

Neighborhood Socioeconomic Disadvantage, Residential Stability, and Perceptions of
Social Support among New Mothers

Center for Research on Child Wellbeing
Working Paper #2007-08-FF

Kristin Turney
University of Pennsylvania
3718 Locust Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19104
turney@sas.upenn.edu

Kristen Harknett
University of Pennsylvania
3718 Locust Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19104
harknett@sas.upenn.edu

Word count: 8,042

February 22, 2007

Neighborhood Socioeconomic Disadvantage, Residential Stability, and Perceptions of Social Support among New Mothers

Neighborhoods are important sites for the formation and development of social ties. In theory, living in a disadvantaged neighborhood may be associated with lacking social support. We investigate this hypothesis among mothers of young children using longitudinal data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing study (N=4,211). We find that mothers in disadvantaged neighborhoods, compared with their counterparts in better neighborhoods, are less likely to have a safety net of friends or family to rely on for monetary or housing assistance. We also find that residential stability is associated with stronger personal safety nets. For mothers who move when their children are young, moving to a better neighborhood seems to have little effect on their perceived instrumental support, but moving to a more disadvantaged neighborhood is associated with a decline in instrumental support.

The availability of instrumental support from friends and family members can serve as an important safety net over the life course. Having individuals available to provide support can be particularly important for new parents, as the transition to parenthood is often accompanied with emotional and financial stress (Cowan and Cowan 1992; Mulsow, Caldera, Pursley, Reifman, and Huston 2002). While individual-level predictors of social support such as age and marital status are well-documented in the literature (Eggebeen and Hogan 1990; Hogan, Eggebeen, and Clogg 1993; Eggebeen 2005), researchers have paid much less attention to the importance of place in determining who has and who lacks support from social connections.

Social ties are partly determined by where one lives. Neighbors, because of their proximity, potentially serve as a ready source of support for new parents. In this paper, we look at how neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage is associated with perceptions of social support among new mothers. Measures of perceived social support capture the willingness and ability of friends and family members to help out in times of need, and prior research shows that this available support is associated with economic stability (Haider and McGarry 2005; Henly, Danziger, and Offer 2005; Harknett 2006). We create an index of perceived social support encompassing monetary, housing, and child care support. We look at the extent to which one's neighborhood conditions are associated with this perceived social support in a cross-sectional analysis. We also use longitudinal data to analyze the relationship between residential stability and perceptions of social support.

We use data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing survey, a longitudinal study of nearly 5,000 new and mostly unmarried parents in 20 U.S. cities. These data are particularly well-suited to answer our research questions, as sample members were drawn from a large number of neighborhoods, allowing for considerable variation in neighborhood conditions. Almost half of the mothers in the sample moved between the 12- and 30-month waves of data collection, facilitating a longitudinal analysis of residential stability and perceptions of social

support. The study also allows us to focus on new mothers, a population for which perceived social support is especially important.

Previewing our results, we find that neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage is negatively associated with some types of perceived social support in the cross-sectional analysis. Mothers living in disadvantaged neighborhoods – independent of individual-level factors such as race, socioeconomic status, household composition, and health – are less likely to have friends and family members who are willing and able to provide them with monetary or housing assistance. In contrast, mothers in more and less disadvantaged neighborhoods are equally likely to have child care assistance available from their social ties. Residential stability is positively associated with perceived social support for mothers. Moving to a better neighborhood does not affect mothers' perceived support, but moving to a worse neighborhood is associated with a decline in perceived social support at least in the short-term. Combining our results, we find that the quality of a neighborhood and residential stability are both important, independent predictors of perceived support.

BACKGROUND

Importance of instrumental social support

The relationship between adult children and their parents is an important one; parents and other kin play a strategic role in assisting individuals over the life course (Eggebeen and Hogan 1990; Rossi and Rossi 1990). About half of middle-aged Americans are routinely engaged in intergenerational support, and 10% are extensively engaged in such relationships (Hogan et al. 1993). These intergenerational exchange networks are of increasing importance and, for some, these relationships are more important for well-being than are nuclear family ties (Bengtson 2001).

Exchanges of support from kin networks – along with support from non-kin networks –

are important for several reasons. By providing instrumental assistance such as loans, housing, or child care, social networks can serve as a private safety net (Edin and Lein 1997; Harknett 2006). This private safety net is particularly important for the everyday survival of low-income families, as recent changes in welfare legislation have made it increasingly difficult for individuals to rely on public assistance (Haider and McGarry 2005; Henly et al. 2005). Briggs (1998) and Henly et al. (2005) refer to this type of instrumental support, support that helps with the stresses of daily life, as *coping* support. These authors also point out that social networks can perform a *leverage* function, helping individuals and families achieve upward social mobility.

Among low-income families, perceptions of available social support are associated with a reduction of the likelihood of living in poverty and less perceived economic hardship (Henly et al. 2005). Perceptions of available material and emotional support are associated with higher levels of employment and earnings and less reliance on welfare among single mothers (Harknett 2006). Additionally, these networks might be especially important for parents who recently had a child (Nichols, Elman, and Feltey 2006), as parenthood poses significant financial and emotional challenges (Cowan and Cowan 1992; Mulsow et al. 2002).

Studies of parents' social support sometimes measure instrumental support that was received during a given period. One drawback of this approach is that parents' receipt of support is highly correlated with their need for support. Measures of received support cannot distinguish between two very different types of parents: those who need instrumental support from their networks but are not receiving it and those who have no need for instrumental support. An alternative approach, and the one used in this paper, is to measure "perceived support," which captures potential support that parents can draw on when needs arise. The latter approach provides a measure of the personal safety net that parents have to fall back on in times of hardship and avoids the problem of conflating the need for support with the availability of that support.

Predictors of social support

Demographic factors such as race, gender, immigrant status, and age influence the type and amount of social support individuals receive from their networks. Qualitative research demonstrates the strength of familial support within low-income Black communities (Harrington 1962; Hannerz 1969; Aschenbrenner 1973; Stack 1974; Newman 1999). These ethnographic studies, however, lack a comparison group. Other nationally representative studies have found that Whites are more likely than Blacks and other minority groups to receive financial, emotional, and child care support (Hofferth 1984; Eggebeen and Hogan 1990; Cooney and Uhlenberg 1992; Eggebeen 1992; Hogan et al. 1993). More recently, Sarkisian and Gerstel (2004) found that Black women are more likely to be involved in reciprocal exchanges of practical kin help while White women are more likely to be involved in exchanges of emotional support.

Many immigrant families are characterized by the presence of extended family members, and individuals have exchange relationships with both household members and non-household members (Glick 1999; Glick and Van Hook 2002). Glick (1999) finds that Mexican immigrants, particularly those who migrated to the United States recently, are more likely than Mexican Americans to receive social support from their kin networks. However, Hao's (2003) examination of a variety of immigrant groups finds that immigrant families have less access to coresidence, housing, and transportation support than native families.

Age is also associated with social support from kin networks; individuals in their twenties are more likely than their older counterparts to be receiving support as they make the transition to employment, marriage, and adulthood (Eggebeen and Hogan 1990).

