

## Educational and Residential Segregation of Immigrants in the United States

Martha Cecilia Bottia

It is a difficult time for immigrants around the world, particularly in the United States. Being an immigrant myself, I know it from personal experience. Regardless of citizenship status, reason to migrate, educational background, ethnicity, fluency in the English language, and legal status, immigrants are currently under attack. But in the face of the myriad challenges they face, millions of immigrants and their children must make decisions about where to attend schools and where to live.

People appear to forget that migration is part of the natural development and advancement of humanity. Migration has offered opportunities for millions of people worldwide to create safe and meaningful lives abroad and it has helped improve people’s lives in both origin and destination countries (International Organization for Migration, 2018). The history of immigration in the United States dates to the

beginning of this nation. According to Martin (2013), U.S. immigration has occurred in waves, with peaks followed by troughs. The first wave of immigrants, prior to 1820, was of mostly English-speakers from the British Isles. Irish and German Catholics dominated the second wave, between the 1840s and 1850s. The third wave, between 1880 and 1914, brought over 20 million European immigrants to the United States. The fourth wave began after 1965, and has been marked by rising numbers of immigrants from Latin America and Asia. Throughout these years, the proportion of immigrants as a percentage of the U.S. population across the years has oscillated between a low of 4.7% during the 1970s and a high of 14.8% around 1890. Currently, approximately 14% of all U.S. residents are international migrants (United Nations, 2017). This

means that although the share of immigrants in the U.S. today is high, it is not as great a *proportion* of the U.S. population as the peak of U.S. immigration during the 1890s.

### Key Facts about Immigrants

There are certain terms that are used widely to refer to immigrants and will be used in this article. These include: *foreign born or a first-generation immigrant* is anyone who is not a U.S. citizen at birth; *native born* is anyone born in the United States, Puerto Rico, or a U.S. Island Area or those born abroad of at least one U.S. citizen parent; *second generation immigrant* is anyone who is a U.S. native with at least one foreign-born parent; and

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(IMMIGRANT SEGREGATION: from p. 1)

third-and-higher generation immigrant is a U.S. native with both parents native born.

Immigrants in the United States are an extremely heterogeneous group who differ in characteristics such as country of origin, educational levels, occupation, legal status, and reasons for leaving their home country. Today, over 80% of immigrants originate in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Oceania, or the Caribbean—the rest come from Europe or North America. The United Nations Population Division and Pew Research Center reports that as of 2017, the top three countries of origin for immigrants in the U.S. were Mexico, China, and India. Fifty-five percent of all first-and second-generation immigrant children are of Hispanic origin, while Asian children make up 17 percent of all first-and second-generation immigrant children in 2014 (Child Trends, 2014).

Immigrants have very different levels of education and skills. Some immigrant parents are among the most educated people in the nation, while others have low levels of education and gravitate to sectors of the U.S. labor market that rely on low-skilled workers (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2015). Most immigrants in the U.S. currently live in California, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey. In fact, California, Nevada, New York, and Florida are the states with the highest percentages of immigrants, ranging between 20 and 27% of the state population. More recently, many immigrants are moving rapidly to growing states such as North Carolina, Georgia, Arizona, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The percentage of first-generation immigrants is

the highest in the Western regions of the U.S. (42%), while the highest percentage of second-generation immigrants is in the South (35%). Suggesting that many immigrants arrive to Western states in the U.S. and then with time and as they settle they tend to move to Southern states.

While most of the migration to the U.S. occurs legally via a valid visa, green card, refugee status, or asylum seeker status, it is estimated that 6.9% of U.S. students enrolled in kinder-

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### **80% of immigrants originate in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Oceania, or the Caribbean.**

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garten through 12th grade during 2012 had parents who were unauthorized immigrants (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The realities for these children are vastly different from those of children whose parents are legally in the country. Families' reasons to leave their countries of origin are also very diverse and differentially impact immigrant children's lives. While some families might migrate to the U.S. for better employment or educational opportunities, others come for political asylum and/or to escape imminent danger in their home countries. In general, immigrant children face barriers linked to their socioeconomic, legal, and English learner status, such as hostility from the native population and a weak understanding of the U.S. education system. Furthermore, immigrant youth experience segregation by race, poverty, and language at schools and neighborhoods.

