Family and Social Networks Considered in an Examination of Exurban Migration Motivations

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ABSTRACT

Exurbia is growing in population and land use mainly due to internal migration from urban and suburban areas. Existing literature has identified urban decay, housing affordability, and natural amenities as key reasons why Americans move to exurbia. The literature, however, largely overlooks the potential influence of family and social networks. Drawing from previous studies in non-exurban contexts, this paper asks: are family and social networks attracting migrants to exurbia? The authors conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 34 exurbanites in northern Indiana and northwest Illinois, allowing residents to describe their migration decisions without forcing participant responses into predefined survey categories. Twenty-five of the thirty-four interviewees cited family and social network influences. Networks guided moves not only to particular exurban areas, but also to specific exurban properties. We submit these findings in an attempt to further theorize exurban migration and deepen understanding of these moves.

Key Words: exurb, migration, social networks, family, residential choice.

INTRODUCTION

Exurbia is the low-density residential landscape beyond the built-up suburbs around central cities. Exurbia is important to scholars, bureaucrats, and businesspeople because it is home to a large and growing proportion of the population of the United States (Clark et al. 2009, Mackun 2009, Berube et al. 2006, D. G. Brown et al. 2005, Fulton et al. 2001, Heimlich and Anderson 2001). Those who wish to understand, provide government services for, and sell products to exurbanites are keenly interested in knowing why Americans move to exurbia.

Researchers have identified urban decay, housing affordability, and natural amenities as three key reasons why Americans move to
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exurbia. There are undoubtedly additional undiscovered reasons why people move there. This paper investigates a previously seldom-examined potential exurban migration motivator: family and social networks. Migration networks have been extensively studied in international contexts but research has yet to thoroughly apply networks in investigating internal movements to exurban areas. Specifically, this paper asks: are family and social networks attracting migrants to exurbia?

RATIONALE FOR EXURBAN STUDY

Exurbia is important because it has been growing for the past several decades. This growth has resulted in a sizeable exurban population. From 2000 to 2007, the number of persons living in outlying exurban counties around metropolitan statistical areas grew by 13.1 percent (Mackun 2009). In comparison, the number of persons living in central counties, containing cities and suburbs, grew at a slower rate of 7.8 percent, while the country’s population as a whole increased only 8.2 percent during this period (Mackun 2009). Regionally, the population of outlying counties grew faster than that of central counties in all regions of the country except the Northeast (Mackun 2009). In 2007, approximately 12.2 million Americans lived in exurbia, up from 10.8 million in 2000 (Berube et al. 2006). Exurbia’s large population and area has the potential to affect changes in the economy, society, government, and environment (A. Nelson 1992). Among those changes are employment decentralization, farmland and open space development, increased costs of publicly provided goods, rises in traffic, and growing energy consumption. Citing these reasons, we submit that it is important for scholarly research to understand the reasons behind exurban growth.

SOCIAL NETWORKS IN MIGRATION SCHOLARSHIP

Family and social networks are among the primary factors influencing the decision to move (Boyd 1989, Massey et al. 1994). The family and social network approach, when considered, is commonly applied to international migration, especially from Latin America to the United States (Massey et al. 1994). Family and social networks are important because migrants do not pick locations at random; rather, migrants use ideas and resources from family and friends that facilitate their moves (D. L. Brown 2002, Stockdale 2002). Family members, especially those living in another location, are important because they can provide information about another place and thus are likely “to influence residential choice” (Mulder 2007, 270). Family members living elsewhere “may induce people to move in their direction” (Mulder and Cooke 2009, 300).

Labor migrants become aware of potential destination locations through their multiple contacts in multiple places (Wilson 1994). Some researchers have posited that people living in non-western societies assign greater importance to family and have larger networks than their western counterparts (Khanum 2001). These migrants retain strong family and social networks even after migrating to the west (Liebhrer and Mulder 2006).

Still other researchers argue that migrant family and social networks are variable in form and function and can enrich a wide array of migration studies, even when examining internal migration in the developed world (Dawkins 2006, D. L. Brown 2002, von Reichert 2002). In Western societies, the family still plays an important role in the exchange of ideas, support, money, and goods. Intergenerational transfers of ideas, support, money, and goods between family members are still very important and have probably increased in recent decades. The most apparent relationship between migration and residential choice is the intergenerational transfer of a house from parents to children (Mulder 2007). Even though some think that western societies do not value family, families are indeed important as givers of assistance and social connections (Michielin et al. 2008, von Reichert 2002).

