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Choice, Mobility, and Place Attachment: Minnesota's Public School Choice

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My special thanks should go to all of my participants in this study, who provided their invaluable time and stories, and smiles as well. They truly gave me great opportunities for me to conduct this study.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents with love and respect, Jung Bum Choi and Ki Ok Shin. You have always been there for me. Our home has always been full of love and trust. I love you so much.

Abstract

Relationships between place and people are complex because places become specific and unique as we build memories, share stories, accumulate histories. Therefore, mobility and place attachment are often placed in opposite discussions. Considering the daily life and limited resources of low-income families, however, the relationship between place and people can be a love and hate relationships and the discussion on mobility and place attachment are not straightforward. The current study explored how inner-city low-income families with school-age children experience school choice. Particularly, the study attempted to examine the Choice Is Yours program that allows school mobility with the help of transportation in order to support for low-income families in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The primary purpose of the current study was to develop a better understanding of how low-income families perceive choice, place, mobility, and place attachment using the theoretical frameworks of mobility and place attachment. To understand and interpret the meanings of their perception and experiences, a phenomenological study was employed and in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the parents who participated the Choice Is Yours program.

Conversations with the participants show that having choice allowed them not only to attain academic achievement but also to be aware of available resources, to grow ability to judge well, and to develop positive relationships with peers and school community. The participants expressed multi-layered emotions with places. Place attachment of the current study was associated with the experience of first-time homeownership, familiar and convenient environments, and close kin relationships that

were located in the same neighborhood. This was related to moving decisions. Future

study on the inclusion of non-choosers of the opportunity-based program in such

neighborhoods would provide a better understanding the impact of choice and the

perception of mobility and place attachment. This will broaden the discussion about the

school choice program by connecting educational policy with housing policy.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

Research Problem

> You love the place and you hate the place…I went up there [on a visit to the North
> of England] because I wanted to get away from it all, and…when I got back to
> London I felt like kissing the ground. I was choked! It's pretty much a love/hate
> sort of situation, especially when you have lived in the one area all your life.
> (Corcoran, 2002, p.202).

Relationships between place and people can be a love and hate relationship. The

elderly quoted in *Place attachment and community sentiment in marginalised*

neighbourhoods: A European case study recalls us to the meaning of place. We reside in

a place. Unavoidably, where we reside in matters to us because a place is the where we

experience every day. Corcoran (2002) argued that "(T)he capacity to inhabit a particular

place affords the dweller the opportunity…" (p.204). Here, questions were raised by the

researcher regarding the meanings of place, choices given to the residents, and the

relationships between people and places were imbued with the story of the senior resident

in London from the study of Corcoran (2002).

Urban neighborhoods, more specifically, inner-city neighborhoods of concentrated

poverty in the United States appear to become significant places in terms of limited

opportunity, socio-economic inequality, and segregation. Recent research on the meaning

of place has focused on recent mobility programs that aim at providing equal, quality

opportunities to disadvantaged low-income families and children (Blokland, 2008;

Clampet-Lundquist, 2010; Kleit & Manzo, 2006; Manzo, Kleit, & Couch, 2008; Tester,

Ruel, Anderson, Reitzes, & Oakley, 2011; Tester & Wingfield, 2013). Housing mobility

programs are designed to give choice options as a means of improving opportunities to

low-income families residing in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Smith, 1995). Subsequently, the families move from their houses and neighborhoods away from their rootedness, memories, and social networks. When people are in transitional stages, place tends to be a significant factor. Since some of the mobility programs appear to be involuntary, mobility can threaten low-income families' well-being. It is possible that vulnerable families can be more threatened by the transitional stages due to their limited circumstances. Mobility and place attachment are often placed in separate discussions. Tied to the issues, scholars have conducted studies of the meaning of place, including how public housing residents constructed the meaning of place (Tester & Wingfield, 2013), what their lived experiences of place before redevelopment (Manzo et al., 2008), how place attachment impacted them (Tester et al., 2011), and how place attachment and place considerations (amenities and stabilities of neighborhoods) influenced their relocation choices (Kleit & Manzo, 2006).

If low-income families have children when they have to move, school changes come along with them. According to Lankford (2001), education is one of the most effective means to escape from the persistent chain of poverty. There are school choices that allow students to cross school district boundaries. Among various kinds of school choices, there are school choice programs that are specifically targeted to low-income families in disadvantaged neighborhoods, such as the Choice Is Yours program in Minneapolis.

In 2000, as a result of the settlement of an educational adequacy lawsuit filed by the Minneapolis branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored

People (NAACP) against the State of Minnesota, the Choice Is Yours (CIY) program was initiated (Aspen Associates, 2009). Under the state's open enrollment policy, Minnesota's CIY program allows inner city low-income students residing in Minneapolis to attend suburban schools and selected magnet schools within the Minneapolis school district. Minneapolis residents who qualify for free or reduced price lunch are eligible to receive priority placement in participating K-12 schools in suburban school districts (Aspen Associate, 2009). The Minneapolis Department of Education (MDE), Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), the NAACP, and the suburban school districts from the West Metro Education Program (WMEP) support the CIY program together parents and children. The cost of transportation to these suburban schools is provided by state desegregation transportation aid funding. There is no tuition charged to participated families for this program.

The settlement required that the state would support busing to suburban school districts from 2001 to 2005. In 2003, the Voluntary Public School Choice (VPSC) program expanded the CIY program with funding from a 5-year federal grant and continued through the 2007-2008 school year. After ending the legal settlement, the CIY program had continued during the 2012-2013 academic year with the eight school districts participating under WMEP's comprehensive desegregation plan. Since the CIY program's inception, the number of participants attending the suburban schools steadily increased. In 2013, however, the CIY program was no longer required to admit new students; the decision whether to continue the program depends on each school district.

The basic motivation and implementation of school choice are the same as housing

choice in that low-income families are provided equal access to various opportunities in affluent settings through mobility. How school choice differs from housing choice is that families are able to send their children to quality schools without moving from their homes and neighborhoods. Instead, they can stay in lower-cost neighborhoods with more affordable housing options and keep their social networks (Crowley, 2003). Therefore, Crowley (2003) claims that school choice programs contribute residential stability for low-income families and children. School choice programs have gained attention from educators, urban planners, and sociologists due to the benefits (Schwartz, 2009).

Questions arise regarding the choice of schools. DeLuca and Dayton (2009) suggested that we need to understand "how parents and children select environments for their children" and "how parents and children engage new opportunity structures that come from social policy interventions" (p.480). We certainly need to understand residential mobility of low-income families with children. Wherever they want to send their children, Briggs, Ferryman, Popkin, & Rendon, (2008) questioned if "the logic of choice shifts when poor, inner-city families move to less poor area" (p.83). Moving was unlikely to happen to low-income families even if they have equal or stronger pursuit of their children's development (Briggs et al., 2008; DeLuca & Rosenblatt, 2010). Considering the daily life and limited resources of low-income families, we know that "schooling is not always on the top of the list" (DeLuca & Rosenblatt, 2010, p.1481). In the conclusion, DeLuca and Rosenblatt (2010) suggested that it is necessary to include schooling in connection with housing in order to understand whether school programs were effective. This is because "the connection between schooling and housing

opportunities is a complex one for poor families, one that is conditioned by resources, culture, and other life events" (DeLuca & Rosenblatt, 2010, p.1452).

However, the CIY participants changed children's schools with strong motivation as they are usually defined as the ones who are willing to seek new or better school opportunities for their children. Since the CIY program was terminated, school choice options may be more limited in the future for low-income families. How will the participants of the CIY program respond? What do they think about choice options that might be given to them? What are their situations of housing and neighborhood like? Are the parents of the CIY program willing to change their neighborhoods to continue to provide further educational opportunities? Or, as previous studies have revealed, are the participants of the CIY program not likely change their neighborhoods due to barriers, such as limited information about affordable housing and school quality, lack of resources, and/or cultural orientation (DeLuca & Rosenblatt, 2010; Kim & Morrow-Jones, 2011; Montgomery & Curtis, 2006)?

On the other hand, Ross, Reynolds and Geis (2000) claim that residential mobility was explained differently from poor and non-poor neighborhoods. Families in the neighborhood with limited opportunities resulted in increasing frequent mobility (Family Housing Fund, n.d.). Ross et al. (2000) found that long-term residency helped enhance social ties of residents. In this sense, place can be directly threatened by moving spatially. However, the authors also found that long-term residency blocked opportunities of the residents to escape to their neighborhoods. Likewise, limited opportunities resulted in blocking future opportunities for the children (Family Housing Fund, n.d.). Therefore, the

discussion on mobility and place attachment are not straightforward even though they are often placed in opposite positions, especially in the circumstances of low-income families (Gustafson, 2001).

To understand the questions above, further explanations are needed about residential mobility of low-income families with children along with choice, place, and people. Housing is a complex setting. Ziebarth (2009) explains that "(H)ousing is the interaction of places, people, and processes within a context of demographic change, environmental situations, economic realities, and political processes" (p.137). Housing and neighborhood where we live become the specific, unique place as we build memories, share stories, and accumulate histories. According to Corcoran (2002), place is layered with many aspects of memory, sentiment, history, and identity, contributing to belonging and attachment to the place. Currently, there is a lack of research regarding the understanding about how low-income families experience and perceive school choices, residential mobility, and place attachment. In addition, remarkably little study has been directed towards the understanding of housing and schools together.

Purpose and Research Questions of the Study

The primary purpose of the current study is to develop a better understanding of how low-income, inner-city families with school-age children experience school choices. The geographic area of the study is Minneapolis, Minnesota. In order to understand the experiences, mobility and place attachment are the theoretical frameworks of this current study. Through the theoretical frameworks, the researcher examines participants' experiences on school choice, in particular the Choice Is Yours (CIY) program that aims

6

to provide an enhanced and equal educational opportunity for Minneapolis low-income families. Therefore, the current study seeks to shed light on the phenomenon of how low-income families experience and perceive choices, place, and mobility.

The research questions for this study are addressed as follows: (1) What were the reasons to move out of the school districts and choose the CIY program? (2) How have the families experienced on the CIY program? (3) What are the families' housing and neighborhood situations? (4) How the families perceive and understand mobility and place attachment in regard to school choices? With the research questions, the researcher further explores how choice options have been utilized with the families in terms of the reasons seeking school choices, the decisions of housing locations, and their perceptions on choice options.

Research Approach

In order to answer these questions, the researcher chose a qualitative study as the methodological approach. In Creswell's book (2007), a rationale for a qualitative study is described well:

> The rationale is not the discovery of new elements, as in natural scientific study, but rather the heightening of awareness for experience which has been forgotten and overlooked. By heightening awareness and creating dialogue, it is hoped research can lead to better understanding of the way things appear to someone else and though that insight lead to improvements in practice (Barritt, 1986, p.20 as cited in Creswell, 2007, p.102).

In order to understand more precisely the research questions, this study was designed as a qualitative study. As mentioned above, the relationship with housing and schooling has not adequately and substantially addressed with regards to choice, place,

and residential mobility for low-income families with children in inner-cities. What is lacking is how these families perceive and deal with choice under their circumstances and what their dilemma or confliction is. Therefore, it is important not only to review the existing literature but also to listen directly from those concerned. Using an in-depth interview, the researcher sought to hear the voices and stories of the low-income families with children. Furthermore, a qualitative study can be used to develop theories "when partial or inadequate theories exist for certain populations and samples or existing theories do now adequately capture the complexity of the problem we are examining" (Creswell, 2007, p.40).

The research questions were consisted of "what" and "how" format to reveal the experiences and perceptions of the families. The research questions for this study are addressed as follows:

1. What were the reasons parents had for deciding to take advantage of school choice programs, especially the CIY program?

2. What were the parents' experiences in the program?

    a. Finding out about the program

    b. Transferring process

    c. Lived experience with children enrolled in the program

3. What were the families' housing and neighborhood situations?

4. How do the families perceive and understand mobility and place attachment in regard to school choice?

In seeking to understand this phenomenon, the researcher chose phenomenology to explore lived experiences and perceptions and the ascribed meanings of individuals. Phenomenology is to study one's experiences and perceptions based on the surface responses and deep responses (Roberts, 2012, p.3). This approach primarily considers the perception of individuals' experiences and interpretations in their lives (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, a phenomenological study is best selected to analyze the deeper understanding of the common experiences and perceptions of low-income families with children living in an inner-city.

The aforementioned primary research questions were formulated with the intention of an exploratory study. The sub-primary questions were shaped through literature reviews. A phenomenological qualitative study requires follow-up research questions to further explore situated meanings and essences of participants' certain experiences and circumstances through interviews (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Creswell, 2007). Therefore, prompts and follow-up questions were made during interviews.

Significance of the Study

An examination of the program's impacts on participants should be conducted to explore the meanings and functions of the program with the target population in the target area. Housing and school choice programs are, in general, of advantages to low-income families with children in poor neighborhoods, although some of the research are mixed in terms of educational or social benefits (see more DeLuca & Dayton, 2009). A choice truly opens an opportunity for them. However, choice programs might be another transformation of taking choices away from venerable families depending on how the

programs are delivered to the person concerned. In addition, In order to understand choice of low-income families with children in such neighborhoods, housing and school should be considered together within the context of neighborhoods because housing outcomes can be reinforced or harmed by school, or conversely (Orfield & Wallace, 2007). The significance of the current study is to put the trend of the relationship with housing and school together. This study will also contribute further insight for many professionals who are interested in housing policy, education policy, policy making, child development, and urban planning. An opportunity-based program must be accompanied with persistent and integrated efforts. Therefore, understanding the perception of the people concerned will be essential for the success of future research and policy development.

In order to understand the experiences, the researcher looks at mobility and place attachment as the theoretical frameworks of the current study. Research literature on mobility and place attachment are often discussed as opposite yet interrelated concepts. Yet, there have been few in-depth qualitative studies that address the links between mobility and place attachment in a relation with school choices. While past research has been conducted to examine children's educational outcomes of school choice, relatively little research has studied the relationships between housing and school choice together. Regarding choice, researchers have noted that more observable and qualitative methods need to be considered (DeLuca & Dayton, 2009; Lankford, 2001). It is important to listen to participants' own voices and identify their own experiences of the program. Therefore, the current study seeks to shed light on the phenomenon of how low-income families

experience and perceive choices, place, and mobility.

In conclusion, this study will extend the literature in Housing Studies by providing evidences of the impact through the voices and experiences of the people concerned. In addition, we need a more detailed and reliable description of the existing and timing of the impact of choice.

Definitions and Clarifications of Key Terminology of the Study

For the purposes of this study, the following definition of key terminology is need.

Housing mobility programs. Following the definitions by Goetz (2004) such that in the current study, housing mobility programs refer to the programs that seek to improve the lives of low-income families by providing housing and neighborhood choices are called housing mobility programs.

School choice vs. Open enrollment. Followed the distinction by Herrmann, Burroughs, and Plucker (2009), school choice is a category that refers to any options for parents and children to change schools. Open enrollment is a single type of program that gives public school choices to parents and children.

Study participants. Individuals who have been involved with the Choice Is Yours (CIY) program in Minneapolis and participated in the study are referred to as the parents as in the study.

Issues that measure schools inequality, such as academic test scores, are critical. However, at this stage in the research, the researcher looks beyond the quantitative measures of school quality. The current study focuses on examining the program experiences of the individuals in a relation to the residential situations in order to

understand how the program impacts on improving or enhancing children's opportunities. By doing so, socioeconomic and racial compositions of schools and school climates with the help of the study participants' voices may be addressed.

The researcher clarifies that the current study focuses on traditional public schools in Minneapolis, excluding Charter schools. Charter schools are one of public school options but can be on a different position in regard to urban education. Charter schools tend to have more resources and higher academically motivated students than traditional public schools (Powers, Topper, & Silver, 2012).

Overview and Organization of the Study

This dissertation consists of five chapters. This chapter has provided an overview of the present study: research problem, research purpose and questions, research approach, definitions and classifications of key terminology, and significance are described. In chapter two, backgrounds of housing choice and school choice programs and relevant research literature related to mobility and place attachment are discussed. In chapter three, the methods of the study are presented. In chapter four, findings that emerged as a result of the analysis from the low-income families' experiences are addressed and discussed. Conclusions and implications that were drawn from the findings, future studies, and limitations of this study are discussed and suggested in the last chapter.

CHAPTER TWO. THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of how low-income inner city families with school-age children experience school choices. In order to understand the experiences, mobility and place attachment are the theoretical frameworks of this current study. This chapter reviews several bodies of literature that address choice perspectives, theoretical lens of mobility and place attachment, historical contexts and policy implementations of housing mobility and school mobility, and the concerns and impacts of the policy implementations. By the end of this chapter, the main point of the study, choices for low-income families regarding mobility and place attachment, will be reached.

Understanding Choice: Where We Live and Why We Move

Choice in the United States

For decades, the idea of choice has been broadly defined in various public policies and reform programs throughout the United States. Choice truly opens opportunities; choice refers to enhancing the possibilities and improving the accessibility of families in-need. The idea of choice originated in the civil rights movement, where reform efforts sought to achieve racial balance and equality as provided in the Civil Right Act of 1968 (Smith, 1995). Since then, the idea of choice has transformed into numerous policies directed at housing and school programs.

Evidence that families and children living in high poverty neighborhoods have fewer life chances is vast and has been proven over time (Crane, 1991; Ellen & Turner, 1997; Jencks & Mayer, 1990; Kling, Ludwig, & Katz, 2005; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Sampson, 2008; Vartanian, Buck, & Gleason, 2007; Wilson, 1987). This is referred

by Galster and Killen (1995) as the 'geography of opportunity' that influences lifetime outcomes of individuals. Researchers have emphasized the impact of concentrated poverty neighborhoods for low-income families and children since their options and resources are limited. Especially during the 1980s, numerous social and developmental problems in those neighborhoods were observed (Briggs et al., 2008; Galster, Marcotte, Mandell, Wolman, & Angustine, 2007; Rosenbaum & DeLuca, 2002; 2008; Wilson, 1987). The problems included violent crime, drug use, out-of-wedlock births, school dropouts, rising and chronic unemployment, and welfare dependence (Briggs et al., 2008; Crane, 1991; Galster et al., 2007; Pashup, Edin, Duncan, & Burke, 2005).

Researchers have exhaustively discussed the effects of concentrated poverty neighborhoods and its cumulative effects upon children. Among these discussions, Wilson's seminal book, *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), has been widely cited for describing the nature of the culture of poverty, what he calls an "underclass culture" (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1997). He views the concentrated poverty as not a symptom but a system. Wilson discussed how concentrated poverty plays an important role in child development creating a combination of barriers for children, such as inappropriate education and poor employment opportunities (Wilson, 1987). Later, Sampson and Wilson (1995) developed a *social disorganization theory* that implies "the inability of a community structure to realize the common values of its residents and maintain effective social controls" (p.45). As the theory explains macro-level threats, juvenile delinquency and crime are perhaps the most significant social issues in concentrated-poverty neighborhoods because those neighborhoods tend to create low social sanctions (Popkin,

14

Levy, Harris, Comey, Cunningham, & Buron, 2004). In concentrated neighborhoods these problems are exacerbated by structural constraints, such as racial discrimination and a poor labor market (Popkin et al., 2004). Limited opportunities force low-income families and children to remain in such neighborhoods, persistently receiving low-quality education, repeatedly experiencing economic marginality, and ultimately blocking long-term opportunities (Jargowsky, 2002; Wilson, 1987).

Responding to the neglect of inner-city problems over nearly two decades, efforts have been extensively approached to enhance social, developmental, and economic life chances of low-income families and their children. Since the late 1980s, choice interventions by the federal government have been initiated. The federal government began to focus on deconstructing the concentration of poverty in inner cities and relocating residents to more affluent neighborhoods through mobility programs. When the idea of choice is used with mobility, the underlying meaning is that "households with the desire to move from where they currently live have no undue restrictions in doing so and have real housing choices" (Pelletiere & Crowley, 2012, p.3).

Therefore, the choice promises to provide opportunity. The idea of choice has been utilized for these groups living in concentrated poverty even though the promise of better opportunities has been critiqued (the critiques will be presented in the end of the section). Indeed, the language of choice has been extensively used and applied to housing and school programs (e.g., Housing *Choice* Vouchers, *Choice* Neighborhoods, School *Choice* Vouchers and The *Choice* is Yours), sometimes converted into an opportunity (e.g., Moving To *Opportunity* and Housing *Opportunities* for People Everywhere, that is

15

commonly used with HOPE VI). Even though the language of choice or opportunity has

not been used, the idea of choice has implied in various programs.

Neighborhood Effect Models

Many researchers and policy-makers argue that policies should emphasize ending

the cycle of concentrated poverty for people by breaking the constrained opportunity.

Since the late 1980s, the mainstream purpose of the policies of choice interventions was

to integrate low-income families with high-income families by locating low-income

families in affluent neighborhoods, or bringing high-income families into concentrated

poverty areas through mixed-use development (Ellen & Turner, 1997; Jencks & Mayer,

1990). The assumption of the social class integration may stem from the Neighborhood

Effect Models. Neighborhood Effect Models highlight that low-income families and their

children would benefit from less-impoverished neighborhoods and schools with the help

of a wide range of resources, such as appropriate adult role models, motivation to achieve,

and accessibility and quality of local services including education (Ainsworth, 2002;

Ellen & Turner, 1997; Jencks & Mayer, 1990; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

In theory, affluent neighborhoods play a beneficial role to low-income families

when they provide high- and low-income families the opportunity to interact. Affluent

neighborhoods have also more resources than poor neighborhoods, including accessibility,

availability, and quality of services. This model is referred to as an *Institutional Resource*

Model (Ellen & Turner, 1997; Jencks & Mayer, 1990; Leventhal, & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

The resources are from community organizations and services, police protection,

recreational activities, libraries, and schools (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1997). The affluent

resources can also include experienced staff members, and teachers, availability of

encouraging learning materials, such as books and toys, and volunteering by parents

(Ellen & Turner, 1997).

Rather than focusing on resource availability, the *Collective Socialization Model*

highlights role models of community adults. Notwithstanding, parents are predicted as

key adult role models in that they mediate the links between children and neighborhoods

and they monitor children. Parental characteristics such as income, structure of

households, education, age, family stage, occupation, immigrant status, and race/ethnicity

and parental skills influence the level of role modeling parents provide. In addition to

demographic characteristics of parents, the physical home environment (e.g., safety,

cleanliness, space allocation, and lighting) and parental behaviors (e.g., rules, controls,

responsibilities, and warmth) are also influential (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn 1997). This

is because children are provided with routines and structure, such as regular meal times

and bedtimes, in the home environment (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 1997). In many

cases, poor neighborhoods are more likely to disregard the routines and structure because

of the breakdown their residents' lifestyles. Furstenberg and Hughes (1997) notes that the

appropriate behaviors of parents will reproduce socially approved behaviors to children.

While the *Institutional Resource Model* and the *Collective Socialization Model* postulate

that surroundings affect on individuals, the *Relative Deprivation Model, the Contagion*

Model and the *Competition Model* emphasize individuals' motivation.

In the *Relative Deprivation Model*, individuals value their circumstance by

comparing their own situation with their surroundings and others around them (Turley,

2002). Therefore, this model is sometimes called a social comparison model. In other words, feelings of self, such as loss of self-respect, fear of failure, and dissatisfaction, are subjective and relative sentiment of self to others. The premised condition of the theory, as stating by Turley (2002), is that individuals are aware enough of their neighborhood conditions to compare those conditions with themselves. That is, individuals can consider their options within the surroundings. In this angle, this model is somewhat similar to the *Institutional Resource Model* because the individuals' employment opportunities might be increased along with their neighborhoods' if they relocated to more affluent neighborhoods (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

There is an old saying, *bad associations spoil useful habits*. The saying delineates well peer effects. A certain rate of disadvantages, behaviors, or attitudes that spurs negatively and becomes easily worse is related to the *Contagion Model*. This behavior model posits that children interchange and imitate behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes with their peers those who live in the geographically nearby space (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1997). Deviant teens are more likely to generate from the disadvantaged, minority neighborhoods because the residents are easily exposed to social problems (Crane, 1991). From this perspective, the model expected achieved success through integration. It is expected that better behaviors can be created in better neighborhoods.

The *Competition Model* predicts that individuals compete for scarce resources with neighbors and peers (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Within poor neighborhoods, resources tend to be limited, thus, children likely struggle to obtain the chances to access the resources. Therefore, children in affluent neighborhoods are advantaged (Briggs,

1997). When it comes to the discussion of schools, the *Competition Model* suggests that

public schools would facilitate educational quality and economic wellbeing through

competition (Boyd, Edin, Clampet-Lundquist, & Duncan, 2010).

According to the *Neighborhood Effect Model*, school is, perhaps, the mechanism

by which the effects occur because schools have strong influences on children in terms of

behavior, socialization, values, health, and education. School is closely affected by

housing and neighborhood characteristics and the geography opportunities. For instance,

children enroll schools in the neighborhoods by school districts; parents send their

children schools within the school districts. When families seek housing, as Morris and

Winter (1996) stated, they tend to pay an attention to neighborhood schools under

American neighborhood norm, preferring housing that is located in good school districts.

Children often form their social networks in schools within their neighborhood's

geographical boundaries. All daily activities of children are shaped in their geographical

boundaries. Young people in middle school and high school age tend to spend less time

with their families and more time with friends or in school. Thus, the geography of the

school and neighborhood are important for children's development and wellbeing.

Likewise, better schools are considered as a key tool of improving chances and

quality of life for children theoretically and practically for past decades. The role of

schools within concentrated poverty neighborhoods in particular, has been a focus of

research. Several studies show the impact of schools in concentrated poverty on children.

Crane (1991), using data from the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), found that the

effects on the dropping out of school among the children of professional or managerial

workers became larger and more marked at some marginal level. On the contrary, studies generally show the positive, educational outcomes of children in affluent neighborhoods. In a study about the neighborhood effects on children who relocated in suburbs, Kling et al. (2005) found a marked reduction of crime rates among females. Using the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 and the 1990 U.S. Census, Ainsworth (2002) examined the relationships between neighborhood characteristics and individuals' educational achievement in affluent neighborhoods. The author found that the characteristics of school-related behaviors (e.g., increased time spent on homework and higher reading and math test scores) were associated with higher educational achievement and employment. Combined, all of these studies seem to agree that affluent settings of children are related to positive outcomes. The next step is to look at policy considerations regarding disrupting the concentrated poverty and descriptions of historical overviews about housing and school choice programs.

