income households. These factors have led many individuals within the communities studied to believe that there is an influx of low-income households from Chicago into their communities for housing assistance. Through this process a Narrative of migration has been developed, and at its heart lays the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program and the housing authorities that administer it. This perception of a migration has managed to illicit significant controversy within the communities in this study as well as many communities across the state, but is this controversy based in reality or perception?

As was mentioned earlier, a cursory analysis of migration data was conducted to try and address the existence of this migration. Although there were issues with data gaps from the years 2000-2005 as well as questions concerning the ability of the measure to capture movements of smaller groups of people, this analysis can provide a context for the scale of this migration. On the next page is a table listing what was found when migration data was aggregated for this Midwestern state; looking for out of state migration into the state for the 2005-2009 IPUMS 5-year estimates and controlling for poverty > 99 and student status. This analysis used a

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<sup>6</sup> Information obtained from calling the Chicago Housing Authority Voucher Program.

combination of the variables MIGPLAC1 and MIGPUMA1, which is residence of the household within this state one year prior to moving into the state.

**Table 3: Estimated Number of In-Migrants to State Studied From Areas Outside of the State**

Source: IPUMS data 2005-2009

<b>Estimated Number of Out-of-State Migrants into Study Area State</b>					
Sioux City area, South Dakota	Cook County, Illinois	Rock Island, Illinois	Omaha Nebraska	Pheonix, Arizona	Northwest, Central Arkansas
3,936	3,507	2,508	2,255	2,039	2,080

Although these numbers demonstrate that there has been an in-migration of low-income individuals from Chicago to this state, it does not appear that this migration was significant in number during the 2005-2009 time period. This point is emphasized when one looks at the level of in-migration from Cook County in comparison to the in-migration from other states. If there were low-income individuals from Chicago were moving to these communities, it would have been at a small scale. A cursory analysis of this data demonstrates that the force of this migration does not lie within its scale, but within the Narrative that has developed around it.

Table 4 on the next page contains estimates of the approximate date of in-migration for each of the communities. A perception that low-income individuals from Chicago were migrating to the study sites began around the year 2003, when cities began to notice newcomers into their communities. Since the migration data above is missing the years 2000-2005, it is possible that the migration data did not capture the period in which a larger migration did occur. As was mentioned earlier, this is one of the limitations of this analysis and was taken into consideration in the overall research analysis.

**Table 4: Dates for Migration**

Community	Approximate Date In-Migration Began <sup>7</sup>
<b>Farmville</b>	2002-2003
<b>Church City</b>	2003-2004
<b>Mariett</b>	2006-2007
<b>Carrington</b>	2003-2004

Despite the limitations of this migration data, it is clear that a migration of low-income households from Chicago to these communities would not have been substantial in number; so what are the underlying factors that influence this Narrative? One point of interest is that for all the communities in this study over 90 percent of their population was white. This would have made any new population of African Americans very noticeable within these communities. Although I go into further detail about this facet of the Narrative in the next chapter, it is worth mentioning here that one of the significant factors contributing to this perception of an ‘influx’ can be associated with the discrepancy of race between the incoming migrants and the existing residents. When one official was asked why they thought community members were running with this theory of a Chicago migration, they noted the difference in race as a factor.

Well, it’s because they’re more visible. Before they started migrating here from Chicago, I can count on one hand probably the number of African American families that lived in Farmville (Housing Official 08/09/11)

These African American households were often associated with Chicago, and in one of the communities in-migrants were also attributed to the cities of Milwaukee or Minneapolis.

Although the details of the Chicago Narrative such as origin of migrants, public housing vs. low-

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<sup>7</sup> Dates for in-migration are approximate. These dates were extracted from the analysis of both interview material and newspaper articles. Most of the interviewees stated the dates directly, or they were extrapolated from a combination of statements and dates when articles about the Chicago migration started appearing in the newspapers.

income neighborhoods, and reasons for moving varied across the communities studied, the content was the same. It told a story of low-income households moving from Chicago to these communities in order to acquire housing assistance from the local PHAs. The migration data discussed above along with housing authority statements, newspaper articles, and city documents provide evidence that some migration from Chicago is occurring; however the migration data also shows that it is not consequential in number. Yet for the households that are moving to these areas, they face difficulties that go beyond movement to a new state and encounter barriers to being welcomed by the larger community.

The differences in city size, transportation and social services, and culture all may come as a shock to low-income households moving in from an urbanized area like Chicago. All of this is compounded when one considers that households have no idea what to expect when they arrive in these communities, and have little financial means to make such a move in the first place.

So they're getting dropped off thinking that they're going to have public transportation to get them to Farmville and thinking that it's probably the same community as a Chicago suburb. They think that it's going to be a continuous city and it's nothing but cornfields. So they're doing that, and they're willing to do that to get housing assistance. And they're leaving their friends and their family and they're loading up their kids. And they're coming to a place where they're not being accepted. And they're still willing to do it because they need that assistance. (Housing official 08/09/11)

Due to conflicting power structures, tight rental markets, and low access to necessary resources, public housing and low-income residents from Chicago were often marginalized in the city they were displaced from as well as the communities they relocated to. The narrative that has developed within these communities, a diaspora of displaced low-income households from Chicago, is more indicative of the place they come from than the migration itself. Although the communities investigated in this study focus on this narrative of Chicago in-migration, it is often

mentioned by the interviewees that a movement from urban to rural areas is occurring all over the country. As will be discussed later in this research, the presence of the Chicago Narrative within these communities demonstrates that residents never truly escape the places they move from. As Hannah Rosin ironically mentioned in her article about relocated public housing residents and the crime that was attributed to them;

Truly escaping poverty seems to require a will as strong as a spy's: you have to disappear to a strange land, forget where you came from, and ignore the suspicions of everyone around you. Otherwise, you can easily find yourself right back where you started. (Rosin 2008, 4)

No longer should the academic discussion be simply about the dispersal of poverty in an urban environment, but also the communities that receive that poverty and the cultural, social, and financial capacity they have to accommodate it. In the following paper I discuss the manifestation of the Chicago Narrative within these communities and its implications for the PHAs and the jurisdictional preference policies they have adopted.

## Chapter 5: Community Perceptions and “Program Integrity”

I’ve had people in the community very, very, (pause) nasty. I mean, they will come in my office and pretty much accuse me of ruining Farmville. I had one gentleman come in and ask me point blank, to not let people from Chicago move here anymore. And I said ‘Uh... that’s illegal.’ I said... ‘You can move anywhere you want to in the entire county.’ (Housing official 08/09/11)

This chapter deals with the communities’ reactions to the in-migration of households from Chicago and the housing organizations’ efforts to combat perceptions of increased crime and fraud in their programs. As the community reacted to newcomers from the City of Chicago, issues of both race and class were entrenched in the community’s Chicago Narrative. Crime became one of the focal points of this Narrative, with some community members calling for the eradication of the HCV program altogether. Housing authorities stepped up ‘program integrity’, taking actions such as stepping up monitoring of the police blotter, and introducing national rather than state background checks.

### Chapter 5.1: What’s Race Got to Do with It? The ‘Culture’ of Poverty

So we have people in Mariett on both sides. We have some people saying ‘I liked it the way it was, I don’t want change.’ Other people are saying ‘This is really neat because now I can learn more from other people. And I think that’s pretty much what people are seeing, and that’s why there’s public outcry sometimes about people coming into our program. [Its] because they may not have the same living styles that we do. And so it’s obvious then. When it’s not the same it stands out more... where people just are not understanding [that] different cultures have different ways of living. (Housing official 08/02/11)

Evidence of a perception that low-income migrants from Chicago were relocating in communities across the state started as early as the late 1990s for some communities. Schools and neighborhoods began to notice the presence of low-income households who were often assumed to have formerly resided in Chicago (*Carrington Newspaper* 08/17/2003; Housing official 08/19/11). The complexity and depth of the Chicago Narrative came across through the

community perceptions reported in interviews, newspaper articles, city council meetings, and online commentary. The stories surrounding this perception of a Chicago migration often began with the households moving to these communities for housing assistance, and eventually evolved into a contentious debate about these newcomers and their impact on the community. The community reaction to this perception of a migration was often split between community members that wanted to be open about inviting new members to the community and those that feared what the community was changing into. Discussions on the Chicago migration and how it was changing these communities often incorporated components of race, poverty, and crime.

Only a few officials and advocates explicitly talked about the element of race within these community perceptions; and when they did, it was only hesitantly. Race was mentioned as the ‘elephant in the room’ by one housing official when referring to local politics in the community and it was often a difficult topic to broach in all of the interviews. “The big elephant in the room is a race issue, it is it just is (Housing Official 08/19/11).”

A few officials and advocates noted that part of what made the migration so ‘noticeable’ by the receiving communities was that the migrants were of a different race, and that they stood out because communities either had a very small percentage of African Americans to begin with.