Socioeconomic factors including education and income are highly and positively correlated with receipt of support (Eggebeen and Hogan 1990). Families headed by a college

graduate, for example, are more likely to receive social support than families whose household head has fewer levels of education (Jayakody 1998). Mental and physical health may also be important determinants of social support, either because of their effects on socioeconomic status or on the number and quality of social network ties. Further, mental health status may negatively affect perceptions of available support (Sarason, Sarason, and Pierce 1990).

In addition to demographic and socioeconomic factors, family structure characteristics, in particular marital status and number of children, play an important role in determining social support. Compared to their married counterparts, single mothers are more likely to engage in multiple dimensions of exchange (Hogan et al. 1993). On the other hand, single-parent families may have fewer available kin to turn to for support, as the relationships between individuals and their in-laws are characterized by high levels of social exchange (Goetting 1990). Similarly, individuals in cohabiting relationships report receiving less support than their married counterparts (Marks and McLanahan 1993; Hao 1996; Eggebeen 2005). In one of the few studies that examine the relationship between social support and number of children, Eggebeen (2005) finds no relationship between parity and received support among cohabiting couples. Belsky and Rovine (1984), however, find that support is greater for first-time parents and declines as children age.

Social isolation and neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage

Whereas the studies reviewed above emphasize individual-level correlates of perceived social support, a separate literature documents the importance of neighborhood context. In *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), Wilson posited that individuals living in poor communities are socially isolated from mainstream social networks, resources, and institutions, and this seminal work spawned a great deal of research on the relationship between neighborhoods and social behavior (for reviews, see Ellen and Turner 1997; Small and Newman 2001; Sampson,

Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley 2002). Wilson's theory implies a spatial nature of behavior; individuals' actions are shaped by where they live, and neighborhood structural characteristics shape normative climates that define acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Individuals living in high-poverty communities – often characterized by high rates of unemployment and crime, inadequate housing conditions, and a lack of adult role models – can be isolated from job contacts, social support networks, or marriage networks. This social isolation can prohibit upward social mobility in these communities (Wilson 1987, 1996; Anderson 1990, 1999; Massey and Denton 1993; Roschelle 1997).

Although most of the neighborhood effects literature focuses on child or adolescent outcomes (Sampson et al. 2002), recent research has looked at the role of neighborhood context in shaping adult outcomes such as family structure (South and Baumer 2000; South and Crowder 2000; South 2001) and employment (Reingold 1998; Elliott 1999; Elliott and Sims 2001; Kling, Liebman, and Katz 2006). Theory suggests that neighborhood environment is associated with the availability and quality of instrumental support from social ties, but few studies have directly analyzed this relationship. One exception, Fernandez and Harris (1992), finds that Black women in poor neighborhoods are cut off from network ties. On the other hand, Rankin and Quane (2000) analyze a sample of 546 Black mothers of adolescent children living in racially-segregated Chicago neighborhoods and find that social isolation, operationalized as network composition and organizational participation, is not related to neighborhood poverty.

Other researchers have argued that tests of neighborhood effects should consider length of exposure to the ecological setting (Jencks and Mayer 1990; Tienda 1991), as length of time spent in neighborhood plays an important role in one's feelings of attachment to the community (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). Additionally, neighborhood-based friendship ties, positive neighborhood evaluations, and social activities all increase as time spent in neighborhood increases (Sampson 1988). Schieman (2005) finds that residential stability is an important

element in understanding neighborhood effects. In this work, based on a sample of older residents in the Washington, D.C. area, the relationship between received support and community conditions is contingent on residential stability.

Research from the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) experiment, a federal housing mobility program that moved people from disadvantaged neighborhoods to mixed-income communities, finds that moving, even to a better quality neighborhood, may disrupt social ties. Kissane and Clampet-Lundquist (2005) analyze interview data from Baltimore and Chicago families and find that those who moved to low-poverty neighborhoods received less instrumental assistance from friends and family members than those in the control group. Pettit and McLanahan (2003) use MTO data from Los Angeles and find that parents who move to better neighborhoods are less likely to know the parents of their children's friends. These findings are consistent with other qualitative work that finds that individuals who move to better neighborhoods do not frequently exchange information and resources with their new neighbors (Kleit 2001; Clampet-Lundquist 2004).

Most researchers who look at the association between ecological setting and various outcomes use Census tracts to define neighborhoods, but neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage is operationalized differently across studies. Examples of ways researchers measure neighborhood disadvantage include the percentage of residents with high or low incomes (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanow, and Sealand 1993), the percentage of workers with high or low education (Duncan and Aber 1997), male joblessness (Massey and Shibuya 1995), neighborhood poverty (Rankin and Quane 2000), or an index that combines and standardizes some combination of Census tract characteristics (South and Crowder 2000). In our paper, we primarily use an index approach, but we also include a discussion of results based on the individual components of the index such as poverty.

In summary, prior research on neighborhood effects tends to focus on child outcomes or

on adult employment and social mobility, whereas prior research on social support to poor mothers has tended to focus on individual-level rather than neighborhood correlates of this support. Our paper works at the intersection of these two literatures by examining the relationship between neighborhood conditions and the support mothers have available from their social networks.

Hypotheses

Grounding our research questions and hypotheses in theories about neighborhood effects and social support, we seek to answer three sets of questions.

First, do mothers in disadvantaged neighborhoods report that they have less social support available than their counterparts in better neighborhoods? We expect that individuals living in neighborhoods with higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage will have disadvantaged friends and family members, and, therefore, will report lower levels of perceived social support. However, the relationship between neighborhood disadvantage and perceived support may be entirely explained by individual-level characteristics. Our analysis will estimate the relationship between neighborhood disadvantage and social support after controlling for individual-level characteristics and disadvantages.

Second, does residential stability increase perceptions of social support? We expect that residential stability will be associated with stronger social ties with neighbors, and in turn will be associated with higher levels of perceived support. We also consider whether residential stability increases perceptions of support in disadvantaged and better neighborhoods alike. A positive effect of residential stability may be muted in disadvantaged neighborhoods if crime and feelings of insecurity inhibit the development of relationships with neighbors.

Finally, is a change in neighborhood quality associated with a change in perceived social support? Prior research suggests that moving can disrupt social ties, so we expect that a change

in neighborhood quality – either positive or negative – will be negatively associated with mothers’ reports of available support.

METHOD

Data source

This research uses data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing survey, a longitudinal study of nearly 5,000 new and mostly unmarried parents in 20 U.S. cities that were stratified by labor market conditions, welfare generosity, and child support policy. See Reichman, Teitler, Garfinkel, and McLanahan (2001) for further information about study design and sampling technique. Mothers and fathers separately completed a 30- to 40-minute survey after the birth of their child, and were interviewed when their child was approximately 12, 30, and 60 months old. This paper uses data from the first three waves of data collection to look at mothers’ perceptions of social support while their children are still quite young. Response rates varied by marital status, but were still relatively high: Of those who completed the baseline survey, 91% of married and 90% of unmarried mothers completed the 12-month survey and 89% of married and 87% of unmarried mothers completed the 30-month survey.

These data are well-suited to answer our research questions. To begin with, Fragile Families data are representative of all unmarried parents in U.S. cities larger than 200,000. Additionally, parents live in a large number of neighborhoods, which vary widely in their poverty and other conditions. Further, new mothers are a population for which perceived social support is important. This perceived social support is particularly important to the large number of Fragile Families respondents who are first-time parents, as the transition to parenthood is not only a turning point in individuals’ lives but also a transition marked by high levels of stress.