Considerations on Desegregation

Although often subtle but clearly, neighborhoods with concentration poverty were created by discriminatory laws, real estate agents, or landlords (Schwartz, 2006). The resulting residential segregation has aggravated school segregation. The federal government has made many efforts to combat segregation over the years. The National Housing Act was initiated in 1934 to improve housing conditions and ensure a stable housing market through the creation of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The federal government also created the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) to refinance and extend mortgages in order to make them long-term and affordable. Initially,

the goal of the federal government was to encourage homeownership and protect home values for homeowners (Schwartz, 2006). As a result, the HOLC was not designed for low-income families, particularly African Americans. The standards of HOLC were discriminatory against certain inner-city neighborhoods, making African Americans less able to obtain loans, a practice known as redlining (Henderson & Browne, 2004). Additionally, the FHA mortgage insurance program, the Veterans Administration home loan programs, as well as other private real estate opportunities subsidized White households to move to suburbs and prohibited similar opportunities for minority households, the flight from blight was aggravated (Henderson & Browne, 2004).

In 1968, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act. In Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act, there is a clear mandate that all federal housing programs must be fair, regardless of race, color, religion, familial status, sex, disability, or country of origin (Schwartz, 2006). As a result, the Act is often referred as the Fair Housing Act because the Act not only prohibits racial discrimination but also promotes all housing transactions to be fair (Henderson & Browne, 2004). Later, Congress passed the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act in 1975 and the Community Re-investment Act in 1977. These laws extended the Civil Rights Act of 1968 contributing much to providing access to credit for minority people.

Another important factor in the discussion of choice is the isolation and segregation of low income families in inner cities. In 1937, public housing programs were introduced as a part of the New Deal in order to encourage employment and clearance of slums (Schwartz, 2006). Urban Renewal was implemented through the Housing Act of 1954. The Urban Renewal project encouraged constructing and redeveloping public housing.

However, Urban Renewal forced many African American families into public housing concentrated in inner cities. Accordingly, their children were largely assigned to inner-city neighborhood schools (Henderson & Browne, 2004).

Housing mobility programs are one of the remedies undertaken in response to increasing racial and economic isolation and segregation in inner cities. As public housing programs are largely based on early Urban Renewal efforts, the roots of the HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) program are largely based on New Urbanism. In response to suburban sprawl and a breakdown in the sense of communities, the principle of New Urbanism design is to create environment-friendly physical designs, revitalize neighborhoods, and bridge diverse communities by mixing with all income and racial people and deconcentrating public housing (Elliott, Gotham, & Milligan, 2004; Johnson & Talen, 2008).

Theoretical Frameworks: Mobility and Place Attachment

> The creation of the archipelago nation had two consequences for African-Americans. The first is the ghettos became the center of black life; the second is that the walls of the ghetto, life other symbols of segregation, became objects of hatred. In this ambivalent love/hate relationship it was impossible to choose to dwell (Fullilove, 2004, p.27).

Place attachment and mobility are often addressed in opposition, but it is impossible to separate one from the other. This is because both are about human dwelling, physically and psychologically, which relates to the setting of human activities, social processes, and its evaluation (Stedman, 2005). This section discusses mobility and place attachment as a theoretical framework.

22

Mobility

The Role of Housing and Neighborhoods

Why we move matters. Simply, mobility means moving from one place to another. Families move between homes within or between neighborhoods for different reasons. For example, changes of family structure, job opportunities, housing preferences, or school preferences may all trigger moving. These are positive reasons and may lead to positive outcomes for the well-being and stability of families and their children. However, mobility can result from negative reasons as well, such as loss of employment, divorce, death, eviction or foreclosure, or forced relocation. When families move for positive or negative reasons, a neighborhood remains an important factor and may not be disregarded because a house is a permanently-attached structure. It is fixed to a specific place and satisfaction with that dwelling depends in part on where it is located (Jaffe, 1989).

A large body of literature has examined the reasons and the influencing factors of families' moves. The pioneering study on residential mobility was the work of Rossi (1980) in the *Why families move: a study in the social psychology of urban residential mobility*. In explaining why families move, Rossi (1980) proposes that residential mobility of families is "determined by each individual household's needs, dissatisfactions and aspirations" *(*Rossi, 1980, p.177).

Following Rossi's (1980) conventional explanations for residential mobility, the first explanation refers to the needs by family life cycle. The family life cycle means the family's changing needs based on the family functions of formation, expansion, nurturing,

23

and dissolution (Randall, Kitchen, & Williams, 2008). For example, young adults

between the ages of 20 and 35 typically need housing as they form their households

separate from their parents. They then change housing as their families expand with the

birth of children. Life-cycle is a common approach (e.g., Randall et al., 2008; Rossi, 1980;

Skobba, 2008).

The second explanation of mobility is dissatisfaction with current housing.

Dissatisfaction may also relate to family's changing needs by changes of family structure

or size (Morris & Winter, 1996; Skobba, 2008). For example, when a family increases in

size, dissatisfaction with their current house may occur and they will seek a bigger house

with more rooms (Morris & Winter, 1996). In addition, in this theme, housing needs to be

considered in more comparative contexts. Housing is a *hub* in the social network and

contributes attachment to neighborhoods (Dunn, Hayes, Hulchanski, Hwang, & Potvin,

2006). If current and certain circumstances of neighborhoods do not match with pursuing

family' needs, the family becomes dissatisfied with their housing and makes a decision to

move. On the one hand, one can hardly avoid the fact that satisfaction or dissatisfaction is

a subjective in a relative sense. While dissatisfaction with housing and neighborhood can

be caused by objective and absolute standards, the one can be perceived by comparing

their situations with others or prevailing housing norms within particular areas.

According to Morris and Winter (1996), a deficit refers to a "condition or set of

conditions that is subjectively defined as undesirable in comparison with a norm" (p.22).

If a deficit is perceived by a family, satisfaction of housing becomes low. In this situation,

according to Morris and Winter (1996), the family then may consider moving.

The last explanation focuses on aspiration in that mobility can be the means of achieving improved life chances through moving. This is seen as an upward residential mobility, sometimes called upward social mobility (Sabagh, Arsdol, & Butler, 1969; Shumaker & Stokols, 1982). Researchers here described upward social mobility. For example. Shumaker and Stokols (1982) explain that families move with promising more successful social status. McDonald and Richards (2008) mention that families move to better quality neighborhoods. However, this mobility does not always happen to all families due to disadvantaged *structural constraints,* especially for low-income and minority families (Buendia, 2011; McDonald & Richards, 2008; Morris & Winter, 1996; Scanlon & Devine, 2001; Skobba, 2008).

Low-income families are likely to move in situations in which they occupy crowded housing, have improper tenure rights, and face severe housing instability (Skobba, 2008). Downward residential mobility, according to McDonald and Richards (2008), refers to not only moving into poor condition housing but also locating in undesired neighborhoods with unfamiliar and poor social networks. Therefore, downward residential mobility has been an issue for housing mobility programs because the mobility also occurs when families are forced to relocate. Forced relocation has a tendency to move households involuntarily into unfamiliar places with poor social networks. Low-income families especially tend to establish strong social networks as a strategy to improve their well-being, so they are more likely to desire living along with or nearby families, kin, and friends (McDonald & Richards, 2008). Sometimes, this cultural factor helps understand mobility patterns or mobility decisions for low-income families

25

(McDonald & Richards, 2008).

In this manner, Crump (2002) points out that tightly developed social networks within communities should not be ignored or negated by physical condition or neighborhood reputation. For example, prior to its demolition during the 1990's the Sumner-Glenwood public housing in Minneapolis, Minnesota was occupied by a sizeable population of Hmong immigrants with an established social network. This public housing development has a long history (Crump, 2002). The housing was built in 1937 during New Deal's slum clearance policies. Between the 1960s and 1980s, the housing was mostly occupied by African-Americans. Subsequently, the majority of residents shifted to Hmong immigrants. By 1990, the poverty rate was high in Sumner-Glenwood, the housing was overcrowded, the physical condition of housing was severely deteriorated (Crump, 2002). For the residents of the Sumner-Glenwood housing, living in the homogeneous community in spite of the concentrated poverty was beneficial supporting childcare and monitoring behaviors to mitigate juvenile crimes (Crump, 2002). Beyond what it is promised by the relocation mission, the plan might not have desirable outcomes if the cultural factor of the residents is not respected.

Likewise, Ross, Reynolds, and Geis (2000) argue that this cultural factor – establishing and remaining strong social network– can contribute to positive effects in poor neighborhoods. The factor promotes long-term residency and reduces crime rates, so prohibits rapid turnover of residents. In a study on neighborhood stability and residential well-being, Ross et al. (2000) explained that stability with long-term residency enhanced social ties. However, long term residency in poor neighborhoods has little support to

improve well-being because neighborhoods may hinder their residents' opportunities to escape to better advantaged neighborhoods (Ross et al., 2000). In terms of opportunities, McDonald and Richards (2008) share a similar view with Ross and colleagues (2000). McDonald and Richards (2008) examined the resident trajectories of African American mothers and their residential experiences through interweaving quantitative and qualitative data. Interestingly, the researchers found that current socioeconomic poverty of the participants was more likely to be linked to their early relationships with parents and early experiences of deprivation from inner-city lives (McDonald & Richards, 2008). That is, downward residential mobility hindered the African American mothers exiting from poor housing and neighborhoods. With their findings, McDonald and Richards (2008) stressed that low-income families experienced disadvantages by the structural constraints of gender, race, and income status. In order to help understand residential mobility of low-income families and their opportunities, the authors stressed that scholars should not minimize the impact of locational aspects.

Residential Mobility and Housing Choice

Given the fact that residential mobility relates to a concept of choice, housing specifications have been seen in research including building types and tenure, preferences of location, or likelihood to stay or leave (Skobba, 2008). Since economic considerations are determinants of families' decisions, studies frequently utilize market-based approaches (e.g., Kim & Morrow-Jones, 2011; Phe, & Wakely, 1998). Among the approaches, the Tiebout theory has been spotlighted (Bayoh, Irwin, & Haab, 2006; Brunner, Cho, & Reback, 2012; Kim & Morrow-Jones, 2011). Tiebout theory suggests

that families have preferences over local public services such as nicer neighborhood

amenities, higher quality schools, and greater safety (Brunner et al., 2012; Kim &

Morrow-Jones, 2011; Montgomery & Curtis, 2006; Tiebout, 1956). The assumption of

the theory stems from economic motivation (Montgomery & Curtis, 2006). The uneven

distribution of public amenities and services across local jurisdictions is viewed as the

main determinants of suburban development. Locations with inferior local public services

are not attractive to families; these locations are often associated with inner cities. The

theory is useful for understanding the processes and factors of residential locations.

However, some scholars mentioned that the assumption should be applied carefully and

research should not be limited in the field of economic (DeLuca & Dayton, 2009; Kim &

Morrow-Jones, 2011; Montgomery & Curtis, 2006) because low-income families are not

able to afford to move to the suburbs and have clear preferences for public services due to

their financial status. That is to say, middle and high incomes make families' optimal

choices accessible with help from their financial status. For families who are passive and

venerable, rational and optimal decision-making processes of mobility do not appear to

occur. Accordingly, low income families are more likely to live and stay in inner cities.

Among local public services, school has not been examined separately in

residential location decisions. Rather, school quality is often included in the bundle of

neighborhood quality factors. School quality ratings have however been examined to

understand housing prices. In a study of the relationship between public school

characteristics and housing prices, Rawlings (2010) found that public school

characteristics were more influential factors on housing prices than local amenities, such

as proximities to lake and transportation. Likewise, racial composition, mobility rate, and test proficiency of the public schools greatly influenced housing prices. The findings are reflected Brown's (2006) study. Brown (2006) also found that school districts with higher level of school quality were associated with families with higher income.

As shown above, school quality is related to housing price and income levels of families. Then, the following question arises as whether school, as a sole factor, influences families' locational decisions and whether families are willing to pay a trade-off between school and housing. Kim (2010) found that high-income families with school-aged children were more likely to choose their preferred locations with high school quality in spite of choosing older houses. Middle-income families were also willing to pay a trade-off between school quality and housing quality but with older houses and smaller house sizes. Seo (2009) found out that school quality was a key factor in residential location among families with school-aged children- equal to employment. Uninvestigated questions remain whether low-income and venerable families with school-aged children have similar relocation behaviors. It is true that the structural constraints are obstacles for low-income families to move, however, school is still an important factor for low-income families. Good education is even more important to low-income families in order to achieve better life chances for their children.

Place Attachment

The Meaning of Place

Urban places are not just bricks and mortar for providing shelter. The place we call home is inscribed into our bodies; the street we call ours is the setting for our communal longing and belonging; our neighborhood is the first world that we know as a child (Simms, 2008, p.87).

Corcoran (2002) says "(P)lace is a slippery term which is difficult to define," because it is layered with many respects of "memory, sentiment, tradition and identification" with a location over times (p.203). When it comes to the social science, the meaning even gets complex and diverse (Trentelman, 2009). Simms (2008) also makes a similar approach to place as cited above. Research has explored place concepts through diverse ways of settings, samples, concepts, and methods. A place becomes the specific, unique location as we build memories, share stories, accumulate histories. Then, we feel belonging and attachment to the place. In this sense, Corcoran (2002) argues that place can be directly threatened by spatial mobility. Therefore, mobility and place attachment are often considered in opposite positions (Gustafson, 2001). The meaning of place has been understood through the terms of sense of place, place identity, place attachment, and place dependence (Tester et al., 2011).

Place-Related Concepts

Sense of Place

Regarding people and places, within the place literature, sense of place and place attachment are used as overarching place-related concepts (Trentelman, 2009). Sense of place often subsumes three concepts of place identity, place attachment, and place dependence (Hay, 1998; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Tester et al., 2011). The sub-concepts of sense of place possess overlapped descriptions or distinctive characteristics, but are commonly associated with 'human interpretations of the setting' (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Manzo & Perkins, 2006). One plausible explanation by Trentelman (2009) is that place attachment has a positive inclination, while sense of place does not.

30

Place Identity

Place identity, developed by Proshansky (1978), refers to how individuals define their personal identities in relations to place with the help of "a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioral tendencies and skills" (Proshansky, 1978, p.155, cited in Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001, p.234). According to Trentelman (2009), place identity also means how individuals want to be defined by others in relations to places. The identity is created by situated self-meanings and emotional relationships with places (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Tester et al., 2011). Place identity is developed by belonging and commitment of individuals, such as a role, occupation, and a social group (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). According to Tester and his colleagues (2011), a neighborhood identity tends to communicate a person with shared meanings in the area. Therefore, place identity is examined by a neighborhood identity as well.

Place Dependence

Place dependence, defined by Shumaker and Stokols (1981), is described such that a person evaluates one place to another with an emotional bond, making a comparison between them (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Trentelman, 2009). The chosen option can appear to be the best one among poor and negative alternatives (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Therefore, one of accompanied concerns is that place dependence can limit people achieving their goals (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Tester et al., 2011).

Place Attachment

Place attachment is generally construed as an emotional bond or link to a place,

primarily affective people's feelings (Altman & Low, 1992; Trentelman, 2009). Place

attachment is developed by perceptions and experiences of psychological and physical

environments over time. Yi-Fu Tuan (1974, 1977) is among the first and most known

scholar who examines place attachment (Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Trentelman, 2009).

Tuan (1977) notes that place attachment is developed through subconscious processes

with the help of "memory of sounds and smells, or communal activities and homely

pleasures accumulated over time" (Tuan, 1977, p.159). Interestingly, Riley (1992) also

notes that people's attachment to places may not occur consciously or rationally, rather

that place attachment is created "beyond cognition, preference, or judgment" (Riley, 1992,

p.13). Then, this point can be interpreted that place attachment is not necessarily

associated with neighborhood characteristics or neighborhood reputations, which are

socially constructed. Indeed, in the study by Tester et al. (2011), neighborhood

characteristics, either negative or positive, did not explain place and community

attachment. However, social support, social cohesion, and social control were related to

the place and community attachments.

As already mentioned, community attachment should be addressed along with the

discussion of place attachment. Emphasizing the importance of community participation,

development, and redevelopment, researchers have examined how residents feel about

communities and how these feelings affect communities at large (Comstock, Dickinson,

Marshall, Soobader, Turbin, Buchenau, & Litt, 2010; Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Tester et

al., 2011). The focus is on the emotional relationship between residents and their

communities. Given that both place attachment and community attachment deal with

people's attachment to specific localities, place attachment and community attachment seem to be discussed in writing interchangeably.

The definitions of community are inclusive, geographically and conceptually (Meister, 2006; Trentelman, 2009). The definitions of community by Meister (2006, pp324-325) are as follows:

- Individual residents in immediate geographic or catchment area

- Nonprofit and community-based organization (e.g., congregations, advocacy groups, organizations, universities, foundations, service clubs)

- Local, state, or federal government officials and agencies

- Informal community groups (e.g., social clubs)

- Professionals, merchants, or other commercial enterprises

- Sector (e.g., the business sector or the independent sector) in a city

- Geographic area

Community tends to refer to neighbors within near areas, social groups, and geographic settings. Increasingly, recent research, within disciplines of environmental psychology and recreational tourism, has brought large settings into the discussion of community attachment. The research has been highlighted at natural and leisure places (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Stedman, 2005). The assumption is that sensing a place may differ by residential status, such as tourists, short-term residents, and permanent residents (Hay, 1998) because longer residency helps develop attachment to place. Community attachment also works with exploring social dynamics and internal and external processes in nature. According to Trentelman (2009), community attachment includes networks,

communication, and cultures.

Mobility and Place Attachment: Love and Hate Relationship

In this study, the researcher examines place attachment and residential mobility through a qualitative study. Place attachment is used to explore people's subjective emotions and bonds with places. As above mentioned, place attachment involves one's positive, affirmative emotions toward a specific place. That is, one individual's understanding of place can be different from others' understanding. Understanding of place may not follow constructed and objective characteristics of the community or functionality of places (Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Manzo et al., 2008; Tester et al., 2011). For families, residential mobility can range from a house to another house within the same or nearby community. Therefore, the researcher focuses on place attachment rather than community attachment.

Geertz (1996) notes that place concepts are "highly qualitative, complex and involved concepts that cannot be reduced to a quantitative calculation (cited in Larson, De Freitas, & Hicks, 2013, p.227)." Since place attachment is formed through perceptions and experiences, it has been examined through a variety of qualitative studies (Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Stedman, Beckley, Wallace, & Ambard, 2004). Studies have explored how people perceived place attachment on their current places or moves. The idea of the studies is that attachment to places becomes disrupted by relocation and environment events, such as hurricane (Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Starling, 2012). In recent years, research on place attachment and mobility has proliferated in view of the issues of relocated residents of public housing transformation through a qualitative studies (Manzo,

Kleit, & Couch, 2008; Tester et al, 2011). This work increases our understanding of the context within which low-income families make decision about moving.

Tester et al. (2011) found that the majority percentage of public housing residents expressed place attachment to their housing. In particular, disadvantaged populations among the residents, such as senior and the disabled residents, had stronger attachment than younger family public housing residents. Studies on the links between poverty and place show that poor structure of family and neighborhood reproduce the downward cycle of poverty (Buendia, 2011; McDonald & Richards, 2008). Fullilove (2004) argued that segregation created *islands of black life*, which meant black archipelagoes as Fullilove called it. Simms (2008, p.75) mentioned that "(W)ithin the boundaries of the archipelago, there is a circumscribed freedom and sense of belonging, yet the place is not freely chosen but maintained by default." In this manner, Simms (2008) describes the relationship between the decision of moving and places as "love and hate relationship" for low-income families. How do low-income families react under the circumscribed places? How do they perceive place and mobility under their own circumstances?

The current study embarked from this ambivalent inquiry. To understand a choice of low-income families in the concentrated poverty neighborhoods, this study pays particular attention to residential mobility and place attachment by using a qualitative study. The key driver of the families is their decision to participate in the Choice Is Yours program, a school choice program in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Prior to discussing the methodology of inquiry, the next section discusses mobility programs in both housing policy and school policy. The policies are designed to provide better opportunities

through mobility, which are targeted toward low-income families living in disadvantaged neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.

<div align="center">**Housing and School Choice Programs**</div>

Housing Mobility Programs

Historical Overview of Housing Mobility Programs

Beginning in the late 1980s, the federal government dramatically shifted its approach towards low-income families by redeveloping the most devastated public housing and relocating the residents. The programs that seek to improve the lives of low-income families by providing housing and neighborhood choices are called housing mobility programs (Goetz, 2004). The federal government provides housing mobility by combining two sets of programs: tenant-based and unit-based mobility programs (Briggs, 1997; Goetz, 2002). Tenant-based mobility programs provide housing choice vouchers, which can be used to subsidize rent in the private market. Unit-based mobility programs fund the construction or rehabilitation of public housing. The following section provides an overview of four housing mobility programs - the Gautreaux demonstration project, Moving to Opportunity, the Gautreaux II, and HOPE VI.

The Gautreaux demonstration project is widely regarded as the first tenant-based mobility program (Briggs, 1997; Popkin, Buron, Levy, & Cunningham, 2000). In 1966, Dorothy Gautreaux, a Black resident in Chicago public housing, filed suit against the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on behalf of 40,000 African-American families in Chicago public housing. The suit argued that CHA discriminated against tenants by placing public

housing in areas already suffering from concentrated poverty and racial segregation

(Kaufman & Rosenbaum, 1992). Ten years later, the case, *Hills v. Gautreaux* (1976),

went to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court agreed that CHA had assigned the

tenants on a racially segregated basis, in violation of the 1968 Civil Rights Act. Then,

the Supreme Court required HUD to help public housing residents in Chicago using

housing choice vouchers to move to predominantly White suburban areas in

neighborhoods with no more than thirty percent of black population (Rosenbaum &

Zuberi, 2010).

Between 1976 and 1998, over 7,000 selected Black families from public housing

projects or on the waiting lists in Chicago were able to move from public housing to non-

concentrated poverty neighborhoods in either urban or suburban locations (Polikoff, 2006,

as cited in Rosenbaum & Zuberi, 2010). This led researchers to investigate the effects of

each group that had different treatments. One treatment was to relocate to suburbs with

mostly white population (over 70%), and another one was to move urban areas,

neighborhoods with mostly black and low-income families (Rosenbaum & Zuberi, 2010).

After several years, the relocated families who moved to white-dominant suburbs had

different outcomes from the urban movers (Boyd et al., 2010). The suburban children

were less likely than their urban counterparts to drop out of high school, and were more

likely to graduate from high school and even college through additional academic

resources and positive role models (Kaufman & Rosenbaum, 1992). In terms of

integration, the suburban children seemed to interact with white middle-class children in

the neighborhoods (Resenbaum, 1995). This proved social and racial integration (as seen

in theories) benefits low-income families and children. The positive education and employment outcomes (rates of employment) of the original Gautreaux project impressed scholars and policy makers, and became a driving force in the development of recent housing mobility programs (Popkin et al., 2000; Rosenbaum & Zuberi, 2010).

Authorized by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992, the Moving To Opportunity (MTO) program was designed to assist very low-income families with children in public housing or receiving project-based assistance to move into neighborhoods with low concentrations of poverty (Goering, 2003). About 5,000 families of the MTO were randomly assigned to one of three groups in five cities – Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City (Rosenbaum & Zuberi, 2010). The three groups were the MTO vouchers group, a Section 8 vouchers group, and a no subsidies group. These groups are referred to as an experimental group, a comparison group, and a control group, respectively (Johnson, Ladd, & Ludwig, 2002; Skobba, 2008). The three groups allowed for an experimental study design. In addition, unlike the original Gautreaux, the MTO focused on the poverty rate by Census tracts, not racial composition (Johnson et al., 2002). The families of the experimental group moved to very low poverty areas (poverty rates with no more than ten percent in 1990 Census tracts) through receiving counselling services and assistance in finding housing. The comparison group was able to move to lower poverty areas with Section 8 vouchers, however; the rate of poverty was not a set requirement and the group did not receive housing counseling or relocation search services. The participants assigned to the control group received neither any vouchers nor services (Johnson et al., 2002). The outcomes are

discussed in the following section.

The court-ordered desegregation case, the original Gautreaux program, was replicated with similar residential motility programs through subsequent cases, such as *United States v. City of Yonkers* (1985) in Yonkers, *Hollman v. Cisneros* (1992) in Minneapolis, and *Young v. Pierce* (1995) in East Texas (Goetz, 2002; Johnson et al., 2002). In 2001, CHA, in response to ongoing litigation, implemented to offer the Gautreaux II program (Boyd et al., 2010). Similarly to the original Gautreaux, the Gautreaux II allowed low-income families to relocate into affluent neighborhoods through the Gautreaux II vouchers. The Gautreaux II qualified the "opportunity" neighborhoods based on both poverty rates (less than 23.49%) and racial compositions (less than 30% black) (Pashup et al., 2005) (For the description of program guidelines for moved neighborhoods of the original Gautreaux, MTO, and the Gautreaux II, see Table 1). The Gautreaux II vouchers seem to be a quick solution for low-income families and provide free choices for the families. However, the families had limited time to use vouchers (for six months). With the vouchers, the families were able to move out from high-poverty areas quickly rather than "spending years on the lists for scattered-site public housing in more desirable areas or a standard Housing Choice Voucher" (Pashup et al., 2005, p. 366). After one year, those who moved to low-poverty areas "would be free to move and use their voucher anywhere they chose, regardless of the racial or poverty composition of the neighborhood" (Pashup et al., 2005, p. 366).

One approach to combining tenant-based and unit-based housing mobility programs is the HOPE VI (short for Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere). The

HOPE VI presents a much more significant change for families than adapting to the

tenant-based mobility programs. In 1989, the National Commission was established to

investigate and report on severely distressed public housing projects. In 1992, the

Commission reported approximately 86,000 units (about six percent of public housing)

were severely distressed (Goetz, 2002). After submitting the report to Congress, HUD

was authorized to help public housing residents to move out of "the pocket of poverty"

(Manzo et al., 2008). The HOPE VI has several main directions: 1) demolition of

distressed public housing, 2) redevelopment of the original neighborhoods to lower

density and mixed-use communities that would be mixed-income and mixed-race, and 3)

relocation of the residents in non-poverty neighborhoods with housing choice vouchers.

Since its establishment, many distressed public housing projects were redeveloped into

mixed-income developments and large partnerships were established (Goetz, 2002).

Since the inception of HOPE VI in 1992, more than 254 HOPE VI grants (a total of $6.1

billion) have been awarded (U.S. HUD, 2011), 129 projects were developed in 80

different sites (kingsley, Johnson, Pettit, 2003), and 56,221 households were relocated

between 1994 and 2004 (Manzo et al., 2008).

In FY 2010, HOPE VI grants were eliminated and a new Choice Neighborhoods

program was proposed based on insights from the HOPE VI. The Choice Neighborhoods

expanded capacity beyond public and assisted housing. The Choice Neighborhoods

includes more comprehensive approaches to improving neighborhoods with a wider

variety of public services: quality education, public transit, employment opportunities,

and safe neighborhoods (U.S. HUD, 2011). This change recognizes that more effort is

needed to help the most vulnerable families in order to promote their economic

improvement and to provide better education and safe neighborhoods for their children.

The descriptions of housing mobility programs are presented in Table 2.

Table 1.

