

Why low-income families move: It's not just about housing

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Homes for All
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Background

- Explored long-term housing experiences of low-income families
- Impact of subsidized housing, services
- Housing career
- Study funded by The McKnight Foundation

Background

- 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=730)
- Quantitative and qualitative data

Participant Information

	Subsidized (n=33)	Waiting List (n=14)
Age (mean)	36 years	49 years
Gender	26 women 7 men	9 women 5 men
Race/Ethnicity	Majority African American (69.7)	Majority African American (64.3)
Education	60.6% at least high school diploma	64.3% at least high school diploma

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

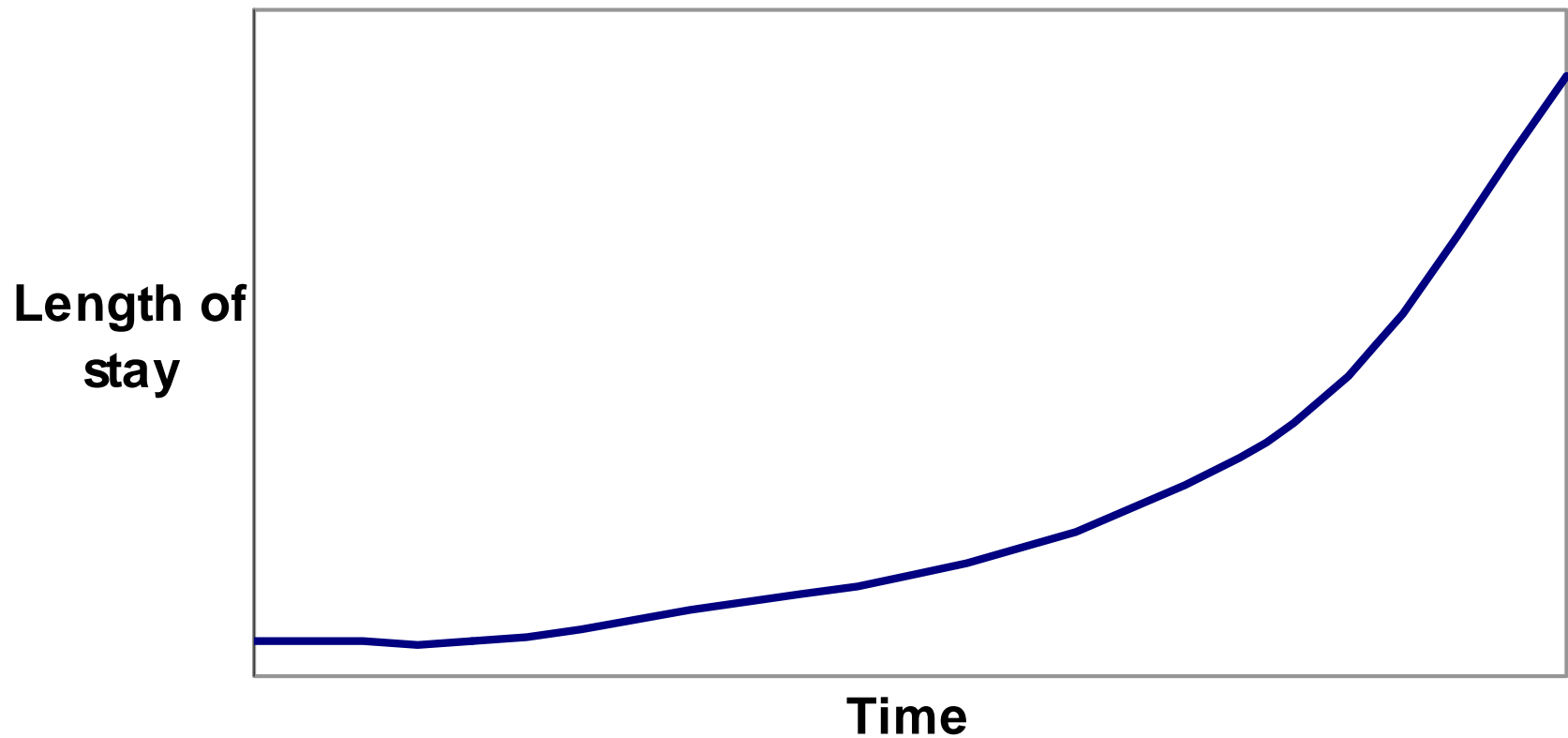
Type of accommodation

Accommodation type	n	pct.
Rental	330	48
Private unsubsidized rental	193	28
Subsidized rental	73	11
Transitional rental	36	5
Shared rental	16	2
Employment/School housing	12	2
Doubled-up or living (off-lease) with others	206	30
With family/friends	152	22
With parents	54	8
Institutional	120	18
Homeless shelter	47	7
Chemical/mental health facility	31	5
Jail/Prison	28	4
Other institutional	9	1
Domestic abuse shelter	5	1
Homeless	19	3
Homeownership	7	1