Key variables

Dependent variables:

The dependent variable in the analyses measure mothers' perceptions that they have various types of instrumental assistance available. Mothers were asked if they could count on someone, during the next year, for the following: to loan them \$200, to loan them \$1,000, to help with babysitting or child care, to provide them with a place to live, to cosign a bank loan for \$1,000, and to cosign a bank loan for \$5,000 ($\alpha = .806$ at the 12-month wave, $\alpha = .812$ at the 30-month wave). Each of these questions comprise a dichotomous dependent variable: 1 = *available social support* and 0 = *no available social support*. Respondents who answered "don't know" (between 1% and 5% of respondents) are coded as not having access to that type of social support. In analyses not shown, we drop those respondents who answered "don't know" to having the various dimensions of social support available. This does not substantively change our results.

We use these perceived social support variables in three ways. To begin with, the dependent variable in our main analyses is a sum of these six items from the 12-month wave of data collection. This variable captures the magnitude of perceived support from friends and family members: 0 = *has no type of social support available*, 6 = *has all types of social support available*. The perceived support scale combines monetary support of varying magnitudes, housing, and child care assistance. For reasons of parsimony, we present our main results using the perceived support scale as our dependent variable. We also present descriptive analyses of the relationships between neighborhood disadvantage and each of the six individual components of the scale.

Second, to better examine how neighborhoods might be differentially associated with various types of support, we construct two variables to measure coping and leverage support (Briggs 1998). The coping variable in these analyses is a sum of responses to the following types of support: loan for \$200, housing assistance, and child care assistance. The leverage variable is

a sum of responses to the following types of support: loan for \$1,000, cosigner for \$1,000, and cosigner for \$5,000. Individuals who have this type of support available might be better able to get ahead in the long run, whereas coping support may merely help families in the short-term. Both of these variables range from 0 to 3; the higher the value, the more support an individual has available.

Finally, in analyses that utilize the longitudinal design of the data, we look at change in support over time. This variable is the difference in available support between the 12-month and the 30-month wave, and ranges from -6 to 6. Higher values indicate the respondent gain support between the two waves.

Although we recognize that these measures of social support are by no means exhaustive of the types of support parents may need or receive from their networks, we argue that monetary, housing, and child care support are all of substantial, practical importance for new parents. Additionally, parents of 12- and 30-month-old children have had time to adjust to the reality of support available from family or friends.

Independent variables:

We comprise an index of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage, taken from tract-level 2000 Census data where the Fragile Families mothers lived at the 12-month and 30-month interview. Baseline interviews were conducted in 16 states, and these Census tract data are from 44 states because some mothers moved from the state in which they gave birth. The index is composed of the following neighborhood-level variables: percent greater than 25 years old without a high school degree, percent unemployed in the civilian labor force, percent living below the poverty line, and percent receiving public assistance ($\alpha = .833$ at the 12-month wave, $\alpha = .837$ at the 30-month wave). We first standardize these four variables so that the mean of all variables equals 0 and the standard deviation equals 1. We then create a neighborhood

socioeconomic disadvantage index by summing the standardized variables together.

The majority of our analyses use a continuous measure of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage at the 12-month wave, which ranges from -7.984 to 16.886 . The higher the index, the greater the level of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage. We also construct quintiles of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage to detect non-linear relationships between neighborhoods and perceived social support. In Appendix A, we show models predicting perceived social support that substitute the index of neighborhood disadvantage with each of the four individual neighborhood characteristic variables. These results show that the individual neighborhood characteristics are all consistent, significant predictors of support.

In analyses where we look at change in perceived social support between the two waves, our main independent variable is a measure of change in neighborhood disadvantage. Change in neighborhood disadvantage is a measure of the difference between the 30-month wave and the 12-month wave, and ranges from -12.366 to 15.369 . We generate quintiles for this variable, to capture the magnitude of the differences in neighborhood quality. Our multivariate analyses include dummy variables for mothers in the first quintile who experienced a sizeable increase in neighborhood quality and mothers in the fifth quintile who experienced a sizeable decrease in neighborhood quality, with mothers in the middle three quintiles serving as the reference category. We combine the middle three quintiles because the distribution of change in neighborhood quality is concentrated around 0, as many parents did not experience a change in neighborhood quality between waves.

Our second independent variable is a measure of time lived in current neighborhood. We approximate time lived in current neighborhood by using information about how long individuals lived in their neighborhood at baseline, along with whether or not the respondent moved between baseline and the 12-month interview. This variable is measured in years. Because individuals define neighborhoods differently (and the majority do not define their neighborhood by its

Census tract boundaries), this variable is not a measure of how long the respondents lived in their Census tract.

Control variables:

The multivariate analyses control for characteristics we expect to be correlated with neighborhood socioeconomic conditions and perceived social support based on previous research. We include a host of variables that control for family background in an effort to minimize the selection bias associated with studying neighborhood characteristics (Jencks and Mayer 1990; Sampson et al. 2002). Although an experimental design would be ideal, our analyses rely on observational data; this leaves open the possibility that the relationship between neighborhood conditions and perceived support might be spurious. We account for selection bias as much as possible in our analyses, controlling for the following variables: race, if the mother and father are a mixed-race couple, immigrant status, age, number of adults in household, if a grandmother resides in the household, number of children, if the birth is the mother's first child, education, employment status, household income, overall health, depressive symptoms, and relationship status. With the exception of variables that can be expected to remain stable over time (i.e., race and immigrant status), all of the variables are measured at the 12-month wave of data collection.

Race is represented by a series of dummy variables: White (reference category), Black, Hispanic, and other race. Education is also represented by a series of dummy variables: less than high school diploma (includes respondents with a GED and is the reference category), high school diploma, and post-secondary education. Employment status is a dummy variable representing whether the respondent worked in the past two weeks. Poor or fair health is a dummy variable indicating the respondents' self-reported health status. We use a measure of depressive symptoms, measured using the Composite International Diagnostic Interview-Short

Form (CIDI-SF) Version 1.0, to control for mental health. This is a dummy variable representing whether the respondent experienced depression in the past year. Additionally, relationship status is measured by a series of dummy variables: married (reference category), cohabiting, visiting (romantically involved but not living together), and broken up. Relatively few observations are missing these control variables, and we impute these missing values using a regression-based approach. In results not shown here, we handle missing data by listwise deletion. This does not substantially change the results.

The Fragile Families survey includes nearly 5,000 couples, but the analytic sample for most of our analyses is 4,211 mothers. We delete the 533 observations in which the mother did not complete a 12-month interview, and an additional 8 observations that are missing information on available support. Additionally, we delete 146 observations that are missing Census tract information. Missing Census tract information is due to incomplete address information, refusal, nonresponse, and residence outside the United States. In addition, some new parents may be missing information on individual Census tract characteristics, such as when the denominator of a percent was zero.

The mothers in this paper's analytic sample have very similar levels of perceived social support (on all six individual measures as well as the sum of the measures) to the initial sample of nearly 5,000. Additionally, the mothers in the analytic sample and full sample are remarkably similar in terms of demographics, socioeconomic status, and neighborhood quality. We use the cluster option in Stata to adjust for non-independence of individuals who live in the same Census tract. There are 2,586 separate Census tracts.