Guidelines for Moved Neighborhoods of the original Gautreaux, MTO, and the Gautreaux II

Guidelines for moved neighborhoods	Original Gautreaux	MTO	Gautreaux II
Poverty rate	No guideline	Less than 10% in the 1990 Census (2)	Less than 23.49% (3)
Racial ratio	More than 70% White (1)	No guideline	Less than 30% black (3)

Note: Source (1) from Rosenbaum & Zuberi (2010), (2) from Johnson et al. (2002), and from (3) Pashup et al. (2005)

Table 2.

Description of Housing Mobility Programs

	Program	Year	Intended treatment of participants	Participants	Original neighborhood	School	Location	Moving location of the participants
Tenant-based mobility	Original Gautreaux	1976~	1) Suburban communities with using Housing Choice Vouchers 2) Revitalizing urban communities with using Housing Choice Vouchers	Voluntary African American public housing residents	Not changed	Changed	Chicago	Limited locations Not by families but rather by housing counselor assignment and position on wait-list
	MTO	1992~	1) Experimental group: moving with a MTO voucher, receiving relocation counselling and search assistance, having the requirement to live in new placement for a year 2) Comparison group: moving with a Section 8 voucher, receiving no search assistance 3) Control group: receiving any vouchers and assistance, retaining project-based assistance	Voluntary Public housing residents in poor neighborhoods	Not changed	Sometimes changed	Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Boston, Baltimore	Limited locations to the experimental group Unlimited locations to the comparison group
	Gautreaux II	2002~		Voluntary, but selected by criteria orientation attendees	Not changed	Sometimes changed	Chicago	Limited locations
Unit- & Tenant-based mobility	HOPE VI	1992~	1) moving the original residents with Section 8 voucher to unlimited locations 2) returning the original residents to redeveloped mixed-income development	Involuntary Public housing residents in poor neighborhoods	Changed	Sometimes changed	The most severely distressed public housings in US	Unlimited locations

Note: Adapted ideas of the table format from Table 2. *Elements of housing and school choice programs* (p. 463-464), by DeLuca & Dayton (2009)

Outcomes of Housing Mobility Programs

In 1989, Kaufman and Rosenbaum (1992) interviewed the suburban-moved children of families those who relocated between 1976 and 1981 through the original Gautreaux program. The authors found that the suburban-moved children showed more successful outcomes in education and employment than the city-moved children (Kaufman & Rosenbaum, 1992). The suburban movers were more likely to be in high school, in a college track, and enrolled in a college. Also, they were more likely to be employed in the formal job sector and paid with benefits than their urban-moved counterparts (Kaufman & Rosenbaum, 1992). Positive improvement from the original Gautreaux program is described in several studies (e.g., Rosenbaum, 1995; Rosenbaum & Popkin, 1991a; Rosenbaum, Popkin, Kaufman, & Rusin, 1991b). According to the follow-up study fifteen-years after placement, over sixty percent of suburban-moved families remained in the suburbs (Keels, Duncan, DeLuca, Mendenhall, & Rosenbaum, 2003). This result proved social and racial integration in affluent neighborhoods benefits low-income families and children.

Unlike the original Gautreaux, the Gautreaux II and MTO have not uncovered significant impacts on families (Boyd et al., 2010; Briggs et al., 2008; Pashup et al., 2005; Rosenbaum & DeLuca, 2008). First of all, spatially moved distances from their original neighborhoods are worth presenting. While the families of the original Gautreaux were required to move far away from their original neighborhoods (average 25 miles), over half of the families of Gautreaux II moved within the city of Chicago, and majority (84 percent) of the families of MTO was less than 10 miles (Rosenbaum & Zuberi, 2010) (for

the descriptions of moved distances of the housing mobility programs from the original

neighborhoods, see Table 3). At the time when the Gautreaux II was implemented, many

of areas within the city of Chicago were gentrified (Boyd et al., 2010). Accordingly,

forty-eight percent of tracts within the city of Chicago was qualified based on the poverty

and racial guidelines (Pashup et al., 2005). Pashup et al. (2005) pointed out that the city

of Chicago looked like a "checkerboard of qualifying and nonqualifying tracts" (p.367).

That is to say, many of families might not need to change schools of their children, while

nearly 100 percent of the families participating in the original Gautreaux changed school

districts (Rosenbaum & Zuberi, 2010). According to Briggs et al. (2008), some of

families of the MTO did not change schools in order to preserve children's friendships

and protect them from potential safety concerns. Therefore, those not changing schools,

possibly, influenced the null and mixed outcomes of the Gautreaux II and MTO regarding

education and employment. The HOPE VI projects show consistent findings (see more

details in Goetz, 2010).

Table 3.

Moved Distances of Housing Mobility Programs

	Origianal Gautreaux	MTO	Gautreaux II	HOPE VI
From the original neighborhoods	Average 25 miles (1)	Less than 10 miles (over 50% of the families) (1)	Remained within the city of Chicago or nearby suburbs (84% of the families) (1)	14% moved to suburbs in five sites (2) 2% left from the city of Chicago (3) A median distance was 2.9 miles (4)

Note: Source (1) from Rosenbaum & Zuberi (2010), (2) from Comey (2007), (3) from Fischer
(2003), and (4) from Kingsley et al. (2003)

Through a qualitative study in three MTO sites of Boston, Los Angeles, and New York, Briggs et al., (2008) found that families made little improvement with children's schooling and educational achievement. The families even made secondary move to worse neighborhoods and schools. Brigg et al., (2008) explained that the families lacked information and social networks in new neighborhoods and schools and met with structural constraints (a mouth-to-mouth referrals) influencing their relocation choices (Brigg et al., 2008; DeLuca & Rosenblatt, 2010). For low-income mothers in the Baltimore MTO site, the relocated placement was positively influential in terms of health and safety (DeLuca & Rosenblatt, 2010). However, most children of the mothers did not transfer to well-performing schools. One of explanations, even excluding the fact that they did not move to opportunity-rich neighborhoods, was that the mothers seemed to more consider accessibility of transportation, proximity to employment and networks, and safety than academic atmosphere of schools (DeLuca & Rosenblatt, 2010). The results are seen to be the repeated "mechanism" of low-income families (Brigg et al., 2008; DeLuca & Rosenblatt, 2010).

Recently, the final MTO evaluation after 10 to 15 years was conducted, including more than 4,600 families in the five MTO sites (Sanbonmatsu, Ludwig, Katz, Gennetian, Duncan, Kessler, Adam, McDade, & Lindau, 2011). Consistent with the early findings, the MTO provided improved safety and health for low-income families (in particular female mothers), and, overall, improved housing quality and conditions for them. However, there are no significant economic improvement in terms of assistance dependence, employment or/ housing affordability. Furthermore, the study findings

indicate a mixed-effect on housing stability (homelessness, doubling-up). For children, education improved slightly, but criminal behaviors continue to be observed.

Compared to the MTO, it is early and risky to evaluate the outcomes of the Gautreaux II due to the relatively short time since implementation and small number of participants. Instead, researchers have evaluated the risk of program processes and the reasons of not moving (Boyd et al., 2010; Pashup et al., 2005). Pashup and colleagues (2005) interviewed 71 mover families and 20 non-mover families (85 percent of equal response rate) of the Gautreaux II in Chicago. Going beyond to present its outcomes, Pashup et al. (2005) pointed out the strict criteria and difficult processes of the program, mentioning that the Gautreaux II "was ambitious and difficult to implement" (p.386). Unfortunately, in spite of at-length orientation and counselling services, the participants often felt unclear understanding about program processes and insufficient information on housing searches and schools choices.

Likewise, Boyd et al. (2010) expressed that the Gautreaux II was "far less durable" (p.119). Through an interview study of three-year experiences after the Gautreaux II implementation, Boyd et al.(2010) found that the families felt a lack of social networks in the new neighborhoods due to distance from kin, they had difficulties with transportation, and their children experienced racial discrimination in the schools. The families had freedom to move after one year placement, and 81 percent of the families made their secondary moves to poor and racially segregated neighborhoods (Boyd et al., 2010). On the contrary, the factors for those who made successful stable moves developed good relationships with landlords and new neighbors, experienced closeness with kin and

friends, were employed, and solved transportation difficulties by possessing a car.

The evaluation findings regarding youth behaviors and criminal activity revealed mixed results from both the original Gautreaux and MTO programs. In the original Gautreaux, the suburban-moved boys were less likely to experience crimes than the suburban-moved girls (Keels, 2008). Kling, Ludwig, and Katz (2005) examined delinquency and criminal behaviors with five MTO sites. They found that the children in the experimental group recorded fewer crimes than those in the control group. However, several years later, crimes (property crime arrests) increased for suburban-moved boys more than control group boys, while suburban-moved girls were persistently less convicted for crimes.

Some studies showed that the original residents of HOPE VI projects lived in lower poverty-rate neighborhoods than their past ones (Kingsley et al., 2003; Popkin et al., 2004). However, the new neighborhoods were still considered to be poor and segregated (Kingsley et al., 2003). It is true that it is early to be discussing on the outcomes of HOPE VI. However, beyond discussing the outcomes of HOPE VI, the distinguished features of HOPE VI from other housing mobility programs are worth mentioning. That is in the participation; the participation is involuntary and relocations are not limited (Goetz, 2004). The participating families of HOPE VI were not selected and not promised that their relocations would be better than their past neighborhoods. This section discussed outcomes families and children experienced with housing mobility programs. The constraints and challenges of low-income families by relocation remain to be discussed. The next section expands the discussion about this concern.

Critiques of Housing Mobility Programs

Popkin et al. (2000) expressed concerns regarding serial adaptation of the original Gautreaux, stating that "it would be a terrible irony if the ultimate legacy of Gautreaux project were the re-concentration of very poor families in substandard housing" (p. 937). The MTO and Gautreaux II, which are designed in the spirit of the original Gautreaux, have raised questions by policy-makers and scholars due to their poor or mixed outcomes (Boyd et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2002; Rosenbaum & Zuberi, 2010). The researchers agree that the impact and outcomes of the original Gautreaux should be carefully evaluated.

According to Kaufman and Rosebaum (1992), in principle, the participants of the original Gautreaux had choices of areas. However, in reality, their choices of locations were limited to designated areas. Going into the details, the areas were determined by the status of the participants or housing agents instead of preferences of the participants (Briggs et al., 2008; Rosebaum, & Zuberi, 2010). Therefore, participation of the original Gautreaux was not truly voluntary. Actually, the Gautreaux II and other mobility programs selected the eligible participants through program criteria, although participation remained to voluntary (Goetz, 2002). For example, the criteria of Gautreaux II was that participants "were current legal CHA lease-holders who were not behind on their rent, had not damaged their unit, and had no misdemeanor convictions in the past two years (Pashup et al., 2005, p.366). However, the participants of the original Gautreaux were heavily screened by the CHA and housing counselors based on income, rental behaviors, and house management skills in order to reassure landlords and

neighbors in new placement (Goetz, 2002). Then, the agency and counselors assigned the participants to urban or suburban neighborhoods. Therefore, the original Gautreaux is considered a quasi-random experiment, while MTO is a random experiment (Rosebaum, & Zuberi, 2010). Even though the criteria of the original Gautreaux restricted choices, its limitations somehow brought positive outcomes for the families. The selected families of the original Gautreaux do not represent the entire population of low-income families and children in high-poverty neighborhoods. In other words, it is unclear whether the outcomes were the ones proved by the theoretical assumption of the Neighborhoods Effect Models or whether the outcomes came from the family itself (Goetz, 2002).

By saying that, a rising concern is on the cream skimming effect of successful program evaluations. The cream skimming effect has been widely discussed in regards to school choice programs. The term is originally coined by Levin (1998): children from better-off families are more likely to take advantages of school choice programs. Levin (1998) classifies the types of those who are more likely to seek school choice programs as having: 1) advantaged accessibility to transportation, 2) experienced better access to information, 3) higher socioeconomic status, and 4) higher educational accomplishments. Therefore, its side effect is that more educationally motivated and wealthier families leave public schools in inner cities. By doing so, the loss effecting school may expand to the neighborhoods.

The circumstances of residents and public schools in inner cities may get even worse as "creaming" results in those with the most resources leaving the community. Housing mobility programs are also likely to have this "undesired effect" in original,

concentrated-poverty neighborhoods, and this effect may further aggregate segregation both racially and economically (Goetz, 2002; 2004; Orfield & Wallace, 2007). On these basic grounds, according to Goetz, the movers participating in housing mobility programs likely had better resources than non-movers, and more advantaged families were selected in order to make their settlement in new neighborhoods more likely to be successful. The system then likely sorted out relatively higher motivated and better-off families from concentrated-poverty neighborhoods. In the following section, several concerns are presented; 1) how movers and non-movers differ, 2) who are the left behind in the original neighborhoods, 3) how mobility programs affect the disadvantaged families who stay behind in the original neighborhoods, and 4) how the original neighborhoods have been influenced.

In the Gautreaux II, the process itself was costly for non-movers in terms of time and experiences (Pashup et al., 2005). Going back to the discussion on the criteria and process, in order to obtain vouchers families were initially required to pass program criteria. Then, the families had to attend lengthy orientation sessions. The orientations were held 48 times over 10 months with each session lasting over 3 hours (Pashup, et al., 2005). The families from the study of Pashup et al. (2005) also mentioned that the program staff members were inaccessible and they had difficulties communicating with them. Given these situations, it might not be easy for the families to move out unless they were highly self-motivated and relatively affluent. For the non-movers, the authors found that barriers included unfamiliarity with where qualified neighborhoods were located, distance from kin and friends, limited accessibility of transportation, and health problems

(Boyd et al., 2010; Pashup et al., 2005). Other factors that led families to give up were family situations, such as unavailability or affordability of rent units in the private housing market suitable for large-size families (Pashup et al., 2005). Similar barriers were found in evaluations of MTO programs. For example, Shroder (2002) found that movers of MTO were more likely to be smaller and younger households, and had fewer ties with the original neighborhoods and more motivation to move. In a follow-up study of the MTO in Chicago from 1996 to 1998, Cunningham and Popkin (2002) reported that non-movers were more likely to experience barriers such as housing affordability, transportation accessibility, and insufficient information than movers.

In terms of the settlement in new neighborhoods, the involuntary system also shares common barriers to successful transitions. Given that the original residents "have no choice but to move, because their housing is torn down" (Goetz, 2004), much attention focused on movers or relocatees. Researchers found that the original residents of the HOPE VI demolition projects were faced with multiple problems, not only financial constraints but also difficulty in attaining adequate information to search for alternative housing, especially for those with limited social networks and/or large families (Popkin et al., 2004). They had difficulties in private housing market with unavailable rental units and costs of paying utilities (Popkin et al., 2004). Although it was against the law, discrimination in housing was apparent as well (Pashup et al., 2005). With the constraints, the original residents moved to areas where rents are affordable and landlords accept the families regardless their desired choices.

Likewise, these constraints were reflected in the study by Kingsley, Johnson, and

Pettit (2003). Kingsley et al. (2003) found that 49 percent of participants in the HOPE VI program from 1993 to 1998 actually ended up in public housing rather than having moved into private market rental housing or homeownership. Using the focus group interviews of movers, Smith (2002) examined the moving decision-making process and the reasons people choose to move. Even though the initial moving decisions were more about local services such as schools, access to shopping, and transportation, their final decisions were generally determined by housing availability and affordability. Through in-person interview data from the High Point HOPE VI project in Seattle, Kleit and Manzo (2006) also examined the differences between the actual and initial staying and moving behavior of original residents. Preliminary choice considerations included neighborhood quality, such as schools, familiarity, safe and good neighbors, quality amenities, public transportation, and medical care. In their actual decisions, however, households with older aged heads and large family sizes hindered the residents from moving due to housing market constraints. Overall, in the HOPE VI program, unsuccessful movers are more likely to be under limited circumstances and successful movers tend to be relatively more advantaged families that enabled them to relocate into better neighborhoods and settle well.

Next, concerns of those who stay behind in the original neighborhoods and how the neighborhoods are affected are examined. The Gautreaux and MTO programs were not targeted to change or improve the original neighborhoods, but, concentrated instead on public housing residents. With the Gautreaux legacy and MTO, little study has been conducted regarding the original neighborhoods (Johnson et al., 2002). Therefore, the

review of this concern focuses on the HOPE VI program. One might argue that inner-cities with or without HOPE VI many neighborhoods have been developed since the public housing transformation occured. Such development would bring benefits to the original neighborhoods and those who stay behind in those neighborhoods as well. This is because the original neighborhoods would be redeveloped to be mixed with moderate and high income families. This may be true, however, in actuality, mixed development or housing voucher opportunities cannot guarantee benefits to original lower income residents. As Johnson, Ladd, and Ludwig stated:

> As far as is known no systematic research has examined the effects of housing voucher programmes on origin neighborhoods. Moreover, there is no social science basis for predicting how the social composition of origin neighborhoods might change in response to large-scale housing-voucher programmes, or how any reductions in origin neighborhood poverty rates or increases in the proportion of middle-class residents will affect the low-income families who remain in these areas (Johnson et al., 2002, p.133).

Despite the limited study about the original neighborhoods, some researchers have suggested that the original, left-behind neighborhoods would experience no "desired effect" by out-migration of motivated and better-off families (Popkin et al., 2000; Geotz, 2004). Therefore, as pointed out, the neighborhoods are likely to be entangled in worse situations when motivated and resourceful families relocate elsewhere.

Meanwhile, what research on HOPE VI has found is that very few of the original residents returned to occupy the newly developed mixed-income housing (Joseph & Chaskin, 2012; Kingsley et al., 2003; Popkin et al., 2004). One possible explanation is that many redevelopment projects might not been completed by the time when the studies were conducted. The other explanation is the one-for-one replacement, originating from

the 1987 Housing and Community Development Act failed to materialize. The one-for-one replacement was not the requirement when redeveloping under the HOPE VI program guidelines (Goetz, 2002). Thus, housing authorities were not required to construct the same number of affordable units as had accommodated the original residents (Popkin et al., 2004). In addition, redevelopment and gentrification have increased housing prices (Goetz, 2002). In main cities, like the city of Chicago, public housing projects (c.f., the Cabrini-Green project or the Henry Horner Homes) are located at the edge of the downtown area (Steinberg, 2010). With housing redevelopment, a great deal of neighborhood infrastructure with private housing market investments has generated the areas unaffordable for the original public housing residents who wanted to return. Along with increased housing prices, Chicago's central city neighborhoods have changed in terms of demography with a higher median educational attainment and income for adults from 2000 to 2009 (Synder, 2011).

Since the 1990s, public policy makers have supported mixed income development as a means of revitalizing neighborhoods and ameliorating poverty, particularly for transforming the distressed public housing (Goetz, 2002; Popkins et al., 2000; Smith, 2002). In terms of integration, has HOPE VI reached its goal? In the redeveloped site of HOPE VI in Seattle, Kleit (2005) found that the outcome was the creation of ethnic diversity however the groups of owners and renters were ethnically homogenous. Using in-depth interviews with relocated residents at redevelopments in Chicago, Joseph and Chaskin (2012) found that non-returners expressed that they were afraid of possible stigma from higher-income residents. According to Briggs's (1997) study of Yonkers

54

mobility, teenagers returned to their old neighborhoods to hang out with their old friends, or parents returned to go their old churches even though they moved. Mixed income development that encourages people across a wide range of socioeconomics has introduced challenges to market rate renter, homeowners, and subsidized renters, as one calls it an "imaginary integration" (Steinberg, 2010).

Meanwhile, one possible explanation about why integration did not work well may be cultural differences of social networks and social ties. For example, according to Turley (2003), even among the homogeneous groups results varied; white children were positively impacted by relocation to better neighborhoods, but this was not the case among black children. This pattern shares findings with the study of Briggs (1997), which implies links between social and emotional attachment to a place and outcomes for children. Through examining lived experiences of distressed public housing residents before redevelopment, a qualitative study of Manzo, Kleit, and Couch (2008) revealed that the public housing community itself was well-functioning by residents who were attached to the community and supported with neighbors. This might be somehow different from the assumption of neighborhood effect models or the promise of public housing transformation.

School Choice Programs

Historical Overview of School Choice Programs

As seen the outcomes of the housing mobility programs, educational outcomes of relocation to more affluent neighborhoods was one of the successful impacts on children. School choice grew in popularity during the late 1980s, but the concept of choice in

school was not new. Before the beginning of school choice programs, parents had to move to housing in neighborhoods with higher quality schools or pay for school tuition out of their own pockets. Current choice programs have deep roots (for the summaries of school choices, see Table 4). However, not all families had equal opportunities to participate in school choice programs. Some families were not allowed to send their children to their desired schools (see Kafer, 2007). As a result, many school choice programs have evolved through subsequent court decisions. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation in schools through its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (Frankenberg, 2009). Two historical events followed the decision; 1) the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA-Title 1) was approved and 2) the Equality of Educational Opportunity Study, also known as a Coleman Report, was released in 1966 (Buendia, 2011). These reports captured an unequal gap between the poor and the middle-income, "the poor families were lacking the fundamental knowledge essentials as well as a family structure whose values were conducive to socializing their children into a pro-education outlook (Buendia, 2011, p.2)."

However, while *Brown* held that segregated schools were unconstitutional, the racial integration of schools was threatened by housing discrimination and neighborhood segregation. The Civil Rights Act of 1968 sought to achieve racial balance and equity in housing as well as employment and education (Smith, 1995).

Table 4.

The Summaries of School Choices

School Choices	
Year	Description
1954	The decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*
1955	A school voucher was first proposed by economist Milton Friedman
1955	Minnesota enacted the nation's first tax deduction for K-12 expenses, including tuition at private schools, transportation, textbooks and other supplies
1958	The National Defense Education Act: federal funds to local public schools for science, math, foreign language instruction, and counseling services
1965	The Elementary and Secondary Education Act to provide federal funds for local public schools.
1968	The Civil Rights Act
1972	School voucher programs providing federal funding were first proposed for low income and minority students to use in any participating public or independent schools in Alum Rock County, California. However, the program was rejected
1980s	Re-proposed Magnet schools
1988	Open enrollment was first enacted in Minnesota
1990s	Restarted School Voucher program from Milwaukee Parental Choice Program in Wisconsin
1992	Charter schools are first opened in St. Paul, Minnesota
2001	The No Child Left Behind Act
2003	Congress enacted The District of Columbia School Choice Incentive Program

Types of School Choices

Currently, various types of school choices are available to parents, including inter-and intra-district public school choices, school vouchers, magnet schools, charter schools, tax credit for education expenses, and homeschooling (Kafer, 2007). According to Quartz and Martinez (2007), school choices can be classified with two sets: *school-typed* and *boundary-based choices*. School-typed choices include charter schools, magnet schools,

and school vouchers. Boundary-based choices refer to crossing geographic limits on school enrollment. These types of choices include public school choices, such as open enrollment, which include inter-district and intra-district choice and neighborhood choice zones.

A school voucher program is a form of school choices by which parents can choose from public, private, or religious schools. School vouchers have a long history. At the same time as the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, economist Milton Friedman proposed the first education choice concept, called a school voucher (Kafer, 2007). Since 1955, the idea of choice by Friedman slowly advanced to provide benefits for families and children. In 1958, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act, which provided federal funds to local public schools to enhance science, math, foreign language instruction, and also to provide counseling services. In 1965, Congress enacted the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to provide federal funds for local public schools. Particularly, for at-risk neighborhoods, school voucher had been politically contentious. In 1972, school voucher programs providing federal funding were first proposed for low income and minority students to use in any participating public or independent schools in Alum Rock County, California. However, the voucher program was rejected and then withered away (Kafer, 2007).

In the 1990s, school voucher programs regained attention due to the low quality public school systems in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Followed by the implementation of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, many states began voucher programs (DeLuca & Dayton, 2009). School voucher programs are still controversial. Some believe

that school vouchers guarantee a good quality of education within a safe and academically adequate atmosphere. Others argue that school vouchers promote competition and government funds are not using properly in that a portion of White families in urban school districts are able to transfer their children to private and faith-based schools. Government funds are therefore delivered to the schools that already have with sufficient resources. As White families take advantage of opportunities to transfer their children to private and faith-based schools public school segregation has deepened.

Other school-typed choices are magnet schools and charter schools, which are specialized public schools. Magnet schools began in the late 1960s, and proliferated in the late 1970s. In keeping with the meaning of *magnet*, magnet schools are designed to draw students from wide areas. Magnet schools have three main goals of 1) promoting racial balances, 2) providing a specialized curriculum or new approach in education, and 3) improving achievement. To accomplish the goals, Magnet schools tend to be located in urban areas and encourage students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds to enroll in the schools by controlling enrollment (Magnet Schools of America, 2007). In 1992, Charter schools were first opened in St. Paul, Minnesota. Charter schools are public schools that are organized by parents and operate independently from school districts. Because of the uniqueness, Charter schools may contribute concentrating students with certain racial/ethnic students (Frankenberg & Lee, 2003).

The concept of boundary-based choices began in the late 1980s. For most of the twentieth century, students were enrolled in schools within their geographic boundary neighborhoods. Since school characteristics are closely associated with neighborhood

characteristics, the goal of boundary-based choice programs addresses educational gap

and disparity public schools between in urban and suburban areas. Even though many

possible reasons for the gap in educational achievement can be granted (e.g. curricula,

teachers, school resources, and support of parents), place-based inequalities may be the

strong cause. The first attempt to break the geographically educational gap was to give

public school choices that aim at addressing a wide opportunity for parents to choose

schools out of their school districts, and, by doing so, achieving racial balances (Witte,

Carlson, & Lavery, 2008).

Urban Public School Choices

The conceptual framework of the current study focuses on public school choices in

inner-city Minneapolis that aim to provide an equal and enhanced opportunity. The field

of education has paid a great deal of attention on an urban schools and a particular urban

population in describing urban education issues (Buendia, 2011). According to the

National Household Education Survey, the percentage of students attending public

schools in the United States within their neighborhoods decreased from 80% in 1993 to

69% in 2007 (Herrmann, Burroughs, & Plucker, 2009). Although public school choice

options become common, little research has examined open enrollment (Herrmann et al.,

2009; Witte et al., 2008).

Open enrollment has unique approaches in its flexibility and availability

(Herrmann et al., 2009). The flexibility is whether participation of open enrollment by

each school district is required, that it is, is it mandatory or voluntary. As of 2009, 21

states have mandatory open enrollment, 12 states have voluntary open enrollment, and 13

states use both types (Education Commission of the States, 2008, as cited in Herrmann et al., 2009). Availability means whether a school district accepts students within the districts (intra-district) or those living in other districts (inter-district). Therefore, classification of open enrollment includes four groups: mandatory intra-district, mandatory inter-district, voluntary intra-district, and voluntary inter-district. The researcher focuses on open enrollment in Minneapolis, which is based on a mandatory inter-district program.