We are interested in the role that

segregation has on the life of immigrant children in part because immigrant students' education and well-being is strongly related to the future of the U.S. (Suárez-Orozco, C., Abo-Zena, & Marks, 2015). First- and second-generation immigrant children in the United States make up one-fourth of all U.S. children (Ornelas & Perreira, 2011) and are the fastest-growing student population in the United States. They are also more likely to be poor, live in urban areas, experience residential mobility, and live in overcrowded housing than native-born children. Frequently, these children experience unique stressors associated with their migration (such as possible exposure to traumatic events preceding or during migration) and acculturation processes (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010) and are later affected by the composition of the schools they attend and the neighborhoods where they live.

### **Contact Theory**

Intergroup Contact Theory, proposed by Allport (1954), helps understand the link between school and residential segregation and immigrants' outcomes. This theory indicates that positive contact experiences are important to reduce self-reported prejudice. Contact theory emphasizes the importance of contact situations between immigrants and natives to induce positive affect and to reduce anxiety. Contact or interaction increases the quantity and quality of knowledge that natives have about immigrants' lifestyle and therefore fosters important affective ties through enhanced empathy and reduced anxiety (Aberson and Haag, 2007; Vezzali et al., 2018). School and/or residential segregation of immigrants might reduce the possibility of contact between immigrants and non-immigrants and therefore might have important consequences for the shared experiences of immigrant and non-immigrant youth and for the future of American society.

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# Going Local to Support Fair Housing: Establishing the Move to PROSPER Housing Mobility Program

Jason Reece, Rachel Kleit & Amy Klaben

Escalating affordability problems, limited housing resources, lack of access to high opportunity communities and federal retrenchment from fair housing goals has spurred a unique local housing mobility initiative in Columbus, OH. Move to PROSPER (MTP) is a pilot initiative seeking to provide affordable rental opportunities in highly desirable neighborhoods in the Columbus region. The program is distinctively the product of local organizing and action by community stakeholders, with no direct involvement from traditional affordable housing providers, such as the housing authority or HUD.

Program participants receive a small, privately financed rental subsidy and coaching from the Move to PROSPER program team. The program assists participants in locating healthy and safe housing in high opportunity neighborhoods in the Columbus, OH region. All housing units are located in public school districts which are high performing and participants are required to enroll their children in these high performing schools.

Move to PROSPER is unique in two distinct ways. First, the program does

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not use any traditional affordable housing funding sources. The program is a nonprofit/private partnership, with two large realty companies providing internal subsidy for rental units within their developments. These internal subsidies are matched with philanthropic support, which further reduces rental unit cost and provides coaching assistance to participating families. Hous-

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***The primary concerns among focus group participants were community safety and access to educational opportunities for their children.***

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ing support and coaching are provided for three years for each participating family.

Second, the Move to PROSPER program assists lower income single female-headed households who qualify but do not receive housing assistance as only 25% of those eligible are able to access it in central Ohio. Program participants are single women, over age 18, with 1 to 3 children age 13 and under. Children must be eligible for Medicaid. Participants cannot be currently receiving housing assistance from the Housing Choice Voucher program. Participants must be experiencing housing instability, be very low income with incomes between \$23,000 and \$37,200, based on family size.

Given the challenging federal leadership at HUD and limited resources for housing mobility (or expansion of the Housing Choice Voucher program) when we began this program, we felt that “local” fair housing solutions could become more important in the near future. Now that Congress has approved a new \$25 million Housing

Mobility Demonstration in the 2019 budget, we are hopeful that some of the lessons we learn can inform public housing agencies that decide to participate in the demonstration. The following article, discusses our experience of “Going Local” to establish a unique housing mobility program in Columbus. We explore the lessons learned from initiating Move to Prosper, exploring the engagement, relationship building, capacity building and resource development needed to launch the program.

## The Columbus Context and Motivation

Columbus has several successful ongoing place based community development efforts.<sup>1</sup> However, exclusionary zoning, lack of regulations prohibiting discrimination based on source of income and no organized housing mobility programs have increased the re-

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### Lenora Lapidus

We dedicate this issue of *Poverty & Race* to Lenora Lapidus, the director of the ACLU Women’s Rights Project, who passed away this month. Lenora rejuvenated and expanded the Women’s Rights Project over the 18 years she served there, and helped to bring intersectional issues facing low income women of color into the ACLU’s orbit, representing—among others—domestic workers, victims of domestic violence, and women facing eviction because of their victimization. We will miss her passion and vision.