Analytic plan

We first explore the dynamics of perceived social support among new parents. We look at descriptive statistics about the extent to which they report having available financial, housing,

and child care support from friends and family members. Most pertinent to this analysis, we look at how perceived social support varies across quintiles of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage. We use chi-square tests to determine statistical significance of the difference between the means of the first, second, third, and fourth quintiles of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage to the most disadvantaged neighborhood quintile.

Next, we use Poisson regression models to estimate the relationship between perceptions of social support and neighborhood disadvantage. Poisson regression is more appropriate than ordinary least squares regression here, as the dependent variable is a count variable and skewed to the left (Kennedy 1998). The first models estimate the influence of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage on perceptions of social support. We then extend the models to estimate the influence of demographic characteristics, household composition, socioeconomic status, health, and relationship status. These models allow us to explore neighborhood effects net of individual- and family-level characteristics. The third set of models adds in length of time spent in current neighborhood. Finally, to examine the possibility of a threshold effect or a nonlinear relationship between neighborhood disadvantage and perceived social support, we replace the continuous measure of neighborhood disadvantage with quintiles of neighborhood disadvantage (with the most disadvantaged quintile as the reference category).

Then, we substitute our measures of perceived social support for two different types of support: coping support and leverage support. We estimate the relationship between these two different types of support and neighborhood disadvantage, which allows us to see if neighborhood quality might confer different types of advantages via social support. We only present the coefficients of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage in the tables, but include all covariates in the models.

Finally, we use the survey's longitudinal design to examine how changing neighborhood conditions might influence one's available support. In these analyses, our dependent variable is a

measure of change in perceived social support between the 12-month and the 30-month waves, and our independent variable is a measure of change in neighborhood conditions between the two waves.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for all variables. Between 83% and 88% of mothers report having small amounts of monetary assistance, housing, and child care support available when their child is about one year old. As we might expect, fewer parents report having larger amounts of monetary assistance to fall back on. For instance, less than half of mothers report they could get someone to loan them \$1,000, and only two in five have someone who would cosign a \$5,000 loan. On average, mothers have 4.0 of the six types of social support available. When their children are about two and a half years old, mothers report slightly less available support, but the difference, on average, is negligible. As for change in support between the two waves of data collection, about 40% of mothers experienced no change (descriptives not shown). The remaining 60% of mothers were about equally split between those who experienced an increase in support and those who experienced a decrease in support.

[Table 1 about here.]

Table 1 also shows mothers' neighborhood conditions at the two waves of data collection. When their children were about one year old, mothers, on average, lived in neighborhoods where about 19% of people lived at or below the poverty line. About 8% of their neighbors were receiving public assistance and about 10% of their neighbors were unemployed. Average neighborhood characteristics were similar at 30 months.

Turning briefly to demographic characteristics of the sample, the majority of mothers are minority – about half are black and one-quarter are Hispanic. About 16% of the sample are

immigrants. The average mother is 26 years old and, for nearly two in five mothers, this is her first birth. As for the relationship between the mother and the father of her child, about 30% are married, 28% are cohabiting, 10% are dating, and 32% are broken up.

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for each measure of perceived social support for mothers by quintiles of neighborhood disadvantage. Poverty rate is only one of the four Census tract variables that comprise the neighborhood index, but the poverty rate provides an illustration of neighborhood conditions in each quintile to put results in context. Mothers living in the first quintile have an average poverty rate of 6%, while mothers living in the fifth quintile have an average poverty rate of 34%. Table 2 shows that neighborhood conditions are associated in a linear fashion with perceptions of instrumental support. As expected, perceptions of social support are strongly negatively associated with quintiles of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage; mothers in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods have less available support than their counterparts in better neighborhoods. For example, while 62% of mothers in the most advantaged neighborhoods report having someone who would cosign a \$5,000 loan, only 25% of mothers in the least advantaged neighborhoods report this available support. This pattern of perceived social support being lowest in disadvantaged neighborhoods and highest in advantaged neighborhoods is evident across all six individual types of social support.

[Table 2 about here.]

The bivariate relationship between perceived social support and neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage may be confounded by individual characteristics such as demographics or household composition. Controlling for individual-level factors is particularly important in studying neighborhood effects, as individuals have a certain amount of choice in deciding what neighborhood they live in and how long they remain in that neighborhood. The results presented in the preceding tables – and discussed below – allow us to draw better conclusions about the relationship between neighborhood conditions and perceived social

support.

Relationship between neighborhood disadvantage and perceived social support

Table 3 presents Poisson regression models that predict the number of types of instrumental support that mothers perceive as available to them. Model 1 shows that neighborhood disadvantage is negatively associated with perceived social support. Without controlling for other factors, a one-unit increase in mother's neighborhood disadvantage index is associated with a 0.036-point decrease in the level of available support. The magnitude of this relationship is small but statistically significant. A change from the lowest to the highest observed value on the neighborhood disadvantage index is associated with almost a one-point increase on the six-point perceived support scale.

[Table 3 about here.]

In Model 2, we find that neighborhood disadvantage is still a salient predictor of perceived social support after controlling for individual characteristics. Mothers, for example, experience a 0.010-point decrease in perceived social support for every one-unit increase in neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage. Therefore, mothers in poor neighborhoods – independent of individual-level factors such as race, socioeconomic status, and household composition – have lower levels of perceived social support than their counterparts in more advantaged neighborhoods.

In Model 3, we add length of time lived in a neighborhood as a covariate. Length of time in neighborhood is associated with higher levels of perceived social support. For every additional year that mothers live in their neighborhood, they experience a slight (0.003-point) increase in instrumental support from friends and family members. Although length of time in neighborhood is associated with higher levels of perceived support, residential stability does not substantively change the coefficient of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage. In analyses not shown

here, we replace the continuous measure of length of time in neighborhood with dichotomous measures indicating less than one year, one to five years, or five or more years lived in one's current neighborhood. Living in one's neighborhood for one year or less is associated with less perceived support for mothers, although this coefficient is not significant. However, mothers seem to benefit from living in their neighborhood for five years or longer, as this variable is associated with a increase in perceived support (0.059, $p < .0001$).

In Model 4, we replace the continuous measure of neighborhood conditions with quintiles of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage. Model 4 confirms that, after controlling for an array of individual characteristics, living in the most disadvantaged neighborhood is associated with significantly lower perceived support compared with each of the other neighborhood quintiles. These results follow a linear pattern: The better the neighborhood, the higher the levels of support. Mothers living in the least disadvantaged neighborhoods, for example, average 0.089 points higher on the perceived support scale compared to those living in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Mothers living in the second best quintile average 0.072 points higher on the perceived support scale compared to those living in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods.

We have shown that neighborhood disadvantage is related to perceived support for new parents and that residential stability is positively associated with greater perceived support. In theory, residential stability may be more beneficial for parents living in better neighborhoods and less beneficial for parents living in the worst neighborhoods. The crime and distrust often associated with poor communities may interfere with the process of building social ties. Also, even if individuals in poor neighborhoods are residentially stable, they still may experience a high level of neighbor turnover. In results not shown here, we test the hypothesis that the positive relationship between residential stability and perceived support is concentrated in better neighborhoods by including interactions between quintiles of neighborhood disadvantage and time spent in a neighborhood. None of the interactions between quintiles of neighborhood

disadvantage and time spent in neighborhood approach statistical significance. This suggests that residential stability has a similar influence on individuals in both advantaged and disadvantaged communities.