Open Enrollment in Minneapolis

In 1988, Minnesota passed open enrollment registration, and, in 1991, Minnesota enacted an open enrollment policy. Early adoption of open enrollment made Minnesota a leader in the nation. Many states have enacted open enrollment and most of these states codify the requirement of open enrollment; intra-district, inter-district, or both. Although Minnesota's program is mandatory, school districts can be flexible regarding policies for student entry or exit. However, individual districts have more power over entry, less power over exit (Witte et al., 2008). In 2000, as a result of the settlement of an educational adequacy lawsuit filed by the Minneapolis branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) against the State of Minnesota, the Choice Is Yours (CIY) program was initiated (Aspen Associate, 2009). Under the state's open enrollment policy, Minnesota's CIY program allows inner city low-income students residing in Minneapolis to attend suburban schools and selected magnet schools within the Minneapolis school district. Minneapolis residents who qualify for free or reduced price lunch are eligible to receive priority placement in participating

K-12 schools in suburban school districts (Aspen Associate, 2009). The Minneapolis

Department of Education (MDE), Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), the NAACP, and

the suburban school districts from the West Metro Education Program (WMEP) support

the CIY program together parents and children.

Nine suburban school districts participated as in the Minneapolis Open Enrollment

Program in 2013. Initially, eight suburban school districts participated; Columbia Heights,

Edina, Hopkins, Richfield, St. Louis Park, St. Anthony/New Brighton, Robbinsdale, and

Wayzata. Since 2005, Eden Prairie school district started participating TICY program.

Students are transferred out by zip code. That is to say, those who live on the north side

of Minneapolis are placed in the school districts of Columbia Heights, Hopkins,

Robbinsdale, St. Anthony/New Brighton, St. Louis Park or Wayzata, and those who live

on the south side of Minneapolis can apply for the school districts of Eden Prairie, Edina,

Richfield or St. Louis Park. The cost of transportation to these suburban schools was

provided by state desegregation transportation aid funding. There is no tuition charged to

participated families for this program.

The settlement required that the state would support busing to these suburban

schools from 2001 to 2005. In 2003, the Voluntary Public School Choice (VPSC)

program expanded the CIY program with funding from a 5-year federal grant and

continued through the 2007-2008 school year. After ending the legal settlement, the CIY

program had continued by 2012-2013 with the eight participating school districts under

WMEP's comprehensive desegregation plan. Since the CIY program's inception, the

number of participants attending the suburban schools steadily increased. In the first year,

472 students participated; by 2011, over 2,000 students participated in the CIY program

(Minnesota Department of Education, 2011) (see Table 6). In 2013, however, the CIY

program was no longer required to admit new students: the decision whether to continue

the program depends on each school district.

Table 5.

Enrollment Numbers of the Choice Is Yours program 2001-2012

School District		2001/ 2002	2002/ 2003	2003/ 2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012
Richfield	S	**38**	**89**	**131**	**160**	**183**	**188**	**168**	**133**	**107**	**101**	**100**
Edina	S	52	107	116	148	145	165	175	171	173	160	165
St Louis Park	S/ N	31	64	85	99	129	149	181	244	286	284	248
Hopkins	N	27	58	116	187	209	245	283	314	312	315	319
Robbinsdale	N	190	228	343	426	418	511	495	464	430	515	587
Wayzata	N	**32**	**74**	**115**	**152**	**155**	**224**	**247**	**239**	**210**	**177**	**165**
Columbia Heights	N	77	53	64	185	207	246	286	271	286	352	452
St Anthony	N	**25**	**47**	**60**	**78**	**93**	**95**	**105**	**129**	**114**	**151**	**160**
Eden Prairie	S	0	0	0	0	28	44	57	69	71	74	91
Totals		472	720	1030	1435	1567	1867	1997	2034	1989	2129	2287
Increase		=	+248	+310	+405	+132	+300	+130	+37	− 45	+140	+158
% Increase		=	53%	43%	39%	9%	19%	7%	1.8%	-3%	7%	7.4%

Note: Date from the student learning program director of the West Metro Education Program.
The participated school districts in the current study are bolded.

Critiques of School Choices

The Cream Skimming Effect

The basic assumption in school choice is that choices for low-income families exist

as long as families are eligible for the alternative options. However, the assumption

ignores limited circumstances of low-income families. DeLuca and Rosenbaum (2010,

p.1452) questioned: 1) if the families are unaware the choice options, 2) if the families

understand the choice options well, 3) if the families have enough social networks that

help them, 4) if the families are likely to evaluate school quality, or 5) if their cultures work well with engaging in new schools. As discussed in the critiques of housing mobility programs above, the assumptions may lead to the cream skimming effect.

Using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study, Lankford (2001) discovered that those who moved to private schools from public schools were of slightly higher socioeconomic status than non-movers, even controlling individual interests, behaviors, and family supports. Movers were 50% more likely to be White and from higher income families, and were over 80% more likely to be in families with higher educational levels than non-movers. Meanwhile, the home environments of movers, such as parents helping with homework and supporting their children in maintaining grades, were not significantly different from non-movers. With the benefits of higher socio-economic status, higher educational accomplishments of parents, greater accessibility of transportation, or more experience obtaining school information, children from better-off families are more likely to take advantage of school choice programs (Lankford, 2001; Levin, 1998). As more educationally motivated and wealthier families leave public schools in inner cities, the circumstances of remaining residents and public schools in inner cities may get even worse. If this is true, there would be an increase in the existing racial and economic segregation of urban public schools, as well as of communities.

Frequent Mobility

According to a report of the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) in 2010, a majority of students in elementary schools had changed their schools at least once. While school changes of no more than two times was a majority (70%), 13 % of students had

moved four or more times (U.S. GAO, 2010, as cited in Powers et al., 2012). Moving can

be more stressful for children because adaptation is a *disruptive process* during school

years (Ersing, Sutphen, & Loeffler, 2009). Numerous research studies on student

mobility have founded that students with higher mobility have lower academic

performing than students with lower mobility (Buerkle, 1997; Ersing et al., 2009; Family

Housing Fund, n.d.; Rumberger, 2003). Researchers have even indicated that residential

stability during primary grades are especially important to children's learning

development (Currie & Yelowitz, 2000; Ersing et al., 2009; Family Housing Fund, n.d.).

In a survey of 495 public elementary school students in urban school districts, Ersing et al.

(2009) found that children between first and fifth grades with high mobility (moving

more than three times) had lower scores on state-wide reading tests even after controlling

for the socio-demographic factors of gender, race, and family composition. Highly

mobile children showed a greater number of recorded school absences than children with

low mobility. The Family Housing Fund (n.d.) coordinated a quantitative and qualitative

study of education achievement and mobility by analyzing school data and interviewing

100 low-income families in Minneapolis. Elementary school students who moved three

or more times during the school year had lower attendance rates and lower reading scores

than students who did not move. The qualitative study further explored why frequent

housing mobility affected poor school performance and behaviors. The study found that

difficulty of adjusting to new school atmosphere and curriculum, teachers and friends,

and neighbors in new neighborhoods impacted children.

More Concentration

Recently, in order to minimize children's frequent mobility and increase community attachment, the metropolitan Nashville public school districts declared a school desegregation plan in 1998 (Goldring, Cohen-Vogel, Smrekar, & Taylor, 2006). Despite of convenience and community attachment for families, this plan is somewhat adverse to current widespread plans addressing integration and desegregation. Rather than offering school choice, this plan provides enhanced programs in urban schools such as high-quality early-education programs, after school programs, and social services to help students with homework. During 2001-2002, 85% of all students in Nashville school districts participated in a new student assignment plan (Goldring et al., 2006). However, Goldring et al. (2006) found that African American children were much more likely to be reassigned to schools closer to their homes in high-poverty neighborhoods when busing arrangements were eliminated. Similarly, Kraus (2008), dealing with the CIY program in Minneapolis, found that almost two-thirds of participants withdrew from the program within six years after the program was implemented. Among the withdrawn students, 65% were African Americans. When comparing the retention rates in the suburban school districts, the lower-poverty school districts, such as Edina and Wayzata had higher retention rates than the higher-poverty school districts, such as Richfield and Columbia Heights.

Why two Theoretical Frameworks matter to the Conceptual Framework

The study explores two theoretical frameworks of mobility and place attachment for low-income families with children living in urban area. These frameworks are often

located in separate discussions because mobility often occurs when place attachment is absent or decreased. When mobility is discussed with place attachment, the focus is often on changing people's dwelling, including housing and neighborhoods. Research on mobility and place attachment is identified with two perspectives. One is a globalization context with less consideration of economic situation of individuals. By virtue of improved information and communication technologies, mobility generally increased and people move around more often permanently or temporarily (Gustafson, 2001). Home is not necessarily associated with a certain, physical place (Altman & Low, 1992). However, Feldman (1990) argues that people with highly mobility tend to find places that resemble their former homes so that they preserve their identity, so called Settlement-identity (as cited in Gustafson, 2001, p.670). In order to further understand how people perceive place attachment and mobility, Gustafson (2001) conducted a qualitative interview study with an adult population ages 18 to 71 years emphasizing their perspectives of roots/routes. Analyzing data of those who had with various residential experiences, such as locations and sizes of communities, and marital status to aim at non-representative sampling, the author concluded that place attachment and mobility were not necessarily exclusive or contradictory but associated and coexistent.

The other perspective focused on a local context with more emphasis on the economic situation of individuals. The latter viewpoint describes mobility as challenging due to financial constraints. The concern is for marginalized individuals and families. In the United States, new questions with this links between poverty and place have emerged in the context of housing mobility programs, in particular with the issues of relocated

residents of public housing transformation. When people are in transitional stages, place

tends to be a significant factor. Since some of the mobility programs are involuntary,

mobility can threaten low-income families. It is possible that vulnerable families can be

more threatened by the transitional stages due to their limited circumstances. The

questions are how public housing residents constructed the meaning of place (Tester &

Wingfield, 2013), what their lived experiences of place before redevelopment (Manzo et

al., 2008), how place attachment impacted on them (Tester et al., 2011), and how place

attachment and place considerations (amenities and stabilities of neighborhoods)

influenced on their relocation choices (Kleit & Manzo, 2006).

Place attachment was influential factor of HOPE VI families' moving (Joseph &

Chaskin, 2012; Kleit & Manzo, 2006; Manzo, et al., 2008). Many families of housing

mobility programs did not move far from their original neighborhoods, except

participants of the original Gautreaux. Families frequently wanted to return their original

neighborhoods due to strong social networks after redevelopment was completed (Popkin,

et al., 2004). Examining public housing residents' lived experiences before relocating,

Manzo, Kleit, and Couch (2008) found that the residents in the community created social

bonds with neighbors and formed place attachment. Joseph and Chaskin (2012) found

that the original public housing residents of HOPE VI moved into neighborhoods close to

those they used to live in, spatially and socially. According to Briggs's (1997) study of

Yonkers mobility, teenagers returned to their old neighborhoods to hang out with their

old friends, or parents returned to go their old churches although they moved. However,

on the actual moving decisions, family situations mattered more than place considerations

(Kleit & Manzo, 2006). These patterns indicate that social and emotional attachment was an important factor for moving, however; limited situations of low-income families unavoidably existed.

School choice is another opportunity-based form that allows students to cross school district boundaries. The basic motivation and implementation of school choice are the same as housing choice in the ways that low-income families are provided equal access to various opportunities in affluent settings through mobility. One of central focus in both housing, urban, and education disciplines is the gap of educational outcomes between the poor and the middle-class (Buendia, 2011). This is well explained in the study of Deluca and Dayton (2009). With the important connection with schools and neighborhoods regarding with educational outcomes, Deluca and Dayton (2009) emphasized *external or exogenous forces* on children's experiences and explained how policies interact with neighborhood and school changes.

Moving is stressful for low-income families because they often experience difficulty finding adequate and affordable housing. Moving is also stressful for children. When children change housing, most of them change schools, and they need to adapt to new friends, teachers, curricula, and neighbors. This may disrupt their development progress. Therefore, reducing housing mobility may lead to a smaller negative effect than changing both housing and school settings because children do not need to adjust to new schools in addition to new housing and neighborhoods. Among various kinds of school choice programs, The CIY program is similar to most housing mobility programs. The CIY program specifically aims to assist families and children who live in an inner city

neighborhood with high-poverty rates and racial diversity. To apply for the CIY, the families are to be eligible for free reduced lunch. How school choice differs from housing choice in that families are able to send their children to quality schools without moving from their homes and neighborhoods. Instead, they can stay in lower-cost neighborhoods with more affordable housing options and keep their social networks (Crowley, 2003). Therefore, Crowley (2003) claims that school choice programs contribute residential stability for low-income families and children. School choice programs have gained attention from educators, urban planners, and sociologists due to the program benefits (Schwartz, 2009).

Knowledge is needed about school mobility programs, the impact on those students left behind, and the neighborhoods effect on. DeLuca and Rosenblatt (2010) began their study with an assumption that parents of MTO would be willing to seek new or better school opportunities for their children because they had a motivation to change their neighborhoods for better opportunities. Regarding the choice of schools wherever they want to send their children, Briggs, Ferryman, Popkin, and Rendon, (2008) questioned if "the logic of choice shifts when poor, inner-city families move to less poor area" (p.83). Moving was unlikely to happen to low-income families even though they have equal or stronger pursuit of their children development (Briggs et al., 2008; DeLuca & Rosenblatt, 2010). Considering the daily life and limited resources of low-income families, we know that "schooling is not always on the top of the list" (DeLuca & Rosenblatt, 2010, p.1481). DeLuca and Rosenblatt (2010) suggested that it is necessary to include schooling in connection with housing in order to understand whether school programs were effective.

70

This is because "the connection between schooling and housing opportunities is a complex one for poor families, one that is conditioned by resources, culture, and other life events" (p.1452).

The CIY participants changed their children's schools with a strong motivation to provide better educational opportunities for their children. Since, the CIY program was terminated school choice options may be more limited in the future for low-income families. How will the participants of the CIY program respond? How do they think about choice options that might be given to them? What are their situations of housing and neighborhood like? Would the CIY participants be willing to change their neighborhoods to provide their children with better educational opportunities? Or, as precious studies have revealed, are the participants of the CIY program unlikely change their neighborhoods due to barriers, such as limited information about affordable housing and school quality, lack of resources, and/or cultural orientation (Kim & Morrow-Jones, 2011; Montgomery & Curtis, 2006)? Housing is a complex setting. Including additional explanations, such as place attachment and mobility may contribute to a better understanding of low-income families with children in terms of choice, place, and mobility.

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Research Questions

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The primary goal of this study was to develop a better understanding of how low-income families with school-age children living in Minneapolis, Minnesota, experience school choices. In order to understand the experiences, mobility and place attachment are the theoretical frameworks of this current study. Through the theoretical frameworks, the

researcher sought to understand school choice, in particular the Choice Is Yours (CIY) program that aims to provide an enhanced and equal educational opportunity for Minneapolis low-income families.

The following research questions will be used to examine the goal of the study. The experiences and perceptions will be generally defined as what experiences they have had and how families perceived the CIY program. Primary research questions are designed to reveal the experiences and perceptions of the participants. Follow-up questions were used when necessary. The research questions for this study are addressed as follows:

1. What were the reasons parents had for deciding to take advantage of school choice programs, especially the CIY program?

2. What were the parents' experiences in the program?

   a. Finding out about the program

   b. Transferring process

   c. Lived experience with children enrolled in the program

3. What were the families' housing and neighborhood situations?

4. How do the families perceive and understand mobility and place attachment in regard to school choice?

With the research questions, the researcher further explored how choice options have been utilized with the families in terms of the reasons for school choices, the decisions of housing location, and their perceptions on choice options.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of the current study was to develop a better understanding of how low-income families with school-age children living in urban areas experience school choices. The researcher studied the Choice Is Yours program that aims to provide an enhanced and equal educational opportunity for Minneapolis low-income families. The theoretical lenses used for understanding the phenomenon were mobility and place attachment. Therefore, the researcher sought to explore experiences and perceptions of the low-income families regarding choices, place, and mobility. In seeking to explain a "complex, detailed understanding of the issue", the research design is a qualitative study. Face to face interviews were used to obtain information "by talking directly with people" and "allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature" (Creswell, 2007, p.40).

This chapter provides the descriptions and discussion of the research methodology, including around the following areas: (1) rationale for research approach, (2) description of the research population and sample, (3) methods of data collection, (4) analysis procedures, (5) ethical considerations, and (6) issues of trustworthiness.

Rationale of Research Design

Research Approach

Beyond using interpretive and theoretical frameworks to shape a study, qualitative researchers incorporate both the respondents' and their own *worldviews* (which is also called *paradigms* or *sets of beliefs*) while undertaking the study (Creswell, 2007, p.15). This gives a logical flow of the study and determines the path of the entire methods for

the study.

From the point-of-view of the researcher the present study focused on social constructivism. This worldview assumes that individuals (respondents) "develop subjective meanings of their experiences-meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas" (Creswell, 2007, p.20). Therefore, the researcher relies on the participants' views on their situations and experiences. These, then, are negotiated and interacted with "historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives" (Creswell, 2007, p.21).

Regarding the method, research questions tend to be set broadly and generally, researchers should recognize their own backgrounds and contexts. Open-ended questions often emerge through interviews, interview processes with participants are to be addressed, researchers should focus on specific and unique contexts in which participants live, and researchers interpret the founded meaning with backgrounds of participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Creswell, 2007).

In this study, the experiences from the participants' perspectives were explored by using in-depth qualitative interviews. There are substantial numbers of empirical studies about the cause and effect relationships between housing, education, and neighborhoods and residents living in inner cities. However, several researchers have mentioned that qualitative methods can be more reliable for understanding one's subjective experiences, feelings, attitudes, and perceptions than observable measures (DeLuca & Dayton, 2009; Wright & Kloos, 2007). In the following section, basic features of phenomenology and

the unique standards of hermeneutic phenomenology are discussed.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology assumes that a group of individuals has common experiences and phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). A researcher, then, describes the experiences and phenomenon and transformed the descriptions into the *universal essence* (Creswell, 2007, p.58). Therefore, the presents study is most suited for a phenomenology to provide a deep understanding of the participants' experiences of the Choice Is Yours program and their certain phenomenon of housing and neighborhood.

Phenomenology has two kinds of approach including a hermeneutic phenomenology and a transcendental phenomenology (sometimes called as empirical or psychological phenomenology) (Creswell, 2007). Both focus on inquiring the meaning of the lived experiences of a group, but methods of exploration are different. According to Creswell (2007), a hermeneutic phenomenology makes a strong interpretation with the descriptions of lived experiences of a group as a research mediates between different meanings. While on the other hand, a transcendental phenomenology focuses on fresh descriptions of the conscious experiences of participants.

The current study utilized the hermeneutic phenomenology method to analyze transcribed interviews because the method gives more space to interact and interpret the experiences and phenomenon within the certain situations and contexts in which the participants of this study live.

Ethical Considerations of Study

To protect participants, ethical issues were considered in various ways. First of all,

the present study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Minnesota prior to recruitment (IRB Code Number: 1303P29943). This approval was especially important to have access to the vulnerable individuals participating in the present study. All participants of the study voluntarily contacted the researcher. Before starting every interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, even though the participants were informed it by emails or telephone conversations. The participants were informed of the consent form and the interview procedures. They then were given time to read the form and sign it, giving them the option of not participating. The participants' personal information and other significant identity characteristics were kept confidential. The anonymity was maintained as coded by numbers in the study through all the procedures.

Role of Researcher

The role of the researcher is important in this hermeneutic phenomenological study because the researcher and the study participants are to co-construct the situated meanings of the phenomenon. In addition, pre-conceived notions come from past experiences, knowledge, assumption, and expectations. Along with the processes of analyzing, the researcher must be well aware of the concern above because the pre-conceived notions many impact on understanding and interpretation the phenomenon. More importantly, the researcher acknowledges who the researcher is; in this case, a foreign-born Asian, an adult, a never-married female without children, and, importantly, one who has never lived in Minneapolis. These characteristics contribute to the researcher's ability to provide a more neutral perspective when interpreting the voices

and stories of the participants' experiences.

Sample Selection and Participant Recruitment

Research Sample

Participants of a phenomenological study have to be carefully selected in order that researchers can have best information about the phenomenon of the participants. Criterion sampling, such as is used in this study, is thus the most appropriate sampling method in phenomenological study because all participants have a similar experience and are able to represent the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2007). In this study, the criteria for selection of all participants were:

1) Participants must live in the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

2) Participants must qualify for free or reduced price lunch.

3) Participants' children are in the Choice Is Yours program during the academic year of 2012-2013

As aforementioned in the chapter two, the Choice Is Yours program allows low-income students residing in Minneapolis to attend suburban schools and selected magnet schools within the Minneapolis school district. Minneapolis residents who qualify for free or reduced price lunch are eligible to receive priority placement in participating K-12 schools in suburban school districts (Aspen Associate, 2009). Therefore, the researcher delimitated participants as the criteria.

The sample of the study is the parents, or other primary care givers of children participating in the CIY program. The potential of having participants was not expected to be high numbers. According to Creswell (2007, p.126), 20 to 30 subjects were generally recommended in a phenomenological study. However, 5 to 25 subjects were

suggested as adequate numbers of interviews by Polkinghorne (1989) (Creswell, 2007 p.61), and 3 to 10 subjects were even recommended by Dukes (1984) (Creswell, 2007, p.126). In addition, interviews are often conducted multiple times with the same individuals (Creswell, 2007).

Recruitment

The participants were limited to those who had experienced the phenomenon since they should be met these criteria of: enrolled during the academic year of 2012-2013, dwelling in Minneapolis, and qualified for free or reduced price lunch. Due to program requirements, the researcher was not allowed to have any information of the families of the CIY program and could not access to them directly. Participants had to be recruited with the help of participating suburban school districts with the permissions of the directors or the superintendents and/or with the assistance of staff in a community organization engaged with the CIY program.

The researcher initially contacted the directors of the Minnesota Department of Education that administer the CIY program between from July 2012 to November 2012, and had a meeting with them in November 2012. During the meeting, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and obtained consent to contact the suburban school districts. Then, the researcher contacted the directors or the superintendents of each suburban school district between from January 2013 to March 2013 (see Appendix A for the email of solicitation). Among the nine school districts, three school districts agreed to participate in the study. The districts were Wayzata, Richfield, and St. Anthony/New Brighton, located on the north side of Minneapolis.

The researcher then provided the directors and the superintendents with a recruitment letter and consent form along with a self-addressed stamped envelope, all on the University of Minnesota letterhead (see Appendix B for the recruiting letter to participants). One of the districts attached the contact information on the recruitment letter and printed it out with the school district letter head: the director suggested this procedure feeling that the approach may be more familiar with the families being recruited. The method of sending the letter varied by director or superintendent preferences: some districts wanted to send it by mailing directly to program participants (189 envelopes were prepared), another district wanted to send it by email (total numbers of email addresses were not given to the researcher).

In addition to approaching participating suburban school districts, the researcher contacted and met with directors of two community based organizations engaged in the program; the Plymouth Christian Youth Center and the West Metro Education Program. These organizations worked directly with families enrolled in the CIY program through a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education. The director of the Plymouth Christian Youth Center distributed the recruitment letter with a self-addressed stamped envelope to participants asking students to hand the letter to their parents or guardians. The researcher prepared 30 letters and envelopes for the director to be addressed and mailed by the Plymouth Christian Youth Center.

Parents and guardians who agreed to participate in the study voluntarily contacted the researcher directly returning the recruitment information by emailing or calling the researcher. Even though several methods and significant amount of time was given to

recruiting research participants, only small number of participants agreed to participate in the study. With these recruitment efforts, 11 people contacted the researcher. Of the 11 people, the researcher was able to arrange interviews with six parents. The six parents had a total of 15 children. Among the 15 children, 13 children were in the program; one child was in preschool and the other one was toddler. Participants who took part in the interview and completed the process received a $20.00 Target gift card as token compensation.

Data Collection Methods

Interviews

In-person, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were selected as the primary method for data collection to understand the experiences of the participants and to develop richer and deeper meanings of the experiences. All data of this study were collected by the researcher between May and July of 2013. All interviews were conducted and recorded in a neutral setting such as a coffee shop and a public library, with the exception of one participant. That participant asked to have an interview in his house because he had a toddler. The duration of interviews was from one hour to one and half hour. Prior to the interview, the participants were informed about the study, possible risks, benefits of participation, confidentiality, voluntary nature, and flexibility as a necessity given the nature of qualitative study (see Appendix C for the consent form). The interview conversations were recorded using recording applications on a cellphone and laptop computer with agreement of the participants.

Creswell (2007) stated that a researcher could determine a person's perspective on

phenomenon or experiences throughout the interview method. In this regard, participants'

personal experiences were considered throughout the interview.

Following Creswell's recommended procedures (2007), the participants were first

asked to fill out a brief questionnaire of their demographic characteristics, such as

number of children, employment, age, and education. Then they were given a copy of the

interview questions and time to think about them (see Appendix D for the interview

questions). The researcher started each interview with open-ended, prepared questions

about the experiences of the CIY program and lived situations (see Appendix B for more

interview questions). Prompt questions were essentially determined by responses of

interviewees. The questions evolved throughout the interview whenever the participants

brought up issues that were not considered in the prepared questions. In this manner, the

researcher let them develop the issues. This process allowed the researcher co-

constructing interview questions with the participants throughout the interviews in order

to explore and understand the meanings of the phenomenon. The participants were also

reassured that the researcher was not interested in the educational achievement (test

scores of math or reading) of their children, although the researcher was interested how

the children were doing well in schools and how the participants felt about the CIY

program.

Data Preparation

All of the interviews were carried out by the researcher. During the interviews, the

researcher wrote down rough field notes. After completing the interviews, the researcher

also made post-interview field notes and reflections. They were saved in separate

computer folders and actual file folders by printing out the computer files in order to maintain security (Lichtman, 2006). The stored notes helped the researcher to manage the rest of the procedures. The computer folders were saved, and all paper documents were stored in locked file cabinet that was only accessible by the researcher.

Next, transcriptions of the recorded interviews were completed as follows: First, the researcher listened to the recordings few times, and then started transcribing the interview into word-by-word documents. Second, each draft of transcription was checked the accuracy by a colleague. Lastly, the researcher made a final draft while listening to the recordings once more, and reading the final draft of transcriptions of the interviews thoroughly, line by line. With the final draft of transcriptions, the researcher re-read each one independently. These time-consuming processes were well worth the effort to obtain the data for analysis.

Data Analysis

The present study employed the phenomenological analysis method developed by Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen, which was discussed by Moustakas (1994) (Creswell, 2007). According to Creswell (2007), the analysis method is most "practical, useful method" for phenomenological studies (p.159). In order to adapt the analysis, several steps were followed, including (1) describing experiences of individuals, (2) developing list of significant statements, (3) grouping the statements into themes, (4) writing a textual description by including verbatim examples, (5) writing a structural description by reflecting the situations and contexts in which the phenomenon of the individuals were experienced, and (6) writing a composite description incorporating with both the textual

and structural descriptions.