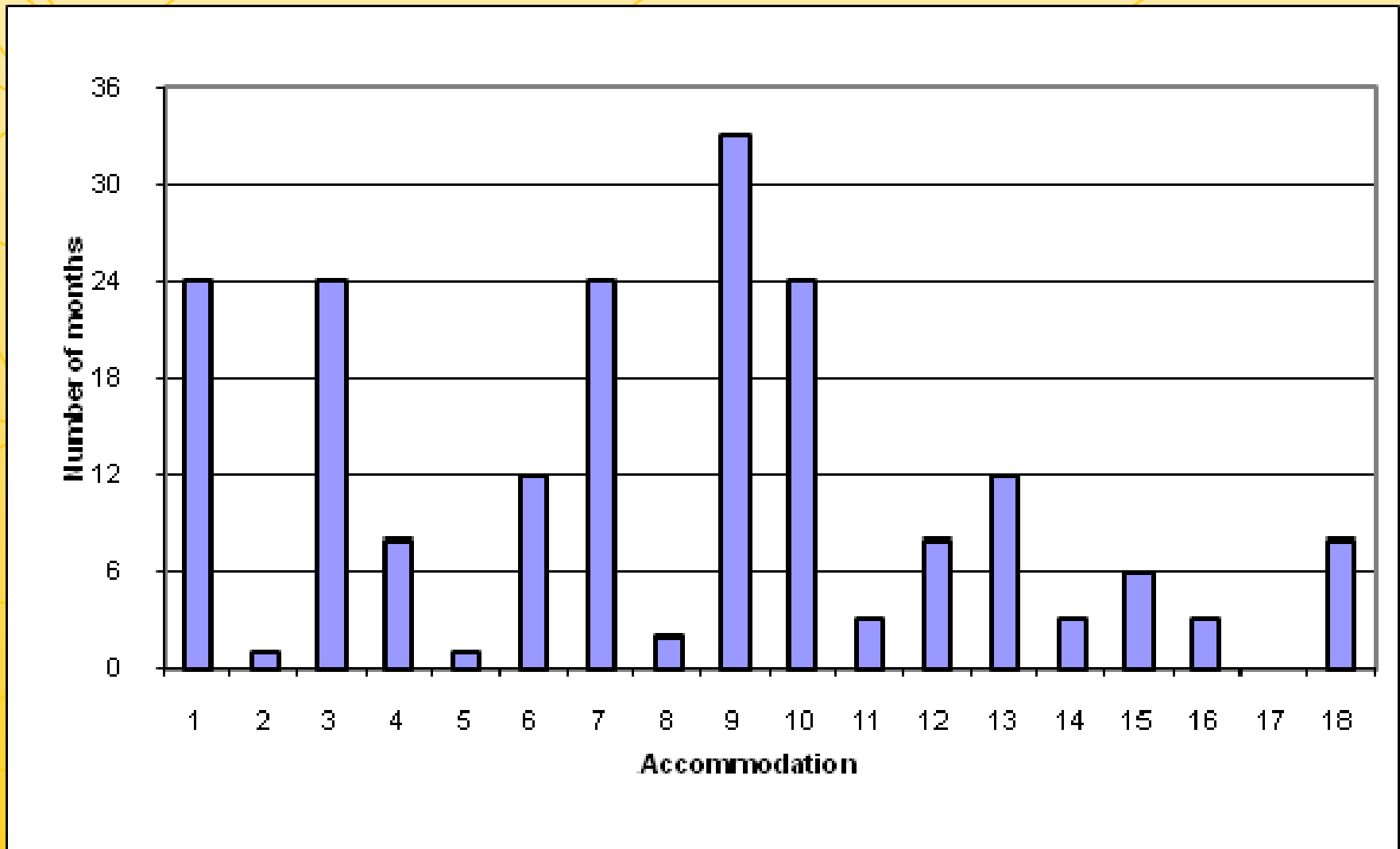
Table 2: Types of accommodations

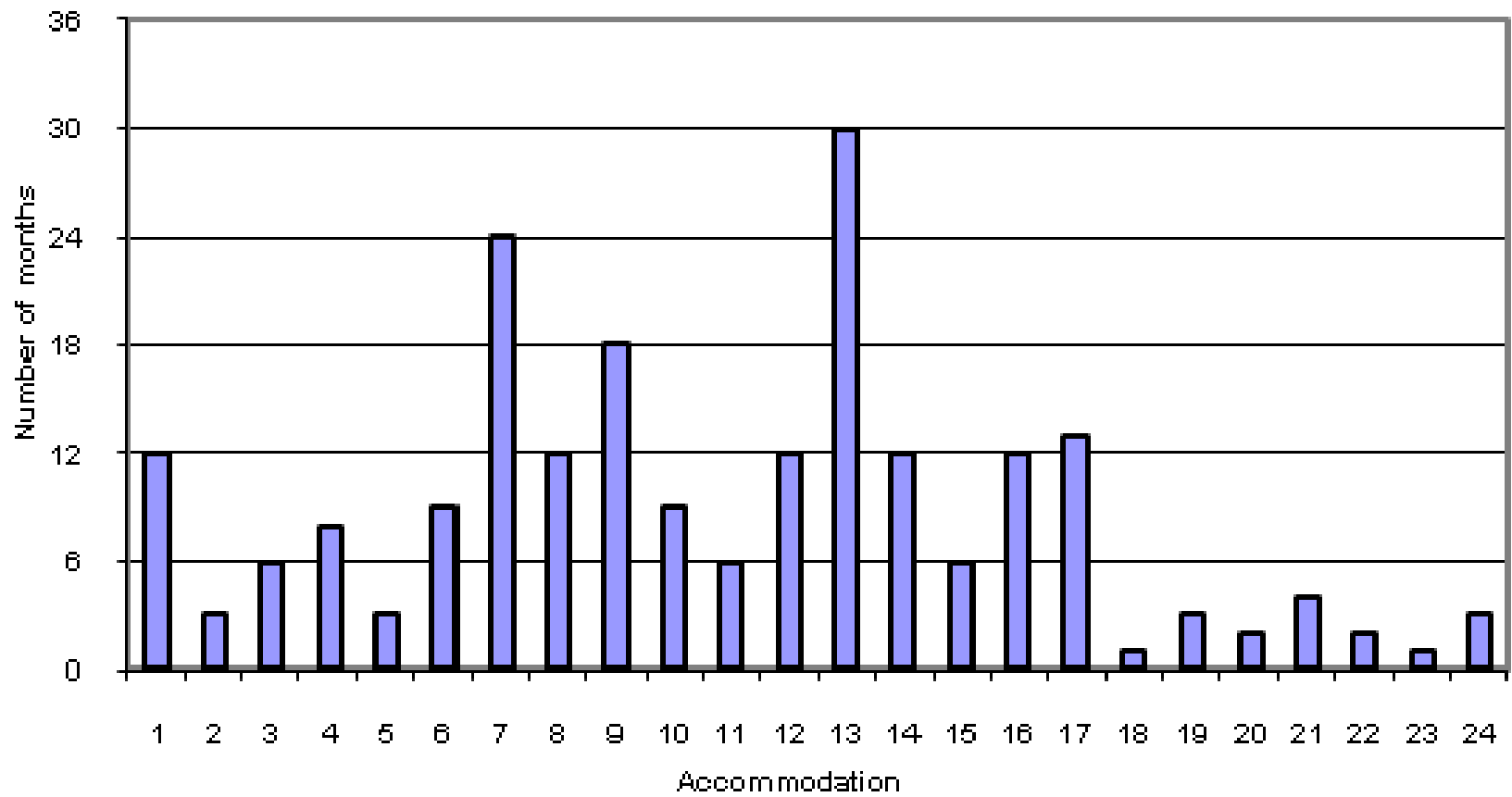
Stability and trajectory

Normative trajectory of housing stability