Additionally, the covariates in Table 3 tell an interesting story about perceived social support among new mothers. As expected, socioeconomic characteristics, such as being employed and household income, are positively associated with perceived social support for new mothers. Additionally, having fair or poor health or reporting depressive symptoms is negatively associated with perceived social support. The relationship between health and perceived social support might be endogenous, however, as lacking available support may contribute to poor mental health.

Additionally, age is predictive of social support; older mothers report lower levels of available support. This suggests that older mothers simply have fewer network members able to assist, or that mothers' friends and family members are less willing to help out as they age. Number of children is negatively associated with perceived social support among mothers. Even after controlling for a host of other factors, every additional child is associated with a 0.021 decrease in mothers' perceived social support. As mothers have more and more children, their friends and family members might be less willing – or able – to assist. Mothers could wear out their networks, if they are consistently asking for help, or network members might expect these mothers to be more self-reliant as they mature and gain parenting experience. The relationship between individual characteristics and perceived social support are generally consistent with prior research.

Coping support versus leverage support

Our discussion thus far has focused on the relationship between neighborhood disadvantage and the average number of six types of instrumental support available. The

previous analyses combined perceived support of various monetary amounts, child care, and housing support into one scale. However, the relationship between neighborhood and perceived support may vary depending on the type of instrumental support in question. Here, we separate the six types of social support into two categories: coping support and leverage support. It is possible that neighborhoods are more strongly associated with support that can help individuals get ahead; if this is the case, this could have important implications for the ability of families to increase their socioeconomic status over the long term. Table 4 presents Poisson regression results predicting each of these two types of support. We first run models using neighborhood disadvantage as a continuous variable, and then examine the possibility of nonlinearities by using quintiles of neighborhood disadvantage. All covariates, including length of time spent in neighborhood, are included in these models, but we only present coefficients for neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage.

[Table 4 about here.]

Interestingly, Table 4 shows that neighborhood conditions are not associated with coping support for new parents but are associated with leverage support. Parents who live in better neighborhoods are not any more likely than their counterparts in worse off neighborhoods to receive support that helps them cope with the trials and tribulations of every day life. However, the coefficient of neighborhood disadvantage is larger and more significantly predictive of leverage support. Every one-unit increase in neighborhood disadvantage, for example, is associated with a 0.022 decrease in available leverage support. Therefore, those in better neighborhoods are more likely to believe they have the larger amounts of support. In other words, living in better neighborhoods might be better able to transmit advantages that will help mothers get ahead in the long run.

In analyses not shown here, we use logistic regression to predict the odds of perceiving each of the six individual types of support. In general, we find there to be an association between

neighborhood disadvantage and perceived support. Child care assistance is the one exception to this; the availability of child care is not contingent on neighborhood quality. New parents in poor and nonpoor neighborhoods are equally likely to perceive available assistance. This is not entirely surprising, as child care – unlike the other five measures of support – is a form of assistance that requires time but does not require economic resources. This suggests that new parents living in poor and nonpoor neighborhoods might have similar levels of network members willing to assist, but parents in poor neighborhoods have fewer network members who can assist monetarily. The null relationship between neighborhood disadvantage and child care support is consistent with our earlier evidence that neighborhood disadvantage is more strongly related to leverage than to coping support.

Changes in support as a function of changes in neighborhood quality

One limitation to our prior analyses is that we use cross-sectional data. Our coefficients are subject to potential unobserved heterogeneity, as individuals have a certain amount of choice in deciding where to live and how long to stay in that neighborhood. It is possible that we have omitted some variables that, once accounted for, could render the relationship between neighborhood conditions and social support spurious.

We now extend our analyses to utilize the longitudinal design of Fragile Families to look at the relationship between change in support and change in neighborhood quality. The cross-sectional results suggest that better neighborhoods confer advantages in terms of perceived social support. Table 5 provides a more stringent test of this relationship, and presents additional support for the previous findings. While an increase in neighborhood quality is not associated with a change in perceived support, a decrease in neighborhood quality is associated with a *reduction* in perceived social support. Those who experience a decrease in neighborhood quality over the short-term, suffer a -0.175 reduction in the level of support available to them.

In the second model in Table 5, we restrict the sample to just those individuals who moved between the 12-month and 30-month wave of data collection (just under half of the sample), and look at the extremes in that distribution of movers. This model also demonstrates that moving to a worse neighborhood is associated with lower levels of perceived support, but that upgrading neighborhoods does not influence change in support.

In results not shown, we check the robustness of these results and come to similar conclusions. First, we include a control for neighborhood disadvantage at the 12-month wave. Second, we substitute our quintiles of change in neighborhood disadvantage for quintiles of change in neighborhood poverty rates. The general findings persist; individuals who experience a decrease in neighborhood quality report less available support from their friends and family members.

DISCUSSION

This paper tests the theory that neighborhood disadvantages are associated with social network disadvantages, manifested as a lack of perceived instrumental support. We examine a sample of 4,211 mothers in the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing study. These parents resided in more than 2,500 different Census tracts and were exposed to widely varying neighborhood conditions. We measure neighborhood quality as a scale that comprise poverty, unemployment, welfare receipt, and college completion rates. In the quintile representing the worst neighborhoods, the average poverty rate is about 34%; in the quintile representing the best neighborhoods, the average poverty rate is about 6%. These parents also vary widely in their assessments of whether they had access to monetary, housing, and child care assistance from their friends and families. Almost half the sample moved during our follow-up period, allowing longitudinal analyses of residential stability and social support and of changes in neighborhood quality and social support.

Our cross-sectional analysis supports the hypothesis that instrumental support is more readily available in better neighborhoods relative to worse neighborhoods. Comparing across quintiles, mothers living in the better neighborhoods are significantly more likely to report that they could access various amounts of monetary assistance (\$200, \$1,000, and \$5,000) compared with their counterparts in worse neighborhoods. Mothers in better neighborhoods also have more access to housing assistance from their friends or families than their counterparts in worse neighborhoods. Although mothers are likely to have sources of social support beyond their neighborhood connections, living in a better neighborhood – net of individual- and family-level factors – is associated with having friends and family members who are more willing and able to provide monetary and housing assistance.

We find one noteworthy exception to the positive association between neighborhood disadvantage and perceived support: Neighborhood disadvantage is not associated with the availability of child care assistance. Therefore, mothers in disadvantaged neighborhoods may have individuals who are willing to help them (evidenced by the availability of child care assistance) but who lack the means to provide monetary or housing support.

Our findings are consistent with Wilson's (1987) theory that individuals living in poor communities are socially isolated from mainstream social networks, resources, and institutions. Wilson focused on the lack of social mobility associated with neighborhood advantage. We find that those living in disadvantaged neighborhoods may also have difficulties in coping with everyday stressors because their friends and family members lack the resources to provide an economic safety net.

We predicted that residential stability would be associated with the development and strengthening of social ties with one's neighbors, which may in turn enhance the availability of instrumental support. The longer one lives in a neighborhood, the more time one has to get to know and enter into exchange relationships with neighbors. Our evidence is consistent with this

theory. Further, we find that the benefits associated with residential stability are not restricted to the most advantaged neighborhoods. Residential stability is associated with greater perceived support for mothers in better and worse neighborhoods alike.