Several studies have probed the influence of family and social networks in the internal
migration of developed world residents. Pettersson and Malmberg (2009) and Michielin et al. (2008) considered the influence of parents’ residential location on migration of the adult children. They found that adult children move toward their parents when the children need support and contact, but the reverse was not the case. Stockdale found that mobility patterns and associated decisions of migrants out of rural Scotland are “influenced and conditioned by the existence of family and social networks” (Stockdale 2002, 61). Stockdale’s subjects used accommodation provided by distant family and friends for shelter initially while searching for jobs in a new area. These family and social networks are of primary importance in first destination choice (Stockdale 2002).

In their study of the western United States, Beyers and Nelson (2000) found that urban-to-rural migration is channeled into particular streams. Many migrants in their study area came from the same origin communities and gathered information about a community through friends who had previously lived there. This finding led them to conclude that “much can be learned about the patterns and processes of internal migration by borrowing frameworks from the often separate body of literature focused on migration at the international scale” (Beyers and Nelson 2000, 467).

Glasgow and Brown, in their study on social integration of retired U.S. movers, found that these migrants had substantial social network ties to their destinations (Glasgow and Brown 2006). They, along with von Reichert (2002) argue that kinship ties and amenities motivate moves. The results of research linking the wider family and social network context to residential choice should help lead to a more comprehensive explanation of residential choice (Mulder 2007).

EXISTING LITERATURE ON EXURBAN IN-MIGRATION DRIVERS

Exurbia is populating and expanding primarily due to net positive domestic migration (Mackun 2009), not due to natural increase or the arrival of foreign immigrants. The United States has a history of population movement to exurbia and away from cities and their suburbs. In the 1970s, the country experienced a momentous shift of population away from high-density settlements and towards low-density locales in the “nonmetropolitan turnaround” (Fuguitt 1985, Wardwell 1980). This urban/suburban exodus continued, albeit at a slower pace, into the 1980s. In the early and mid-1990s, the “rural rebound” occurred, as migrants once again flowed out of cities and suburbs (Manson and Groop 2000, K. Johnson and Beale 1994). This flow weakened in the late 1990s, but from the turn of the millennium to the approximate start of the current recession, the areas outside of and adjacent to cities and suburbs had been growing faster than the areas within (Mackun 2009).


Second, research has identified affordable land as an exurban attraction (B. Johnson 2008, Chambers 1997, Davis et al. 1994). Exurban property is cheaper than centrally


While the above-cited locational characteristics provide an impetus to move and a context within which exurban migration occurs, motivations and behaviors pertaining to exurban migration are highly complex and in need of further research (Mulder 2007, Dawkins 2006). In the remainder of the paper, we demonstrate empirically that by including social networks in analyses of domestic migration, scholars gain a deeper understanding of the factors driving exurbanization.

METHODOLOGY

Before formulating a method of gathering data on exurban migration motivations, this paper must define the term “exurban” itself. This was challenging because of the lack of scholarly agreement on its meaning (P. Nelson Forthcoming, Sayre Forthcoming, Taylor Forthcoming, Walker Forthcoming). In existing scholarship, location is an important exurban qualification. Studies generally place exurbs beyond the city and surrounding suburbs, (Berube et al. 2006, Bruegmann 2005, Crump 2003) but still within the urban sphere (Berube et al. 2006), and not in the distant rural countryside (A. Nelson 1992). Other research has been more specific, stating that exurban places are those outside of a census Urban Area (UA), but inside of a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (A. Nelson and Sanchez 1997). Morrill (1992) defined exurbs as those entire counties adjacent to MSAs, Smith and Sharp’s (2005) exurbs were the unincorporated areas just inside the edges of an MSA, and Lamb’s (1983) exurbs were counties and census places within 50 miles of UAs that contained more than 250,000 residents.

Research has also used economic activity as another defining exurban characteristic. Exurbs, for some, are places that have economies similar to cities (Ash and Thrift 2002), being economically and socially tied to the city (Bruegmann 2005). Exurbs are part of the urban labor market (Ash and Thrift 2002), with some studies specifying at least 10 percent of the residents to commute to the census-defined primary city’s county (Morrill 1992) or have at least 20 percent of residents commute to the UA (Berube et al. 2006).