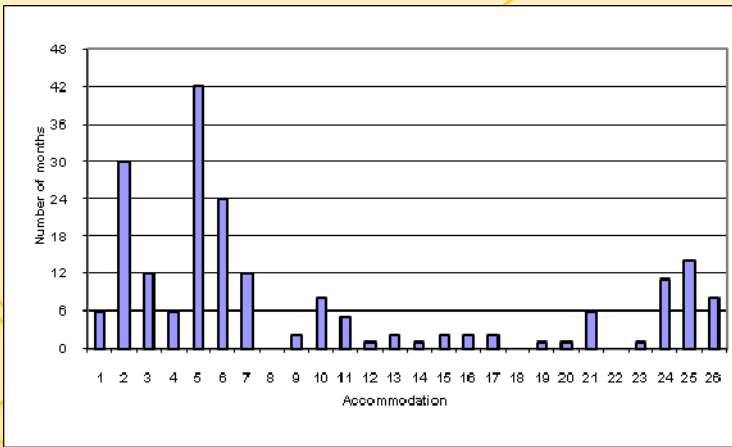


Stability and trajectory

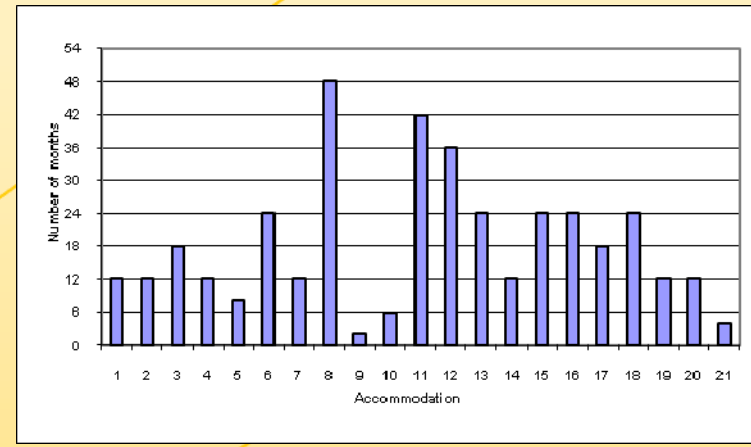




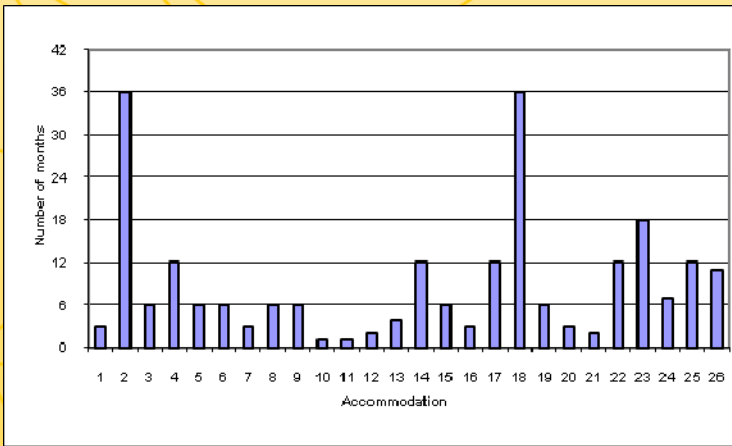