Our longitudinal analyses of changes in neighborhood conditions that result from moving reinforce the findings from the cross-sectional analyses. In the short term, moving to a more disadvantaged neighborhood is associated with a decline in perceived support. Interestingly, moving to a neighborhood of similar or better quality is not associated with changes in perceived support. Our findings differ from the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) experiment, which suggests that moving to a better neighborhood may disrupt social ties. In our analysis, moving took place on mothers' own initiative. In MTO, participants initiated involvement in the program but moving was encouraged by the possibility of receiving a housing voucher to move to a low-poverty neighborhood. The difference between our findings and those from the MTO experiment suggests that either (a) restricting mothers' choice of neighborhood destinations, as the MTO experiment did, may lead to a decline in social network support in the short term, or (b) unobserved characteristics of those who moved to better neighborhoods on their own initiative in our analysis may explain the stability in their social network support.

A few features of our sample and measures should be kept in mind when interpreting our findings. The Fragile Families sample only includes new parents living in urban areas, and results might differ for residents of rural areas, parents of older children, or individuals without children. Additionally, we discussed earlier how our coefficients are also subject to potential unobserved heterogeneity, as individuals have a certain amount of choice in deciding where to live and how long to stay in that neighborhood. Finally, our dependent variable only measures a few types of instrumental support, and the data do not include a measure of intensity of the child care support available.

Nevertheless, these findings underscore the importance of ecological context in shaping

the availability of social support and, in turn, limiting or enabling parents to deal with potential problems. Parents who live in resource-poor neighborhoods are less likely to have a friend or family member who can provide a monetary safety net, which could be important in the event of a parent or child's health problem, job loss, car trouble, or countless other scenarios. Parents in resource-poor neighborhoods are less likely to have a place to live in the event that they find themselves permanently or temporarily displaced from their home or apartment. In the context of disadvantaged neighborhoods, small hardships or crises have the potential to quickly escalate into major crises such as homelessness or major economic debt.

While we can clearly document the association between neighborhood disadvantage and a lack of available instrumental support, we can only speculate as to whether instrumental support would improve if neighborhood conditions improved for a given family. In this observational study, choices of neighborhoods, residential stability, and moves to better or worse quality neighborhoods were not randomly assigned. Therefore, unobserved individual characteristics may confound the relationship we have documented between neighborhood disadvantage, residential instability, moving to worse neighborhoods and social support. As we interpret the finding that neighborhood disadvantage is associated with a lack of social support, we must remember that residential stability improves support for mothers even in disadvantaged neighborhoods. While we would argue that it is important to document and understand the patterns of disadvantages that accrue in particular types of neighborhoods, what to do about these disadvantages remains a pressing and complicated policy problem.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, E. (1990). *Streetwise: race, class, and change in an urban community*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Anderson, E. (1999). *Code of the street: decency, violence, and moral life in the inner city*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Aschenbrenner, J. (1973). *Lifelines: Black families in Chicago*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Belsky, J., & Rovine, M. (1984). Social-network contact, family support, and the transition to parenthood. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 46, 455 – 462.
- Bengtson, V. L. (2001). Beyond the nuclear family: The increasing importance of multigenerational bonds. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 1 – 16.
- Briggs, X. d. S. (1998). Brown kids in the white suburbs: Housing mobility and the many faces of social capital. *Housing Policy Debate*, 9, 177 – 221.
- Brooks-Gunn, J., G. D. Duncan, P. K. Klebanow, & N. Sealand. (1993). Do neighborhoods influence child and adolescent development? *American Journal of Sociology*, 99, 353 – 395.
- Clampet-Lundquist, S. (2004). Hope VI relocation: Moving to new neighborhoods and building new ties. *Housing Policy Debate*, 15, 415 – 447.
- Cooney, T., & Uhlenberg, P. (1990). The role of divorce in men's relations with their adult children. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52, 677 – 688.
- Cowan, C. P., & Cowan, P.A. (1992). *When partners become parents: The big life change for couples*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Duncan, G. J., & J. L. Aber. (1997). Neighborhood models and measures. In J. Brooks-Gunn, G. J. Duncan, & J. L. Aber (Eds.), *Neighborhood poverty: Context and consequences for children*, (pp. 62 – 78). New York: Russell Sage.

- Edin, K., & Lein, L. (1997). *Making ends meet: How single mothers survive welfare and low-wage work*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Eggebeen, D. J., & Hogan, D.P. (1990). Giving between generations in American families. *Human Nature, 1*, 211 – 232.
- Eggebeen, D. J. (1992). Family structure and intergenerational exchanges. *Research on Aging, 14*, 427 – 447.
- Eggebeen, D. J. (2005). Cohabitation and exchanges of support. *Social Forces, 83*, 1097 – 1110.
- Ellen, I. G., & Turner, M. A. (1997). Does neighborhood matter? Assessing recent evidence. *Housing Policy Debate, 8*, 833 – 866.
- Elliott, J. R. (1999). Social isolation and labor market insulation. *The Sociological Quarterly, 40*, 199 – 216.
- Elliott, J. R., & Sims, M. (2001). Ghettos and barrios: The impact of neighborhood poverty and race on job matching among blacks and Latinos. *Social Problems, 48*, 341 – 361.
- Fernandez, R. M., & Harris, D. (1992). Social isolation and the underclass. In A. V. Harrell & G. E. Peterson (Eds.), *Drugs, crime, and social isolation: Barriers to urban opportunity* (pp. 257 – 293). Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.
- Glick, J. E. (1999). Economic support from and to extended kin: A comparison of Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants. *International Migration Review, 33*, 745 – 765.
- Glick, J. E., & Van Hook, J. (2002). “Parents’ coresidence with adult children: Can immigration explain racial and ethnic variation? *Journal of Marriage and Family, 62*, 240 – 253.
- Goetting, A. (1990). Patterns of support among in-laws in the United States. *Journal of Family Issues, 11*, 67 – 90.
- Haider, S. J., & McGarry, K. (2005). Recent trends in resource sharing among the poor. NBER working paper.

- Hannerz, U. (1969). *Soulside: Inquiries into ghetto culture and community*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hao, L. (1996). Family structure, private transfers, and the economic well-being of families with children. *Social Forces*, 75, 269 – 292.
- Hao, L. (2003). Private support and public assistance for immigrant families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 65, 36 – 51.
- Harknett, K. (2006). The relationship between private safety nets and economic outcomes among single mothers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68, 172 – 191.
- Harrington, M. (1962). *The other America*. New York: Macmillan.
- Henly, J. R., Danziger, S. K., & Offer, S. (2005). The contribution of social support to the material well-being of low-income families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67, 122 – 140.
- Hofferth, S. L. (1984). Kin networks, race, and family structure. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 46, 791 – 806.
- Hogan, D. P., Eggebeen, D. J., & Clogg, C. C. (1993). The structure of intergenerational exchanges in American families. *American Journal of Sociology*, 98, 1428 – 1458.
- Jayakody, R. (1998). Race differences in intergenerational financial assistance. *Journal of Family Issues*, 19, 508 – 533.
- Jencks, C., & Mayer, S. E. (1990). The social consequences of growing up in a poor neighborhood.” In L. E. Lynn & M. McGreary (Eds.), *Inner-city poverty in the United States* (pp. 111 – 186). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Kasarda, J. D., & Janowitz, M. (1974). Community attachment in mass society. *American Sociological Review*, 39, 328 – 339.
- Kennedy, P. (1998). *A Guide to Econometrics*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Kissane, R., & Clampet-Lundquist, S. (2005). Friends, jobs, and moving to opportunity. Paper