The African American [population] is essentially in 1990 I think it was 3- 3.5 %. In 2010 it’s maybe 3.5 -4 %. So percentage-wise it’s not an appreciable difference... It’s not African Americans like [name emitted], who’s born and raised here. Different language, you know different clothing, so it is more noticeable. The only way, if it was white people, that it would be noticeable is if all of the sudden everybody from Appalachia moved to [state]. I think you’d notice that. (Housing official 8/26/11)

On the next page is a table representing demographic change in each of the four communities over the past twenty years. This table displays that pre-Narrative, in the 1990 census, all of these communities were over 90% white and the African American population

represented 2.1% or less of the total population. Two of the communities, Farmville and Mariett, had a zero or near zero population of African American residents. By the year 2000, communities were beginning to see a decline in white population and a rise in racial diversity. The community with the most racial change was Carrington with a decline in white population from 93.7 to 82.5 % of the total population, and the African American population doubling. Carrington was closely followed by Farmville, with the African American population drastically changing from its 1990 to 2010 percentages. The changes that are represented by this table provides a picture of how these communities have changed in the past twenty years, and provides a demographic background for the community controversy generated around the in-migration and race's role within it.

**Table 5. Racial change in case study communities 1990-2010.**  
**Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census, 2010 Census**

<b>Racial Change <sup>8</sup></b>		
<i>Carrington</i>	<b>White %</b>	<b>Black %</b>
<b>1990</b>	93.3	2.1
<b>2000</b>	87.3	3.7
<b>2010</b>	82.5	5.8
<b>% Change</b>	<b>-37.5%</b>	<b>+97.7%</b>
<i>Church City</i>	<b>White %</b>	<b>Black %</b>
<b>1990</b>	97.9	1.1
<b>2000</b>	95.4	1.2
<b>2010</b>	93.8	1.8
<b>% Change</b>	<b>-7.3%</b>	<b>+59.6%</b>
<i>Farmville</i>	<b>White %</b>	<b>Black %</b>
<b>1990</b>	99.5	0
<b>2000</b>	96.9	0.4
<b>2010</b>	92.7	2.5
<b>% Change</b>	<b>-9.4%</b>	<b>+1,900%</b>
<i>Mariett</i>	<b>White %</b>	<b>Black %</b>
<b>1990</b>	98.8	0.4
<b>2000</b>	96.2	1.2
<b>2010</b>	91.7	4.0
<b>% Change</b>	<b>-38.1%</b>	<b>+550.3%</b>

Within newspaper articles for the studied communities, the subject of race or community racism was often brought up as an inevitable component of this community controversy. However race and its role within the Chicago Narrative were different depending on which side of the issue one landed on. For community members that were more welcoming of the immigration, racism was often used to characterize the negative reactions of less accepting community members. However the community members that did react negatively often would not explicitly mention race but instead focus on perceptions of crime and its relationship to the

<sup>8</sup> Percentage change calculated from base population for each category, not percentages.

new migrants. When race was brought up by housing officials it was often noted as one component of several others that the community used to characterize the incoming population.

It's the people that are in the community and had been raised there that see different cultural changes. There are so many different cultural changes between urban living and rural living in this state. (Housing official 8/26/11)

This difference in 'culture' was often identified as being the primary stimulant to community reaction. This cultural difference was often noted in the way the newcomers lived and interacted with traditional community members. These differences held connotations of both race and class, and were often discussed by officials as mischaracterizations of both. Some housing officials noted that existing negative stereotypes were fed by a misinterpretation of 'cultural' differences; leading to assumptions about the population that was moving into the communities. This racial component is central to the development of the Chicago Narrative that surrounded these migrants and the term culture was often used as a proxy for race. However these racial issues were also mired within issues of class and were therefore difficult to disentangle. The themes of race and class make the story of these migrants and the communities' reaction to them a complicated one. This story not only involved the outward appearance of the in-migrants but the history of a place. This place is imbedded in the historical context of Chicago's African American low-income and public housing neighborhoods: a place that followed them wherever they went.

### **Chapter 5.2: Chicago, Section 8, and Crime**

So you had middle class African Americans in the auditorium that believed the primary recipient of vouchers in Carrington were single black females on welfare, and that somehow the city advertised in Chicago. And somehow people were invited here and everybody on the program is a criminal. I mean, both sides sort of held the exact same myth. (Housing Official 8/26/11)

As new households began to move in, they were perceived as bringing in an inner-city culture that many community members had not had any interaction with besides reading about it in the newspaper. Some titles of local newspaper articles relating to Chicago or connections to Chicago include “Chicago Street Gang 'Franchises' Drug Sales” (*Mariett Newspaper* 12/18/95) or “Killing, crack ring linked Stepfather says murderer was Chicago gang member” (*Carrington Newspaper* 07/23/92). The themes of violence and poverty connected to low-income and public housing neighborhoods in Chicago set a negative frame of reference for residents in the case study communities. With the assumptions that these migrants were intimately associated with the HCV program, housing authorities were no longer just combating negative community perceptions of poverty, but also race.

With the discussion of this Chicago migration centered on the HCV program and the interstate quest for assistance, there were calls made to city halls by community members to map rates of crime and voucher households. The following quote describes an incident in one of the communities that was not linked directly to a resident from Chicago, but was associated with an emerging “ghetto” that is presumed to be the product of an influx of low-income Chicago residents by the receiving community.

And, well there was [an individual] that was murdered here. Over in an apartment complex which has a horrible reputation. That has very few assisted units. But he was murdered by two young African American kids, well men. They were 18 and 19 though. There were some high profile....incidents. And I know the council was inundated with phone calls. (Housing Advocate 08/17/11)

The discourse concerning migrants from Chicago within the receiving communities I studied began to center around crime, first with their origins in Chicago’s public housing developments and again within the receiving communities themselves. Often there were perceptions of a fluctuation in crime starting around the time of in-migration, sometimes coupled

with incidents that had a connection to Chicago. These perceptions of crime were occasionally accompanied by the identification of an emerging ‘ghetto’ within the community, in which housing choice voucher recipients were located. Often the PHAs and community officials were blamed for these emerging ‘ghettos’ and were faced with accusations of bringing in-migrants from Chicago personally. This quote is an excerpt from a community newspaper aimed at quelling those rumors in the community:

We've said it before. But it bears repeating: That old story you've heard, about how the city is recruiting people from the inner cities to move to Mariett - it just isn't true. If you think about it for a minute or two, it doesn't even sound true. What would the city's motivation be?

Does the city get some sort of kickback for signing up out-of-towners for subsidized housing? Check [Name Emitted]'s column. Answer: Nope. (*Mariett Newspaper* 10/12/08)

The relationship between crime and low-income households from Chicago was often a sensationalized one in these communities. Some of the officials and advocates reverberated what has often been found in the crime studies, usually the people committing the crimes are the same people who have been living in the community for many years and they are not on the HCV program.

...He was upset because he thinks he has to lock his door now. And I'm like 'Well you needed to lock your door ten years ago.' Most of the breaking and entering's that happen in Farmville occur, you can talk to the police department and get statistics, but they're primarily born and bred, Farmville-iyans. (laughs)..Breaking and enterings, they are not families from Chicago... (Housing official 08/09/11)

However, these perceptions of crime still remain a concern for many community members that have seen their communities changing. Some officials note that these reactions are motivated out of fear of the unknown, and that community members will become used to this new form of migration as others have before them. However some officials also note that there

are real concerns to be addressed with this migration in terms of city's social service and cultural capacity. In some of these communities efforts have been made to bridge these gaps by increasing dialogue between neighbors and expanding awareness in cultural and racial diversity which has created a positive momentum forward. However the controversy surrounding the Chicago Narrative shows that these communities still have a long way to go before they become the better receiving communities housing officials had envisioned when households were dispersed by Chicago's *Plan for Transformation*.

### **Chapter 5.3: Program Integrity: Accountability to the Public**

Affordable housing has always been an issue of contention for housing policymakers, providers, and communities alike. There has been a vast amount of literature dedicated to the topic of NIMBYism<sup>9</sup> and strategies that can be used to overcome negative perceptions of affordable housing (Goetz 2011; Fields 1997; Tighe 2010). However the main takeaway from this literature is that local community support is a large part of the success or failure of affordable housing projects and programs. Public support can often make or break a project or initiative, and the political will of communities are often cognizant of public opinion. Given these considerations, housing authorities are often very aware and sensitive to the political and social framework within which they interact. And in smaller communities and cities, such as those in this study, community and political opinion are a marked presence within their world.