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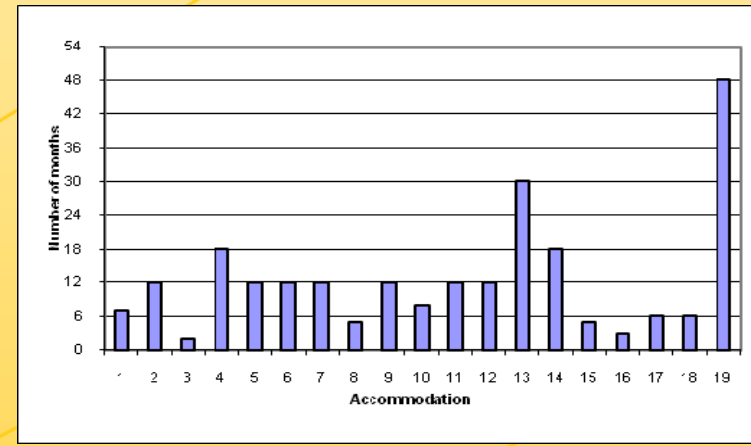
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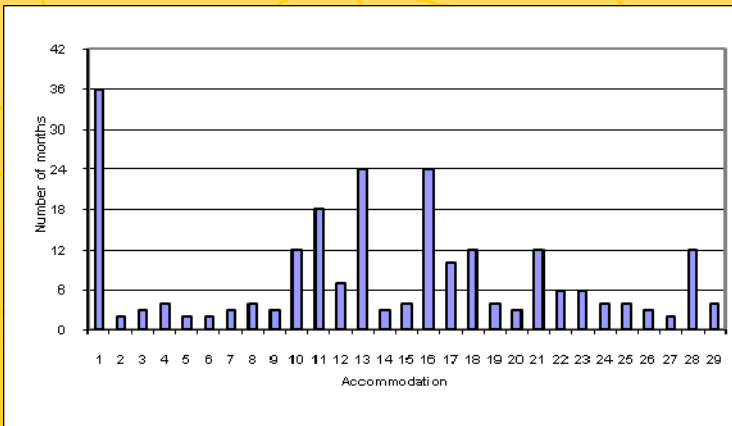
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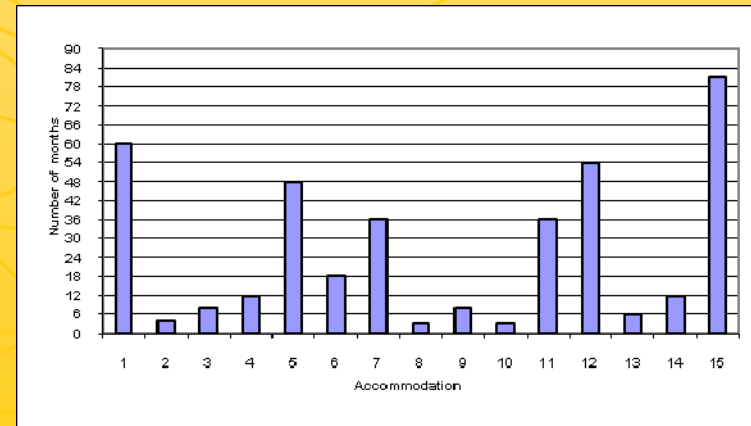
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Why did families move?