- presented at the Annual Meetings of the American Sociological Association.
Philadelphia, PA.
- Kleit, R. G. (2001). The role of neighborhood social networks in scattered-site public housing residents' search for jobs. *Housing Policy Debate, 12*, 541 – 573.
- Kling, J. R., Liebman, J. B., & Katz, L. F. (2006). Experimental analysis of neighborhood effects. *Econometrica*, conditional accept.
- Marks, N. F., & McLanahan, S. S. (1993). Gender, family-structure, and social support among parents. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 55*, 481 – 493.
- Massey, D. S., & Shibuya, K. (1995). Unraveling the tangle of pathology: The effect of spatially concentrated joblessness on the well-being of African Americans. *Social Science Research, 24*, 352 – 366.
- Massey, D. S., & Denton, N. A. (1993). *American apartheid: Segregation and the making of the underclass*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mulsow, M., Caldera, Y. M., Pursley, M., Reifman, A., & Huston, A. C. (2002). Multilevel factors influencing maternal stress during the first three years. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 64*, 944 – 956.
- Newman, K. (1999). *No shame in my game: The working poor in the inner city*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Nichols, L., Elman, C., & Feltey, K. M. (2006). The economic resource receipt of new mothers. *Journal of Family Issues, 27*, 1305 – 1330.
- Pettit, B., and S. McLanahan. (2003). Residential mobility and children's social capital: Evidence from an experiment. *Social Science Quarterly, 84*, 632 – 649.
- Rankin, B. H., & Quane, J. M. (2000). Neighborhood poverty and social isolation of inner-city African American families. *Social Forces, 79*, 139 – 164.
- Reichman, N. E., Teitler, J. O., Garfinkel, I., & McLanahan, S. S. (2001). Fragile families:

- Sample and design. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 23, 303 – 326.
- Reingold, D. A. (1998). Social networks and the employment problem of the urban poor. *Urban Studies*, 36, 1907 – 1932.
- Roschelle, A. R. (1997). *No more kin: Exploring race, class, and gender in family network*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rossi, A. S., & Rossi, P. (1990). *Of human bonding: Parent-child relations across the life course*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Sampson, R. J. (1988). Local friendship ties and community attachment in mass society: A multilevel systematic model. *American Sociological Review*, 53, 766 – 779.
- Sampson, R. J., Morenoff, J. D., & Gannon-Rowley, T. (2002). Assessing neighborhood effects: Social processes and new directions in research. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 443 – 478.
- Sarason, B. R., Sarason, I. G., & Pierce, G. R. (1990). *Social support: An interactional view*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Interscience.
- Sarkisian, N., & Gerstel, N. (2004). Kin support among blacks and whites. *American Sociological Review*, 69, 812 – 833.
- Schieman, S. (2005). Residential stability and the social impact of neighborhood disadvantage: Gender- and race-contingent patterns. *Social Forces*, 83, 89 – 122.
- Small, M. L., & Newman, K. (2001). Urban poverty after *The truly disadvantaged*: The rediscovery of the family, the neighborhood, and culture. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, 23 – 45.
- South, S. (2001). The geographic context of divorce: Do neighborhoods matter? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 755 – 766.
- South, S. J., & Baumer, E. P. (2000). Deciphering community and race effects on adolescent premarital childbearing. *Social Forces*, 78, 1379 – 1407.

- South, S. J., & Crowder, K. D. (2000). The declining significance of neighborhoods? Marital transitions in community context. *Social Forces*, 78, 1067 – 1099.
- Stack, C. B. (1974). *All our kin: Strategies for survival in a black community*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Tienda, M. (1991). Poor people and poor places: Deciphering neighborhood effects on poverty outcomes.” In J. Huber (Ed.), *Macro-Micro Linkages in Sociology* (pp. 244 – 262). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Wilson, W. J. (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wilson, W. J. (1996). *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor*. New York: Knopf.

Table 1

Means of Variables Used in Analyses (N=4,211)

Variable name	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
<i>Perceived social support – 12-month</i>				
Loan for \$200	0.831	n/a	0.000	1.000
Loan for \$1,000	0.487	n/a	0.000	1.000
Child care	0.878	n/a	0.000	1.000
Housing	0.841	n/a	0.000	1.000
Cosigner for \$1,000	0.593	n/a	0.000	1.000
Cosigner for \$5,000	0.394	n/a	0.000	1.000
Coping support	2.550	0.859	0.000	3.000
Leverage support	1.474	1.255	0.000	3.000
Sum of perceived social support	4.024	1.836	0.000	6.000
<i>Perceived social support – 30-month</i>				
Loan for \$200	0.829	n/a	0.000	1.000
Loan for \$1,000	0.484	n/a	0.000	1.000
Child care	0.868	n/a	0.000	1.000
Housing	0.828	n/a	0.000	1.000
Cosigner for \$1,000	0.575	n/a	0.000	1.000
Cosigner for \$5,000	0.386	n/a	0.000	1.000
Sum of perceived social support	3.972	1.869	0.000	6.000
Change in support	-0.058	1.591	-6.000	6.000
<i>Neighborhood characteristics – 12-month</i>				
HD disadvantage	-0.011	3.475	-7.984	16.886
% without college degree	0.829	0.149	0.154	1.000
% below poverty line	0.185	0.140	0.000	0.731
% receiving public assistance	0.079	0.068	0.000	0.550
% unemployed	0.104	0.073	0.000	0.545
Years in neighborhood	4.185	6.551	0.379	42.528
<i>Neighborhood characteristics – 30-month</i>				
HD disadvantage	0.000	3.482	-8.487	15.369
% without college degree	0.828	0.148	0.106	1.000
% below poverty line	0.180	0.137	0.000	0.927
% receiving public assistance	0.076	0.068	0.000	0.850
% unemployed	0.103	0.073	0.000	0.664
Moved since 12-month interview	0.488	n/a	0.000	1.000
Change in HD disadvantage	0.003	2.247	-12.366	15.369
<i>Control variables</i>				
White	0.215	n/a	0.000	1.000
Black	0.493	n/a	0.000	1.000
Hispanic	0.251	n/a	0.000	1.000
Other race	0.039	n/a	0.000	1.000

Mixed-race couple	0.173	n/a	0.000	1.000
Immigrant	0.158	n/a	0.000	1.000
Age	26.438	6.093	12.000	49.000
Adults in household	2.195	0.983	1.000	10.000
Grandmother in household	0.187	n/a	0.000	1.000
Number of children in household	2.306	1.329	0.000	10.000
First birth	0.385	n/a	0.000	1.000
Less than high school diploma	0.387	n/a	0.000	1.000
High school diploma	0.254	n/a	0.000	1.000
Post-secondary education	0.359	n/a	0.000	1.000
Employed	0.531	n/a	0.000	1.000
Household income	32,261	35,997	0.000	500,000
Poor or fair health	0.137	n/a	0.000	1.000
Depressive symptoms	0.157	n/a	0.000	1.000
Married	0.302	n/a	0.000	1.000
Cohabiting	0.276	n/a	0.000	1.000
Visiting	0.098	n/a	0.000	1.000
Broken up	0.324	n/a	0.000	1.000