With more and more community members beginning to become vocal about the Chicago movement, communities were seeing a growing racial tension between existing community members and the newcomers. The communities in this study responded to this growing tension through several methods; conducting crime studies, fair housing studies, seminars and

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<sup>9</sup> NIMBY stands for (Not In My Backyard) and is usually referenced in terms of undesirable uses, which often can include homeless shelters, affordable housing, or halfway homes.

workshops on diversity, increased funding of multicultural centers, and implementing youth programs.<sup>10</sup> Housing authorities and housing organizations alike have used the local newspapers to combat these perceptions by publishing articles such as “Let’s put rumors about housing in Mariet to rest” (*Mariett Newspaper* 10/12/08), and “Public Housing Facts and Realities” (*Farmville Newspaper* 12/04/08). However despite these efforts, community pressure remained, with some residents in these communities calling for the eradication of the HCV programs altogether. One official mentioned this: “... there were people [public] that wanted the program gone. Like, totally gone.” (Housing official 08/19/11)

As a result, PHAs have begun to bolster efforts to protect what can be called ‘Program integrity.’ Program integrity encompasses the credibility of the housing organization and its programs to the community and clientele that it serves. It is often invoked to counteract the association between crime and housing programs by either stepping up monitoring of the police blotter, providing national (rather than state) criminal background checks; or increasing public awareness that these measures are being taken. This concept was mentioned several times throughout the interviews, and was usually in reference to the housing authority’s ability to weed out fraud and crime that can damage or negatively affect the program and its clients. One official mentioned this concept in relation to the negative implications of handing their program over to a regional authority.

... whoever HUD would get in to take our place [is not] going to be as invested in program integrity as we are. And then to make matters worse... we’re the only housing authority in the [state] that does a national criminal background check. (Housing official 8/26/11)

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<sup>10</sup> This information was gathered through reviewing city documents (Human rights report, 2010) (Crime Study, 2010) and archives, council minutes (12/1/09), University and Educational documents and archives, and newspaper articles.

When it comes to program integrity, housing organizations often are fighting an uphill battle. Communities can harbor negative perceptions of crime and fraud that are hard to counteract. Added to the recent controversy surrounding community perceptions of a Chicago migration and its connections to the HCV program, these issues can pose serious risks to the political and social viability of these organizations. Increasing the screening measures being taken, public awareness of those measures, and partnering with the police to study crime patterns have been some of the tools these organizations have used to show the surrounding community that they take program integrity seriously. In smaller communities it often only takes one high profile incident to incite controversy, and if the housing authority is seen as lax on crime it could drastically damage their credibility with the community.

## **Chapter 6: Funding and the Problem of Portability**

When you lease up you have to live here for a year. And after that year, a lot of them were moving back to the Chicago area for example. So, they came here to get a voucher, and once they had it then they moved back. So if the receiving housing authority was billing, then we were paying for them to be there, and we were not able to help the people here. That was the purpose of the preference. (Housing official 08/16/11)

This Chapter comprises a detailed explanation of the portability process and how it can complicate administrative funding and functions when a client ports from one community to another area with a higher standard of living such as Chicago. First I briefly discuss how these authorities are funded and what this means to the housing authorities and their administration of assistance. Then I move into a discussion of how this process ties in with the goal of national mobility and the Chicago Narrative. Then I explain the portability process; before the client enters the program to the end when they port to a new jurisdiction. Finally, I discuss the financial implications of billing and absorbing and how this has affected the housing authorities in the case study communities.

### **Chapter 6.1: Funding**

Housing authorities are in a dramatically different funding climate than they were twenty, or even ten years ago. As federal funding is decreasing and HUD is looking for ways to make housing authority programs and administration more efficient, the way funding is administered is becoming more convoluted and competitive. As this research was being conducted, it became increasingly apparent that housing authority decisions regarding policy and administrative practices were largely dependent upon financial considerations. The funding process is much too intensive for a detailed explanation here, however it is an important part of the findings so a brief overview will be provided.

Funding for housing authorities is essentially based on two factors: Appropriations and a PHA's voucher utilization rate. Appropriations essentially are the amounts of federal money that Congress passes in the budget for HUD to distribute between their own programs and the PHAs. To determine how much money each PHA receives HUD keeps an active record of how many vouchers on average, of their total vouchers issued, a housing authority has 'leased up' or utilized throughout the fiscal year. The housing authority is then evaluated on the average percentage of vouchers that are utilized and if the percentage is 98% or greater then the housing authority gets full points for their evaluations.

However, many housing authorities do not have enough money to fully utilize the amount of vouchers issued because appropriations have been decreasing. HUD realizes this, so if a housing authority has a utilization rate below 98% they then look at the amount of money the PHA spent of the total received, or 'budget authority'. Although this seems like a fair compromise, many housing authorities noted the difficulty of keeping a large percentage of clients 'leased up' due to very high turnover rates or churning<sup>11</sup> within the program. In addition, the decreasing administration dollars combined with burdensome reporting requirements make it difficult for these authorities to accomplish this task. One official noted that: "There are just so many reporting requirements and the administrative dollars are decreasing on them." (Housing official 08/19/11)

Housing authorities are finding themselves in an increasingly difficult world. As the financial support declines and regulation stays relatively fixed housing authorities find themselves in limbo, a space between the localization of governance and the decentralization of federal authority. This often means that housing authorities are dealing with a more locally

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<sup>11</sup> 'Churning' is described in greater detail in Greenlea's (2011) article "A Different Lens: Administrative Perspectives on Portability in Illinois' Housing Choice Voucher Program."

dependent and thus administratively fragmented system. In addition to these difficulties, housing policy is changing the landscape of poverty through dispersal-oriented and mobility-oriented programs without allowing for the financial and regulatory flexibility for these housing authorities to adapt. As a result the housing authorities are finding ways to adjust to this new environment, through the use of local policy adoption. As was rightly mentioned by Janet Smith, "... evidence of devolution... is not necessarily evidence of increased local control." (Smith 2000, pg. 228) In other words, increased local control means little if it is accompanied by decreasing funding and performance based oversight.

### **Chapter 6.2: National Mobility and the Right to Move**

Okay, so... People do move a lot (laughs) we know that. And uh, nationally I think we are seeing, within the last five years, we have a seen a higher increase... of moves. Whereas in the past, normally if they used portability it was somewhere in the state that they went. And particularly, between county housing and city housing, going back and forth that way. So of course we are seeing more mobility. (Housing Official 08/02/11)

The ability to move out of poverty and into areas with better housing, educational opportunities, and employment has been an integral component of the housing choice voucher (HCV) program. Through private market-oriented assistance the HCV program has facilitated a form of mobility, in which assistance is no longer tied to the unit but tied to the individual. The voucher issued to a client is able to move with them anywhere in the United States through a mechanism called portability. Portability allows voucher recipients the choice to move to areas with better opportunity without having to give up their assistance. In a housing era where an applicant can wait up to ten years for assistance this is an increasingly valuable feature of the program. As a result, portability and the national mobility it entails is one of the findings of this study and provides a glimpse into the administrative realities that housing authorities must deal with on a daily basis.

I think the understanding that a voucher is portable has gotten greater over the years and it's [portability] probably increased because of that. It's [National mobility] always been a part of the voucher. I think there was a difference in the knowledge of it, not from the housing authorities but from the clients. It's just become much more commonly understood. (Housing official 08/19/11)

In the Chicago Narrative, households migrate to communities with shorter waiting lists, a better supply of affordable housing, and safer neighborhoods. However the discourse surrounding this migration does not always end there, with some households exercising their portability to move back to their city of origin in Chicago. If a family decides to move back to a place in Chicago, they are able to bring the assistance they obtained in the previous housing authority's jurisdiction with them. There is often paperwork that accompanies this transfer between the housing authorities, but the family does not have to go through the application process or wait on the receiving housing authority's waiting list. Through this mechanism and the mobility it offers, these households have not only been able to receive assistance in a shorter period of time than it would take if they were on the CHA's waiting list, but they are also able to move back to the places where they have family and social support networks.

Through the portability process and the national mobility that it offers, households have the geographic flexibility to move for new job opportunities, better schools, and safer neighborhoods. However with a decentralized and locally-oriented housing system, a process that involves the transfer of residents across state lines and even across the nation can cause problems. Research done by Greenlea (2011) and Basalo (2003) both identify issues with this process including: difficult communication between housing authorities, discrepancies between rent standards, inadequate funding and administration staff to accommodate the move, and the ability for the tenant to relocate into unwelcoming neighborhoods. These findings were also

reflected in this study, showing that the process of portability has complicated the administration of HCV programs nationwide.

### **Chapter 6.3: Portability as a Process**

I think that the people that are applying from out of the area are primarily the ones that are exercising the portability. The percentage of people that apply from within our jurisdiction, as residents of our jurisdiction, that percentage hasn't really changed. We have a few that port to other areas but it's primarily the people from out of our jurisdiction when they apply. (Housing Official 08/09/11)

Portability as a process is often complex, and it may be further complicated by the possibility that the administration of housing assistance may vary according to local context. Therefore a brief overview of the whole process of HCV assistance, from beginning to end, is necessary. In order to utilize a voucher or become 'leased up' as it is commonly referred to by housing authorities, a tenant must first apply to the program and move to the top of its waiting list. After this happens a tenant is screened based on their income, criminal history, and prior subsidized rental history with other PHAs. Supplemental screenings, income qualifications, or waiting list preferences such as jurisdictional preference may also affect this process and are often specific to the housing authority.