Top 5 reasons for moving	n	%
1. Got their own place	83	13.2
2. Completed program or sentence	65	10.4
3. Wanted a better place	45	7.2
4. Relationship problems	41	6.5
5. Eviction	39	6.2



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

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 and 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

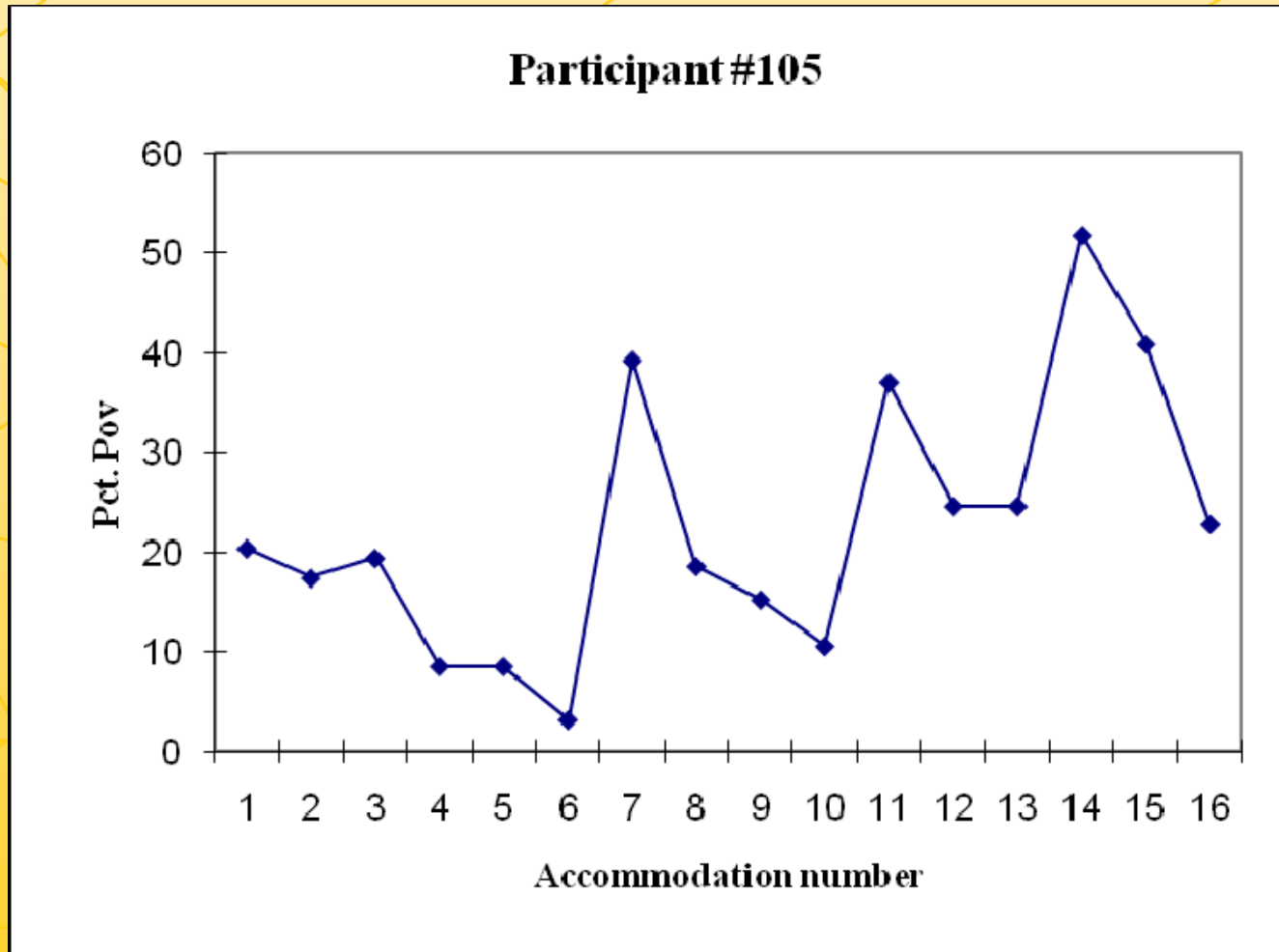
Explanation of move-trajectory	n	pct.
Social and interpersonal situation	161	40
People or relationships	71	17.7
Life circumstances	55	13.7
Substance abuse or mental health	24	6.0
Getting (or losing) children	11	2.7
Characteristic of the housing units	154	38.3
Unit quality	62	15.4
Security of tenure	49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