In the tradition of the research cited above, we distill the exurban definition to two factors: geographic location and connection. Regarding geographic location, we define exurbia as the area within an MSA but outside of its UA. Regarding connection, we regard places where residents live outside an MSA but commute to the MSA’s core county as exurban as well. This recognizes that individual
exurbanites may live outside of a demarcated exurban area, rejecting an artificially discrete boundary between exurbia and rural areas.

Prior work on drivers of exurban migration employed surveys to ask respondents to identify which listed factors influenced their decision to migrate (TAPAS Group 2004a, 2004b, Crump 2003, A. Nelson and Sanchez 1999, Rudzitis 1991, Williams and Sofranko 1979). Rather than forcing participant responses into predefined categories, however, our research used interviews so that participants could explain their own reasons for exurban migration in their own words without being prompted. The in-depth, semi-structured interviews allowed for open-ended answers and thus elicited more thorough and broad responses. This approach provided a high level of detail from a small number of cases (Boyle et al. 1998, Cook and Crang 1995, P. Atkinson and Hammersley 1994, Schoenberger 1991). Methodologically, our research drew from the numerous geographers who have demonstrated the utility of qualitative methods and migrant narratives in migration studies (Herbert 2000, Lawson 2000, McHugh 2000, Halfacree and Boyle 1993).

Our study area is comprised of exurban counties in northern Indiana and northwest Illinois (Figure 1: Study Area). We chose these areas because little exurban research to date has focused on the Midwest, which has been exurbanizing extensively (Bruegmann 2005, Clark et al. 2006, Smith and Sharp 2005). Notable exurban research has often focused on the West (Gosnell et al. 2007, Gosnell et al. 2006, Gosnell and Travis 2005, Walker and Fortmann 2003, von Reichert 2002, Duane 1999, Theobald et al. 1996), the South (Audirac et al. 1990, Hayes 1976, Clay and Orr 1972), and the Mid-Atlantic (Lang 2003, Lang and LeFurgy 2003, Garreau 1991). To find exurban interviewees,
the first author contacted one individual in northwest Indiana (near the Chicago MSA) and one individual in northwest Illinois (near the Davenport MSA). These individuals were important because they had knowledge of their exurban neighbors and thus could find participants eligible for this study.

We elicited interview contacts for exurban householders from the two reference individuals. Additional participants were collected using snowball sampling because interviewees are more honest and forthright with a researcher who is recommended by a friend (R. Atkinson and Flint 2001, P. Atkinson and Hammersley 1994, Berg 1988). Snowball sampling also serves to minimize status and gender differences (Fontana and Frey 1993).

We conducted thirty-four private audio-recorded interviews with exurbanites. Each interview consisted of twenty questions regarding the exurbanite’s property, migration history, neighborhood, livelihood, and neighbors. Most of the interviews took place at the participant’s home or place of employment. Some participants found it more convenient to meet the interviewer at another interviewee’s home or workplace. Following the interviews, the primary author transcribed each audio recording. The primary author analyzed each narrative by identifying emergent themes explaining exurban migration motivations, instead of coding transcripts into a set of predetermined categories (Kern 2007).

**EXURBAN INTERVIEW RESULTS**


Interestingly, the interviewees commonly referenced their contacts as influencing their moves, as 25 of the 34 cited family and social network influences. While participants could have moved to a number of nearby exurban places to satisfy their desires, their family and social network connections often guided their migration to a particular exurban area or, in some cases, a specific piece of property.

For example, interviewee #1 moved to exurban acreage in Huntington County, Indiana, about 35 miles southwest of Fort Wayne, Indiana. In part, he left his subdivision because there was pressure to maintain highly manicured landscaping. As he explained, “I’m not a yard person and in a subdivision if a dandelion pops up, people run out there and get those damn things. I’m not into that.” This interviewee moved to exurbia because there his landscaping would not have to meet his neighbors’ approval. He did not want to let the fields grow wild because doing so would lead to a proliferation of weeds. Instead, he remarked that he would indeed mow, but rarely, or would even lease some of his land to a local farmer so that he would not have to tend to the land at all.