Once a tenant passes these screenings they then start the process of becoming integrated into the program and finding a unit.<sup>12</sup> Households are usually given packets stating a range of potential rent prices for which they qualify (based on income), the program expectations and guidelines for conduct, and general information about how the program works. After this session, the tenant needs to find a unit that is within 90-110% of the fair market rent depending on PHA policy<sup>13</sup> and pass any additional screenings the landlord may perform. The area's fair market rent is used to establish the payment standard, which is essentially the amount of assistance the

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<sup>12</sup> These processes can vary between authorities, but it usually entails some sort of orientation to the program.

<sup>13</sup> This varies according to housing authority and often involves several factors including policy goals, need, and housing market factors.

housing authority pays to lease up a tenant in their jurisdiction. The tenant is usually given 60-90 days to accomplish this, complete the necessary paperwork, and have their housing inspected by the housing authority. If all of this is accomplished, then the landlord, tenant, and housing authority will enter into an agreement that the tenant will pay approximately 30-40% of their income towards rent with the housing authority paying the rest up to their area payment standard. If the tenant wishes to exercise the portability that comes with their voucher they may do so based on certain requirements. 1) They lived in the housing authority's jurisdiction prior to their acceptance of the voucher or 2) They have lived in that jurisdiction for at least one year after coming onto the program.<sup>14</sup>

Once a tenant is approved for their port out of the jurisdiction and to a new housing authority, it is up to the tenant to decide where they would like to port their voucher. As Greenlea noted, there are many reasons for a resident's choice in location and it often depends on the tenant's own motivations (Greenlea 2011). These motivations may be based on employment opportunities, better schooling, and supportive family networks and personal investment in the community. Sometimes the housing authorities that are being ported out from are 'billed', and it can cause issues for the housing authority. All officials interviewed in the study mentioned that this was the case for their housing authorities, and that it often created barriers that were both administrative and financial in nature.

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<sup>14</sup> These requirements can also vary according to PHA policy.

#### **Chapter 6.4: To Bill or Absorb?**

Essentially the applicants that we're getting from Chicago. (pause) When they come, they have to stay here a year if they apply from outside of our jurisdiction. And usually when that year is up if they're eligible they are going back to Chicago. (sigh) Probably half of the time lately Chicago is billing us. And our average payment that we make is \$279.00 a month, to landlords. And we've paid up to \$1300 dollars in Chicago. And that does hurt our program because that's potentially three to five families that we could be assisting here over assisting one family in Chicago. And that has created a fairly negative perception of the program and of the families coming here, because they think that they're taking away from the Farmville families. (Housing official 08/09/11)

In the quest for affordable housing, some households have moved to distant communities to obtain assistance intending to go back to their home city. This poses a problem when the housing authority that they are porting to has a higher payment standard than the housing authority they are porting from. This issue presents itself through the portability processes known as billing and absorbing. When a tenant ports to a new authority, the receiving authority can choose to either bill or absorb. If the receiving authority decides to bill, they receive 80% of the administration fees for the voucher and the full Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) from the sending authority.

If the payment standard is higher for the receiving housing authority, that may mean that the sending authority can be paying up to three times the amount they would pay to lease up a tenant in their own jurisdiction. Table 6 on the next page displays fair market rents (FMRs) for a one bedroom unit determined by HUD for each of the communities in this study and Chicago from 2000-2012. Once again, the payment standard that a housing authority uses to determine how much assistance it provides is based on fair market rents for the area the applicant is 'leased up' in. Although representative of the discrepancy between housing markets, it should be noted that the fair market rents go up substantially based on the amount of bedrooms a client may need. For example, in 2008 the FMR for a one bedroom in Chicago was \$840/month; however a four

bedroom was \$1304/month. In this table, if a fair market rent remained the same over more than one year, those years are bolded.

**Table 6. Fair market rent comparison.**

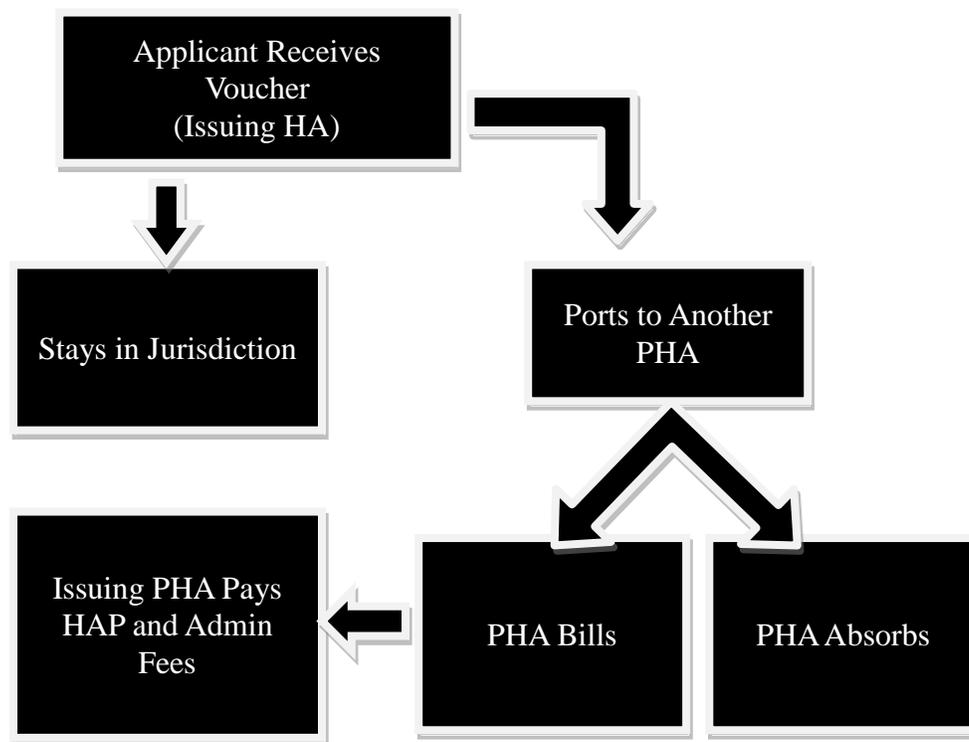
**Source: (2000-2012 HUD HOME Program Rent Limits)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Chicago</b>	<b>Carrington</b>	<b>Church City</b>	<b>Farmville</b>	<b>Mariett</b>
<b>2000</b>	\$640/month	\$446/month	\$347/month	\$328/month	\$358/month
<b>2001</b>	\$711/month	\$452/month	\$350/month	\$330/month	\$363/month
<b>2002</b>	\$747/month	\$464/month	\$364/month	\$343/month	\$372/month
<b>2003</b>	\$778/month	\$473/month	<b>\$369/month</b>	<b>\$349/month</b>	\$380/month
<b>2004</b>	\$797/month	\$477/month	<b>\$369/month</b>	<b>\$349/month</b>	\$383/month
<b>2005</b>	\$803/month	\$514/month	\$409/month	\$348/month	\$392/month
<b>2006</b>	\$802/month	\$519/month	\$418/month	\$377/month	\$400/month
<b>2007</b>	\$832/month	\$541/month	\$431/month	\$389/month	\$412/month
<b>2008</b>	\$840/month	\$561/month	\$442/month	\$399/month	\$427/month
<b>2009</b>	\$893/month	\$575/month	\$453/month	\$409/month	\$437/month
<b>2010</b>	\$902/month	\$582/month	\$459/month	\$415/month	\$442/month
<b>2011</b>	\$903/month	\$592/month	\$467/month	\$421/month	\$449/month
<b>% Change</b>	+ 41%	+33%	+35%	+28.4%	+25%

The table above provides a picture of the variability of FMRs between housing authorities, and how they can change drastically from year to year. For three of the housing authorities in this study, the difference between FMRs doubles between their jurisdiction and Chicago's. If a housing authority with a higher FMR decides to bill a housing authority with a

significantly lower FMR, this could mean that there is less assistance being utilized in their jurisdiction. There is currently no time limit for a housing authority to bill, and this presents considerable issues for housing authorities that administer to smaller jurisdictions, such as Farmville and Church City. Figure 5 below is a graphic that shows a simplified version of this process, and represents the financial path a voucher takes when it is ported to another jurisdiction.