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

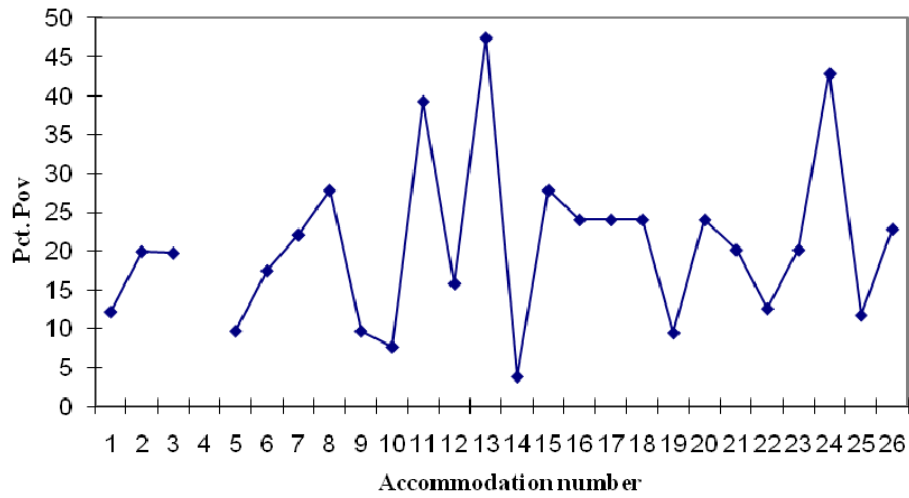
Neighborhood poverty

Neighborhood poverty	n	Pct.
Low (<10%)	111	20.8
Medium (10-20%)	138	25.8
High (20-30%)	131	24.5
Very high (30%+)	154	28.8
Total	574	