(GOING LOCAL: Continued from p.3)

gional patterns of segregation and opportunity isolation have remained pronounced. The Columbus region is the second most economically segregated region in the nation and despite a strong economy has experienced a substantial rise in poverty and housing affordability challenges since the 2008 recession.<sup>2</sup> The Columbus region is estimated to have a shortage of more than 54,000 affordable housing units and has one of the highest eviction rates in the nation.<sup>3</sup>

Establishing Move to PROSPER was motivated by these challenging local conditions, the retrenchment of federal affordable housing delivery systems and the extensive literature documenting the impacts of housing instability and the benefits to children of living in high opportunity communities. While programs such as Move to PROSPER cannot address these structural challenges, it can find new sources of affordable housing NOW by creating mixed income neighborhoods so kids can receive as much support as they can to do well in school and live in good quality homes in safe communities.

## Learning What Mothers Want: Engaging Potential Participants

All elements of the program's design were informed by three rounds of focus groups of potentially eligible single female headed households in Columbus, OH. More than thirty potential program applicants were engaged to understand neighborhood and housing preferences. These initial engagements directly influenced the program's design. Several consistent themes emerged from our focus group experiences.

- The primary concerns among focus group participants were community safety and access to educational opportunities for their children. Many participants did not see renting as a long term goal, but as a stepping stone to achieve home ownership in the future.

## Fair Housing Innovation in Connecticut

We were excited to see 3 new bills reported favorably out of committee in the Connecticut state legislature last month—bills that take innovative new approaches to longstanding fair housing challenges. We congratulate the Hartford-based Open Communities Alliance for their role in advocating for these bills, and recommend them for consideration in other states:

### 1) An Act Establishing Accountability for Fair and Affordable Housing Through Zoning Regulations (HB 6749)

This legislation amends the state's Zoning Enabling Act, CGS Sec. 8-2, to fulfill Connecticut's federal and state fair housing legal obligations by ensuring that municipal zoning supports housing integration. The legislation would (1) improve the order and clarity of Sec. 8-2, (2) highlight town obligations to affirmatively further fair housing, and (3) provide an incentive for towns to address the state's affordable housing needs in the form of access to state discretionary funding.

### 2) An Act Concerning Housing Authority Jurisdiction (HB 7067)

House Substitute Bill 7067 was advanced by the Planning and Development Committee and placed on the House Calendar. Most housing authorities are restricted to operating within the borders of their towns. Due to Connecticut's deep segregation, this makes it difficult for housing authorities to become full partners in offering a range of housing choices to their clients and contribute to creating desegregated housing options. Housing authority jurisdiction is a function of state law. HB 7067 would amend CGS 8-39 et seq. to permit housing authorities to adopt expanded areas of operation that extend to higher opportunity areas within 30 miles of their municipal borders.

### 3) An Act Concerning the State's Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development (HB 6892)

HB 6892 was also advanced by the Planning and Development Committee and placed on the House Calendar. This proposal would amend CGS Sec. 8-37t, to consolidate existing housing data collection requirements and ensure that all relevant state agencies report housing information to allow for a full understanding of the state's subsidized housing inventory and an assessment of progress on legal obligations to counteract a legacy of government policies that created housing segregation (the "affirmatively further fair housing" obligation). The assessment of progress would be included in the federally-mandated five-year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. Under HB 6892, these planning tools would also articulate specific geographic housing investment goals based on opportunity mapping, provide regional affordable housing allocations, and report on progress towards goals.

Visit the Open Communities Alliance website for details on all of these bills: [http://www.ctoca.org/2019\\_policy\\_priorities](http://www.ctoca.org/2019_policy_priorities)

- Many expressed a desire to relocate to higher opportunity areas, but also desired some existing diversity in the neighborhoods they would consider moving too. Racial bias in homogeneously White neighborhoods were common concerns. Neighborhoods

which were somewhat diverse and opportunity rich were ideal.