The first step required that the researcher read to each the written transcript several times through in full in order to obtain overall feelings for its whole content. Then, the researcher read the transcripts carefully in order to identify significant statements. In this step, the researcher highlighted and circled significant words and important phrases or sentences that seemed to recur in the text. During this step, similar words, phrases, or issues were used by the participants, these were clearly highlighted. From the highlighted and circled words and phrases (the data), the researcher formulated the common meanings and clustered the data into common themes. The researcher also met one of the participants to ensure whether the common themes were properly founded. Finally, the researcher produced a completed written document incorporating with both the textual and structural descriptions.

Several themes were developed for each research question, but additional themes that were not covered in research questions emerged as well during the analysis. At this stage of the analysis the researcher revisited the literature reviews. The researcher examined and compared the themes of experiences and issues by discussed in the literature, including sample quotes, with the data collected in her study. Finally, the researcher sought to understand the experiences by reflecting on situations and contexts of the participants. These steps eventually led researchers to find the essence of the meanings of the participants. The steps of qualitative data analysis, however, were not mutually exclusive but interactive. Thus, the researcher necessarily went back and forth among these steps as the interviews and analyses proceeded.

A complete assessment of all six interviews presented as follows; (1) describing the phenomenon of low-income families' experiences on the CIY program and their housing and neighborhood and (2) uncovering the meaning of phenomenon through understanding their perceptions on mobility and place attachment with their own situations and interpreting the meanings of phenomenon.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In a qualitative study, trustworthiness refers to any strategies to address reliability and validity that are commonly used terms in a quantitative study. Unlike a quantitative study, establishing trustworthiness is up to the perspectives of researchers, so to speak, how they provide the descriptions and analytical processes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Therefore, a qualitative study has numerous ways to establish trustworthiness (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The current study used three strategies of trustworthiness; credibility, dependability, and transferability.

Credibility

Credibility is based on ensuring technical accuracy of the interview to represent the responses, experiences, and perceptions of the participants well (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). To achieve credibility, the researcher provided the following actions: (1) all information of the interview was captured in digital recording as it was presented, (2) field notes and self-reflection were carried out, and (3) the themes were checked by a professional colleague and the participants.

Dependability

Dependability, in a qualitative study, refers to whether other studies can replicate

the finding of study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). To do this, the researcher provided detailed and thorough explanations of how the data of the present study were collected and analyzed.

Transferability

Since the findings within this particular context are specific, it would be hard to apply to other studies with various situations or populations. Therefore, the responsibility of the researcher is to provide sufficient information about the current study (Shenton, 2004). The researcher attempted to include rich and thick description of all processes with the open and honest intention (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). In addition, the researcher provided detailed description of situations, contexts of each participant.

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Summary

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This chapter provided the methodology employed in the current study. The study used a hermeneutic phenomenology to understand detailed and deeper meanings of experiences of school choices and perceptions of choice, place, and mobility of the low-income families with children in an inner city. One-on-one, in-depth interviews were the primary method of data collection. Interviewees were selected using a criterion sampling of those families with children living in Minneapolis and participating in the CIY program. Data collection including recruitment, interview processes, and data analyses were addressed. The next chapter will provide interview results and findings including characteristics of the participants and quotes.

CHAPTER FOUR. FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of how low-income families living in an inner city experience school choices. The researcher focused on exploring mobility and place attachment. While research on mobility and place attachment are often considered in opposition, this does not always explain experiences of low-income families. Moreover, research on the links between housing and school in a relation to choices being given to low-income families has yet to be considered. Therefore, this current study was intended to fill a gap in the existing literature to provide insight into how low-income families experience and perceive mobility and place attachment.

The goals for this study were to (1) uncover the reasons why/how low-income families choose the CIY program, (2) explore the families' experiences about the CIY program, (3) identify the families' housing and neighborhood situations, and (4) understand the families' perceptions of mobility and place attachment in regard to school choices. The researcher searched primary research questions through previous research, as well as connecting emerged various categories during interviews. This step helped not only to emerge as many concepts as possible but also to recognize meanings and connections of the concepts and to identify the dominant and important meanings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). As the result, common themes rose in the families' understanding of their own experiences and perceptions on place, mobility, place attachment, and choices under their situations.

In this chapter, study findings are presented based on the data analysis steps that were presented in the previous chapter, including (1) describing the phenomenon of low-income families' experiences on the CIY program and their housing and neighborhood and (2) uncovering the meaning of phenomenon through understanding their perceptions on mobility and place attachment with their own situations and interpreting the meanings of phenomenon. The organization of this chapter flows as follows. First, reasons and processes of transferring schools when the participants decided to choose the CIY program, this housing and neighborhood situations followed by the prepared research questions were described. Second, unprepared questions that occurred during interviews were uncovered and illustrated. Finally, central and dominant themes were developed to identify essential understanding of participant's perceptions and experiences. The steps of qualitative data analysis were interactive. The researcher went back and forth among these steps. This chapter was presented the study findings; research participants' experiences in their own words.

Describing the Phenomenon

The first step in this phenomenological analysis was to describe the experiences and situations of the parents of the CIY program. Meanings occurred when analyzing the way the CIY program families experience and understand their phenomenon (van Manen, 2002). Therefore, this step aimed to identify dominant meanings. Six parents whose children had enrolled the school year of 2012-2013 were interviewed during six weeks from May to June in 2013. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each interview took between 60 and 90 minutes. In this section, the researcher reviews

87

responses of the parents in their own words identifying what different ways the parents made decisions on school choices, what situations they had at the time when they made the decision, how they understood the CIY program, and which situations of housing and neighborhood they were in. The children's ages, grade levels, name of their neighborhoods are shared in the description and discussion.

Descriptions of the Parents of the CIY Program

The six participating parents had a total of fifteen children. Among the 15 children, 13 children were in the program; one child was in preschool and the other one was toddler. Therefore, this allowed the researcher collecting the experiences of the CIY program with thirteen children, including those one who had graduated from high school and was attending a college and the another who was accepted the CIY program and would attend schools the following year. Five of the participants were women and one was a man, a stay-at-home father. Three were married, one was engaged, one was divorced, and one was single. The age of the parents ranged from middle 30s to middle 50s. Two identified their race or ethnic background as an African American, and all others were Caucasian. Four of the parents had higher educational backgrounds. Three parents had completed a 4-year college, one had completed a 2-year college, and two had a General Educational Development (GED). The respondent with a GED was accepted a 2-year college for the following year. Three held part-time jobs (two were in Minneapolis; one was in Hopkins), two were unemployed, and one was employed full-time in Minneapolis (see Table 7). More than half of the study parents had been participating in the CIY program for a long time, with a range from a half year to 9 years (see Table 8).

Table 7.

Demographic Characteristics of Interviewees

ID #	Age	Marital status	Race/ethnicity	Education	Occupation
ID 1	Middle 30s	Single	African American	GED	Part-time
ID 2	Middle 50s	Married	Caucasian	2-year college	Unemployed
ID 3	Early 40s	Divorced	Caucasian	4-year college	Employed
ID 4	Middle 40s	Married	Caucasian	4-year college	Part-time
ID 5	Early 40s	Engaged	African American	GED	Unemployed
ID 6	Late 30s	Married	Caucasian	4-year college	Part-time

Table 8.

The CIY Experiences of Interviewees

ID #	Number of children	Number of years with the CIY				
		Total years	Age / Years with the CIY			
			1st child	2nd child	3rd child	4th child
ID 1	2	7 years	18 / 7	14/ 7		
ID 2	1	2 years	16 / 2			
ID 3	2	8 years	20 / 8	13 / 8		
ID 4	4	7 years	17 / 7	- / 1	- / join in 2014	4, in preschool
ID 5	2	0.5 years	7 / 0.5	Toddler		
ID 6	4	9 years	14 / 9	12 / 7	11 / 6	9 / 3

Experiences on the CIY program

Experiences on the CIY program included: the parents' reasons for transferring from previous schools, transferring processes, and experiences in the current schools. Overall, the parents were not satisfied with the previous schools of their children in the inner city, and were satisfied with the current schools through the CIY program.

Reasons for Transferring Schools

Analysis of reasons and motivations of the parents is accompanied with a wide range of subthemes. Generally parents indicated dissatisfaction with their child(ren)'s previous school. The responses were categorized into nine reasons for transferring: (1) to

provide better college educational opportunities, (2) to provide better extracurricular opportunities, (3) to get busing, (4) to have siblings attend the same school, (5) to continue to have a tutoring, (6) obtaining support for special needs, (7) mistrust of teachers and school systems, (8) school closing, and (9) unsafe situation. The subthemes are presented in this section by intertwining with participants' experiences and situations.

As ID 1 entered the coffee shop for the interview, she smiled big, asking me if it was hard to find the coffee shop. She seemed to feel comfortable with the coffee shop. She said that the coffee shop was recently opened and was the only coffee shop in her neighborhoods, mentioning that she really liked having a neighborhood coffee shop. Born and raised in Minneapolis in Minnesota, ID 1 is a single mother in her middle 30s, raising two children: a daughter of 18 years old and a son of 14 years old. She gained a GED and worked as a medical assistant. Then, she went back to school to study pathology but could not finish her degree. She stated she always wanted to go back to study. When we met again six months later in order to show the final transcript to her, she was talking excitingly about being accepted a college admission.

> I'm very excited. I haven't been in school in a long time. Nine years. This is going to be something.

As she expressed a strong desire toward education, the main reason that she wanted to participate in the CIY program was to provide "better educational opportunities" to her children. She believed that "Education is all that you have, that is all I ask of my kids". When asked of her why she thought education was important, she took some time and elaborated (ID 1):

If your kids aren't educated, they don't have anything they can do. They drop out of school, ditch school, and just don't have anything to do. They're bored, so they get into trouble. And that's what the problems are.

ID 2, a recent 2-year college graduate in her middle 50s, has a son of 16 years old. She likewise thought that learning was important. In the middle of our conversation, she shared her mother's story (ID 2):

My mother moved here (Minneapolis) when all the children grew up. I grew up on a farm in Minnesota, in the country. And then she went back to school at the U (University of Minnesota), and she graduated from college, got her masters, and then died. She was only 58 years old. Yeah, long time ago.

Her son had been attending a school through the CIY program for 2 years. He went a Spanish immersion school in Minneapolis because her husband is from Guatemala and she wanted her son to learn the language and the culture. However, when her son was in 8th grade, the school was closed. Some of the students from the school were transferred to another Spanish immersion school in Minneapolis, which was much further away from her current house. However, distance was not her reason to switch schools because she liked the Spanish school. What she mentioned was (ID 2):

I like the school, I like the culture, I like the community, I like the people.

Her main reason was to continue to have a tutoring program for her son. Before her son switched schools, he had had a tutoring program. However, he did not qualify for tutoring due to the school's limited budget so she had to switch her son's school. Otherwise, she said she did not have any options (ID 2):

I really didn't. I was unemployed. I was going to school at that time. I didn't have much money. I couldn't afford to pay for tutoring. I was just desperate at that time. And this program, he was eligible for this program because he is living in Minneapolis.

When sitting in a coffee shop while waiting for an interviewee, a lady with a big smile came up to the researcher. She appeared to be cheerful and passionate. ID 3, a college-educated single mother in her early 40s and a preschool teacher with two children. She joined the CIY program eight years ago when her older son was in 8th grade and when her younger son was in kindergarten. Her older son is now 20 years old, and graduated from high school in enrolled in college. Her younger son is now in middle school.

Her older son has dyslexia. However, his dyslexia was not detected until he switched school from his previous school. She did not know about the reason her son was behind, academically he could not even receive proper services (ID 3):

> He was at a kindergarten, his teacher said that he didn't learn everything but they're going to pass him through to first grade and send him to summer school. So we did that. And they said the same thing after first grade. They said that he really shouldn't go up, but they're going to pass him and put him in second grade. And in second grade the teachers said they aren't going to pass him. And I asked what happened. And they said that "he barely knows his ABCs' and 123s', counting, he's writing backwards and he's doing this, or going to the bathroom all the time, or going to the nurse's office". They said "unfortunately your child is 2 years behind."

Her concern was not only about lack of services available, she did not like the way she was treated in the school system. This experience gave her mistrust toward the previous school. She had no idea that her son was missing classes and not doing well because she had not received any phone calls or letters from the school. She decided to talk with the teachers to determine what she needed to do for her son (ID 3):

> I was begging, (Talking to the teachers) "I'm a single mom, I need help, this is my first child, I don't know what's going on. I'm doing everything for him. I can help out at home but I don't know what to do. We read together every night, I'm doing flashcards with him. I think I need some help. Can you do something to help me?

She then had a chance to talk with the principal. However, what she heard from the school was (ID 3):

> If you don't like the way we do things here, your child doesn't need to go to school here.

This experience made her look for another options. She switched her older son to another school in Minneapolis, where she could still have her family's support when she was not available. The new school tested her son and found out that her son was dyslexic. In that school, her son went from 2nd grade to 8th grade, and was able to progress minimally through help for his dyslexia. However, she still felt that neither the level of service and education were enough for her older son. When her younger son was about to start a kindergarten, she "strongly" wanted to provide better school environments for her children. She always believes that her children will have "better chances for their future when they go to college". In order to have a college opportunity, she also thought her two sons would need extracurricular opportunities, such as sports and volunteering. The opportunities of higher education and extracurricular activities were her motivation to take a look at available options, and she found out about the CIY program.

Similar issues of ID 3 came up to ID 4. ID 4 is a married mother of four whose oldest son had special needs. He went a charter school in Minneapolis, which was near her house. She felt that her son was not provided proper and matched services from his the school. Therefore, she requested an evaluation for her son (ID 4):

> He had special needs. I had to request the evaluation in writing. I kept asking for it. And eventually they told me that I had to request it in writing. They didn't seem willing to help. They wanted to make it as hard as possible. I think if he had stayed where he was... they didn't really want to challenge him because they didn't think he was very able to. And so I think he would not have learned.

Her husband and she were disappointed at the school system, in particular with "whole bureaucracy of it", and they felt "They kind of were willing to let him fall by the wayside, and not do anything for him". They decided to transfer her oldest son into a school that fit his needs and willingly help him.

ID 4's oldest son had been attending his current school through the CIY program for 7 years. Now, he is 17 years old and in 11th grade. At the time she was interviewed, her first and second sons were attending schools through the CIY program, and her third son was accepted to attend the school and thus would join the CIY program in the following year. When asked about what are the reasons of transferring schools of her 2nd and 3rd sons then, she indicated its convenience of having them in the same schools (ID 4):

> I'm just satisfied that all three kids got into the school I want them to go to and that they're all together. It's nice to have them all in the same school. It's very stressful to have them in different schools because they have conferences, sometimes they'd have conferences on the same night. This way I know that if there are events, they're all going to be lined up on the same night.

ID 6 holds a college degree with a teaching license and in her late 30s. She is a mother of four children who are attending schools all through the CIY program. Her children are in 8th grade, 6th grade, 5th grade, and 3rd grade. Unlike other parents of this study, she had no experiences of neighborhood, inner-city schools. When her first child was about to enter a school, she gathered information what schools would be good for her children because she did not want her children to send any neighborhood schools. Also, driving her children to schools was not her option because she had very younger children

at that time. A friend of hers whose child went to an inner-city school helped her make a

decision (ID 6):

> I know of someone, a friend of mine, whose daughter graduated from a high school in Minneapolis. When she graduated high school, she was getting straight A's. She was one of the top students in her class. And then when she went to a college in St. Paul (in Minnesota). When she got there, she couldn't, like in her introductory class, she couldn't write the paper because her high school hadn't taught her how to write a paper. She couldn't even do the most basic things in college.

And she did not want her children to have the same experiences. She wanted a

school where her children would be actually ready to go to college when they would

graduate.

Transferring Processes

Information Sources

Finding out about the CIY program was a challenge for the parents. A half of the

parents (ID 1, 2, & 5) had learned the CIY program from a teacher and a secretary; the

other half of them (ID 3, 4, & 6) had heard through word of mouth. ID 1 lived in

Plymouth. When she had to move out, she did not want to change her daughter's school

to attend Minneapolis schools. Then, her daughter's teacher of the previous school in

Plymouth introduced the program to her. ID 2 also did not know about the program until

a secretary of the previous school pointed it out to her. ID 5 was introduced by the

director of Young Scholars Program which his daughter was in.

The other half of parents actively searched which schools would be good for their

children and considered locations of schools as important. ID 3 had heard from a friend

of hers whose child was attending schools outside of the school district (ID 3):

95

Through word of mouth. It was just someone else who had their children in another school district. Yes, somebody had told me, like a friend was telling me when I was talking about different schools to send my kids to.

ID 4 had heard from an organization in her neighborhood (ID 4):

I had heard about it through 'Way to Grow', a nonprofit in the neighborhood, which works with young children. I heard about a lot of stuff through them. I don't think it (the CIY program) was widely known at that time, but I did know a few kids that participated in the program.

By the time her children were ready to enter school, ID 6 and her husband looked at a lot of different options, including schools in their school district, but only charter schools. Then, one day, she saw the sign on the bus stop (ID 6):

I was driving down the road. I saw at a bus stop. They had a sign. Then I called them to get more information about it. And, so they just sent me the application.

Difficulty of Processes

The parents (ID 1, 2, & 5) whose information was through a school secretary or a teacher indicated that the processes were easy because they had assistance. The parents (ID 3, 4, & 6) who actively searched better and appropriate schools for their children also indicated the processes were not difficult in terms of filling the application form and submitting it. They contacted the schools or organizations where they could learn more about the CIY program and got the necessary information. However, ID 3 indicated a difficulty of gathering information or transferring processes. She remembered that she was not provided with enough information or assistance from the school where they were trying to transfer to (ID 3):

As a matter of fact, when I wanted to apply, they didn't encourage, they weren't helpful. They didn't help me fill out the application or tell me which steps to do, I said "I'm gonna find out and I'm gonna do it", because that's how badly I want my children to go. I called and got an application and brought the application to the school and gave it to the people that it needed to go to. And then I called all the time, like "where's my kid on the waiting list, have you heard anything?" All the time I was trying to make sure I followed through to see, and asked them if there is anything else I can do.

What two parents mentioned was, in particular, that once one of their children accepted and were attending schools through the CIY program, it appeared to be much easier for their siblings to get in the same schools:

Since the first child one was started in the program, they just automatically, I mean, we didn't have to apply. They just went because they are siblings and because they have the same bus stop (ID 6).

First, my younger one got in for kindergarten, and the school said "well okay, he has a sibling", so his brother got in half-way through the school year in 8th grade (ID 3).

Experiences of Transferred Schools

Reasons for Choosing the Current Schools

When asked about reasons of choosing their current schools, location and school reputation were main reasons. Three parents (ID 3, 4, & 6) mentioned the reasons of closeness to their homes.

One is probably location because it's closer to this neighborhood. I didn't want them to be far (ID 3).

Some of the districts are far away from home, and I didn't want the kids to be bused very far. If I drive then it just takes about 12-13 minutes. And there's no traffic because I don't have to get on the highway (ID 4).

It helped that it's close. It's not far. So that made a big difference (ID 6).

97

Since it seemed that the parents did care about closeness, during the interview, the researcher asked all interviewees what they would have done if there would be no transportation support. ID 4 responded she would have not transferred her children's schools (ID 4):

> I probably wouldn't have transferred because at that time I had two toddlers and there's no bus for that. There's only the one bus that gets them there. I would have found something closer.

ID 3 and ID 6 mentioned that it would have not been easy because they would have needed a lot of family or friend support. However, they would have tried to transfer with the help from families or friends. Therefore, the parents of the study were very happy about transportation support of the CIY program.

> It would have been very hard because we would have to find alternate ways. I mean, it would probably take a whole network of family and friends to get him back and forth from school. Because I work from 8-5 and unfortunately school is not from 8-5. And so he gets out of school before I get out of work and we'd have to have someone to pick him up. It would take a lot of support from a lot of different people to try to make it happen. (ID 3)

> I probably would have driven them because we do have friends who live close to us who have kids there. And so I would have tried to arrange some sort of a carpool. (ID 6)

While most parents had strong contentment with school in suburbs, ID 1mentioned that her son experienced discrimination in a suburban school. She, an African American and a single mother, did not provide detailed information about her son's experiences, however; she did not like the way of teachers behaved toward her son. She transferred her son to another school in the same school district (ID 1):

98

My son, well…he actually transferred schools within the same school district because of the racism from the teachers. The way of the teachers…they have racism in that school. So he got transferred. It wasn't his fault. He was discriminated against there.

Satisfaction with Schooling and School Environments

All parents participating in the study were satisfied with schooling and school environments, such as education, teacher's enthusiasm, resources, and parent's involvement. One of the benefits experienced by most parents was associated with academic improvement and admission to college. ID 2's son transferred her son's school in order to continue to have a tutoring. She was telling about her son's story of attending a Spanish immersion school in Minneapolis (ID 2):

> He never did very well learning Spanish, or anything else actually. He's always been kind of a bad student. You know, when he had grades, a C was pretty good. He had Ds and Fs. He's been slow at everything he has done.

Soon after her son started getting a tutoring, he had slowly improved in his reading and his grades, although he is still struggling, as she mentioned. She expressed her satisfaction with his current school (ID 2):

> I've been extremely happy and thankful for my children. He's doing so well at this school. He's, now, not quite a B student. But, he's a B- student now. So he has improved. He's doing great. He's so much better than he was. I didn't think he could even read until he was in 5th grade. My son is doing very well. He's doing so well. Now he's in advanced classes, like in advanced algebra in 7th grade.

Another benefit with transferring aligned with her son's academic success in Spanish, which made her very happy. In his Spanish school, she thought he was not doing well in learning Spanish, but it turned out he was good at speaking Spanish in his new school (ID 2):

99

And he's taking language classes, like Spanish. He did learn Spanish (in his previous school). He just didn't learn it like I thought he would. When he came to current school and signed up for Spanish, he's a star (laughing). Yeah, he did know something after all. Just he wasn't keeping up with native speakers.

Except getting tutoring, when asked her opinion about what else helped him improve academically, she was quick to respond the positive peer effect of her son's friends; they were working together with her son (ID 2):

A big thing is that his friends study together. They help each other, a lot. The students he's hanging out with now are more academic and they study together, which helps. He is putting more effort into school because of the tutor and because of his friends. He used to not want to study at all.

Both ID 3 and ID 4 transferred schools of their children due to mistrust of school system and lack of services. When ID 4 switched a school of her first son, she could receive immediate help from the transferred school without waiting for long and complicated processes of evaluations (ID 4):

If the child has special needs, then they make sure that that child is helped to the most possible. I didn't have to go through the whole… they just stepped in and started intervention right away without waiting for the results of the evaluation.

ID 4 mentioned that she was especially satisfied because her son' current school challenges him even though he is not academically strong. She believed the school values academics, and this makes the students do the best they can.

ID 3's son, who is dyslexic, graduated from high school and went on to college. Her younger son is in middle school and has been involved with various sport activities and volunteering opportunities. Her satisfaction was, particularly, associated with these activities to her children (ID 3):

My kids are in a lot of events there. I attend my kids' sports, events at school. He plays football, basketball and he runs track for the school.

100

Moreover, she was very contented with a built-relationship with parents and staff at the transferred school while her sons were involving with the activities. Through this built-relationship, she felt sense of belonging and "a strong bond" with the people and school, even with that community (ID 3):

> He's with the same kids, on the same teams. There's always one of the dads who is coaching. So it's the same network of parents that are there together. So I feel like I've built a lot of relationships there with the other parents and staff at the school. They're very good at communicating. The principal sends out personal emails to everybody. They have daily announcements telling you things that are going on. They're very open about things that are going on. They're very parent-involved in that community. It's always different parents taking turns bringing snacks or giving rides to the kids. We have everybody's numbers. So we've built this community network around that group of boys that go to that school.

ID 1 and ID 6 had similar emotions with sense of belonging and trust to the current school. ID 1's daughter, who graduated from high school and went on to college, had a lot of tutoring services from the school. At the time of the interview, ID 1's son, who is in middle school, was struggling in Math at school. Therefore, she had a meeting with a psychologist, a social worker, and the principal from the school. They said they were trying to test him if he needs special education, and they would do everything for her son. After meeting, she again felt confident with her decision and a sense of trust with the school. ID 6 also was satisfied with the schools of her four children (ID 6):

> I and my children are happy at school very much. The teachers are wonderful. Everything is great. I love it there. I like the elementary school. I like the middle school. I really like the superintendent.

Living Situations of Housing and Neighborhood

    Reasons for Moving

    ID 1 lives with her two children in a house with Section 8 voucher. In 2007, six years ago, she moved to North Minneapolis from Plymouth. Her reasons of moving were associated with safety, affordability, and education. She mentioned she had no choice but to move seven years ago for the sake of family safety. Her family happened to be involved with a fight in her former apartment, public housing, in Plymouth. She did not know exactly why she and her children became involved with the fight. However, she described her and her children as victims of the fight; her daughter was being targeted. The fight became bigger, and, eventually, the police officers arrested the people (total 17 people) who started the fight. Since the building housed Section 8 tenants, the arrested people were evicted. Since, the housing complex went from bad to worse, as she heard. This was the moment she decided to move to somewhere safer (ID 1):

    So, I had to move. I felt unsecure and unsafe, and had to move from the housing

    Her reason of choosing her current neighborhood, North Minneapolis, was affordability. By the time when she was looking for a safer house, she wanted to move somewhere near Plymouth so that she did not need to change her children's' schools. However, the rent in that area was beyond what she could afford even with Section 8 voucher (ID 1):

    I couldn't afford the rent in Plymouth. It was hard to find adequate housing. The rent is so much than they will pay. Mainly the affordability. The rent is cheaper being over here. So, I moved here (North Minneapolis).

Another reason to move in North Minneapolis was to be eligible for the CIY program. She grew up in South Minneapolis. After she figured out she could not find a house in Plymouth, she was going to move to South Minneapolis where she felt comfortable and the rent was affordable. Then, her daughter's teacher, who knew that ID 1 did not want her daughter to experience school changes, introduced the program. The teacher said that her daughter did not need to change her school if she moved in North Minneapolis. This is because students who live on the north side of Minneapolis can apply to schools in the Wayzata school district under the CIY program. She stated (ID 1):

> They said for my kids to continue to go to Wayzata where my daughter already went, they had to be out of Plymouth. I was going to South Minneapolis, but they wouldn't be able to bus there.

She had started searching a house that she could afford to pay rent with her Section 8 voucher. From Craigslist (an advertisements website), she found a house in North Minneapolis. It was a brand-new house built in 2006. She said she really wanted the brand-new house for her kids. However, the landlord (her current landlord) did not accept Section 8 voucher because he had no idea what it was. She had tried to talk with him about the voucher, and he accepted it. Her current landlord was, actually, happy that she had the voucher, as she mentioned, because the house had been empty for a whole year since he built it. ID 1 was also happy with the voucher because:

> It helped out because I couldn't afford it if I didn't have it.