**Figure 5. Portability process graphic: Billing vs. absorbing**



All of the housing authorities in this study cited this issue with the portability process as a concern regarding the administration of their programs. However HAP payment discrepancies between jurisdictions were not the only issues encountered by the housing authorities:

If they bill us then we not only are paying the housing assistance payments, but they also get 80 percent of our admin fees too. Well as you can see most housing agencies don't like that, because housing admin fees are low right now anyway... It really makes it hard if you get quite a few portability families. It makes it hard to keep on administering the program when you are losing those dollars. (Housing official 08/02/11)

As noted above, billing not only can create issues with Housing Assistance Payments but also administration fees. In order to administer their HCV program housing authorities have two separate funding sources, one source consists of funding for the HAP payments, and the other is funding to administer the program. Administration fees are a set amount that is allocated based on the number of vouchers that are leased up by the housing authority. With the decreasing availability of funding, the administration fees are decreasing while the number of vouchers issued often stays the same. This frequently means that housing authorities are processing the same amount of paperwork and clients, with less staff and funding to do so. This is an even bigger problem when many of a housing authority's vouchers are being billed, and the other authority is receiving 80% of the administrative fees for that voucher.

Although these issues were cited often with in-migrants from Chicago, it also comes up as a concern for what is simply Out-of-state migration. Other urban areas such as Los Angeles and New York were noted by officials as creating the portability issue for a few of the communities studied, and were often noted when speaking in general terms about this problem. However when asked for specific examples of this situation occurring, housing officials would mention Chicago and that many issues with portability occurred with low-income migrants from that city. Although this problem can come about any time that a tenant from a smaller housing authority ports to a large one, in the context of this study this problem presented itself when a larger number of households began migrating from Chicago.

And you will find pockets in rural areas where the need is not as great. But because of the portability aspect of a voucher they're still going to get people that will find them and get on their waiting list. (Housing official 08/19/11)

As housing authorities administer their programs, they are dealing with a more mobile landscape than they ever have before. Low-income households in urban areas may now be able to bypass waiting lists by applying to authorities with shorter waiting lists and porting back to their city of origin. This often poses issues for smaller housing authorities and their jurisdictions if the larger authority decides to bill rather than absorb. Housing authorities are allowed the option to deny the port if they can prove that they will have to terminate households from the program in order to accommodate the move. However this is often difficult to prove and is also a very time consuming endeavor, especially for housing authorities that are already low on staff.

## **Chapter 7: Jurisdictional Preference: A built in protection**

So, I mean, with the administrative policy it's constantly changing, depending on the needs. (Housing official 08/02/11)

In this chapter I discuss the adoption of jurisdictional preference as a national trend and its implications for housing assistance. Then I look at the stated and underlying assumptions behind the adoption of the preference and its relationship to the Narratives. As the perceptions surrounding a Chicago migration began to gain notoriety, housing authorities noted a rise in demand for assistance from their own jurisdictions as well as those Out-of-state. With the difficulty of the portability process amidst negative community perceptions of the programs, housing authorities decided to adopt a policy that put 'local residents first'.

### **Chapter 7.1: Context and Process: Mechanics of the Waiting List and National Adoption**

I think if you haven't adopted a local preference you're probably one of the few people. But it's not anything new, it's been years. I think it started, first it started along the border towns of [State], and then it gradually moved inwards. It's probably been 10 years or more that we've been hearing things about that. I think we just had to be proactive in making it work the way it's supposed to work. (Housing Official 08/16/11)

With the recent downturn in the economy and the shrinking federal budget for housing; PHA's are seeing a rise in local need and a decrease in the financial support to accommodate that need (Primer 2008). Jurisdictional preference policies for program waiting lists do not show up often in existing academic research despite their having existed the past ten years. The papers that do exist are minimal and are focused on the legal ramifications of the policy, rather than why they were implemented to begin with (Norquist 2010).<sup>15</sup> Through this study, the underlying justifications for these policies become clearer when one places them in the context of an

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<sup>15</sup> After having talked to PHADA and looking at current and past research I found very little about Jurisdictional preference as a policy with the exception of one legal article and a study by the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

increasingly mobile landscape. From the research that does exist it can be surmised that housing authorities began to implement local preferences for housing waiting lists after the QHWRA act permanently repealed mandatory federal preferences for waiting lists in 1994 (Hunt et al. 1998; NLIHC Report 2004). Below is the excerpt taken from a summary of this act in which PHAs are provided the discretion to implement local policies for the administration of their waiting lists.

**C. Permanent repeal of federal preferences for public housing and Section 8 - Sec.514 and 545**

Repeals the mandatory Federal preferences which included applicants involuntarily displaced, living in substandard housing, or paying more than 50% of family income for rent. Authorizes PHAs to develop locally-based admission preferences based upon local housing needs and priorities, using accepted data sources, including public comments from the PHA plan and data from the consolidated plan process (Hunt et al. 1998, 7)

Before the QWHRA act housing authority waiting list preferences were largely dictated by federal law and consisted of five criteria: applicants involuntarily displaced by disaster or housing demolition; domestic violence victims; homeless persons; applicants that live in substandard housing; and applicants that pay over half their income in rent (NLIHC Report 2004). Housing authorities today are allowed to determine and adopt local waiting list preferences, after receiving permission from HUD. Many of these preferences include those that were outlined previously by HUD in addition to elderly and disabled preferences and jurisdictional preferences. Jurisdictional preference can be defined as a policy that gives an applicant priority on the waiting list for having lived in the jurisdiction prior to their application to a program.

When an individual applies to receive assistance from the HCV program at a given PHA, they are usually put on a local waiting list. Applications that are handed in are time and date stamped and then ordered based on when the individual applied. However if a housing authority has adopted jurisdictional preference, applicants that live in the jurisdiction at the time of their

application are given a preference over the ones that did not. This means that if an out-of-jurisdiction individual applies to the program and they are number 106 on the list according to time and date, someone who lives in the jurisdiction may move ahead of them even if they applied a month later. For the smaller housing authorities in this study, someone who applies from outside the jurisdiction still has a chance of receiving assistance eventually. However for larger housing authorities it is harder if not impossible, with some out-of-jurisdiction applicants that will be on the waiting list indefinitely.

According to a National Low Income Housing Coalition study conducted in 2004, approximately 22.1% of the PHAs in the sample<sup>16</sup> ordered their waiting list based on time and date only, the rest of the housing authorities use some sort of preference system to order their list. Of those that order their list using preferences, approximately 27.6% of housing authorities order their housing choice voucher waiting list based on whether or not an applicant lived or worked in the jurisdiction at the time of application (NLIHC Report 2004). The only voucher waiting list preferences that had a higher rate of adoption were for applicants that were involuntarily displaced, or applicants that were victims of domestic violence (NLIHC Report 2004). This means that in terms of national adoption, the scale of jurisdictional preference is a consequential phenomenon and one that is worthy of further study.

## **Chapter 7.2: Reasons for Adoption: The Narrative and Beyond**

We had so many people coming from out of town, that we couldn't really help the people in our jurisdiction. Because we took whoever was at the top of the waiting list. It was not really fair to the people that lived or worked in Church City and that is our jurisdiction. So that's why we put the preference on [the waiting list], to help the people that actually lived here first. (Housing Official 08/16/11)

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<sup>16</sup> This study compiles data from PHA waiting lists using a sample of 134 PHAs out of a total of 3,935 PHAs nationally in 2004. They used information from an annual plan that each PHA submits to HUD. The sample was limited to PHAs that have at least 250 units of public housing, since "smaller PHAs are not required to report the same waiting list information in their annual plans." (NLIHC Report 2004, 2)

The housing authorities that were a part of this study have all adopted jurisdictional preference within the past seven years. In an effort to understand the underlying themes and context of policy adoption housing officials were asked about their reasons for adopting the policy. Housing officials were also asked about the date that the policy was adopted to provide a chronological background for policy adoption and to assess if there was any relationship to this perception of a migration of low-income individuals from Chicago. As can be seen by the table below, jurisdictional preference was usually adopted approximately 2-3 years after evidence of the Chicago migration began appearing. Most of the housing authorities in the study adopted this preference around the same time, with evidence of the migration presenting itself differently across the communities. The following findings suggest that the underlying factors influencing local policy change are often composed of complex relationships.

**Table 7. Jurisdictional preference adoption in comparison with migration timeline.**

<b>Approximate Date In-Migration Began<sup>17</sup></b>	<b>Timeline for Adoption of Preference</b>
2002-2003	Farmville -2006
2003-2004	Church City - 2005-2006
2006-2007	Mariett – 2007
2003-2004	Carrington- 2006

<sup>17</sup> Dates and times for migration and policy adoption are approximate. These dates were extracted from the analysis of both interview material and newspaper articles. Most of the interviewees stated the dates directly, or they were extrapolated from a combination of statements and dates when articles about the Chicago migration started appearing in the newspapers.

In the following quote, one housing official describes the date of adoption as well as the reasons their PHA adopted the preference.