This same participant also cited favorable characteristics of his destination home that influenced his move. He said, “I wanted a pole barn on my property where I could store my antique cars. I always wanted a piece of property with a walk-out basement so I could get to my auto shop.” His former property in a suburban subdivision did not have the space for a three-car garage, nor did zoning regulations allow for such a structure. In the exurbs, he could afford to purchase adequate land for his large garage and did not have to worry about the restrictions of land use regulations.
In addition to having hobbies that demanded expansive exurban land, this interviewee spoke of his desire to build a larger house in an exurban area. He said,

I wanted a ‘main level-type’ house. I wanted a house where the master bedroom was on the main level and all the other bedrooms were upstairs. The house that I built here has everything [my wife and I] need on the main level. We have the bedrooms upstairs when the grandkids come and the basement for them but if we don’t want to leave that main level we don’t have to do that.

The quarter-acre lots in his old neighborhood did not provide the space necessary for the footprint of a one-story house of comparable square footage to his old two-story house. He found the acreage he was looking for in the exurbs.

Many exurban areas could have satisfied his needs, but he chose to move east, in the direction of his daughter, son-in-law, and two young grandchildren. He ended up moving to an exurban property on a highway located about five miles from his daughter’s family. His family and social network connection here guided his move to a particular area.

Interviewee #4 told a similar story of leaving a densely populated area for a particular exurban area where she had a family and social network connection. She also had problems with inquisitive neighbors. “[We moved to Marshall County, Indiana] because my husband didn’t like living close to people who were always watching what he was doing.” This woman described her husband as a person who enjoyed working on various projects. Living on a larger lot would allow him to fix cars and tend his garden in relative privacy. She had grown up on the south side of Chicago in an urban neighborhood. “My sister and her friend used to exchange clothes through the window next door.” She moved to a suburban area in Crown Point, Indiana, located about 15 miles south of Gary, Indiana, after receiving a job offer there. She said, “My parents got married in Crown Point and I thought that sounded romantic so I said if they have an opening there I’ll take it. That’s just how it happened.” Soon after moving to Crown Point, she married and moved to her husband’s home area, the suburban fringe of nearby Gary.

After several years of enduring the neighbors’ “prying eyes” in Gary, she and her husband desired a residence with more privacy and space. They wanted to move to the exurbs, and seemingly, any would do. “We just sold the house and we didn’t know where to go. We had 30 days to decide. My parents had moved to Koontz Lake, [Indiana, about 25 miles southwest of South Bend, Indiana]. They gave us a direction to go.” Following in that direction, the interviewee and her husband moved to their exurban home located about 15 miles east of Koontz Lake.

Another interviewee (#15) spoke of choosing her current residence because it was exurban and because it was close to the homes of her husband’s family members. “When we moved [to exurbia], it was because I like the quiet. I like the fresh air and the open spaces. I like not having people so close, the privacy is very important.” She had grown up in Glenview, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, and after college moved to a suburb of Davenport, Iowa.

Desiring exurban land for privacy, but wanting a geographic location within commuting distance of her office, she could have moved in any direction from Davenport. She moved north, however, to Whiteside County, because her husband’s elderly parents and brothers lived in that area. “[My husband] knew a lot about this place. It was convenient to be close especially when [her father and mother in-law] were ill. [My husband] sees his brothers, so he enjoys that.” Like the above interviewees, this woman moved to exurbia to distance herself from her neighbors and chose an exurban area because of a family and social network connection.

While the above-mentioned participants moved to a general exurban area because of
network ties, many others moved to a specific piece of property because of family and social connections. Interviweee #20 cited the blandness of his suburban home as the impetus for his move to exurbia. He left his former neighborhood in of the suburbs of Moline, Illinois because he did not like its crowding, newness, and lack of character. He said,

[Our old house] was a traditional split-level aluminum sided, small house. It was a nice family home, but really didn’t have any yard. The houses were jammed right next to each other and there was really no character to it at all...We wanted to put a little bit more of our own style into [a house] and bring an old thing back [by rehabbing an old house].

This interviewee described his old suburban neighborhood as plain and lacking charm. He disliked the sameness of the houses in his old neighborhood and wanted an opportunity to restore a historic exurban house.