In addition, since her sister was living in her current neighborhood, she also could have her sister's help (ID 1):

> It was really nice that my sister was in this nice neighborhood and I could just move in.

ID 2 moved in Minnesota from Kentucky in 2001. She was born in Minnesota, then, she moved to Kentucky in her 20's. She met her husband while working on the farm in Kentucky, and her son was born in there. Her main reason to move back to Minnesota was to live with her family so that her son could know about his entire family. ID 2 shared her story:

> I was born in Minnesota. Then I went to Kentucky to work with horses and I stayed there for 25 years. My son was born in Kentucky. And… when he was old enough to start school, I moved back here so that he could be in one place around his family. And so he could know his family. We moved here in 2001. My husband left a good job, that's with horses, to come here and be with his son.

ID 2 lives with her sister and her family in a house, which was originally her mother's. After her mother passed away, her sister and her sister's family had been living in the house approximately for 30 years. She seemed to struggling with limited financial situation (ID 2):

> I lost my job few years ago, I was unemployed. I am unemployed. I mean, we don't have money, right now, at all. My husband works at the University of Minnesota. He's a dishwasher in a dormitory. But when school closes for the summer, then he doesn't have a job. So for the first time ever, he went to Guatemala for this summer. I said, "you go down there and let them feed you. And see with your family."

Like ID 1, ID 2's sister helped her to move and settle in, and still supports her a lot.

The reason of ID 3 moved to North Minneapolis had similar to ID 2. She has been living in her current neighborhood for 16 years. She was born and grew up in her current neighborhood. Her family and her friends are in her neighborhood. She had never thought about moving to any other places because she liked being around with her family and friends.

ID 4 was originally from New York State, and moved to Minnesota for school

about 20 years ago. She met her husband in Minnesota. Then, they found a house near

schools and the park (ID 4):

> We liked the neighborhood, we liked that there was a park a block away. And the park had playgrounds and just a little wading pool. We wanted to be near a park. And there were schools nearby. Of course later we also found that they aren't as great as we thought.

For them, location seemed to be important in terms of closeness to school. However,

affordability seemed to be more important; the neighborhood they found was the one they

could afford. At the time they were looking for a house, they could not borrow for a

mortgage. Therefore, they had to look for an alternative way, a contract for deed. ID 4

shared:

> This was a neighborhood that we could afford because we didn't have… the bank, actually, wouldn't give us any money, so we were very limited to what kind of house we could buy. We couldn't get a mortgage. We had to do something call contract for deed, which means that we paid the owner every month. It's kind of like rent-to-own but it's not rent-to-own. So that was the only way we could get a house. We were limited to the ones where the owners were willing to do that.

ID 5 purchased and moved to his current house almost six years ago. He had

similar reasons of location and affordability with ID 4. Due to the location of his fiancé's

job, they wanted to live near the city of Minneapolis. However, the reason of choosing

his current neighborhood was affordability, as the most important reason for them (ID 5):

> The location. We stayed in the midtown building (in South Minneapolis) until we were ready to buy a home. We wanted to be in the city. My daughter's mother working is in Minnetonka. The pricing of the home was one of the main reasons.

For ID 6, born in Minnesota and always lived close to the city, the reason of

choosing house and neighborhood was "an easy choice." Fifteen years ago, she got

married to her current husband, and then she moved into his apartment, which is just behind their current house. They purchased a house, a single-family house, five years ago. She mentioned that her husband and she did not look for other places to live when they bought the house. They liked their neighborhood, it was close to the University of Minnesota, and the price was affordable.

Current Housing Situation

The analysis of housing situation resulted in describing tenure and housing type, crowdedness, and moving frequency. The majority of parents lived in a single-family house, including renting (ID 1 & 2) and owning (ID 4, 5, & 6), except ID 3. ID 3 had been living in the same apartment for more than 15 years. Two parents of the study (ID 5 & 6) had lived in an apartment and moved to a single-family house five years ago. Therefore, none of the parents in this study had moved within five years. Few of the parents (ID 3, 4, & 6) had lived in the same place for more than 15 years.

ID 1, a single mother of two children who moved to North Minneapolis six years ago, was a Section 8 voucher and living in private market rental housing. She had the voucher for nine years: three years in public housing and six years in private market rental housing. She was very satisfied with her current landlord, "I was lucky" as she stated (ID 1):

> He's a real good landlord. He has no other houses. He travels a lot, the world. He's well off, let's put it like that. He has property management. They finished the basement. He was like he didn't want me to ever leave. He never increased the rent. I've never had an incident with him except for when the Section 8 inspectors come in—they come in every year, and inspect the house. He just calls me and lets me know. And he just asks me if there is anything going on and what needs to be fixed.

ID 2 moved in her current house in 2001 and is living with her sister' family in a single-family house. She lives upstairs with her son, sharing a room tougher (ID 2):

> I have my own apartment upstairs. It has a bathroom and a small kitchen, one bedroom. We live in one bedroom upstairs. Me and my son share a room together.

In her current house, she was living with large and extended families (ID 2):

> Everybody lives here. A lot of family here. A big house. I live upstairs. My sister lives downstairs. Her and her daughter live there. In the basement, a friend of my sister's daughter

She was very content with living with large family because her son, her only child, could be around them, which was her main reason to move back to Minnesota. As she shared (ID 2):

> My son is the only child, my sister's daughter, they're like siblings. They sometimes hang out with, watch movies with, play with. My father is here every day, he lives a mile away. But he comes and sits at the house every day. So, there is always somebody form the family in the house.

A friend of her sister's daughter also live in the house (ID 2):

> And in the basement, there's another person living. A friend of my sister's daughter, who is from North Minneapolis and did have a very bad family. He was very sad, things were very bad. A lot of alcohol and drugs. And when he was in 8th grade he came to live with us. And now he's in his second year of college and he's still living with us. So there are a lot of people in my house, but it's a big house.

ID 4 has been living in the same house for 20 years. Her house is a duplex: two bedrooms upstairs and two bedrooms downstairs. Two months ago, before the interview, she had tenants who lived downstairs. Therefore, it was crowded with her six family members in two bedrooms, as she mentioned (ID 4):

> That was a little crowded. That's why we took over the whole house. The family lived downstairs moved out, so now we have the whole house. So now we have 2 more bedrooms. So now we have 4 bedrooms.

Current Neighborhood Situation

Safety of Neighborhoods

Most parents agreed that their neighborhoods were not safe, but they considered their neighborhoods as "livable" ones. However, ID 1 expressed strong disaffection with her neighborhood. ID 1, who lives in North Minneapolis and whose reason of moving to her current neighborhood was affordability and education, was very discontented with her neighborhood. Lack of safety was the reason of discontent. She mentioned that she even had a hard time sleeping at night, she stated (ID 1):

> I don't like it. But it's affordable. I live in the worst neighborhood. It's the worst neighborhood you could possibly say. I've seen two murders ever since I lived over here. The police station is right down the street, so it seems like it'd be safer, but it ain't. It's been hot outside, there's been a shooting or a killing every single day. Seriously, I don't sleep.

She also did not have good relationships with her neighbors. Actually, she did not try to build the relationships with them because she felt too scared to get out of her house. When they happened to have family time, she and her children tend to go outside of their neighborhood (ID 1):

> I just, we just stay in the house. I'm never going to take my kids out of here. I don't talk to anybody, because I live in a very bad neighborhood. It's always been away from the house to their bus stop, both my daughter and my son to the bus stops. That's all we do. We don't go anywhere. We don't do anything in this neighborhood because it's too unsafe. So, usually if we do some family outings, it's not in Minneapolis.

In a relation to her neighborhood as "the worst neighborhood", she made an interesting point by describing her house (ID 1):

I'm right in the middle of everything. And my house, I don't have a fence, so people come. That's how everything is in tangle-town. Everything is discombobulated, it's all caught up. So, no matter where you go, you're in the middle of things. So where I live, I see people come through my yard, they're shooting.

ID 2, at the middle of 50s and who lived with her sister, "really" liked her

neighborhood and felt "safe" in her neighborhood. When asked to describe her meaning

of safety, she shared her friend's story.

My friends in North Minneapolis talked about how there were gunshots in their neighborhood and they had to hide under their bed. His friend (her son) over at his other school, a little girl in his class, was shot and was paralyzed. That doesn't happen over here. That doesn't happen in this neighborhood.

After sharing the story, she mentioned that her neighborhood was actually not very safe,

but she seemed to be fine with it because, at least, she did not hear gunshots within her

neighborhood (ID 2):

Although my car has been broken into, our house has been broken into. You still have to lock up and be careful. Things do happen. But I don't hear gunshots. Pretty happy about that.

Similar to ID 2, in spite of being aware that their neighborhoods were not very safe,

the rest of the parents (ID 3, 4, 5, & 6) were satisfied with their neighborhoods:

It's not super safe, but it's alright. It's livable but it's not the greatest. (ID 4)

The neighborhood itself is overall a good neighborhood. But occasionally there is crime or vandalism. But overall, out of 10 I'd give it an 8. (ID 5)

About a neighborhood safety, ID 4 and ID 6 commented upon attributes of

different perspectives. ID 4 reported that how safety was perceived might depend on age.

When we become older, we become more vigilant. She said that she used to feel much

safer, however; she was not sure if her neighborhood became less safe or she was older

and more careful. ID 4 also shared how her children perceived their safety:

> They do not feel safe doing that (going to the park and play), they're really not that
> comfortable going to the park. They feel like the kids there might bully them, and
> take away their stuff, which has happened. They've had stuff stolen at the park, like
> bikes and school gear. They spend some time outside but they always come back
> and say, "I was going to play basketball but these kids took the ball so we couldn't".
> (ID 4)

ID 6 reported different perspectives of city residents and suburb residents by the

comparison between them. She seemed to take it for granted that a city was always less

safe than a suburb. By saying that, she always had lived close to a city, so she felt safe in

her neighbhood (ID 6):

> It's not a suburb. And so it's always going to seem less safer than it would seem to
> be like if you lived in suburbs. But, I think I feel safe. (ID 6)

Relationships with Neighbors

"There are too many people that don't care." (ID 1)

"We say hello to each other but we don't have a lot of things we do together." (ID 4)

"Especially after the tornado, we all kind of had to lean on each other,
look out for each other. So that kind of bonded us.
Now, we very much know each other." (ID 5)

Following the above conversation, ID 4 brought up an interesting point about

community organizations. She believed non-profit organizations in a neighborhood had a

positive impact that played a role of connecting neighbors. But, those organizations had

been declined in her neighborhood. About a decade ago, as she remembered, there were a

lot of community organizations in her neighborhood; one of those was the source for her

information regarding the CIY program. The organizations had a various programs for parenting for free. Once a while, they had events for parents in the neighborhoods. The organizations also provided a meal when they had the events. The parents could bring their kids because the kids were separated out under the guidance of someone who took care of the kids. Even though the goals of these events were not community-building, she believed it was very helpful to build networks with neighbor parents (ID 4):

> Because parents got to know each other, neighbors got to know each other. I mean, you did bump into other people when you went to these places. You'd talk and then you'd meet other people because they knew other people.

She reported that her neighborhood had gotten better than the past few years. This was from the help with community organizations, as she had figured out (ID 4):

> It has helped. It did change. It's just changed. For a while, it seemed like it was getting much worse and for the last few years. But it seems like it's been getting better, again. So far as gangs of roving kids that are up to no good, or things like that. It seems like it's calmed down in the last couple of years. So there are some improvements I think.

She strongly believed that the community organization, Walking Club, benefited her neighborhood by doing "just things", such as encouraging people to cut grass or reporting to the police if they found something wrong. The small things, as she believed, helped her neighborhood stop or least alleviate declining value (ID 4):

> Walking Clubs where their specific goal is to…like, neighbors go out in the neighborhood and they'll walk around the neighborhood. And if they see something, not right, then they talk to the owners, "you've got to fix this." Or maybe, they go to the police liaison and say that, or to an appropriate department that can push the homeowner to fix something, that can be anything from overgrown grass or just old cars dumped around the place.

According to Tester et al. (2011), social supports from friends and neighbors or organizations refer to those, such as moral support, babysitting, transportation, errands, yard work, or other work around the house. As ID 4 stated, small supports from organizations make neighborhoods different and better. Interestingly, this was also mentioned by ID 1. She also believed that the efforts, such as taking care of grass and watching out each other, make neighborhood look good, and are important to neighborhood stability and reputation. By saying that, she was not happy that her neighbors did not take care of their grass (ID 1):

> There are too many people that don't care. I think that if people would go by example, and do the right thing, it'd be better. But it ain't. It's just people don't do by example, like it's not monkey see, monkey do. Like if I go out my grass is really green and I cut and water it, you gonna wanna do the same because you gonna wanna be in competition with me cause my yard looks better than yours. That just don't happen over here.

However, at the end of the conversation, it seems that she understood the reason people did not take care of their grass could be that there were many slum lords in her neighborhood. ID 1 shared:

> It's just like, they don't even care because there's a lot of slum lords. There are too many slum lords. Landlords that don't care about their property, and they don't care about who they rent to. They're just money-hungry, so they don't do anything to the house to make it look better, presentable, none of that. They just don't care.

As above mentioned, ID 1 believed that the neighbor supports are related to neighborhood stability and reputation. According to Elgin (2010), the perceptions of neighborhood stability refers to cohesiveness of their neighborhoods and are associated with those behaviors of helping each other, sharing same values, and trusting each other. Living close to kin also benefits cohesiveness. Two parents (ID 2, & 3) had family and

friends living close by, while others (ID 4, 5, & 6) had family and friends at great

distances because they were from different cities, states, or countries. ID 2 and ID 3

seemed to have good relationships with neighbors.

When asked what the relationships with neighbors aside from their families or

relatives were like, the parents (ID 4, 5, & 6) discussed the nature of their relationships

with neighbors. ID 6, a mother of four children, mentioned that she happened to make

friends through their children so that they can hang out together. The closest friend of her

in her neighborhood was also a mother of four children. ID 4, a mother of four children,

mentioned that she happened to do a lot of things with her family inside of her house. In

her opinion, this was because there were already a lot of family members, She added to

mention that this might due to a cold weather in Minnesota (ID 4):

It's hard to know because in the winter nobody comes outside.

Natural disaster results in dramatic damages to residences and dramatic changes to

residents as well, such as relationships with neighbors. This relates to ID 5. ID 5 lives in

North Minneapolis where a tornado had touched down in two years ago. In 2011, several

tornadoes touched down in the Twin Cities. However, the worst damages were to North

Minneapolis, which already had a numbers of vacant and abandoned homes. The tornado

damaged and destroyed hundreds of homes and streets. In an article published in the

Citypages, Jacob Wheeler (November 23, 2011) wrote:

And the storm couldn't have chosen a more unfortunate place to wreak its havoc.
North Minneapolis was already home to the city's most depressed and dangerous
neighborhoods. In this largely African-American pocket, 31 percent of the 60,000
residents live in poverty, and nearly 80 percent receive assistance from Hennepin
County.

The home foreclosure crisis following the 2008 economic recession disproportionately affected north Minneapolis, leaving empty homes. Those who rent often deal with inattentive or slum landlords. These challenges add up to what local activists called the "storm before the storm"

According to Fussell (2011, p.2), "disadvantaged groups are more vulnerable to housing damage from a disaster than advantaged groups." In this situation, if disadvantage groups are homeowners, they may have more difficulty than renters. ID 5 moved to that area after purchasing the house. He also mentioned that his neighbors were pretty stable and mostly homeowners. Since the tornadoes, ID 5 mentioned that his neighbors started watching out each other. His younger child was born at that day: he and his fiancé called their son "little tornado". ID 5 shared:

This particular neighborhood, the Campden neighborhood, has its ups and downs. We're fresh off a tornado, 2 years ago. Actually my son is called little tornado because he was born on that day. Especially after the tornado, we all kind of had to lean on each other, look out for each other. So that kind of bonded us. Now, we very much know each other.

Summary

All of the participants in this study had a strong motivation for education, not only did they wanted to pursue higher education for themselves but also they wanted their children to have higher and better education. The researcher repeatedly heard "better opportunities or services" from the interviews. The reasons of transferring schools were originated in dissatisfaction with schooling and school environments of the previous schools in the inner city. Therefore, all of parents viewed their decisions on changing schools as positive, hopeful, and satisfactory ones.

Most parents of the study showed stable housing and neighborhood in terms of moving frequency: none of them had moved within the past five years. They generally expressed satisfaction with their neighborhoods. Whether or not the parents liked their neighborhoods, conversations with them revealed safety concerns of their neighborhoods. ID 1, who did *hate* her neighborhood, had somewhat different reasons for moving and living in her current neighborhood from other parents: she moved into her current house to be qualified to participate in the CIY program and to find affordable housing. The relationships with neighbors varied among the parents of the current study, but generally, did not seem to be active.

Uncovering the Meaning of Phenomenon

The first step was to describe the parents' experiences and situations of the CIY program with their own words, following by the primary research questions. The present step attempted to identify the important and dominant meanings raised in the parents' descriptions and perceptions of their own experiences and situations. This step was to uncover the meaning of phenomenon. Uncovering meanings were identified with analysis of responses of the parents, but also discovered from unprepared research questions during each interview, spontaneously that occurred. These questions allowed the researcher to understand and interpret the phenomenon regarding to the meaning of choice. This section was presented as follows: 1) side effect of school choices, 2) relationships with friends within the neighborhoods, and 3) living in inner cities. Lastly, this section was described and discussed the relationship between mobility and place

attachment. Relevant literature is referred to in the discussion to compare and contrast the theoretical framework with the existing knowledge.

Side Effect of School Choices

Choosers: Motivated Parents

"They came and grabbed my daughter early…It wasn't our pursuit of them. Their pursuit of her. They wanted her." (ID 5)

"I wanted a school where when they graduated they were actually ready to go to college." (ID 6)

Majority of parents reported a strong desire for better educational opportunity for their children. They chose better or more appropriate schools out of the neighborhood school districts for their children. Important factors when looking at school systems included staff and resources, extracurricular activities, test scores, and college acceptance rates. Within their neighborhoods, they witnessed decline in the schools, directly or indirectly. The parents had a number of factors that did not meet their needs and desire. They shared the following:

I could never put my kids into that predicament. (ID 1)

The percentage of them just to graduate is less than half. And the majority of students (in the current school) not only graduates from this school but also goes on to higher education. There were more opportunities for when did go to college and to do their college applications. Somewhere I feel like they have a better chance to have a future. There were more opportunities for when they did go to college and to do their college applications. (ID 3)

We wanted to transfer him into a school we knew fit his needs and help him. (ID 4)

I just wasn't happy with the middle school program and the high school program in Minneapolis. I wanted a school where when they graduated they were actually ready to go to college. (ID 6)

116

As a result, the factors prompted the parents to pull their children out of the neighborhood schools. The parents of this study knew about what they needed and wanted for their children. Some parents actually experienced the lack of school systems and resources, whereas others heard the shortages from their friends or neighbors. With the experiences and motivations, the parents gathered information, talked with their friends or neighbors, and contacted the schools or organizations. They were active choosers.

ID 5, a stay-at-home father at the middle of 40s and an African-American, had been sending his daughter to school through the CIY program less than one year. He had a difference situation from other parents of this study in terms of the way of join the program. When his daughter was at a kindergarten, she was included and taken extra time with the Young Scholars program in Minneapolis. By the time to think about where to send a school of their daughter, they were searching and gathering information about schools. After searching, they were not happy about their neighborhood schools (ID 5):

> We did some research and studied the testing and then we looked at each other and said absolutely not. I'm ultimately disappointed in Minneapolis public schools. And generally this area schools are horrible. The majority of students not only do not graduate from this school but also goes do not go on to higher education. Education, desire to educate the children, compassion, wanting to see your child succeed is absolutely non-existent.

He and his fiancé were not considering sending their daughter to the neighborhood schools. However, they had still not decided where to send her and did not even know about the CIY program. At that time, they had heard about the CIY program through the Young Scholars program (ID 5):

> We didn't know first. It was relayed us through the teacher that she was involved. And then the notes that they sent home and the work. When they sent the information home, we looked at it and we thought this sounds like a plan, this

sounds like something my daughter should be involved in. So we accepted their ideas.

He was very happy about the CIY and the school (ID 5):

I think it's taken her, fine-tuning her eagerness to read. I think it's challenging her. She has a need to read and it's rewarding her for that. She's in first grade, she's reading on a 4th grade level. She is reading on a 4th grade level. They tested her. The last session at our parent-teacher conference talked about accelerating her. Probably skip a grade or consider skipping a grade.

Interestingly, he reported that his daughter's current school took her to visit the school even before the semester started (ID 5):

They came and grabbed my daughter early. I'd say it was probably the middle of this year when she got enrolled. She's only in first grade. It was the Young Scholars pursuit of her in this case. It wasn't our pursuit of them. Their pursuit of her. They wanted her, so we had to learn about them.

ID 5 and his fiancé were not only highly motivated parents but also parents of distinguished child in test scores. Delale-O'Connor (2011, p 127) found out that "(C)hildren with higher grades and/or higher test scores were perceived as having the ability to get into more and better schools". This was because many of schools wanted to recruit those children and were more willing to discuss with students and their parents. Therefore, having a child with high academic profile further influences the ability of parents to make beneficial school choices.

Non-choosers: Information Poverty

"It's not that people don't care; it's that they don't know.
If you don't know something, you won't know anything. (ID 1)"

During the interviews, a few of the parents discussed their neighbors who were not in the CIY program. The parents of this study were categorized as active choosers

118

because the parents gathered information actively and attained the choice on their own. They all mentioned the even transferring processes were not difficult, as ID 6 described:

> It was very, very easy. I was surprised. I thought it would be a lot more complicated, and I think it was just one sheet that I had to fill out.

As opposed to these active choosers, the non-choosers referred to by the parents of the study are placed in information poverty. Delale-O'Connor (2011) provides a typology of non-choosers. The key elements to distinguish between choosers and non-choosers are *capacity*, *inclination*, and *preference*. In contrast to choosers, non-choosers are falling into default schools because they are not able to engage with, exercise, and evaluate choice. Among the elements, Delale-O'Connor (2011) mentions "(C)apacity is central to choice because it is ultimately the connection between chooser and system" (p.77). Since the parents of the study were very satisfied with the program and felt it beneficial to their child(ren)'s education, they had attempted introduce the CIY program to their friends or neighbors. However, the parents said that this was "not easy". ID 3, 4, and 6 stated that non-choosers were too busy to think about school options for their children because they had two or three jobs. As ID 6 stated:

> (They) don't really have time to figure out where else their kids should go to school. They don't have time. It seems like they're just too busy. They don't have the brain space to think about sending their kids somewhere else to school.

Along with this topic during each interview, interesting points were mentioned by ID 1. ID 1 mentioned that her friend in her neighborhood had a desire to send her son to a better school. As she shared (ID 1):

119

My son's friend, her mom doesn't know about the program. I've been trying to
have her put her son in. She lives, like 2 houses down from me, on the corner, and
she wants her son to go to a better school. But it's so hard. She doesn't have
information.

Other than not having information, her friend did not have a car. ID 1 even mentioned

there would be transportation support. But her friend did not apply for the program. She

thought that the poor situations of non-choosers resulted in not being able to know about

choices that are available for them. When asked to explain specifically why and how they

were not able to know about the program, ID 1 mentioned several important points. First,

A car ownership is a barrier to the non-choosers. It may be hard to go and know places if

they do not have cars. The mom of her son's friend had never been driven to Plymouth,

as ID 1 stated. Therefore, not owing a car was the limitation of how far she could

consider sending her child to school. This unfamiliarity of the places hindered their

knowledge about where to find schools and information. ID 1 mentioned:

A lot of people don't have resources to go to the school. It's just like that…I can
give the information, but I cannot take you to the school. They have no idea where
the school is about and where it's at. So, just to get in there to get information… if
you don't have a car, you can't get there. There's no way to get out there, except
driving. So I think that's the dilemma. And she (a mom of her son's friend) was
like, "how am I gonna get there? My car ain't working." She has never been to
Plymouth. They're like "well your kids already went to Plymouth". (ID 1)

ID 3 mentioned similar opinions:

Transportation is a big, huge barrier for a lot of these families in this neighborhood.
That's very important. There are more barriers for the families, so they wouldn't be
able to move out to the area.

120

In addition, ID 1 also pointed out that non-choosers could not attain the choice

information due to illiteracy (ID 1):

> Filling the paperwork out. A lot of parents here are illiterate. They can't read
> themselves.

The last barrier mentioned by ID 1, other than a car ownership and illiteracy, was a

pressure to meet the deadline to apply for the program. In order to meet the deadline,

parents have to plan in advance. Non-choosers are more likely to have difficulty in

meeting the deadline in January. While they are hesitating, it may be easy to pass the

deadline. As ID 1 reported:

> Meeting the deadline is a lot of pressure. Usually in January, that's when you get to
> choose what school you want your kids to go to. I think if people are not more into
> that, in January, if they pass that deadline, then their kids cannot get into school.
> When I say something like, "you know, they have transportation, they take kids on
> a bus to school", and they say "yeah" and "wow", and it's just that. They're
> hesitant. I tried to explain it to them, that's the best way I can do it. But I think that
> people are still hesitant because they think that January deadline you have to do
> that in order to get your kid into the school of your choice.

Therefore, ID 6 stated that people in her neighborhood were more likely to send

default schools:

> There are so many low-income families, and in a lot of cases single moms who
> don't really have time to figure out where else their kids should go to school. So
> they just kind of automatically by default send their kids to the closest school in
> Minneapolis.

At the end of this conversation, ID 1 mentioned:

> It's not that people don't care. It's that they don't know. You know, if you don't
> know something, you won't know. And I think if she had more information, she
> would (have taken choices).

Limited Seats and Long Waiting Lists

"They want to keep it just a community school." (ID 3)

When asked how the transferring processes were, few parents (ID 3, 4, & 6) shared the difficulty with the transferring processes. Some of the conversations came down to talk about neighborhood schools, in particular, including limited seats of the CIY program for children from outside the district and, accordingly, long waiting lists to get in. The successful parents were the one who actively searched and gathered information on their own account. What ID 3 heard about the transferring process was as follows:

> They have a lottery where you sign up to get your kids registered there… they have a very long waiting list … So they can only let few kids outside of the district go there.

After ID 3 submitted the application, she called the school several times to check if her son was accepted. The responses from the school were "it's so full" and "you're never gonna get in". She tried to transfer a school of her older son who was in 8th grade, but her younger son got in for kindergarten first because it was easy to transfer for kindergarten. Then the school allowed her older son to get in the school. So the older son got in half-way through the school year. Therefore, she felt "very lucky to get in". Likewise, ID 4 stated that her younger sons waited for several years to get into the school. ID 6 also reported that the school "could never guarantee us". ID 3 described that the reason why there were long waiting lists was because the schools were trying to keep them limited to children from outside districts:

They don't want people from outside to go there. I understand, because it's a community school and those people who live in that community pay a lot of taxes and donate a lot money and a lot of time, their time, and supplies to the school, because it's their community school. So I understand why they just say they want to keep it just a community school.