We started in 2006 and we had two reasons. One was the increasing concern of portability. Because my theory was that people that live here aren't going to want to go portable. It's the people that don't live here that want to go portable. And then in looking at the waiting list and seeing where resident elderly disabled people were [pause]...When we shifted [to] the residency preference our elderly disabled numbers went from about 50%-55% of our program, after [it went] to 60 [%] and I think now, it is even pushing 70. Elderly disabled [clients] are 70% of the program. And I think that's directly attributable to the residency preference. (Housing official 08/26/11)

When asked about their adoption of jurisdictional preference housing officials reported two reasons: 1) They were having a large amount of households that were applying to their program and porting back to higher rent areas and or Chicago and 2) They wanted to help local residents before they helped residents coming in from Out-of-state. Often the issues created when households ported to urban areas such as Chicago were cited as the primary reason housing authorities adopted this preference.

Housing officials noted that these issues with portability put PHAs in a financial and administrative bind due to billing, and they also caused controversy when community members perceived that certain households would move back to their city of origin with their voucher (*Carrington Newspaper* 11/28/06; *Farmville Newspaper* 01/18/07; *Mariet Newspaper* 10/12/08). Combined with increasing community accusations of a connection between Chicago migrants and crime, PHAs were under community pressure to demonstrate that they were putting local residents first. Several newspaper articles written in the case study communities often noted the adoption of local preference to dispel accusations that the housing authority was bringing in low-income residents from Chicago (*Carrington Newspaper* 11/28/06; *Church City Newspaper* 01/01/06; *Farmville Newspaper* 01/18/07; *Mariett Newspaper* 10/12/08).

The funding issues created when residents coming from urban areas took their vouchers back was often noted by officials as a critical one for most of the PHAs in this study. Many officials noted that they were seeing a large increase in applicants that would come into their jurisdiction from outside of the state and then exercise their portability to move back out of the state.

We have had probably an increase in the last 5 years of people from out of state. We've also had more portability. I keep actually numbers, from year to year on how many portabilities we have. And we can see, where, prior to 2005 for instance, there was very little portability going on. Um, I think in, probably 2007 is when it really started increasing (Housing Official 08/02/2011).

However, as was mentioned earlier in chapter four, the migration data for the years 2005-2009 does not appear to show a significant migration of low-income individuals from Chicago or from outside of the state. Although the data has limitations and is not present for crucial years of the migration in question, it does show that the scale of Out-of-state migration into the state was not considerable. This data raises questions concerning the scale of portability occurring for these housing authorities from households that were migrating from outside of the state.

This data therefore provides a degree of uncertainty to the argument that enough households were migrating into the state and porting their vouchers back to put the PHAs in financial straits. Although portability records would provide some insight into this issue, as was mentioned earlier, I was also not able to receive consistent records on portability for all of the housing authorities. This makes it difficult to assess the claim that there were a number of households porting to these urban areas. For the housing authority that I was able to receive numbers for (Mariett), which are noted in table 8 on the next page, there was a spike in ports out of their jurisdiction. Mariett had adopted their jurisdictional preference in 2007, when the

portability numbers had drastically increased from zero in 2005 to ninety six in 2007. However, I am not able to evaluate that claim for all of the housing authorities in this study.

**Table 8: Portability Out of the Jurisdiction for Mariett**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Port Outs of Jurisdiction</b>
<b>2005</b>	0
<b>2006</b>	15
<b>2007</b>	96
<b>2008</b>	75
<b>2009</b>	36
<b>2010</b>	42

Also, for housing authorities with smaller jurisdictions and smaller funding pools it may only take a small amount of individuals porting back to jurisdictions with higher payment standards to affect their funding. The following is a quote from an official from the smallest PHA in the study, discussing their reason for adopting the preference.

Yeah around [Preference adoption] 2006 because it's really, we really started to get scared about you know, all of our funding leaving the area. When it seemed like it was just non-stop, we had more families and... and not just that but the amount of money we were spending sending out applications to families that were not following through. We would some days get six, seven phone calls a day from Out-of-state people. (Housing Official 08/09/11)

With smaller housing authorities it does not take many households to double or even triple the demand on their rental assistance. For the larger housing authorities, a small amount of individuals migrating and porting back to urban areas may be negligible. In essence the magnitude of the migration may not be significant at the community scale, but may be significant to the PHAs at the scale of their organization. At this time, the quantitative data does not provide

a definitive answer to this question of the scale and significance of Out-of-state migration at the PHA level. Nevertheless all of the interviewees independently cited that a large amount of porting to urban areas provided a barrier to the administration of their programs and constituted one of the main reasons for their adoption of jurisdictional preference.

### **Chapter 7.3: Changing Worlds and the Convergence of Rival Narratives**

Jurisdictional Preference is also where the complication between the Out-of-state Narrative and the Chicago Narrative begins to present itself. As was mentioned earlier in the chapter on methodology, the Out-of-state Narrative concerns the perception of an in-migration of low-income households from outside of the state into these communities, which may include Chicago but may also include other areas from outside of the state. Upon analysis of the data I found that it was not as easy to discriminate between these two narratives when it came to the actual adoption of jurisdictional preference. For instance one housing official would mention jurisdictional preference as a built in protection against the housing authority becoming a revolving door. This is a concept that surfaces when housing officials reference both out-of-state migrants and Chicago migrants. However, when those interviewed did refer to applicants or migrants from out-of-state, the context was almost exclusively urban. The financial situation created with the billing process was always in reference to migrants from large metropolitan areas.

Often there were times when ‘out-of-state’ and ‘Chicago’ were interchanged throughout the interviews, suggesting that the two narratives were embedded within one another. However, what was most interesting was that the phrase ‘out-of-state’ was most commonly used when referring to things such as the waiting list and portability issues. These issues were primarily administrative and often had little to do with community perceptions, race, or political pressure.

This demonstrated that the Out-of-state Narrative represented a difference in the urban to rural context of administration, whereas the Chicago Narrative was more specific to the history, race, and culture of a specific place. This held true across the interviews, which makes the question regarding jurisdictional preference more complicated than simply a cause and effect relationship. It is far more likely that the adoption of jurisdictional preference was a combination of several factors that came together in one favorable environment for policy change.

It [Jurisdictional Preference] started increasing significantly, in [State], probably 5 to 10 years ago because they were feeling, some housing authorities felt like there were people coming in from outside because of that short waiting list to apply for their vouchers. And so in response to that a lot of housing authorities in the Midwest started setting the residency preference. (Housing Official 08/19/11)

The Out-of-state Narrative and the Chicago Narrative are two sides of the same issue, one administrative, the other more social. Often the community and political reactions to households moving from what is perceived as the inner city of Chicago were either dismissed by housing advocates and officials as an overreaction, or regarded as a barrier to performing their duties effectively. Regardless, it was evident that this community narrative affected all housing authorities and their adoption of jurisdictional preference. Several of the housing officials interviewed would mention “putting local residents first” and often cited the adoption of the preference within the same context as the Chicago migration. Although Chicago households were usually stated as representing a larger portion of the households migrating to these communities, housing officials often mentioned that there were migrants from areas such as Minneapolis and Milwaukee as well. Therefore housing officials would often use the phrase “out-of-state” to represent in-migrants from urban areas, including Chicago, that came from outside of the state.

When the Chicago Housing Authority implemented the *Plan for Transformation* it reduced affordable housing stock in a city that was already rapidly gentrifying. In the quest for affordable housing some low-income households began expanding the radius of their search and found these communities. For the small amount of households that did migrate to these communities, family connections and social networks quickly spread the word back to Chicago as more individuals were looking for housing.

His mom and sisters came, and then they're cousins came, and then their friends came. It is interesting because we do get birth certificates. Seeing how all these families are related. You know there's a big family connection between the Chicago families that we have here... (Housing Official 08/09/11)

Soon housing authorities noted an increase in applicants that were porting back to Chicago and the administrative and financial burden that came with that process. These housing authorities may have seen this issue before with other areas, but many noted what appeared to be the increase of in-migration from Chicago around the same point in time. With less assistance being utilized in their home jurisdictions housing authorities decided to adopt a policy that put their local residents first, and that they saw as providing them protection from the financial situation that is created when program participants ported to a higher rent area.

Many of the housing officials interviewed also believed that this preference would help them to sort out the applicants that really wanted to live in these communities from those that were simply moving there to acquire assistance and move back. For this reason, housing authorities were hoping that this preference would bring in migrants that would invest themselves in the community.

...Yeah we had a lot [out-of-state applicants] applying for it [HCV Program], which is fine if they want to live here but most of the time they did not want to live here. They wanted to take their voucher back where they really wanted to live and then you have the portability issue kicking in again. And so if they really wanted to live here then they come live here first, apply, and come up on the list. (Housing Official 08/16/11)

Ultimately Jurisdictional Preference can be seen as an effort to give primary consideration to local residents in a housing policy era where mobility is seen as the hallmark of housing programs. Communities rally against housing programs that provide opportunities for low-income individuals to move to their neighborhoods, and housing authorities are constantly re-evaluating their programs to maximize their funding potential. Projects such as the *Plan for Transformation* and processes such as portability have contributed to an environment in which low-income migrants are perceived as complicating the administration of assistance in areas with shorter waiting lists.