- Our focus population desired being closer to jobs, food and services, but the population was not as transit dependent as we had anticipated. Par-

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# Urban Web of Spatialized Racial Inequality

Paul M. Ong and Silvia R. González

In *Uneven Urbanscape* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), we present a theoretically grounded view of how society produces and reproduces racial economic inequality through the urban spatial structure. Many of the basic ideas are not new, and they have been discussed widely among PRRAC members. What we offer are extensive quantitative analyses to document the patterns, causes, and consequences of urban disparities in three arenas: home ownership, employment and early education. Geographic patterns and dynamics are not epiphenomena of aspatial processes, but are instrumental in the construction of injustices. Findings from multi-level econometric models show that both neighborhood and individual factors shape outcomes. The book focuses on the global city of Los Angeles in order to examine systemic differences in geographic access and isolation from 1960 to the present day.

While it is important to understand how disparities are produced within each sphere, the processes do not operate in isolation. Commonalities

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across arenas point to deep inter-connections. Processes are embedded in others and causality runs simultaneously in multiple directions. Taken together, the overlaps constitute a larger structure comprised of extensive intersectionalities to create a web of spatial racism. There are three forms of interactions: inter-market, inter-sectoral, and inter-generational.

A primary example of inter-markets is related to transportation mismatch and jobs. Residents of marginalized neighborhoods face

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***The link between the automobile market and labor market are both sequential and simultaneous because having a job and having a car are jointly determined.***

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higher cost of automobile ownership from discriminatory financing, insurance premiums and traffic enforcement, thus lowering the probability of purchasing a reliable vehicle. In turn, the lack of transportation resources in conjunction with spatial mismatch has a negative effect on employment and earnings. The link between the automobile market and labor market are both sequential and simultaneous because having a job and having a car are jointly determined. There is a similar linkage in the real estate and financial markets, where biased lending interact with segregated housing markets, ultimately contributing to the racial wealth gap.

Inter-sectoral refers to the coordination of the three major societal sectors: markets, the state, and civil society. The best example is the highly fragmented educational system for young children. The private sector competes for affluent students from families that can afford the exorbitant tuition. The competition pushes the

public sector to cater to the desires of more privileged segments, resulting in impenetrable district lines, restrictive neighborhood attendance zones, and selective magnet and charter schools. Furthermore, these racialized educational spaces empower differentiated collective action within the non-profit sector. Affluent parents are able to raise substantial extramural funds to supplement public budgets and to geographically restrict where and how the money is allocated, thus exacerbating educational inequality.

Inter-generation refers to the weaving of events across time through path-dependent developments. Past discrimination contributes to today's inequality in home ownership. Historical redlining and segregation severely hindered the previous generation's ability to accumulate wealth; consequently, their children are less well-endowed and less likely to have the economic means to purchase a home. Equally troubling is the inter-generational reproduction of inequality through the spatially fragmented educational system. As discussed above, the school system is failing to level the playing field for disadvantage students of color, failing to prepare a disproportionate number to be economically productive adults. These examples depict a system where inter-temporal linkages enable inequality to ripple across generations, perpetuating cycles of racial disparities.

While our study utilizes Los Angeles as a case study, the fundamental processes are likely to be present throughout urban America. Residential segregation, the foreclosure crisis, spatial and transportation mismatch, and school segregation are endemic to other metropolitan areas. Observable outcomes are consistent with underlying institutionalized practices. More research, however, is needed to peer into the "black box" of norms, values, and implicit biases that influence

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## School Segregation

Schools have a particularly important role in the development of immigrant children. According to Laosa (2001), for many students, schools could be the only influential point of direct experience with a "mainstream" socializing institution, it could also influence their active civic participation in early adulthood, and it becomes an essential part of their adaptation process and crucial to their successful integration (Callahan et al., 2008).

Immigrant youth are experiencing school segregation by race, poverty, and linguistic isolation (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008, 89), but it appears that economic and racial segregation is most acute for Latino immigrant children: while approximately 37% of Hispanic immigrant students attend schools with more than 50% of 10th graders receiving free lunch, only 22% of Asian immigrants and 11% of white immigrant students attend schools with high concentrations of poverty. These data are consistent with data on school segregation of Latino children generally—with nearly 38% of Latino children attending schools that are 90-100% minority (Orfield & Lee, 2005). Latinos who attend segregated minority schools are also very likely to attend poorer schools where they have fewer educational resources and lower student outcomes. Relatedly, calculations using data from the Educational Longitudinal Survey (2002) show that while 32% of students whose native language is not English attend high-poverty schools (those with over 50% of 10th graders receiving free lunch), only 12% of native English-speaking students attend these schools.

