

Residential Relocation: Impact of Allowances and Procedures in Ohio

David Colony

This study analyzed the experiences of residents displaced from their dwellings for highway construction in Cleveland, Ohio. The findings from interviews with 250 respondents (i.e., all of the prospective candidates for relocation housing payments relocated between July 1, 1970, and February 15, 1972) corroborate those reported in an earlier study of 228 respondents who were relocated before pertinent federal and state legislation provided funds for replacement housing that may be more costly than that acquired at fair market value.

Relocates purchased homes with a median value about \$5000 higher than the value of the housing from which they were relocated. More than 75 percent of those who bought homes costing more than \$20 000 added personal funds to the state allowances to do so; while none of those whose new houses cost less than \$10 000 used personal funds.

The negative aspects of relocation, initially felt by more than 60 percent of those responding, continued to affect 36 percent of the respondents. Concerns included complaints about the physical strains of moving and loss of contact with familiar surroundings and acquaintances (mostly by older relocatees), higher interest rates on new mortgages, vandalism at the project sites, timing of relocation payments, and inability to repurchase homes or treasured fixtures and appurtenances.

Despite monthly housing payment increases for 90 households, only half of these households thought that their financial position had worsened. Generally, most respondents thought that (a) housing and moving payments were adequate; (b) the relocation program and relations with the state highway department were either good or very good; and (c) the state highway department successfully solved most of the problems and provided most of the services associated with relocation. Some unsolved problems, such as financial assistance or dislike of replacement homes, mentioned by relocatees were not capable of solution by the highway department.

Relocation Research in Virginia

Michael A. Perfater and Gary R. Allen

As part of its program of research on the problems associated with the relocation of people displaced because of highway construction, the Virginia Highway and Transportation Research Council undertook a statewide study in 1975 to further the understanding of the issues surrounding displacement. For the study, a sample comprising displacees from both urban and rural communities dispersed over a wide geographic area were contacted to obtain data for an analysis of the social and economic effects of displacement. The analysis showed less than one relocatee in five to have a negative overall feeling toward the relocation experience, even though almost one-third of them felt the total payment had been too small. Although the relocation experience evokes a general emotional distress, certain portions of the relocation program were found to have contributed significantly to the overall negative feelings. Foremost among these were inadequacies in (a) the total payment, (b) the notice to vacate, and (c) the help given in finding a replacement dwell-

ing. Emphasis on improving these aspects of the relocation program can, then, lead to improvements in the general attitudes about displacement.

The economic analysis revealed that the relocation program had served as a vehicle for renters to become homeowners. Owners, too, were found to have benefited. In most cases they had upgraded their housing; in fact, 75 percent of the owners questioned had purchased homes of greater value than their previous dwellings. Yet among homeowners, the largest group of those dissatisfied with relocation claimed that the relocation housing payments had been inadequate. In addition, the data gathered in this study seem to imply that the social impact of a change in physical dwelling is not significant, but a change in neighborhood is. Preferences concerning neighborhood comparability were found to influence the respondents' attitudes toward the entire relocation experience. The percentage of respondents who preferred their replacement neighborhood was much lower than the percentage that preferred their replacement housing. The effects of this preference were revealed repeatedly in cross tabulations of these responses with those concerning attitudes about the administration of the relocation program.

Again using a survey technique to collect data, in a second study, we analyzed adjustment of renter displacees from two standpoints: their mobility and the quality of their current housing. It was concluded that relocation procedures under the 1970 act did not appear to have significantly influenced either the length of residence in the original replacement housing or a decision to move from it. It was also concluded that the manner in which relocation housing payments had been made to renters--whether in a lump sum or in annual allotments--had had no significant effect on how these payments had been used or on the length of time a renter had remained in the replacement housing.

A third study on relocation conducted in 1978 evaluates a portable audiovisual system for use by right-of-way agents at public meetings, in meetings between agents and displacees in their homes, and in the training of agents and other personnel. The agents overwhelmingly endorsed the slide show as an aid in explaining all aspects of the relocation program to displacees.

Attitudes and Experiences of Relocated Household Heads: A Causal Analysis

Clarence H. Thornton

New highway projects have disrupted community life, divided economic and cultural areas, and uprooted many families from surroundings once familiar to them. This paper identifies those factors that either distract from or contribute to positive feelings following relocation.

STUDY AREA AND SAMPLE

This study is part of a much larger study of the socioeconomic impact of a segment of the Interstate highway system on a predominately black community known as Scotlandville. Scotlandville is a partially unincorporated, low-density residential area of approximately 8 miles² north of the central business district of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It is a very stable community with a

population of nearly 23 000; about 65 percent of its residents are homeowners. With the exception of two middle-income residential subdivisions, mainly inhabited by black professional educators, the community is relatively poor. The median family income for the area was approximately \$6530 at the beginning of the study (1972). Approximately 27 percent of the families are below the established poverty line, and 16 percent of all families are headed by females.

Because Scotlandville is located between large industrial and residential areas to its immediate north and south, very heavy traffic is generated along the main thoroughfares. The result has been a severe traffic congestion problem. The segment of the Interstate highway system known as the Scotlandville Bypass is designed to intercept much of this through traffic and channel it onto a partially elevated expressway. To build the bypass, of course, entails displacing a number of residences and small businesses. In 1972, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development estimated that as many as 500 households were located within the highway right-of-way. With subsequent changes in the location of the right-of-way, this figure was reduced to 327. To date, only 214 households and 21 businesses have actually moved.

By using the names and addresses of all relocatees supplied by the highway department, we contacted and interviewed 172 (80 percent) of the relocated households. These households comprise our study sample. Among these households, 52 percent were homeowners, 35 percent were renters, 12 percent were former renters who purchased new homes, and only 1 percent were former homeowners who later became renters. The median income level of relocatees is \$5714. In a follow-up survey, the

relocatees were asked about how happy they were about having moved for the highway. It should be noted that there were differences by tenure status, as well as by the intensity of feelings. The group expressing the least favorable attitude was the renters. Nearly one-fourth of these persons were sorry about having moved. The corresponding percentages for homeowners and those who switched from renting to owning are 12 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

RESULTS

For renters, the results of this analysis indicate that money was the chief problem. While counseling partially reduced the number of problems encountered, the financial assistance package was perceived by many of these relocatees as insufficient. Apparently, the displeasure of this group stems from their own financial woes and their perception of the inadequacy of the financial assistance given to them by the highway department. Both of these influences restricted their choice of housing units, which, in turn, lowered their level of satisfaction with having moved. The counseling services they received, however, should not be ignored since these services served to minimize their problems. The majority of the renters (68 percent), however, remained in Scotlandville following relocation. There is a limited number of quality rental units in the area, and their lower level of satisfaction with their new dwellings may have been tied to this problem. In any case, more attention should be paid to tenant-relocatees--e.g., through consultation with other governmental agencies where appropriate--so that rent supplement payments are not confined to a single period or amount.