In the context of this study, jurisdictional preference can be seen as the outcome of several events coming together to create an environment that was favorable to policy change. The Chicago Narrative can be seen as the political and social component of changing communities and its subsequent controversy and pressure on the housing programs. The Out-of-state Narrative can be seen as the administrative component of a PHA dealing with a changing landscape of policy and poverty. Both of these narratives contribute to the context of policy change, and both have converged to create an environment conducive to that policy change.

## **Chapter 8: Conclusions and Implications for Policy**

So I mean this is happening all over the country, this is not an [State] phenomenon, it's not a Chicago phenomenon, I mean it's happening all over the country.(Housing Official 08/09/11)

In the final chapter I discuss the conclusions of this study, and implications for future research and policy. I begin by providing a brief summary of my research findings and then address how these findings answer the research questions outlined in the introduction of this paper. Then I discuss the importance of these findings in the context of mobility and dispersal oriented housing policy. Finally I address what these findings mean for future policy and research, as well as issues to be addressed.

### **Chapter 8.1: Conclusion**

Through this research it has been shown that local housing policy change does not occur within a vacuum and is often influenced by local community needs as well as national policy. As dispersal programs are implemented and national mobility is encouraged, the geographic manifestation of poverty will change. The implementation of dispersal oriented policies such as HOPE VI often displaces low-income households from neighborhoods they have lived in for generations. These policies as well as mobility oriented policies are often premised on the idea that these households will relocate to areas that provide them with better opportunities. However receiving communities often have barriers that mirror the social obstacles that helped to shape areas of concentrated poverty to begin with. Therefore, it is important to better understand the communities and organizations that receive dispersed households, and the difficulties as well as benefits that emerge for all those involved.

The Chicago Narrative provides further evidence of these barriers, showing that a place can often follow the households that are migrating from it and create difficulties for households

in their new communities. Elements of race and class are intimately associated with the image of public housing neighborhoods, and these connotations do not disappear when an individual moves to a new community. For receiving communities, such as those in this study this leads to further marginalization of households in communities they had migrated to for a better life. This is demonstrated by the Chicago Narrative and a migration that is largely rooted in perception, not numbers. One cannot deny the significance of race in this phenomenon, as a few of the officials themselves noted that the migration would not have been so noticeable if the migrants had been white. Community controversy and claims of in-migrants bringing in crime perpetuates harmful stereotypes about these families, and places significant pressure on the organizations trying to assist them. Yet unfortunately these issues mirror a national controversy that rages on in academic circles, as researchers continue to produce studies to exonerate relocated public housing residents from accusations of crime.

Concerns with the portability process, through billing, discrepancies in rental standards, and the funding issues that they cause demonstrate a disconnect between the localization of housing assistance administration, and the promotion of national mobility. When these concerns are combined with decreasing funding, it often places PHAs in a continual defensive position. This leads to a continuous evaluation of efficiency and performance, placing prominence on identifying policies or strategies that can increase funding and decrease costs. This has led to an environment for PHAs that grows increasingly complicated by the policy emphasis that has defined federal efforts in the past forty years, mobility. These complications are social and administrative, mirroring the two worlds that PHAs operate within and are answerable to. Changes in these worlds have led to the adoption of jurisdictional preference, a policy that places priority on local residents, amidst a very mobile population of poverty.

The findings above represent the answers to my two research questions: 1) What is the relationship, if any, between the adoption of jurisdictional preference policies by housing authorities and the presence of a community perception that there is an influx of low-income migrants from Chicago? And 2) How does this phenomenon fit into the larger context of mobility and dispersal-oriented housing policy? These findings show that the Chicago Narrative is present within all of these communities and can be linked to the adoption of jurisdictional preference. The presence of this Narrative and the community controversy surrounding it provided a significant community push behind the adoption of a policy that placed 'local residents' first. This relationship dealt with the complex social issues that often surround mobility and dispersal programs as assisted households attempt to access new markets in unwelcoming communities.

However the Chicago Narrative is not a simple cause-effect relationship but merely one facet, albeit a significant one, in a complex explanation of policy change. This complexity is demonstrated through the Out-of-state Narrative. The Out-of-state Narrative was not specific to a place like Chicago's low-income neighborhoods, yet it also played a part in the adoption of this policy. Findings indicate that the Out-of-state Narrative represented the administrative and financial difficulty of mobility between an urban to rural context; and thus provided the PHAs administrative justification for the jurisdictional preference policy. These difficulties represent the administrative implications of a program that promotes national mobility, yet promotes local administration. Both components, social and administrative, were important to the adoption of this policy and both take the analysis of this policy change beyond a simple cause-effect relationship.

However, it should be noted that the Chicago Narrative and the mobility that it encompasses is not entirely negative. For the households that did move, the communities in this study often were cited as providing them with safer environments and better opportunities for employment and education. Housing officials would recount ‘success stories’ of individuals that moved from Chicago, and found better opportunities in their communities.<sup>18</sup> This was also represented in the newspaper articles that quoted migrants from Chicago and their experiences in these new communities. Despite a large community opposition, there are still many community members that welcome the new families into towns that have been losing their young households for quite some time. Attempts to bring issues of racial discrimination and diversity awareness have been made, but many of these communities still have a long period of adjustment and work ahead of them.

## **Chapter 8.2: Future Research Areas & Implications for Policy**

There are several areas of interest that need to be addressed by housing policy researchers so that housing policy can be better informed in the future. Currently, there is little research that systematically examines the impacts of dispersal programs on the displacement of residents and surrounding communities across state lines. Many studies only look at displacement in terms of original public housing residents or those that are already on the HCV program. However, the Chicago Narrative illustrates that the impacts of these projects go beyond the scope of the developments themselves to the communities surrounding them that are being revitalized. Part of this gap is due to the nature of the problem, that these individuals are not in the system; and a

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<sup>18</sup> Many stories were told about residents telling the officials that they felt safer in these communities, and had escaped an environment of violence. Other stories recount opportunities for better education, for instance one individual got on the program after having moved from Chicago and obtained a nursing degree, then moved off of the program.

lack of specific, consistent, and traceable data on migration flows.<sup>19</sup> However, further research in this area is important to understanding the full range of communities that displaced residents are moving to; and the administrative, financial, and social capacity these communities have to accommodate them.

There is also a significant gap in the research regarding jurisdictional preference policies. This research seeks to address that gap, however there are many other areas to be investigated as a result of this research. More studies need to be conducted that look specifically at the effect of jurisdictional preference on waiting list times. This will be very difficult due to the variability of waiting list time from week to week, let alone from PHA to PHA. Yet the potential impact of this preference on an individual's ability to obtain housing assistance in a reasonable time period, or at all, should be addressed further. Also, there needs to be a count of PHAs across the United States that have adopted this preference, when they have adopted it, and further analysis on why they adopted it. Given that the National Low Income Housing Coalition's 2004 report indicated a prominent national incidence of this preference, it is important that this information is updated so that the full implications of this policy may be understood from a national perspective.

In addition, the HCV program must be further analyzed in terms of administrative capacity. To date much of the literature focuses on individual- and household-level based outcomes of the program, with the exception of a few researchers focusing on the 'space between' encompassed by the housing authority (Basalo 2003; Greenlea 2011). Specifically, the implications of national, not just regional, mobility should be addressed in accordance with the

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<sup>19</sup> IPUMS data significantly helps this issue. However some of the limitations of IPUMS data include the recent abandonment of the long form of the 2010 census data. The American Community Survey migration data, taken each year, only provides information concerning recent moves in that it asks for place of residence one year ago. The five year data will capture more permanent moves while the 1 year data will capture more transitory moves. However, the lack of data continuity between years for the migration snapshots would pose a limitation and causes issues concerning internal validity. See my methodology section as well as Foulkes and Newbould (2005)

HCV program. National mobility has opened up a new world for a population that has traditionally been marginalized in their capacity for residential choice. However, as with all systems, this creates new areas of difficulty along with the opportunity. These areas of difficulty could be addressed further by 1) Establishing clear guidelines and time limits for absorbing households, and 2) Providing a regional ‘inter-authority’ that financially and administratively manages the time in between inter-state porting out of a jurisdiction and absorption into the new jurisdiction. These changes may help to clarify responsibilities and relieve some of the administrative implications regarding loss of administration fees, poor communication between authorities (Greenlea 2011), and discrepancies between rental standards regarding HAP payouts.