Increasingly, immigrant students report that they experience racism in their school environments, teachers with lower expectations for them, and direct and indirect messages and behaviors that negatively affect their self-identify (Viramontez Anguiano & Lopez, 2012; Verma, Molney & Austin, 2017). Importantly, school seg-

regation is most distinct in large metropolitan areas where immigrants are concentrated.

Segregation at schools refers to the separation of students based on some social, cultural, academic, or racial condition, such as immigrant status (Dupriez, 2010). There are two main types of school segregation, *between school segregation* and *within school segregation*. *Between school segregation* refers to the differences in the student body composition across different schools, while *within schools* (or in classrooms) refers mainly to differences in the student body within schools due to tracking practices that allocate educational resources and opportunities proportionate with students' prior academic achievement, ability, and interest, and with course availability (Mickelson, 2001).

While many studies find that concentration of immigrant students are

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***Immigrant children are over-represented in urban areas that tend to be very racially segregated and have very high levels of poverty.***

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detrimental to their educational outcomes (Rao, 2014; Moody, 2001; Janmaat, 2015; Shaq & Myers, 2014; Conger, 2005), others determine that immigrant segregation has some mitigating effects (Conger, 2005; Goldsmith, 2003; Goldsmith, 2004). Findings of research on the effect of school segregation on immigrant children are divergent due to the immense diversity that exists within immigrant children and differences in methodology. School segregation of immigrant students is linked to negative effect on grades for immigrants (especially for Latinos), limited opportunities to develop friendships outside their ethnic group, lower academic achievement for ESL students and higher levels of prejudice and intolerance towards immigrants. Other studies also find potential mitigating effects of school segregation, which may be related to helping new immigrants develop networks

of mutual support that help children succeed in the other areas, or facilitating the provision of specialized services to English learners. Nevertheless, any positive impacts are likely undermined if immigrant children are concentrated in high poverty schools.

## Residential Segregation

Residential segregation has important effects on the social contexts of schools, communities and families of immigrants that can limit the success of these individuals' labor and educational experiences and outcomes (Teranishi 2004; Lee, 2009; Gandara & Contrears, 2008; Logan et al., 2002; Zhu, Liu & Painter, 2014).

Immigrant children are over-represented in urban areas that tend to be very racially segregated and have very high levels of poverty. Levels of segregation are much higher for black immigrants than for Asian, Hispanic, and white immigrants (Williams & Collins, 2001). For example, suburban Dominicans and Haitians live in higher poverty residential areas than most other immigrant groups (Firebough & Farrel, 2016); and Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Mexicans experience extremely high levels of neighborhood inequality. As well, foreign-born immigrants are more segregated from native-born non-Hispanic whites than are their U.S.-born co-ethnics (Iceland & Scopilliti, 2008). This occurs in part because foreign-born Hispanics and Asians tend to have (on average) lower levels of income, lower ability in English language, and lower homeownership rates (Iceland & Scopilliti, 2008).

The causes of immigrant residential segregation are many. The main reasons include housing discrimination, and government housing and land use policies that limit access to wider housing markets (Zhu, Liu & Painter, 2014). Additionally, some immigrants may prefer to live—and find housing more easily—in locations with other immigrants or communities of similar ethnicity.

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everyday behavior within real estate institutions, neighborhood organizations, governmental agencies, and business enterprises. At the same time, it is critically important that we apply a systems approach to unravel the complexity of the systemic production of inequality. Injustices must be tackled at the interconnections and intersections of what speciously appear as disparate silos. Modern regional models combined with “big data” offers tremendous potential to generate needed insights.