Table 2

Means of Perceived Social Support, by Quintiles of Neighborhood Disadvantage (N=4,211)

	Quintile									
	<i>All</i>	<i>First</i>		<i>Second</i>		<i>Third</i>		<i>Fourth</i>		<i>Fifth</i>
Loan for \$200	0.831	0.910	***	0.864	***	0.836	***	0.792	*	0.752
Loan for \$1,000	0.487	0.699	***	0.553	***	0.444	***	0.409	***	0.327
Child care	0.878	0.912	***	0.902	***	0.879	**	0.862		0.835
Housing	0.841	0.906	***	0.866	***	0.845	**	0.797		0.792
Cosigner for \$1,000	0.593	0.770	***	0.632	***	0.583	***	0.510	^	0.468
Cosigner for \$5,000	0.394	0.624	***	0.439	***	0.361	***	0.300	*	0.248
Sum of support	4.024	4.822	***	4.257	***	3.949	***	3.670	**	3.420

Symbols compare first, second, third, and fourth quintiles to fifth quintile.

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 3

Poisson Regression Analyses Predicting Mothers' Perceived Social Support (N=4,211)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
HD disadvantage	-0.036 *** (0.002)	-0.010 *** (0.002)	-0.011 *** (0.002)	
First quintile				0.089 *** (0.024)
Second quintile				0.072 ** (0.023)
Third quintile				0.055 * (0.023)
Fourth quintile				0.035 (0.024)
Fifth quintile (omitted)				
White (omitted)				
Black		-0.087 *** (0.017)	-0.086 *** (0.017)	-0.091 *** (0.017)
Hispanic		-0.063 ** (0.019)	-0.064 ** (0.019)	-0.068 *** (0.019)
Other race		-0.092 * (0.038)	-0.090 * (0.038)	-0.092 * (0.038)
Mixed-race couple		-0.047 ** (0.018)	-0.047 ** (0.018)	-0.048 ** (0.018)
Immigrant		-0.065 ** (0.021)	-0.060 ** (0.022)	-0.059 ** (0.022)
Age		-0.003 * (0.001)	-0.004 ** (0.001)	-0.004 ** (0.001)
Adults in household		0.011 (0.009)	0.011 (0.009)	0.011 (0.009)
Grandmother in household		0.014 (0.022)	0.007 (0.022)	0.006 (0.022)
Number of children		-0.021 ** (0.007)	-0.021 ** (0.007)	-0.022 ** (0.007)
First birth		0.048 ** (0.016)	0.049 ** (0.016)	0.050 ** (0.016)
Less than high school (omitted)				
High school diploma		0.040 * (0.018)	0.036 (0.018)	0.034 (0.018)
Post-secondary education		0.094 *** (0.019)	0.092 *** (0.019)	0.093 *** (0.019)
Employed		0.043 ** (0.013)	0.044 ** (0.013)	0.044 ** (0.013)
Household income (log)		0.067 ***	0.066 ***	0.067 ***

		(0.008)		(0.008)		(0.008)
Poor or fair health		-0.166 ***		-0.165 ***		-0.165 ***
		(0.027)		(0.027)		(0.027)
Depressive symptoms		-0.138 ***		-0.136 ***		-0.137 ***
		(0.022)		(0.022)		(0.022)
Married (omitted)						
Cohabiting		-0.068 ***		-0.068 ***		-0.070 ***
		(0.018)		(0.018)		(0.018)
Visiting		-0.062 *		-0.069 **		-0.070 **
		(0.026)		(0.026)		(0.026)
Broken up		-0.135 ***		-0.137 ***		-0.138 ***
		(0.021)		(0.021)		(0.021)
Years in neighborhood				0.003 ***		0.003 ***
				(0.001)		(0.001)
Constant	1.384	0.932		0.947		0.889
Wald X2	316.11	1247.62		1265.53		1259.57
Log pseudolikelihood	-8637.11	-8352.51		-8348.94		-8350.92

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table 4

Poisson Regression Analyses Predicting Coping Support and Leverage Support (N=4,211)

	Coping		Leverage	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
HD disadvantage	-0.004 (0.002)		-0.022 *** (0.005)	
First quintile		0.022 (0.019)		0.193 *** (0.047)
Second quintile		0.029 (0.018)		0.160 *** (0.046)
Third quintile		-0.030 (0.018)		0.111 * (0.047)
Fourth quintile		0.013 (0.018)		0.083 (0.048)
Fifth quintile (omitted)				
Constant	0.794	0.771	-0.843	-0.976
Wald X2	467.07	466.36	1293.17	1291.78
Log psuedolikelihood	-6557.78	-6557.83	-6192.49	-6194.42

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Models include all covariates from Table 3, including years spent in neighborhood.

Table 5

Ordinary Least Squares Regression Estimating the Change in Perceived Social Support Among All Respondents (N=3,734) and Those Who Moved (N=1,739)

	Full sample	Movers
Increase in neighborhood quality	-0.002 (0.073)	0.006 (0.109)
Little or no change in neighborhood quality (omitted)	---	---
Decrease in neighborhood quality	-0.175 * (0.069)	-0.214 * (0.107)
Constant	-0.089	0.341
R-squared	0.006	0.009

* $p < 0.05$. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Models include all covariates from Table 3, including years spent in neighborhood. Positive change in neighborhood quality represents those respondents who are in the top quintile of change in neighborhood disadvantage between the 12-month and 30-month wave. Negative change in neighborhood quality represents those respondents who are in the bottom quintile of change in neighborhood disadvantage between the 12-month and 30-month wave. Little or no change in neighborhood quality includes all other respondents.

Appendix A

Logistic Regression Analyses of Neighborhood Characteristics on Six Types of Perceived Social Support.

	Loan for \$200			Loan for \$1,000			Child care		Housing		Cosigner for \$1,000			Cosigner for \$5,000			
	β (SE β)	e^β		β (SE β)	e^β		β (SE β)	e^β	β (SE β)	e^β	β (SE β)	e^β		β (SE β)	e^β		
Mothers																	
% without college degree	-0.997 (0.381)	0.369	**	-1.343 (0.274)	0.261	***	0.322 (0.411)	1.379	-0.328 (0.376)	0.720	-1.186 (0.282)	0.306	***	-1.338 (0.268)	0.262	***	
% below poverty line	-1.351 (0.315)	0.259	***	-1.497 (0.299)	0.224	***	-0.369 (0.369)	0.691	-0.781 (0.382)	0.458	*	-1.070 (0.260)	0.343	***	-1.120 (0.305)	0.326	***
% receiving public assistance	-2.030 (0.654)	0.131	**	-1.771 (0.566)	0.170	**	-0.919 (0.776)	0.393	-1.744 (0.740)	0.175	*	-1.430 (0.525)	0.239	**	-1.392 (0.621)	0.249	*
% unemployed	-1.704 (0.612)	0.182	**	-1.668 (0.567)	0.189	**	-0.137 (0.728)	0.872	-0.527 (0.720)	0.591		-2.104 (0.509)	0.121	***	-1.599 (0.605)	0.202	**

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Coefficients represent influence of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage. Models include all covariates, including years spent in neighborhood.