This interviewee was pulled to exurban settlement because, as he said, he was looking for “a quiet place that [my family] could enjoy without too many distractions from the neighbors. We wanted a place where we could be safe and be out by ourselves without being concentrated with thousands of other people.” He favored exurbia’s low-density housing and proximity to nature in contrast to the “shopping mall world” of the suburbs. He said,

[In the suburbs], it’s all about shopping, going places, and spending money. We want our kids to grow up with a more wholesome, clearer picture of the world rather than just seeing it as a place to buy things. It’s just unbelievable how when I was a kid, so much of this region was rolling countryside and now it’s pockmarked with malls, strip malls, Wal-Marts, and houses. So we moved out.

Given this impetus for moving, he did not select a new piece of property at random. Instead, he purchased an exurban property from his father located near Tampico, Illinois, about 35 miles east of Moline. He explained,

Our current house is actually my grandfather’s old farmhouse, he had built it about 1935. He left it to his sons and they had been renting it out. It had fallen into disrepair and [my wife and I] were interested in refurbishing old properties so we purchased that house and about five of the acres in 1999. We were also interested in getting out into the country a little bit more and we hated the house we had.

Interviewee #27 also moved to a specific exurban property when she left the urban/suburban area. Before moving to exurbia,

I had lived in an apartment in Moline and it was very different from where I’m at now. I lived in another very small apartment before that also in Moline. It was a transition period as I was getting a divorce. Before the divorce, I lived in a house in Rock Island. That house was also in the city. I grew up in Bettendorf, Iowa in a house in a residential neighborhood. So right now is the first time I’ve lived out here.

She went on to explain that her boyfriend wanted to move to an exurban area in Henry County, Illinois, about fifteen miles east of Moline. At this time, she decided to move in with her boyfriend in a newly purchased exurban home:

[The move] was primarily driven by [my boyfriend]. He wanted to get out of a renting situation. He lived in a townhouse and I lived in my apartment. We lived separately. We decided we wanted to purchase a house together and his dream has always been to have a big garden. Nowadays he’s got twelve raised planting beds in there plus a lot of other space around the garden, so it’s rather
large. If you think of a corral, it’s kind of that size. He also wanted to be in a place where we would not be surrounded by loud neighbors. He also wanted to get away from all the ‘BOOM BOOM BOOM’ cars that drive by at three o’clock in the morning in the city— that and to just have a place to go home to and enjoy the solitude. I’ve taken to the new place real well.

This interviewee indeed has “taken to the new place real well.” She spoke of the enjoyment she gets from having a large kitchen for dinner parties. Having moved to exurbia, her perceived stress level has also dropped. “I like living here because you can get out of the rat race. It’s just your own personal space. We have nice space, we have privacy, we can store a lot of things, and so it’s been great.”

It is important to note that while she does indeed enjoy living in the exurbs, her boyfriend’s desire to move out of the city caused her move. Her family and social network connection as well as a life course event pulled her to the exurban area east of Moline, the city in which she worked. Additionally, she mentioned that she did not want to live too far from her mother, in Bettendorf, located about 20 miles west of her current home. “My mom still lives in Bettendorf, who I go visit once or twice a week, so I’m not too far from her or from work either. I can run my errands in the Quad Cities when I visit her or after work. I didn’t want to be too far from her or my office.”

In another case, interviewee #13 moved to a parcel of exurban land selected by her father. She and her husband were casually looking for “some acreage” after having lived in suburban areas their entire lives. She explained that the family was in no rush to move; instead, they were generally interested in relocating to an exurban area sometime in the future. This interviewee had grown up on the suburban edge of Gary. After marrying, she moved to a townhouse in Merrillville, Indiana, a suburb adjacent to Gary’s southern edge. Following the townhouse, she moved, along with her husband and son, to a detached house in a Merrillville subdivision.

Generally, she explained that suburban life was satisfactory, but the family did eventually want to move to a lower density settlement some day. She said,

I wanted a place where I could garden. I love to put in flowers and trees. We have a huge garden [on our current exurban property] that we actually had to cut back. It got too big. Living here, I just like the property and the quietness. It is peaceful, especially at night in the summer. There’s a lot of sky. The skies are much clearer out here, there’s less pollution from the factories and trucks and all that.

