Housing career concept

- Longer-view study of residential mobility patterns
- Sequences of housing occupied over time
- Moves between rental and homeownership
Housing career patterns in the U.S.

The majority of Americans:
- Have progressive housing careers
- Tenure status from renter to owner
- Quality improvements
Housing career patterns in the U.S.

A smaller portion do not make progress over time:
– Begin making progress, then experience a decline → crisis
– Never make progress → low and very low-income
Housing careers of low-income people

- Move more frequently than people with higher incomes
- Moves among low-end rental housing
- Live in housing outside of rental and homeownership (shelters, doubling up with family or friends)
- Often lack control over their moves
- More likely to live in poor neighborhoods
Role of housing assistance

- Housing assistance associated with longer duration stays in rental units.
- Subsidized housing the only factor that ended the cycle of mobility.
- Factor in predicting if those who exited homelessness would become homeless again.

(Berger, Heintze, Naidich and Meyers, 2008; Bartlett, 1997; Dworsky and Piliavin, 2000)
Research design and method
Participant recruitment

• Mailed letters to sample of participants:
  – Living in PPL multifamily properties with and without services
  – On Metro HRA waiting list
• First come, first serve process
• Resulted in a disproportionate number of participants from a single housing site that served the formerly homeless with dual diagnoses
Research design and method

- 47 participants, followed 15 for one-year
- Two groups
  - 33 families ➤ subsidized housing
  - 14 families ➤ waiting list
- Created timeline of housing, life experiences
- Gathered information on all housing accommodations (n=682)
- Quantitative and qualitative data
Research design and method

Data collected through initial interview:
- Housing accommodations
- Housing type
- Perception of housing and neighborhood conditions
- Life circumstances
- Reasons for moving
Research design and method

Follow-up interviews

- #1- Social interactions in the current neighborhood
- #2- Childhood experiences
- #3- Evaluation of individual moves
- #4- Making ends meet on limited incomes
- #5- Exercising choice in residential mobility
Data analysis

Housing career

Housing accommodation
## Participant Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subsidized (n=33)</th>
<th>Waiting List (n=14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (mean)</td>
<td>36 years</td>
<td>49 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>26 women</td>
<td>9 women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 men</td>
<td>5 men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>Majority African American (69.7)</td>
<td>Majority African American (64.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>60.6% at least high school diploma</td>
<td>64.3% at least high school diploma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results
Housing Careers

- Avg. length of career: 22 years
- Avg. number of accommodations: 15
- Avg. length of accommodation: 20 months
  - 29% had average of less than 12 months
  - 23% had average of more than 24 months
## Accommodation type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>pct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rental</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubled-up/off-lease</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional (shelters, CD, jail/prison)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- University of Minnesota
## Rental accommodations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>pct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private market rental</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidized rental</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional/supportive housing</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental through family or friends</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment/education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>330</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stability and trajectory

Normative trajectory of housing stability

Length of stay

Time
Stability and trajectory
## Why did families move?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 5 reasons for moving</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Got their own place</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Completed program or sentence</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Wanted a better place</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Relationship problems</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Eviction</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forced vs. Discretionary Moves

Forced (49%)
- Eviction
- Jail/Prison
- Treatment
- Lack of affordability
- Property sold, foreclosed, condemned
- Relationship problems

Discretionary
- Got their own place
- Wanted a better place
- Lifestyle move
- Poor housing conditions
- Poor neighborhood conditions
A place of their own

“It was me, my four sons, my sister, her older son and her daughter”

- A participant’s description of a doubled-up accommodation
## Neighborhood poverty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood poverty</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low (&lt;10%)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (10-20%)</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (20-30%)</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very high (30%+)</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>574</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Normative neighborhood poverty trajectory

- **Nbhd pov rate**
- **time**
Neighborhood trajectory

Participant #105

Accommodation number

Pct. Pov
Physical environments matter, relationships matter more

- Descriptions of housing, neighborhood, housing need → people, behavior
- Housing and neighborhood characteristics were important
- Relationships and social environment more common reasons for moving
Physical environments matter, relationships matter more

“It was a really nice place, but the landlord...she was an older woman, like in her eighties, and she practically ran our lives, well my life actually... I was grown and I had to be in the house at a certain time.”(#119)
Physical environments matter, relationships matter more

“It meets my needs very well. It helps me maintain my sobriety. If I’m having problems, it feels like, everybody lives here is an addict, and so if I’m having problems, and my next door neighbor is an addict, I can say, “Hey, I’m feeling like using, or this that and the other.” So, there is a lot of support here with staff and the women here.” (#102)
Survival strategies and place

• When it comes to making ends meet, place matters
• Reliance on family and friends, opportunities in neighborhood
Survival strategies and place

This neighborhood makes it easier where I’m at now. Well, the neighbors are good. I have no problems. Everybody supports everybody. Everybody helps each other. If I need a ride to the store, they would give me a ride. They tell me where the food shelf is at, stuff like that. (#113)
Survival strategies and place

- Neighborhoods make it easier or more difficult
  - Proximity to family and friends
  - Access to informal and occasional work opportunities (hair braiding, fixing cars, rides)
  - Non-profit support (food shelf)
  - Transportation

- Relationship between people and place more subtle, overlooked
Trajectory: what makes a move good or bad

Table 12: Reasons for perceived trajectory of moves made by respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation of move-trajectory</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>pct.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social and interpersonal situation</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People or relationships</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life circumstances</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance abuse or mental health</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting (or losing) children</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic of the housing units</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit quality</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security of tenure</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit size</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood or location</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime and safety</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difference in conditions</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>402</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Housing and life circumstances
Childhood experiences: Poverty

The house that I lived in as a child, it was a little tin-roofed house, two bedrooms, my mom and her husband and then all the siblings slept in one room which that was one, two, three, four of us slept in one room. And we had an outside bathroom which was just a toilet and a sink, and we took bath in a tin-tub. #205
Childhood experiences: Residential instability

118: When my dad was still living, we lived a lot in single family houses. After he passed, then my mom would take us from my Caring and Sharing and to the 410. She would just move us in and out of different people’s houses that we didn’t know and she would just leave us there with them.

Interviewer: What was that like then?

118: It was frustrating and scary.
Childhood experiences: Sexual abuse and trauma

Follow-up group
- About half of the women reported sexual abuse by a relative
- Trauma –
  - death of a family member
  - separation from parents
  - family and neighborhood violence
Chemical dependency

- About half of the participants (overall) reported episodes of drug and alcohol use
- Drug use → forced moves, residential instability
Lack of income/employment

• Struggle to make ends meet
• Sporadic employment
• Underemployment
• Formal subsidies are important for longer-term residential stability
Interpersonal relationships and conflict

- Troubled relationships with family, significant others
- Relationship issues a source of residential instability
- Changes in household composition
History of barriers

• Evictions and lease terminations
• Episodic nature of rental histories
• No formal rental history
• Ex-offenders
• Lifelong renters?
Participant aspirations

• Desire for independence, a place of their own and a chance at self-sufficiency
• Desire for long-term housing stability, many saw housing assistance as path to stability
Questions and Discussion