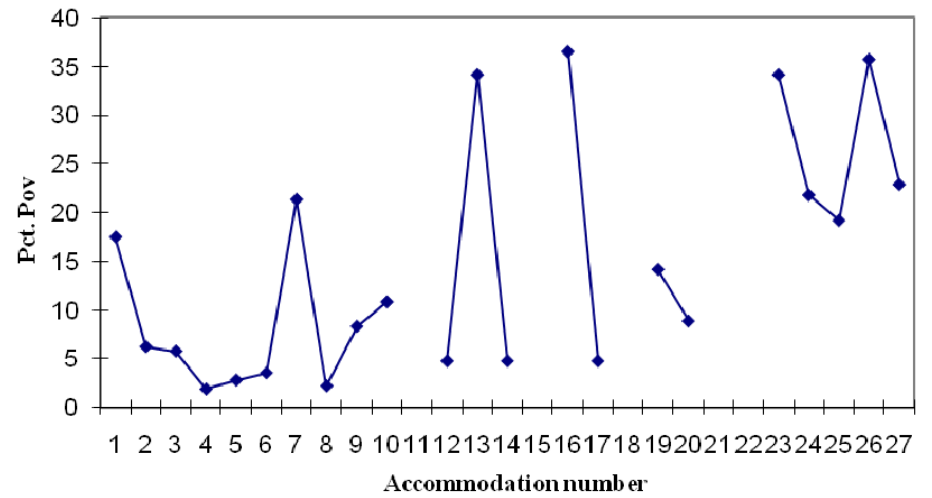
Neighborhood trajectory



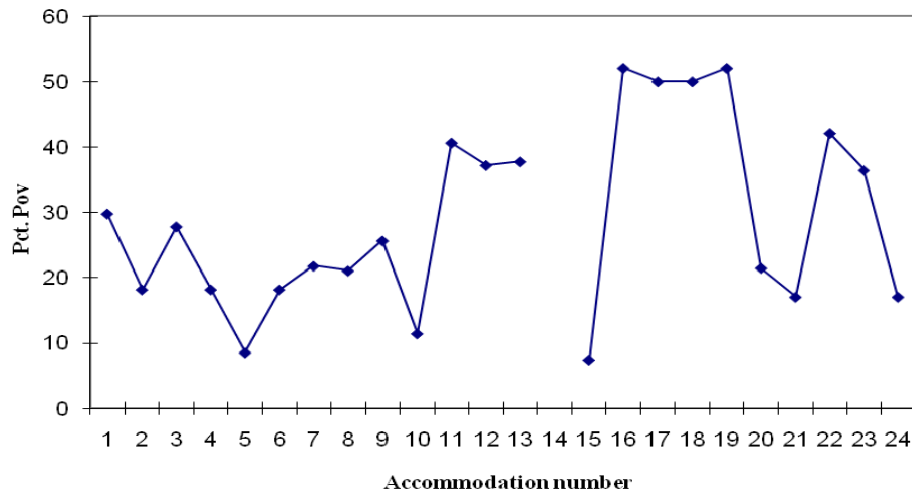
Participant #111



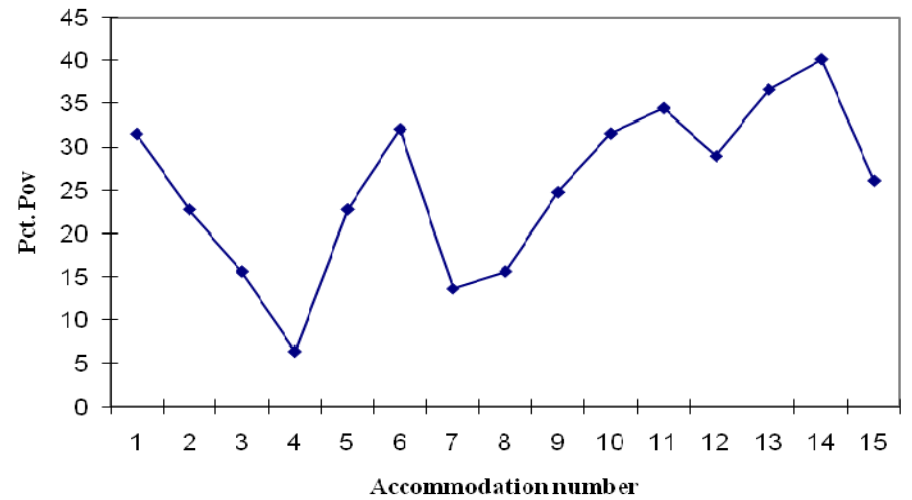
Participant #127



Participant #203



Participant #211



Minimizing exposure to high poverty neighborhoods

	Pct of accommodations in low poverty neighborhoods	Pct of accommodations in high poverty neighborhoods
Few [#]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No differences with rest of sample (n=18) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No differences with rest of sample (n=7)
Many [*]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All females Fewer children More education (n=6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Later launch date Less education (n=10)

Table 9: Accommodations by neighborhood poverty

#: <10% for low poverty areas and less than 25% for high poverty areas

*: >50% for low poverty areas and >66% for high poverty areas



Questions and Discussion

For more information

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