Racial Diversity of Schools

"They do not even have one teacher that is not white.
Not even one teacher.
Now to just be in an all-white school is hard for me.
I'm not happy about this." (ID 2)

Many parents of the current study had diverse backgrounds. ID 5 grew up in New Jersey and his fiancé was from Uganda. ID 4, who was from New York, met her husband at college, who was originally from Russia. They were involved with the Russian community. The diverse backgrounds helped to create the interviews welcoming atmosphere, given that the researcher was also from foreign country. In the interviews alongside talking about experiences of transferred schools, the conversation of ID 2 regarding racial diversity was necessarily captured. In the interview of ID 2, among various aspects of the transferring processes to school in the suburbs, racial diversity was a big issue to her. ID 2 mentioned that she did not feel comfortable with the transferred school environment, especially with racial composition. ID 2, who was born and raised in Minnesota, Caucasian, and much older than other parents of the current study, met her husband in Kentucky, who was from Guatemala (ID 2):

My husband is from Guatemala. We met in Kentucky. That's where I met him. When I worked with the horses, most of the workers were Spanish speakers. I speak a little Spanish, I can get around. That was fun.

123

It seemed that she liked previous school of her son, as she liked being around people with

diverse cultures and surroundings (ID 2):

> That (the previous school in Minneapolis) was good. I like the school, I like the culture, I like community, I like the people. There were very few native speakers in my son's school. I traveled all around the United States before I settled here and was living in communities of different people. And I thrive on that. I do love other cultures. When I was in college I was in inter-cultural communications

When she switched her son's school, it was "a totally different school situation".

She was happy about the new school environments in terms of more resources because

her reason to switch was to continue a tutor program for her son. However, one thing that

made her uncomfortable was the racial composition of transferred school, that being

mostly White. She was not even happy about the racial compositions of the teachers (ID

2):

> More higher-income level students, and … with more money, more resources. (The current school) does not have the financial problems…Which is why I moved him to this school…There's very few native speakers in my son' school now. Yes, it is… They're almost all white students…They do not even have one teacher that is not white. Not even one teacher. I talked to the principal about that, "really you cannot even find one teacher that is not white, just to stick in here somewhere?"

ID 2 further illustrated her point when describing the previous school:

> When he went to a Spanish school in Minneapolis, it was mostly Spanish-speaking students, a lot of Mexicans. There were very few white students, mostly black or Spanish, like 90%. I liked his Spanish school where he had teachers from Puerto Rico, teachers are from here and there and all over the world.

While her son was "doing really well" in the new school, the racial and culture

diversity was missing. The new school of her son was totally the other way around. Her

son became one of very few minority students in the new school (ID 2):

124

Now, they're almost all white students. I'm sure, 98% white…My son used to be that everyone was minorities and he was the majority. And now he is one of the few students that are not white. But, he is very happy there. Very happy, and some of his friends are the few minorities that are there. His best friend is from Vietnam.

Different from her son, she reported that "Now to just be in an all-white school is hard for me. I'm not happy about this. This could affect her relationship with the new school. ID 2 mentioned that:

I don't know anybody from that school. I don't know parents from that school. I just don't have the opportunity to have to interact with the other parents. ..I don't actually go down and talk to people other than those opportunities. Sometimes I should. He was having trouble with one teacher and um, I thought I should go down and talk to that teacher, but I never did.

Relationships with Friends within the Neighborhoods

*"You don't know each other because they all go to different schools…
It will be a disadvantage of not going neighborhood schools."* (ID 4)

During the interviews, the conversation turned toward the opinions and impacts of school choice on neighborhood schools. The negative impact of not going neighborhood schools, discussed by the parents, was the long-distance to children's schools. All parents indicated that they usually attended or tried to attend school events or conference meetings, however; it sometimes appeared to be difficult. Especially, for ID 1 and ID 5, it took about an hour by bus or a thirty to forty minute drive to get to the schools of their children.

Another impact of not going neighborhood schools was the relationship with friend and neighbors. All parents of the study seemed to agree that children should go to neighborhood schools, where they could walk to. What they reported:

You should be able to go to your own, home community school. (ID 3)

I wanted him to be nearby. I wanted him to be in a school that we could walk to, that we could ride bikes to. Because I do think neighborhood schools are important. (ID 4)

ID 5 believed that going to neighborhood schools benefit child development because knowing about where grow up was important for child development, even though he ended up choosing and sending his children to outside from the neighborhoods.

I'm of the point where if you live in the neighborhood your kids should go to school in the neighborhood. Your kids should go to school in the neighborhood. They should be able to walk to school, walk home. You know, go to school, walk home, be safe. This is your neighborhood. (ID 5)

Not surprisingly, the parents of the study (ID 1, 4, 5, & 6) mentioned that their children had friends mostly in their schools because children were spending most of their time at school. In particular, ID 1 was the one who strongly wanted to move back to where she used to live in. When asked the reason why ID 1 insisted to move to her previous neighborhood, she mentioned it was for her children. Her children, as well as she, did not have any friends in their current neighborhood (ID 1):

I would do want to move because of my son and my daughter's friends, his friends are there. He has better relationship with them. They go to the same school with him. He doesn't have any friends over here. I don't like this neighborhood. If I could move the house to somewhere else, I would.

According to ID 4, interestingly, this lack of neighborhood friend might be because many of children in their neighborhoods were going to different schools outside of their neighborhoods. She had been even seeing "20 different buses every day" every morning within her neighborhood. This is illustrated by ID 4:

126

We don't see the children that often because they all go to different schools. Not everybody goes to different schools. But, I know that definitely there are a lot of kids in the neighborhood that do not. And of course the bus picks up a lot of kids, I don't know all the kids, but I know the bus picks up a lot of kids in our neighborhood too. 20 different buses every day. I mean not just the choice is yours program but open enrollment in general. You've got kids on the block that you don't know each other because they all go to different schools. I'm not even sure which schools everybody goes to because nobody walks. I mean the people who go to schools are bussed.

As mentioned above, her children did not go to neighborhood parks because they felt unsafe. Therefore, it seemed that there were not many chances to run into people in the neighborhoods (ID 4):

My children have only few friends to hang out in this neighborhood. My son comes home fairly late. And then the kids in the neighborhood come home at different times. And so the kids don't necessarily know each other. There's no really time to go out and then they're afraid to go to the park because people take their stuff. They do go to the park once in a while, but not as much as I would like.

ID 4 lamented that it would be a "disadvantage of not going neighborhood schools".

At the end of the conversation, ID 4 revealed mixed feelings about school choices:

I wish they did go to the same school. I do have mixed feelings, because…. You know, you go to school and you see other people that go to the same school. It's kind of nice. Knowing there's people that go to the same school in your neighborhood. Um, at the same time, I want my child to have a good education in a safe environment. So, I don't know.

Living in Inner Cities

Changes of Neighborhoods

"I'd say younger people more than when I was growing up…
… used to be mostly home-owners as well, but now there are more rentals…
… now it's more economically lower class who live here.
… It used to be two parent households, now it's a lot of single parent households." (ID 3)

127

ID 1, a single mother of two children, an older child attends a college and a younger child attends a middle school through the CIY program, was living in North Minneapolis. During the interview, she often described her neighborhood as "the worst neighborhood". Her neighborhood, North Minneapolis, is the highest level of urban poverty, combined with a high proportion of immigrants. The most distinct characteristics of North Minneapolis are its high populations of African American, a high proportion of youth, a growing number of female-headed households, as well as high crime ratio, and unemployment and low educational achievement (Kuiper, 2014).

When we met ID 1was very happy about the coffee shop, which was opened few years ago and was the only coffee shop in the neighborhood. She mentioned that her neighborhood had changed since she moved in. There were a few nonprofit organizations in her neighborhood providing job training and youth programs. However, she did not think those efforts had made big differences yet due to the lack of jobs. She had seen many her neighbors continued to struggle to have adequate food or education (ID 1):

> They're putting these shops in up here, but it's still not giving anybody jobs. They put the dollar tree over there, but it's still producing no jobs, it's still making the neighborhood worse because people can't get a hold of food, the education.

Likewise, other parents of this study were also aware that there had been some changes in their neighborhoods. As the interview progressed, the parents talked about their neighbors and places, and their sense of changes of their neighborhoods. When asked how their neighborhoods had changed, the parents (ID 2, 3, 4, & 6), especially, who lived in the neighborhoods over 20 years, were often able to recall their memories of their childhoods neighborhoods. Subsequently, they made comparisons between the

128

current and the past of their neighborhoods. In brief, the neighborhood changes perceived

by the parents (ID 2, 3, 4, & 6) were captured in the census figures for the neighborhood.

The common figures of changed neighborhoods were demography of: 1) younger

populations, 2) more rentals, 3) lower incomes, and 4) more single parents.

ID 3 was born and raised in her current neighborhood. She mentioned that her

neighbors used to look out each other, however; currently, her neighborhood had lost "a

sense of community", as she expressed (ID 3):

> When I was growing up, if you did anything, like, if you went into somebody else's yard and picked their flowers, by the time you got home your mom knew what you did, because the neighbor called your mom. They, like, say "your babies in my yard, picking flowers." Nowadays, if you try to tell somebody's kid, like, "don't pick that flowers." The other parent would get mad, like, "why you talking to my kid like that?" So, it's like we don't have a sense of community any more. We're not looking out for each other. We're not saying that. We used to do, like, I see my neighbors, and if some kids did not have any food. And I say "I have plenty of food here, let me help them." You know, we just do not have a sense of community anymore.

When asked why she thought of loss a sense of community in her neighborhood,

she took a time, and started talking. She and her neighbors knew each other well, even

where they lived and who they lived with (ID 3):

> It was a very nice neighborhood. When I was…like, when you're a kid, you play in people's houses, you see, this is their mom, this is their dad, this is their house they've lived in for 20 years, they own this house, this is their family, they stay together.

She also talked about the schools in the neighborhoods since she grew up there (ID 3):

> And when I was growing up, the schools in the neighborhoods, people were very involved. People put all their money into the schools, all the parents volunteered, but over time…over time, my neighborhood changed a lot.

As the conversation went on, she was able to elaborate how her neighborhood had changed. She then categorized the changes of her neighborhood as younger, more rentals, lower incomes, and more single parents. What she mentioned was as follows (ID 3):

> Uh, the older people who were all like here in the community for years and years and year, passed away. Their kids didn't stay, they moved out other places. So new people moved in. I'd say younger people more than when I was growing up.
>
> This neighborhood used to be mostly home-owners as well, but now there are more rentals. Some houses, people still own their houses. But there are more rental properties now. And there are more apartment buildings over here now than before. They've built a lot of apartment buildings.
>
> There are different income levels now. Like growing up it was like a middle class, working families. And now it's more economically lower class who live here.
>
> I'd say another that has changed in this neighborhood. It used to be 2 parent households, now it's a lot of single parent households. Now when you go to the park, you see, or neighbors you meet, there's one parent. Or at the park there's no parents watching any of the kids. Because, maybe, it's a single parent and she has to be at work or at the house cooking.

Similar to ID 3, ID 2 also mentioned about changes in her neighborhood. She had been living in her current neighborhood since 2001, about 13 years. But she knew about the neighborhood for a long time because her mother and her sister had lived there. ID 2 shared:

> The economy has hurt a lot of people, so things are changing, but not in a bad way. When we first moved here there were a lot of original owners who had been here for a long time. And over the years, the old neighbors have died. Like the 90 year-old who had been here for a long, long time. Now, new people are moving in. Young career people and young families. But I think it's still a pretty stable neighborhood.

When combined with the common responses, the mother came up to agree that it had become significantly affected to child development (ID 3):

So, maybe, they don't know what the kids are doing. So I think that's where it starts to break down.

Family Environments

One of common sentiments about living in inner-cities expressed by the parents of this study was family default. Stable families help children's overall well-being. Often, the parents mentioned family problems related to the neighborhood changes: people or parents in their neighborhoods were too busy to take care of children and house. ID 4 and ID 1 shared:

They are just too busy. And maybe both parents work. (ID 4)

A lot of them, people, parents, because of the economy, just to make it, they gotta work 2 or 3 jobs, so they don't see their kids at all, basically they're just feeding their kids. So I think that comes into play. If there was more of a family environment, maybe it would be better, but it's not. (ID 1)

ID 2 also shared a story about her son's friend, who used to come visit her house a lot. Her son and his friend were best friends before his friends got into trouble, as ID 2 shared:

His best friend from this neighborhood growing up, was a little boy who when they were best friends from kindergarten through 6th grade, and his family was, had a lot of problems. Terrible, terrible, terrible problems. So he spent a lot of time at our house because there were a lot of bad things happening at his house, beyond belief. And I love that child, but his environment he was in. And he has anger problems because of all the things that were happening to him at home. He slipped away. I see he's running up with kids that are going to get him in trouble. That have got, or he gets them in trouble, I don't know who. But they have been in some terrible trouble. Terrible trouble. And it's hard to see that. To know that that child was a beautiful child, but it was all against him. You know? I still see him. He's still here, this neighborhood. Family, I believe had everything to do with it, family.

Often, the parents of the study reported that their previous schools had weak involvement of parents. Interestingly, ID 1 and ID 3 linked family environment to parent involvement with schools.

They're just making it, so the day-to-day activities, they don't know unless the school calls and says "your son was absent today." They have no idea what they've been doing in school, none of that. There's no parent involved. And a lot of kids, they have their mother, you know these single parent homes like mine. (ID 1)

But at the same time, the parents have transportation. Those parents have resources. Those parents are, a lot of them aren't single parents. So while mom is there for volunteering, they can make dad go pick up dinner or vice-versa. Where down here, they don't have those luxuries. (ID 3)

As an African American in Inner Cities

"Statistically, black men in here, they would be lost.
Me and my son, as a black, young boy." (ID 1)

"That doesn't make me who I am, because I'm not like that.
So don't judge me on that. A lot of people do. And that's a slave name." (ID 1)

ID 1 expressed negative feelings onto her neighborhood. She did not believe her neighborhood would change to be better much because of many of her neighbors; they were more likely "statistically" to get into trouble (ID 1):

It's bad because of the drug activity. A lot of people around here are on drugs. Uh, it's getting worse. I think that's where a lot of things are falling short in this community because people don't know.

She also expressed concerns about children living in her neighborhood regarding to the parental care and instability (ID 1):

There are a lot of these kids whose parents are strung out on drugs, so they gotta provide. So they gotta do what they're doing, go sell drugs, be in the streets just to maintain. They don't have any good schools here, they don't have any good communities for these kids to have a safe haven in. So many people are dropouts.

As this interview went on, she started opening up. She is an African-American and

a single mother. She talked about her opinions about living in an inner-city as an African-

American. This contributed to have desire not to have her children attend any

neighborhood schools in the inner city. If she sent her children in any schools in her

neighborhood, she believed that her children would have been lost, "statistically", as an

African American (ID 1):

> The majority of everyone who lives up here is black. So, statistically, it's….this neighborhood isn't gonna change. It's not changing.

> Statistically, black men in here, they would be lost. Me and my son, as a black, young boy. Statistically, if he was to be in Minneapolis public schools, he wouldn't make it. He would be in gangs, he would be in more trouble than he is. I think he would drop out.

> Along with this conversation, she shared her experiences of discrimination. As

Sampson (2008) defined discrimination:

> The negative treatment of one individual or group based upon some characteristics of that group, such as gender, race or ethnicity, or age because of belief that the characteristic justifies such negative treatment. *Institutional discrimination* occurs when that negative or unfair treatment takes place at or is performed by an institution as a result not of individual belief but as a result of the structure, organization, or practices of that institution (Italics in original) (p. 727).

ID 1 was discriminated by her last name. Her last name had a bad reputation in the

community; many of those who had the last name had been related to gangs. Therefore,

people tend to link her to the gangs (ID 1):

> People know my family's last name. Because I heard… for years, and it's always been related to the gangs. A lot of members of my family last name are gang members in Minneapolis. And then a lot of people always want to say that I am one of them.

She also had a hard time to get a job because of her last name. She went to several job

interviews, and felt she was judged by her last name. She thought that she was treated

unjustly regarding her last name. For example, she had been to three companies and they

asked that "you're related to the [last name]?" Then, she mentioned "they're not

supposed to, but they still do…"

ID 1 had the lack of trust toward her neighborhood. This made her believe in her

neighborhood was hope less. However, this belief relates to a deep-rooted sense of

hopelessness that blankets the inner city as well as. She revealed racial discrimination.

Her last name is rooted in the slavery, as she stated. She was facing stigma; racial

discrimination is a critical factor in enduring stigma. As described in McCormick, Joesph,

and Chaskin (2012), stigma is:

> The labeling of persons based on distinguishing characteristics (often with
> substantial oversimplification), the linking of those labels to negative stereotypes,
> the establishment of social position and distance from those labeled, the
> assumption of fundamental differences between groups, and finally, status loss,
> differential treatments, and unequal outcomes for those labeled (p.287).

For her, discrimination was an everyday reality because she was discriminated against

based on her last name and race. She lamented that people demarcated her from others,

and hoped she would not be judged by her last name any more (ID 1):

> But everybody is not bad—just because my last name is that doesn't mean that
> that's who I am. And a lot of them do a lot of bad things to people, but that doesn't
> refer to me. Just like some people, you know, the mafia, you know, their last name.
> That doesn't make me who I am, because I'm not like that. So don't judge me on
> that. A lot of people do. And that's a slave name. Because I've been to three
> companies and they've asked me that. They're not supposed to, but they still do.

Summary

The findings emerging from included the analysis were the characteristics of choosers. Many of the parents addressed the distinguished characteristics between choosers and non-choosers engaging with the CIY program and between urban schools and suburban schools. While the parents of the current study are categorized into active choosers, those who were not in the CIY program referred to by the current study parents were non-choosers with limited resources, such as financial resources, transportation, and family support. The current study parents and academically achieved students in this study were pulled out from inner-city neighborhood schools to suburban schools. Additionally, the study parents felt that suburban schools made it difficult to participate in the opportunities by limiting seats for urban students. Few parents in the current study described their neighborhoods by recalling and comparing what they used to be, and the differences were summarized into those characteristics of younger residents, more renters, more low-income households, and more single heads of household.

Understanding the Meaning of Phenomenon

The last step of phenomenology analysis was to understand and interpret the meaning of the parents' experiences and perceptions with the relationships of choice, mobility, and place attachment. These meanings are discussed as follows: 1) what choice means, 2) perception of mobility, and 3) the relationships between mobility and place attachment.

Choice, Mobility, and Place attachment

What Choice Means

> "*People choose what they can afford.*
> *You don't get to choose what you want.*" (ID 2)

All parents mentioned interesting statements about education. They agreed "education is very important", as ID 3 and ID 5 stated. Especially, given the fact that children "spend the majority of their day at school" (ID 6), ID 5 and ID 6 thought that school was very influential and important to child development. This perception is well-documented in the literatures (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Dockery, Kendall, Li, Mahendran, Ong, & Strazdins, 2010). ID 6 also mentioned that children were "influenced more by their teacher and by their students (friends in the school) than they are by anyone at home".

In the interviews with the parents, education was referred as the key to attain future life chances. ID 1 reported that she used to tell her children that "you can't just think that it is going to be given to you", and thus continued to tell them that "you go to school, get good grades, have to work for your money, and can have all this". She strongly believed that "education is all that we have". She, who was born and grew up in inner cities, was aware of well and had observed that (ID 1):

> If your kids aren't educated, they don't have anything they can do. They drop out of school, ditch school, and just don't have anything to do. They're bored, so they get into trouble. And that's what the problems are.

136

Likewise, ID 3 also believed "how much more educated they (children) are, and the more opportunities for them". With their strong belief, few parents lamented the unequal situation of education of urban public schools, as ID 3 mentioned:

> We want them to be equal or more…we should find out what makes it successful. So, all the kids have the same opportunity where they live

One of the noticeable impacts of school choice that was captured in the analysis was "step-up" of the children of the study parents. In this study, step-up refers to opportunities or motivations that serve as a momentum for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people to reach further opportunities. ID 1's daughter graduated from high school in 2012, and is attending a college. ID 3's son also went on college. After engaging with school choice, the parents (ID 1, 2, and 3) mentioned that their children showed academic achievement through supports and peer relationships. ID 2, who had been in the CIY program for two years, mentioned that her son had changed in a good way after transferring a school. Her son became aware what the best way was for him and what kinds of behaviors are *right* or *wrong in* particular circumstances. ID 2 shared:

> My son, for some reason, had enough sense so that when his friend started hanging out with kids that were looking for trouble. He started staying home and not going out with him (his friend). And they had been best friends for 6 years. I don't know what motivated him to know, but he did. And he would not go with them. And they don't do anything together now. And he used to be here for 50% of his life. He was like a brother to my son. And they had a wonderful relationship. They never fought. There were never any problems between them. And now the child is in so much trouble.

ID 2's son also became aware of available resources and started considering how to connect the resources with careers in the future. This is what ID 2 shared:

And he has a job for the summer. He got that through another program because he is a Minneapolis resident, and he is qualified because our income is very low. He is qualified to get a summer job. So he's gonna work for an organization that helps youth in Minneapolis with leadership skills and green resources, clean energy. And he's just going to be an assistant to the teacher who is running classroom and workshop opportunities for kids. And he's good at that, he's done that before. He works very well as an assistant to a teacher. This will be his second year doing this. And that's really good. He feels really good about himself, having a job and saving his money.

Perceptions on Mobility

"*I would want to move if I had the opportunity and the means to leave.*" (ID 1)

"*I wouldn't be able to move out to the area where my children go to school. The property value is just ridiculous.*" (ID 6)

Almost all the parents mentioned that they would want to move safer neighborhoods or near children's' schools. Few parents mentioned that they even had actually considered moving closer to near their children's schools. The reasons for considering relocation were dissatisfaction with neighborhood conditions and long-commuting time to the schools. However, none of the parents mentioned that they planned move out soon. Relocation plans were often interrupted by financial constraints in meeting home prices or rent costs. In the interviews, financial constraints referred to by the parents were concerns about the high cost of housing and limited numbers of rental housing in the area they would want to move in. What the parents mentioned:

I would want to move if I had the opportunity and the means to leave, if there was affordable housing in Plymouth. But it's hard to find adequate housing. (ID 1)

Moving probably wouldn't be an option because there's not a lot of rental space in the area. It's mostly home-owners and the houses up there are very expensive. Like, in anywhere, I cannot even think about price range. I wouldn't even be able to move to that area. (ID 3)

My fiancé has considered moving them out there close to her school. But we're not in that school district income bracket, so that kind of kills that desire. (ID 5)

I wouldn't be able to move out to the area where my children go to school. The area where my kids go to school is very expensive. The property value is just ridiculous. (ID 6)

Other constraints expressed by the parents, although mentioned less frequently, included personal constraints. Personal constraints reduced the capacity or the motivation to move. For example, ID 2 mentioned she did not want to move because she did not seem to have the motivation anymore (ID 2):

The plan was that after my son finished I would move, but now I don't feel that way. I'm getting too old. I used to travel a lot before. I was 40 when Logan was born. So I used to travel a lot. I miss that. But now, I don't quite, my get-up-and-go is not what it used to be.

Now in her middle 50's, she seemed to want to settle down and feel stable emotionally. She had left her hometown in her 20s, and since then, she traveled many places and explored other cultures. She had her son in her 40s, and when he became school age, she decided to return her hometown so that her son could live close to his families and relatives. When her son completed his high school, her plan was to move to somewhere again. It seemed that, however, now, she wanted to stay where she belonged. This change somehow relates to her physical and emotional health as well. She did not explain her health in detail, but expressed that her status of health had declined.

In addition, during the interviews, she expressed her frustration with searching jobs (ID 2):

I am unemployed. So that's kind of sad. I've been looking for a job. I was unemployed, so that was a big change. I went back to school. I went to St. Paul college and got a 2 year degree in computer science. It's been a year since I finished school. But nobody is hiring. Everybody wants someone with lots of experience. I don't have a lot of experiences.

Being unemployed and searching jobs for a while, even after graduating from college, let her down. Subsequently, as she thought, she could not spend time with friends and neighbors because she was spending much time to search jobs at home. She did not have active social relationships with friends and neighbors.

I don't actually talk to that many people. I tend to stay in my house as much as I can. I don't know why. I'm kinda just busy looking for jobs and not running around.

One of the staying reasons of ID 6 was related to their children. ID 6 mentioned that she wanted to stay in her current housing in order to provide space for her children. She lived near the city, which had convenient accessibility to colleges in the town. She was willing to provide living space if her children wanted to continue to stay at her house even after going to college so that her children could save money (ID 6):

I probably want to live in my neighborhood for a while. Because, especially, if our kids get to the point that they want to go to college in this area, then we want to stay there so that they can…we told them that they can live at home for free while they're in college. But that's an option for them to do.

The Relationships between Mobility and Place Attachment

The reasons to stay at in their current neighborhoods appeared to differ; all parents had their own reasons. The parents selected for the current study were all low-income families due to the qualification of the CIY program. Therefore, it was expected that housing affordability was the main reason for the desire to remain in their current housing

140

situations. Their financial situation would be the big barrier to moving upward. Some of the parents mentioned that they were having hard time financially, like ID 2 shared: "I am struggling myself. It's been very hard. I'm just in the temp service". Regardless of the desires for moving and the belief in that "if you want, that should be your choice and your option" (ID 3), the parents in the current study expressed that mobility was less likely to be related to their choices. ID 2 mentioned:

> Well, people choose the neighborhoods they can afford. People choose what they can afford. You don't get to choose what you want.

However, at the same time, they expressed strong attachment to their current house or neighborhood. Some parents (ID 2, 3, 4, & 6) who had lived for a long time had built attachment to their neighborhoods with amenities (for example, parks and stores) and neighbors. The parents were more likely to live close by kin, families, and friends, which is documented in the literature (McDonald & Richards, 2008; Ross et al., 2000). Other parents (ID 1 & 5) who had lived relatively for a short time made attachment to their own homes as their first home.

According to Stedman (2005, p.189), "(U)ltimately, so this logic goes, mobility may foster greater attachment because people can choose places that best suit them." This is true for ID 2. ID 2 had traveled a lot. Now, she wanted to settle down and seemed to know which places suit her and she want to live in. ID 2 shared:

> I don't want to be around a lot of traffic. I like the residential area. I like the neighborhood. It's a nice neighborhood. It's a pretty quiet neighborhood. I can drive to a shopping mall. I like having a little coffee shop and a little shop close that I can walk to. That's nice, convenient. And I don't want to live near a busy business area. More quiet, for me, in a neighborhood. Some people like that 'gotta go'.

141

She was living with her sister's family, and her father was living close by them. She mentioned that living close by her family was the one she wanted. Therefore, she did not want to move to other places any more.