Further investigation into these areas will be beneficial to affordable housing policymakers, distributors, and clients. For too long housing policy research has used an ‘either or’ approach regarding urban and rural affordable housing. Yet it is becoming increasingly apparent that the two worlds are often connected, necessitating research that bridges both rural and urban contexts through a regional approach. As national mobility is being utilized, low-income households are traveling further to find their land of opportunity. In accordance with this trend, communities and housing authorities alike find themselves amidst accelerated change in a society with a more mobile low-income population. With decreasing financial support and growing need, housing authorities must continually search for ways to stay financially and politically viable. This often means using policy to cope with a landscape of poverty that is continually shifting and changing the world that they operate in.

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## **Appendix**

### **Interviews Conducted**

#### **Carrington**

08/17/11- Housing Advocate

08/26/11- Housing Official

02/10/11- Housing Provider (Private Market)

#### **Church City**

08/16/11- Housing Official

08/16/11- Housing Official

09/23/11- Housing Advocate

#### **Farmville**

08/09/11- Housing Official

08/09/11- Housing Official

08/09/11- Housing Official

03/08/11- Housing Provider (Private Market)

#### **Mariett**

08/02/11- Housing Official

08/02/11- Housing Official

08/02/11- Housing Official

08/17/11- Housing Advocate

#### **Regional**

08/19/11- Housing Official

## **Interview Protocol**

### ***Housing Official Questions:***

#### **Introductory:**

Question: What is your role in the provision of affordable housing?

Question: Can you give me a brief overview of the programs that you work with and what are they like?

Sub-question: Who do these programs target?

Sub-Question: What duties do you carry out within each program/job?

#### **Poverty Structure:**

Question: Has the environment in which you administer housing assistance changed in your time here with relation to housing assistance need?

Sub-Question: Greater or less (Housing Assistance Need)? Describe why you think so.

Question: Have the clientele you work with or their needs changed since you have worked here (Or last 10 years), how so?

Sub-Question: (Housing Authority) How does the Section 8 voucher fit into this environment?

Sub-Question: What do you think is happening with your job and your clientele with respect to mobility?

Sub-Question: Does this (mobility) affect the administration of housing assistance/provision in your area? What are the benefits? What are the barriers?

Question: (Benefits) How do you use this to your advantage?

Question: (Barriers) How do you grapple with or overcome this?

**Application/Waiting List/Jurisdictional Preference:**

Question: Could you describe the application process for me?

Question: Could you describe the waiting list for me?

Sub question: Is it first come, first serve, randomized, or other?

Sub-questions: Is it open or closed at the moment?

Question: How has the waiting list changed in since you have worked here (Or last 10 years)?

Question: What are some of the local preferences that your authority has in place concerning the application/waiting list?

Question: Now I saw on your website you have a Jurisdictional or State Residency Preference.

When did you adopt this preference and can you tell me more about it?

Sub-Question: Was there a specific reason why this preference was adopted?

Sub-Question: What makes it different from other preferences regarding the waiting list?

Question: How does that affect the waiting list or application process?

Sub-Question: Does it place out-of-jurisdiction residents at the bottom and then they move up as the waiting list is gone through, or does the waiting list open up while you are still working on the other list so Out-of-state residents stay at the bottom?

**Process:**

Question: Could you give me a brief overview of your Section 8 program?

Question: What are the goals of that program?

Question: What do you feel are some of the limitations or barriers to the program?

Sub-Question: Any difficulties concerning the administration of the program?

Sub-Question: What are the benefits of the program?

**Portability:**

Question: Could you describe the portability process to me?

Sub-Question: What about porting-in and porting out? How does that work?

Question: Could you describe absorption vs. billing for me?

Sub-Question: What is the process concerning that, how does it usually work for your housing authority?

Question: What are some of the issues that you see with portability if there are any?

Question: How do the federal guidelines and regulations concerning national mobility shape the administration of housing assistance locally?

**Migration/Waiting List:**

Question: (Housing Authorities) Do you have a lot of applicants from Out-of-state on the waiting list, and do you see any patterns concerning Out-of-state applicants?

Question: (Housing Authorities) How has the waiting list changed in relation to Out-of-State applicants since you worked here (or past 10 years)?

Question: (Housing Organizations) Do you have a lot of applicants from Out-of-state, and do you see any patterns concerning Out-of-state applicants within the past 10 years?

Sub-Question: Are you seeing more, or less?

Question: What effect has this Out-of-state movement had on affordable housing provision overall?

Sub-Question: What effect has this Out-of-state movement had on the administration process within your authority?

Question: (If they say it is occurring) What do you see as the primary causes of this (migration)?

**Community Perceptions:**

(If they don't talk about community perceptions in the previous answers)

Question: What do you see occurring in the surrounding community with respect to this migration?

Sub-Question: Has this affected your housing organization?

Sub-Question: In what way? Has it affected the administration of housing assistance?

Sub-Question: How does your organization respond to these perceptions?

***Housing Advocate Questions:*****Introductory:**

Question: What is your role in the provision of affordable housing?

Question: How long have you worked here? How long in affordable housing?

Question: What is your organization's role in the provision of affordable housing?

Question: Can you give me a brief overview of the programs that you work with and what are they like?

Sub-question: Who do these programs target?

Sub-Question: What duties do you carry out within each program/job?

Question: What are the goals and objectives of these programs as they relate to affordable housing?

Question: What are the processes that you undertake to achieve these goals and objectives that are set for your organization?

Question: What are the jurisdictions that you cover, your office and your overall organization?

Question: What agencies, organizations, or levels of government would you say you work with most often in order to provide housing?

Question: In what capacities do you work with them?

Question: How are you funded?

Question: Could you describe the different sources of funding and if there are any regulations attached to that funding?

**Poverty Structure:**

Question: Has your organization's role in the provision of affordable housing changed since you have worked here and how so?

Question: Has the environment in which you administer housing assistance changed in your time here with relation to housing assistance need?

Sub-Question: Greater or less (Housing Assistance Need)? Describe why you think so.

Question: Have the clientele you work with or their needs changed since you have worked here (Or last 10 years), how so?

Sub-Question: What do you think is happening with your programs and your clientele with respect to mobility?

Sub-Question: Does this (mobility) affect housing assistance/provision in your area?

What are the benefits? What are the barriers?

Question: (Benefits) How do you use this to your advantage?

Question: (Barriers) How do you grapple with or overcome this?

**Application/Waiting List:**

Question: Do you have an application process?

Question: Could you describe the application process for me?

Question: Do you have a waiting list for assistance?

Question: How has the waiting list changed in since you have worked here (Or last 10 years)?

Sub-Question: How So?

Question: Do you have any preferences regarding your waiting list?

Question: How does that affect the waiting list or application process?

**Migration/Waiting List:**

Question: (Housing Organizations) Do you have a lot of applicants from Out-of-state, and do you see any patterns concerning Out-of-state applicants within the past 10 years?

Sub-question: Are you seeing more, or less?

Question: What effect has this Out-of-state movement had on affordable housing provision overall?

Question: What do you see as the primary causes of this (migration)?

**Community Perceptions:**

(If they don't talk about community perceptions in the previous answers)

Question: What do you see occurring in the surrounding community with respect to this migration?

Sub-Question: Has this affected your housing organization?

Sub-Question: In what way? Has it affected the administration of housing assistance?

Sub-Question: How has your organization responded to these perceptions?

**Jurisdictional Preference:**

Question: There seem to be housing authorities adopting a jurisdictional preference lately do you have any comments on that? Has it changed your job with relation to clientele at all? or the way that you administer assistance?

***Private Market Provider Questions:*****Introductory:**

Question: What is your role in the provision of housing?

Question: How long have you worked in this field?

Question: How would you describe the housing stock that you manage?

Question: Could it be classified as affordable?

Question: What income levels can be found in your housing? Low, moderate, high?

Question: Could you describe your relationship with the local housing authority?

**Poverty Structure:**

Question: How has the low income community changed since you have worked here?

Sub-Question: How does this relate to your role in housing?

Question: How has housing assistance need changed, why? and if it hasn't why?

Sub-Question: Greater or less (Housing Assistance Need)? Describe why you think so.

Question: Have the clientele you work with or their needs changed since you have worked in this field (Or last 10 years), how so?

Sub-Question: What do you think is happening with your properties and your clientele with respect to mobility?

Sub-Question: Does this (mobility) affect housing provision in your area? What are the benefits? What are the barriers?

Question: (Benefits) How do you use this to your advantage?

Question: (Barriers) How do you grapple with or overcome this?

Question: Do you have a lot of tenants that were originally from Out-of-state, and do you see any patterns concerning Out-of-state tenants within the past 10 years?

Sub-question: Are you seeing more, or less?

Question: (If they say it is occurring) What do you see as the primary causes of this (migration)?

**Community Perceptions:**

(If they don't talk about community perceptions the previous answers)

Question: What do you see occurring in the surrounding community with respect to this migration?

Question: Has this affected housing provision within the area? How so?