She went on to explain what prompted the timing and destination of her move. “We weren’t really looking for a house at the time, but when Dad bought the land out here and offered it to us, well, we couldn’t pass it up.” Her father had recently purchased 39 acres and a house in Porter County, Indiana, approximately 25 miles east of Gary where he lived with his grown son. He in turn offered his daughter; the interviewee described here, a piece of the property on which she could build a house for her family. She said,

Basically my dad bought the farm. We were kind of looking for property in [Valparaiso, Indiana] and in different areas. Then my dad bought this farm and we thought it was a nice area. We liked the openness. He subdivided the property and offered a piece to [my husband and me]. He kind of offered it to us so it worked out nice. We thought, well, we just decided to build out here then. It was convenient for us too; [my father] had just bought all this land. We just wanted to have more garden, more room.

This participant was casually looking to move from the suburban area of Merrillville.
to Valparaiso, a town about 15 miles east of her former residence. Instead, she moved not to Valparaiso, but near Chesterton, Indiana. She explained,

> It just worked out for us. We were looking anyway and [my dad] just went ahead and bought this place. Valpo was the closest area we looked to [Chesterton]. We weren’t looking in the [Chesterton lakeshore] dunes area. We really didn’t look at property here, mostly we looked near Valpo for some acreage.”

Instead of moving to Valparaiso as she had loosely planned, she moved northeast 25 miles to Chesterton because her father had bought property. This example illustrates how family and social networks serve to channel exurban migration.

Similarly, interviewee #5 was not actively looking to move, but did when an exurban property became available to her through a family and social network tie. After marrying, she lived in several apartments in downtown Plymouth, Indiana before moving to exurban Marshall County. In describing her current exurban property, she said,

> The man that lived here had to actually go to a nursing home and has since passed away. He was a friend of my dad’s actually, and he offered [the property] to him, but my dad either didn’t want it or let him know that [my husband and I] may be interested. We weren’t actually looking to move at the time, but it came up and we said ‘yeah, sure.’ We got [the property] very, very reasonably because it didn’t ever go to market. It actually wasn’t appraised. It wasn’t that we sat down and decided to move to the country. This place became an option, but since it was actually what we would have wanted if we had been looking, we bought it.

Amenities that made the exurbs attractive for her included solitude, privacy, and space. She explained,

> I like it because it’s quiet here. I can go out in my yard and not hear neighbors yelling or even talking. [My husband, my sons, and I] can go outside and play. We can play ball, we can play volleyball, or we can play softball. [The property] is big enough that [my sons] can ride little motorcycles. It’s just free, I don’t have to look outside and see other people’s backyards, I don’t have to see what other people are doing, and not that many people can see me.

In sum, 25 of the 34 participants identified family and social networks as guiding their moves to exurbia, as illustrated by the interviews quoted above. The interviewees gave reasons why they left their old residences for relocation to exurbia. While many exurbs would have satisfied their preferences, the interviewees’ family and social networks channeled them to particular exurban areas. Interestingly, interviewees had even stronger network ties not only to the areas in which they live, but also to the exact plot of land.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Participants in this study spoke of a number of overlapping attractions, repulsions, structural conditions, and network components that influenced their moves. While urban decay, housing affordability, and natural amenities provided a context in which large numbers of migrants relocated to exurban areas, these characteristics do not fully explain why people moved and continue to move to particular places and do not illuminate the underlying decision-making process.

The new idea presented in this research is the integration of these migration forces with a network component at work in exurban moves. As common elements of most migration decisions, we argue that family and social networks and similar information exchanges should be incorporated into existing theories of exurban migration to gain a deeper, fuller understanding of this phenomenon.
NOTES

1. The current recession has indeed slowed exurbia’s population and land area growth, but this has occurred in urban and suburban places as well. The government has been working to encourage low-density housing growth through mortgage lender bailouts which attempt to make home financing available and affordable. New home-buyer tax credits and the continued mortgage interest income tax deduction also favor ownership of large, expensive properties rather than the renting of inexpensive apartments. Stimulus funding spent on highway construction also makes commutes easier and increases accessibility to exurban places. Given these activities, which redouble longstanding policies that encourage low-density development, a return to robust exurban growth will likely occur in the near future.

2. Though social factors such as “white flight” and other types of racial or ethnic segregation have also contributed to population redistribution (Massey and Denton 1988, Berry and Kasarda 1977), our focus is upon the commonly cited factors reviewed above.

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