Understanding how the urban structure produces and reproduces racial economic inequality is a foundation for instrumental knowledge to identify feasible points of policy and political interventions. Findings from past and current spatial research have been used

to fight for fairer automobile insurance premiums, reasonable asset limits for those transitioning from public assistant to work, anti-displacement legislation, and just environment-oriented sustainability programs. Engaged scholarship is a component of the struggle to transform the academy

from being a privileged institution complicit in the web of racism into one that embraces the moral responsibility to promote social justice. □

## New on PRRAC's Website

Immigrant Integration and Immigrant Segregation: The Relationship Between School and Housing Segregation and Immigrants' Futures in the U.S., by Martha Bottia (PRRAC, May 2019)

“Housing and Schools: The Importance of Engagement for Educators and Education Advocates” (PRRAC and NEA, April 2019)

“Coordinated Action on School and Housing Integration: The Role of State Government” by Megan Haberle and Philip Tegeler (*University of Richmond Law Review*, March 2019)

## Thank you for your contribution to PRRAC!

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Evidence on the relationship between residential segregation and immigrants' outcomes is not definitive. While most studies report higher levels of residential segregation as an obstacle to adaptation, upward mobility, and educational advancement, other research recognizes some advantages that living in an area with a higher number of immigrants might have on their employment status, earnings, health, and commuting behaviors (Zhu, Liu & Painter, 2014). Immigrant residential segregation discourages immigrants from interacting with natives and therefore limits immigrants' possibilities to better adapt to the American culture, cuts their chances of upward mobility, and truncates their opportunities of educational advancement. Research also finds that residential segregation negatively affects health outcomes such as higher risk of obesity, higher depressive symptoms, and lower levels of physical activity. Residential segregation is also linked to a worsening of economic outcomes for adults if they lived in neighborhoods with a high concentration of poverty as children. As in the educational context, some studies also

identified potential mitigating effects of immigrant residential segregation. For example, segregated immigrant communities may have higher access to ethnic networks that may improve labor market outcomes in the short term. This may also help cope with the stress when immigrants are experiencing discriminatory experiences. However, these positive outcomes are more likely undermined when they are combined with the high rates of residential poverty that often accompanies places where many immigrants are segregated.

## Conclusion

Although the situation of immigrants in the United States has been studied extensively in the past, the need to understand the relationship between immigrants' educational and residential contexts only increases with time. The demographic composition of the United States has experienced dramatic changes and immigrants and minorities make up a larger share of the population every day. Most of the findings summarized here highlight the negative outcomes for immigrants resulting from segregated schools and

residential contexts, such as lower academic achievement, lower diversity acceptance, difficulties to broaden perspectives, difficulty in the adaptation into the American culture, etc. Yet, studies also identify some potential mitigating effects of segregation for immigrants—though whatever advantages appear related to attending school and residing in segregated contexts are probably offset by the higher levels of poverty in those locations. These findings suggest that school and housing integration for immigrant children is best implemented where there is a critical mass of fellow immigrants, drawing on both the benefits of integration and group cohesion.

Immigrants and their children make up a large share of the population in the United States. Therefore, immigrants' education and labor market outcomes will play a very important role in determining the nation's future (Iceland & Wilkes, 2006). In a country that claims to advocate for equality and fairness, there is a need to fight against immigrant school and residential segregation, but also the need to ensure housing choice for immigrant families. □

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Participants didn't necessarily need access to public transit lines, but were commuting long distances by car to reach jobs in the distant suburbs and exurbs. However, being near transit was desired due to unreliable personal transportation.

- Coaching resources were viewed as a positive aspect of the program, and participants expressed a desire for assistance in achieving personal goals and expanding resources for their children. Most expressed a desire for financial coaching and being held accountable for meeting their financial goals. Many women expressed frustration of the intense time demands from work and parenting; ideally

coaches would need to be flexible, culturally competent and non-judgmental.

### **From Idea to Action: Relationships, Capacity & Funding**

Relationship building was essential to moving the program forward. Relationship building started with two owners of rental property in high opportunity communities who collectively own more than 10,000 rental homes. They were willing to open their doors, provide some reduced rent, modify their rental criteria and allow MTP to provide implicit bias training. After bringing property own-

ers on board, the next goal was to develop relationships with social service providers as potential program partners.

In its infancy the program had significant need for expertise and capacity. A project facilitator with 30 years of affordable housing experience was essential to coordinate activities, seek funding and foster relationship building. A local and national advisory committee was formed to guide program design. Coaching resources and a "coaching toolbox" were developed in partnership with the OSU College of Social Work. Volunteer capacity was also donated by local professionals in serving the marketing needs of

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the program. Move to PROSPER engages aspects of collective impact models, in working with (and aligning) a wide set of stakeholders to serve program goals and families.