Similar to ID 2, ID 3 reported that location near kin was her reason why she did not want to move. ID 3, a single mother with two children, was living close by her friends and family. This closeness with her family and friends seemed to foster her greater attachment to her neighborhood. She expressed her attachment as mentioning "it is home… that's where my roots are." The statement was an important one to express place attachment, according to Tester (2011). ID 3 shared:

> I am from here. I was born and raised, grew up here. All my family, relatives, friends are in the same community. It's the neighborhood I grew up in. I've lived in that neighborhood all my life. It's home. I'm comfortable there, my kids are comfortable there. They have friends there, they have family there. I went to schools there, I went there and that's where my roots are.

She also indicated that moving out would be hard because it would require extra resources and supports. This is what she mentioned (ID 3):

> Maybe if my car broke down I would have to take a bus, like 15 cities away to get to work and not have family there to support. Like what if one day I needed to stay late at work, who can pick them up at school if they're all the way out in another, you know, 5 cities away. So those are different barriers that I couldn't, I could never move to that area.

ID 1 moved to her current house seven years ago. Her previous home was an apartment in public housing. When asked why she liked her house, she talked about living in a house versus living in an apartment: for her, it was "so different". Her experience with living in an apartment was associated with disorder, instability, and involvement with drugs and violence. ID 1 described:

142

I don't have to worry about somebody kicking in my door, stealing my stuff. People come in and out your apartment, and they're doing something or selling drugs. You can't raise teenagers in an apartment. You can't.

On the contrary, for her, living in a house was associated with the ability to relax, safety, and freedom. She moved to a brand-new house. She felt relaxed and safe due to being looked out for by neighbors (ID 1):

It is one house, band-new. I'm renting. It was built in 2006. I've lived here for 7 years. I moved here for my kids. I can relax. And we have everybody around, like, when I lived in an apartment, they say, "Oh, we didn't see anything."

You have more freedom in a house because you have restrictions in an apartment. You can't have somebody come and you've got to turn the music down at a certain time and you can't have that many people. And then it's like you've got to be quiet because other people's kids and other people, you can hear other people in the complex. In a house, I have all the things in the world.

Since ID 1 wanted to send her daughter to the same school with better education and have affordable and adequate housing, she moved in her current neighborhood. For ID 1, in order to feel attachment to home, physical attributes of neighborhoods, such as the quality of neighborhood infrastructure and amenities, were not important. While she expressed strong feeling of hate toward her neighborhood, describing it as "the worst neighborhood", she revealed a strong feeling of love for her house. Since she moved into, for seven years, she seemed that she had built strong attachment. She mentioned she "made it home". When asked to describe what home meant to her (ID 1):

Home means something steady, something that has a steady foundation. Something, safe, steady, stable. It's what you make it. And just the stability of knowing that you can come, open your door, and you feel safe there.

143

She was very happy and even proud of her current "home". She said that she had taken care of her home, just like she owned home.

> Because every little thing that I do in the house, I make sure it's taken care of. I don't ask him to do anything, the landlord. I just, I take care of it like it is mine. I know I pay rent, but by the same token, this is mine, this is where I live, and this is where I feel my kids have…I don't know. Now, I can't see myself moving somewhere else other than if it was going to be better. It's just you come to my house, you feel like, "okay, this is your house." You wouldn't think I am renting. The way I take care of it, because, I mow the lawn, and I'm out in the snow. I make sure it's shoveled. I do a lot of stuff, you know, so you wouldn't ever think that I was renting.

Summary

This final step was to comprehend and interpret the meaning out of the parents' experiences and perceptions with the relationships of choice, mobility, and place attachment. The parents considered education as a key to attaining wide opportunities including college acceptance that offers better future life chances. Therefore, many of them wanted to move to good school districts or near the current schools of their children, but none of them reported their willingness or ability to pay for school. On the contrary, most of them revealed their preferences to stay in at their current neighborhoods, which were explained by attachment to their homes and community.

CHAPTER FIVE. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current phenomenological study explored how inner-city low-income families with school-age children experience school choice. Particularly, the study attempted to examine the Choice Is Yours program that allows school mobility with the help of transportation support for low-income families in Minneapolis. The primary purpose of the current study was to develop a better understanding of how low-income families perceive choice, place, mobility, and place attachment. Therefore, the study examined who participated in the program, what their experiences of the program were, and how they perceived their housing, neighborhood, and choice. To understand and interpret the meanings of their perception and experiences, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted in the summer of 2013 with six parents who participated the Choice Is Yours program. Despite seemingly remarkable studies on school choices, mobility, and place attachment, studies about the relationships between choice, mobility, place, and place attachment through the understanding of the particular circumstances of low-income families with children remain underrepresented. In this chapter, the important findings of the study are summarized and discussed. Limitations of the study and future research are discussed. Implication for policy is then briefly addressed.

Discussion of Important Findings

The research presented in this study addressed four specific questions: 1) What were the reasons parents had for deciding to take advantage of school choice programs, especially the CIY program?, 2) What were the parents' experiences in the program?, 3) What were the families' housing and neighborhood situations?, and 4) How do the

families perceive and understand mobility and place attachment in regard to school choice? These questions were designed to address the overall aim of the study to advance the body of literature regarding choice, mobility, and residential place attachment in order to inform future education and housing policy.

What Choice Meant

With regard to the reasons for choosing an alternative school for their children, it is noteworthy to mention how opportunity impacts the participants of school choice programs. The parents in the current study were active and motivated to enhance their children's educational experiences. All of the participants in this study had a strong motivation for education, not only did they wanted to pursue higher education for themselves but also they wanted their children to have higher and better education. The researcher repeatedly heard "better opportunities or services" from the interviews. Perceived opportunity was a major determinant for choosing the choice programs. Although the parents had limited resources, such as financial resources, transportation, and family support, the data addressed that they were active choosers as the characteristics were commonly founded among choosers (Delale-O'Connor, 2011; Lankford, 2001; Levin, 1998). The characteristics include: 1) distinguishable preferences, 2) the capacity to respond with needs, and 3) the capacity to gather information. In addition, the ability to read and understand the information and transferring processes were very helpful. Based on their preferences, needs, and capacities, they collected information, chose the best option available for them, and made a decision.

The second research question focused on the parents' experience with school choice. Overall, the parents were satisfied the choice they had made to enroll their child(ren) in the CIY program. They indicated that higher academic achievement, college acceptance, extracurricular activities, better and appropriate services, and safer school environments were specific reasons for their satisfaction with the program. Extracurricular activities were founded to be especially beneficial for minority students increasing their graduation and college acceptance rates (Smith, 2006).

However, the bigger impact of having choice is not just academic achievement. As this study clarified, academic achievement such as improving test scores through school choices was not the focus of the study, and should not be the ultimate goal of school choice programs. For example, one parent reported that her child developed an ability to judge what is right and what is wrong. Another noted that her child was able to find a group of friends in the new school that were a positive influence for him. She seemed to be very proud of her son now, as he became aware aware of and searched for available resources connecting opportunities to future life plans. She mentioned "he feels really good about himself." Such personal and social skill development is critical for the future success of children who are at risk of academic failure.

The study parents had also made impressive gains. A few parents mentioned that they experienced a greater involvement in the transferred schools. Those parents valued involvement in the activities and volunteerism and their values were met in the transferred schools. For example, one of the parents felt that she formed greater trust and

confidence in the transferred school: other parents felt further bonding with members of the school community.

In addition, having children who had already gone through school choices influenced the ways of engaging with their siblings. Once engaged with school choices, sending the second child to the same school (even the third and the fourth) was much easier (Delale-O'Connor, 2011). The connections and familiarity with school choice was a driving source for potential engagement.

The parents' experiences with the school choice program leaves some room for consideration about diversity and integration in mixed income communities. Regarding a question on whether families and children integrated well in higher-income and mixed-income schools and neighborhoods, the study examined how the parents perceived and experienced with the transferred and new environments.

Researchers addressed a question relevant to integration when choosing schools. In the study of Lauen (2008), racial/ethnic preferences appear to be a significant role in school decisions. Lauen (2008) found that families chose schools in accordance with their racial/ethnic backgrounds. That is, "whites and Hispanics prefer schools with higher white and Hispanic populations, respectively, blacks and Hispanics tend to avoid schools with high Hispanic and black populations, respectively, and whites tend to avoid schools with high percent black" (Lauen, 2008, p.36). Likewise, DeLuca and Dayton (2009) pointed out that "the criteria parents use to navigate school choice options may not be those most likely to improve academic outcomes"(p.479). Considering that information tends to be from word of mouth and that parents may have a desire for well-integration of

148

their children (DeLuca & Dayton, 2009), ethnic preferences of parents are not to be ignored. A similar concern regarding racial/ethnic and economic diversity has been observed in housing mobility programs as well. In the study of residential mobility in Yonkers, the teenagers who moved to suburban neighborhoods returned to their old neighborhoods to hang out with their old friends (Briggs, 1997).

Based on previous research, integration among peer relationships within a school, seem to be difficult one. The concern was also validated by the current study. The suburban public schools in this study tended to lack in both racial diversity and multicultural experiences. The lack of racial diversity was reported as a concern by one of the parents which not only affected her son, but eventually, made her hesitant to become involved with other parents and teachers in the school.

Place Attachment

The third research question centered on an examination of the housing and neighborhood situations of the families in the study. This question was directed at discovering parents' attachment to their places through in-depth engagement with understanding their housing and neighborhood.

A few of the parents became homeowners within the previous five years, which were their first homeownerships experiences. Homeownership was associated with reducing the inclination to move (Andersen, 2008), and even allowed emerging attachment in spite of low socio-economic neighborhoods (Randall et al., 2008). One participant who was not a homeowner had developed a deep relationship and attachment

149

to her current house. She described her meaning of her home as something that provides a sound foundation for living; something safe, steady, and stable.

While the feeling of home and neighborhood seemed to connect with each other, which helped parents and their children create strong place attachment, sometimes parents had conflicting feelings regarding his or her home and neighborhood. The feeling had a major impact on how parents created in-depth attachment to her home while at the same time having negative feelings regarding the neighborhood. One respondent indicated that her home was the safest and most comfortable place as opposed to her neighborhood–the "worst neighborhood". She directly used the word *hate* for her neighborhood and *love* for her home. This conflicted feeling resulted in a failure to establish a strong relationship with her neighbors while at the same time she had established a strong attachment to her home and described her home as being a steady foundation for her life.

Since many of the parents were identified as long-term residents, they felt comfort and convenience to their places. More than half of the parents lived with close family and friends nearby, which was largely beneficial to them. One of the parents expressed her place as her roots, stating "that's where my roots are". This emotion was an important component to place attachment (Hay, 1998).

Place attachment may be hard to define and categorized without understanding how a person views and feels about their places. In-depth engagement with the one's lived experiences has to be accompanied with understanding of place attachment. Places where people live provides *valuable* information for those who live there (Skobba,

150

2008).During each interviews, the researcher could hear various words about how the interviewees described and felt about their places. For participants, place attachment originated from neighborhood rootedness, which was found to be an important component of place attachment in previous research (Hey, 1998).

Even though in these particular cases, the data revealed extensive stories, memories, and experiences about places, it became clear that the study parents have created everyday meaning of place and attachment to their homes and neighborhoods. This might be a small area, like a small yard. For some of the study parents, their social worlds, like relationships and mutual support from friends and kin within their neighborhoods were significant. For other parents who lived in the same place from childhood, the neighborhood where she knew every inch was like her home. Place attachment of the current study was associated with the experience of first-time homeownership, familiar and convenient environments, and close kin relationships that were located in the same neighborhood.

The Relationships between Mobility and Place Attachment

The final research question was to understand the relationships of mobility and place attachment. The study then dealt with the impact of the perception and understanding of mobility and place attachment for school choice decisions and policies.

The findings indicated that the participant households were not associated with frequent mobility. None of the participant households had moved within five years. Over half of them had lived in the same neighborhood more than 20 years. At some point, some of the parents had considered moving as their child(ren) grew up (Randall et al.,

151

2008; Rossi, 1980). Few of them considered moving with proximity to school or job due to the long commute or with better school quality (Kim & Morrow-Jones, 2011). Other parents indicated their considerations for moving due to overcrowded housing and neighborhood safety issues (Morris & Winter, 1996). However, regardless of preferences and inclinations or desires to live in better neighborhoods, these ideals were unlikely to be realized. None of the households actually moved or even realistically considered relocation as an option for improving their child(ren) educational opportunities. Lacking capability to move due primarily to limited financial resources they were prohibited them from relocating to where they want to live; a finding that is supported by extensive previous research (Kim & Morrow-Jones, 2011; McDonald & Richards, 2008; Montgomery & Curtis, 2006; Morris & Winter, 1996). In addition, the parents mentioned that they would have to give up choosing the CIY program if there was no transportation support as the free, school-provided transportation was a key factor in their ability to enroll their child(ren) in the program.

However, the data of the current study does did not indicate that parents felt their immobility as being financially trapped in their housing and neighborhoods. Rather, the participants indicated that they were happy to live in places close to family and friends so that they felt "familiar", "convenient", "comfortable", and overall they were satisfied with their current places. Winstanley, Thorns, and Perkins (2002, p.817) noted that "many people are reluctant to leave familiar and convenient surroundings to which they have grown accustomed and become attached." Vales (1999) suggested that once cultural values and attachment are formed, residents were likely to stay rather than move. The

152

issue is considered critically in low-income and minority communities with concentrated poverty (Manzo et al., 2008; McDoland & Richards, 2008).

Satisfaction is a very personal and subjective emotion, and is understood based on personal circumstances. Therefore, subjective understanding may not relate to objective characteristics or reputation of places. This view helps families develop place attachment because affectionate feeling for a place is closely correlated to subjective satisfaction with a place positively (Wright & Kloos, 2007). Unlike the study by Andersen (2008) that poor reputation was the most significant reason to increase mobility, in this study, poor reputation in terms of safety or physical neighborhood amenities was not a significant driver to relocate. Even though the parents were aware that their places were not "the best place" to live, the majority of the parents expressed strong place attachment.

The study also sought to understand how the parents would perceive mobility in a relation to housing and school. Considering the daily life and limited resources of low-income families, moving decision is more complex for low-income families with children, therefore; school may not be the top factor for moving (DeLuca & Rosenblatt, 2010). However, since the parents were motivated and active educationally, the researcher questioned about whether the parents would make trade-offs between school and housing. The parents in this study looked for better school options that did not require moving out. Housing affordability as one of the moving decisions should not be ignored, but the parents rather preferred living close to families and friends and keeping familiar and comfortable social networks.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study focused on hearing the active voices from those who participated in the school choice program. Throughout the hermeneutic phenomenology employed in this qualitative study, the study connected threads among the experiences of the study parents, between expected and unexpected research questions, and thus between previous literature and beyond the literature (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The repetitive process of interpretation within the hermeneutic phenomenology allowed the analysis to develop rich and deepened meanings from vague and intuitive textual responses of the participants. This study method required understanding the impact and relationships between school and housing (see DeLuca & Dayton, 2009). Therefore, the current study will be useful to policy makers and expand literature in Housing Studies by providing additional knowledge regarding the relationship between school and housing of low-income families and children living in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

The limitations of this study come from two issues: the lack of diversity of interview cases and the selection of participants. First, the current study examined parents of the CIY program who were living in a particular area. The recruitment could be conducted with the help from the school districts that were willing to join in the current study. Three suburban school districts out of nice ones agreed to join in the study. In addition, the researcher was only able to approach those who contacted the researcher voluntarily. As a result, the findings were based on the data from those who actually agree to participate in the study, and the parents represented two school districts, which were located in North Minneapolis. Although the attributes of individuals proved to have

a great deal of influence the small sample size of the study, the researcher notes that the findings should not be generalized to all parents engaged with the school choice program. The perceptions and experiences of participants may vary from those who did not agree to participate in the study. Tied to the above concern, not all of the components of the theoretical frameworks were explored in this study.

The selection of participants was another concern in that the sample was limited to choosers. It was beneficial to explore the perspectives of Minneapolis low-income families with school-age children concerning school choice, place, place attachment, and mobility. However, it would be interesting to ask the same questions to non-choosers in the same area. During the interviews, the conversations about non-choosers were often initiated by the study parents. Questions regarding the impact of opportunity-based programs arise if the programs are delivered to the family concerned. How can we understand well the outcome of school choice without investigating non-choosers directly? In addition, as one of the study parents mentioned, there were many buses in her neighborhood every morning to pick children up to different schools through school choice programs. How can we understand well the outcome of school choice without undermining what is beneficial in the neighborhood as a whole? In order to understand deeper and further the impact of school choice, perceptions of non-choosers will be necessary. Therefore, this inquiry leads to a future research direction. From a policy perspective, this way will broaden the discussion about educational policy with housing policy together.

The first recommendation for future research is to examine the inequality between choosers and non-choosers. The current study dealt with the school choice program that offers educational opportunities. In education policy, school choice programs largely produce two views of choice debate. One view holds that school choice promotes competition and increase achievement (Lankford, 2001; Lauen, 2008; Levin, 1998). School choice thus helps students to be more competitive and improve educational attainment in better school environments, as proponents advocate. On the contrary, opponents argue that school choice increases the inequality between choosers and non-choosers (Ladd & Fiske, 2000; Lankford, 2001; Lauen, 2008; Levin, 1998). The inequality can be examined with those who excluded from the choice program.

As noted previously, the participating parents were identified with motivated and active choosers. The CIY program targets poor and disadvantaged neighborhoods with underperforming public schools. The CIY program specifically gives a qualification for those who are low-income families, eligible for free or reduced lunch. Since the program still remains to be optional and voluntary, the program may have to rely on preferences and decisions of parents in the targeted neighborhoods. However, the findings from the current study are still critical. Even though the CIY program especially targeted low-income families by restricting the number of qualified students in the neighborhoods, it was hard to avoid other highly motivated parents with academically high achieving children gaining access to better schools. The conclusion in Wells and Crain (1997), a study for those who did not participate in school desegregation program, is well-

described about non-choosers and their family environments, and was mentioned by the parents in the current study as well:

> The evidence presented here paints a portrait of twelve black students who end up in all-black inner city schools for several reasons that have nothing to do with the quality of education offered. Many are the children of tired, beat down parents who have not actively investigated the educational options. They often come from homes where day-to-day survival taps so much energy that little is left for gathering information on schools of choice. They attend city schools because they are close to home and host many familiar faces (p.179).

Studying the decisions of non-choosers will make clearer why they were excluded from educational opportunity.

The second recommendation is for additional research on issues of inequality and school segregation between urban and suburban areas. Notably, school segregation in urban areas has increased since school choice has been expanded (Frankenberg, 2009; Kraus, 2008; Orfield & Wallace, 2007). Even before the CIY program's inception, segregation rates in the Minneapolis public schools had already increased, and school segregation rates in the schools continued to increase after the CIY program (Kraus, 2008; Orfield & Wallace, 2007). There was little evidence from the current study to prove that the CIY program aggregated segregation. However, the parents mentioned the socio-economic characteristics between urban and suburban schools. Many parents in the study mentioned that families in the suburban schools had higher incomes and were predominantly white. Many suburban school districts seemed to be homogeneous compared to urban school districts. Given that housing and school are unavoidably connected together, residentially segregated neighborhoods aggravate school segregation

(Orfield & Wallace, 2007). Therefore, direct involvement with non-choosers will enlighten this inquiry.

The Implications for Policy

Policy impacts family well-being, and its impact moves forward when communication to policy makers is effective (Bogenschneider, 2006). In order to make effective policy impacts, researchers and decision-makers must examine the underlying assumptions and understand the targeted population of both housing and school choice policies. The findings from this study were from a small number but unique in that we could hear about why the participants chose to the school choice program, identify who participated in the program, and understand their actual situations. These findings will assist policy decision-maker in forming future housing and educational policies.

Opportunity-based programs with housing and school mobility have in common, the goal of providing better opportunities for low-income families and their children to improve their situations. It is not too much to emphasize the goal of opportunity-based programs, therefore; the findings of this current study recommend that opportunity-based programs should not be limited. The programs are able to contribute one essential thing that is often taken for granted, that is increasing racial and economic diversity. More promising policy should be able to consider long-term outcomes. The present study also suggest there is a need to think about more robust, durable, and consistent ways of approaching and delivering access to targeted recipients. In addition, equally important efforts should be on the way how to improve urban public schools so that more families in inner cities have quality education without undertaking mobility. Last, the study quotes

from one the parents: "all the kids have the same opportunity where they live. We want

them to be equal."

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APPENDIX A. Email of Solicitation

Email of Solicitation

I am Youngeun Choi, a doctoral student in Housing Studies at the University of Minnesota.

I am sending email to you to ask a favor of my doctoral dissertation research. My research is about understanding how school choices have related to housing environments and residential stability of the participants. Specifically, I am interested in open enrollments in Minneapolis (the Choice is Yours), which is targeted inner-city residents who have participated in sending their children to the nine suburban schools, categorized as boundary-based choices (defined by Quartz & Martinez, 2007).

It will be interviews. I would like to investigate the perceptions and experiences with open enrollments in Minneapolis of participants, focusing on their housing careers and environments. Either current participants or past ones would be fine. I anticipate having about 30 participants, particularly parents or primary guardians. My research proposal has been passed by my committee and I am in progress of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process.

I have met Cindy Jackson and Anne Parks at Minnesota Department of Education. They recommend me to contact directors from the suburban schools if you can help me to recruit the participants and if you have some great data about students who come and their characteristics.

One of recruitment would be that you would send them information about what I am proposing and my contact information so that they could contact me.

If you need more details about my research, I can send the brief version of research proposal and interview questions. Also, I would like to meet you as well in order to talk about the letter of permission, consent form, and the way of recruitment.

If you are not the right person to reply this, please forward my email to the ones. Please help me make my research feasible. Looking forward your reply.

Thanks for your support and consideration in advance.

Sincerely,
Youngeun

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_____@umn.edu
XXX-XXX-XXXX

APPENDIX B. Recruiting Letter to Participants

<u>Recruitment to Participation in the Interview</u>

To the Parents in the Choice Is Yours Program.

Hello!

I am Youngeun Choi, a student in the Housing Studies at the University of Minnesota, and interested in housing for child and youth development. The Choice Is Yours program is a great opportunity for your children and I would like to hear about your story.

I am requesting your participation in an interview. This is completely voluntary. I am going to ask you several questions regarding your experiences and opinions during the participation in the Choice Is Yours program. The interview will last about 40 min to one hour. A **$20.00 Target gift card** will be given to you at the conclusion of the interview as a token of appreciation.

Would you be willing to participate?

Do you have time to talk with me to help my study?

Please let me know if you are willing to help me. Here is how you can reach me: 1) by phone at XXX-XXX-XXXX or 2) email at _____*@umn.edu*.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration in advance.

Youngeun Choi
Ph.D. candidate in Housing Studies
Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel
University of Minnesota
XXX-XXX-XXXX (phone)
_____@umn.edu

APPENDIX C. Consent Form

<u>Consent Form</u>

You are invited to be in a research study of understanding the relationship between the Open enrollment (Choice Is Yours program) and residential stability in urban areas. You were selected as a participant because you are someone who has experienced in the program for your child. We would like to hear about your opinion on the program. We respectfully request that you carefully read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by Youngeun Choi, a graduate student in the Housing Studies Program, Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel at the University of Minnesota. The purpose of this study is to explore how the program has impacted on your housing and neighborhoods. The results will be incorporated into only my doctoral dissertation. I am sure that you will make an enormous contribution to improving my research and your communities.

The participation in the research is voluntary. You are free to withdraw during interviews and study at any time. You are encouraged to ask any questions or raise concerns at any time about the nature of the study or the methods I am using. Our conversations will be audio taped to help me accurately capture your insights in your own words. The records of this study will remain private. Any records and files will be kept in a locked office and stored on the University-owned computer; only I will have access to the computer with a secured password. The tapes will only be heard by me for the purpose of this study. If you feel uncomfortable with the recorder, you may ask that it be turned off at any time. Anything you say is confidential. Your names will not be used in any reports.

You will not be penalized or lose benefits if they refuse to participate or decide to stop. In the event you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provide will be destroyed and omitted from the final paper. A $20.00 Target gift card will be given to you as a token of our appreciation for your participation.

There are no physical or psychological risks to you as a participant in this study. You are encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns at any time about the study. The researchers conducting this study are Youngeun Choi. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact me at Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel, 240 McNeal Hall, 1985 Buford Avenue, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108-6136, XXX-XXX-XXXX, and _____@umn.edu. You may also contact Ann Ziebarth, XXX-XXX-XXXX, _____@umn.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature:_____Date: _____

Signature of Investigator:_____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D. Qualitative Interview Questions

Qualitative Interview Questions

Numbered questions are the primary research questions. Lettered questions that follow each numbered question are designed and will be prompts that will be used if necessary.

1. First, I would like to ask your current housing and household

    a. How many children between the ages of 5 and 17 do you have? (how many are in the CIY program?)

    b. How many people are living in your housing unit?

    c. How many bedrooms are in your housing unit?

    d. What type of housing are you living in?

    e. Do you own your housing unit that you are currently living in?

    f. How long have you lived/did you live in your home?

    g. How many times have moved since you first started to participate in the CIY program?

    h. How has your living situation changed as a result of your experience with the CIY program?

2. Tell me about your neighborhoods.

    a. How long have you lived in your current neighborhoods?

    b. What were the reasons you moved to this neighborhood? (for example, location, neighbors, jobs, safety, public schools, or housing)

    c. Do your neighbors get along with each other, helping each other?

    d. Is your neighborhood safe?

    e. Do you want to move out or do you stay at your neighborhoods?

    f. Would you recommend your neighborhoods to someone else?

3. Tell me about how you had been interested in the CIY program.

    a. What was your motivation? From friends, neighbors, or dissatisfaction of schools that your children attended…

    b. Can you tell me about the schools that your children attended and your neighbor schools?

    c. How did you decide on the current schools that your children attend? From friends, school officials, or reputations of the current schools

182

4. Tell me about the CIY program.

      a.   Are you satisfied with the program?

      b.   Are you going to recommend this program?

      c.   How long does it take to get the current school from your home?

      d.   Does/Did the transportation help your children to get the school?

      e.   Are you willing to continue this program?

      f.   If you cannot receive transportation, would you still send your children to the school?

      g.   How (much) have school choices influenced your neighborhoods? (in what ways?)

5. Tell me about your experience with school choice for your children.

      a.   Do you think this program has provided better opportunities for your children? (in the educational achievement, educational motivation, safety, or behaviors.)

      b.   In what ways school choices have influenced your children?

      c.   Do your children do well in the school? (with peers, with teachers)

6. Is there anything else you would like to tell me or any questions I did not ask? Is there anything that I should have asked?

At the end of the interviews, the researcher will ask to fill out questions about demographic characteristics of the participants briefly. The questions are following;

1. You were born in (   )
2. What race/ethnicity do you consider yourself?
3. What is the highest level of education you completed?
4. What is your marital status?
5. Are you currently employed outside your home?