Program leaders began fundraising and realized that the effort was not established enough to receive grants from national foundations. The concept needed to be proven locally and demonstrate the program's capacity for implementation. Funding began with planning grants from four local funders, one statewide organization and one national organization. Donations from partner landlords were essential for rental support, and local fundraising events were utilized to generate resources for housing support, program design and coaching activities. Evaluation activities are being supported separately through a research grant from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency.

## Challenges & Opportunities

Many of the political challenges facing housing mobility programs were experienced in establishing Move to PROSPER. Public officials express concerns about funding short-term subsidies because they fear making people homeless at the end of it. Additionally, local government and corporate funding has been used for place based efforts due to the issues inherent in areas of concentrated poverty. Helping these community leaders understand the need for two strategies, both place based and people based has been a challenge. Some public officials have expressed concern for providing funding so that families could move to better school districts. The local branch of the NAACP expressed concern that the program would encourage their membership base to exit Columbus City Schools (where the organizations relationships are strongest) for suburban schools, where children of color are more likely to be labeled as learning disabled and harshly disci-

plined. To engage this concern the program will use school discipline data to better understand challenges in suburban schools and will work with coaches to support student advocacy in schools.

Funders supporting place based re-development efforts were less likely to support the effort. Some potential funders stated that they do not support a start-up program, or a program that is being evaluated. Many funders expressed interest but adopted a "wait and see" approach to gauge effectiveness before investing. The program has emphasized evaluation activities to document effectiveness for future funders.

Working outside of traditional affordable housing programs and fund-

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### **Building relationships with landlords first was important to demonstrating capacity, fostering trust and finding resources.**

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ing streams presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Substantial fundraising time is needed to support rental subsidies and the program had to develop a sustainable strategy for housing support. Local fundraising among individuals, foundations (and charitable donations) has been critical to bridging this funding gap. Local stakeholders (and potential participants) can be confused about eligibility because the program doesn't have to follow the same existing rules as traditional assisted housing.

The opportunity of not using federal funding is that MTP can be creative in problem solving. Flexibility in eligibility guidelines aids recruiting efforts. MTP can also have different program requirements, such as not reducing the rental support as incomes increase so that there is no disincentive from getting a higher wage job or promotion. Additionally, the limit of three years of support and the use of coaches creates not only a different relational dynamic with the participants than what is found in traditional

housing programs but also different incentives for the participants as they know the support is time limited.

## Project Launch and Implications

In July 2018, the first pilot participant moved into their housing unit as part of the program launch. After reviewing more than 300 initial applicants, the pilot will house a total of ten families in the next two months. Evaluation activities will commence with these ten pilot families, to gauge the impact of the initiative on participant families and sustainability of its unique nonprofit-private partnership model. Following the pilot phase the program will expand to a demonstration project of 100 additional families.

Move to PROSPER seeks to achieve three primary goals: (1) develop a sustainable, locally resourced opportunity based housing program, (2) directly expand access to opportunity to foster family stability, enhanced wellbeing and prosperity and (3) to generate regional dialogue on the impact of developing affordable housing opportunities in high opportunity areas.

While Move to PROSPER serves a relatively small number of families, we see it as exponentially important in fostering a larger regional dialogue about the benefits of fair housing to families, neighborhoods and to our region. We anticipate the outcomes of Move to PROSPER to be important in providing a counter narrative to local NIMBY concerns in the region.

While the barriers to establishing a local program will vary in different communities, we feel some elements of the program are critical to replication. The role of the facilitator in negotiating all the moving parts is very important. The facilitator is needed to address ongoing political challenges and the constant networking required to support relationships.

Building relationships with landlords first was important to demonstrating capacity, fostering trust and finding resources. MTP studied best

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practices for serving families and determined that collaboration and coaching were key. To best serve the participants and utilize the talent and expertise of existing nonprofits, MTP then developed a network of partnerships to meet the needs of participant families. Finally, communication and fund raising for the program have been most effective when they identify the regional economic benefits of providing housing opportunity to families.

By going “local” in establishing the program outside of traditional affordable housing channels, we have been

enabled to expand fair housing opportunities in the face of federal retrenchment. Larger federal advocacy, activism and structural reforms are critical to supporting Fair Housing. While these ongoing advocacy efforts are being fought, we hope our local actions provide inspiration to other communities looking to act quickly in expanding fair housing opportunities. □

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