Thesis Abstracts

THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN DESIRED AND ACTUAL HOUSING AND THE DECISION TO MOVE INTO A SPECIFIC SUBSIDIZED HOUSING PROJECT

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The purposes of this dissertation were:
(1) to describe the desired housing of a group of low-income families and compare it to American housing norms;
(2) to develop a measure of the gap between desired and actual housing and analyze the relationship between the gap and satisfaction with housing;
(3) to assess the influences of housing satisfaction, community involvement and participation in the housing process on the decision to move into a new subsidized housing project;
(4) to assess the change in housing gap that accompanies a move to new housing and analyze the effect of that change on satisfaction with the new housing; and
(5) to evaluate the effectiveness of the new housing project in meeting the needs of the families it was intended to serve.

The population in this study consisted of 52 families who had the opportunity to move from their dilapidated dwelling units in a former migrant camp into new subsidized apartments which were built specifically for them. Data were collected before and after the move through participant observation and interviews.

Frequency distributions, contingency tables, path analysis, correlation analysis and matched pair t-tests were used to analyze the data relating to the first four purposes. For the fifth purpose, constraints, incentives and alternatives to moving to the new housing were identified by in-depth analysis of movers and nonmovers.

General findings of the study were:
1. The housing which low-income families desired was very similar to American middle-class housing norms.
2. The subjective measure of the gap between desired and attained housing and the objective measure of available housing space were of approximately equal importance in explaining satisfaction with housing space.
3. The decision to move to the new housing was related to dissatisfaction with present housing space and quality, family

involvement in the activities of the community and family income; but it was not related to family participation in the housing process.

4. Movement by families from substandard housing into a new subsidized housing project was accompanied by a decrease in housing gap and by increases in housing quality, housing space, and satisfaction with housing. It was improvement in quality, more than improvement in space, that was correlated with an increase in the family's evaluation of the adequacy of the housing.

5. Better quality housing, improved facilities and more space were the important incentives for moving to the new housing, but it is likely that these incentives would not have been realized had it not been for the availability of rent subsidies.

6. High rent and the desire for homeownership were most important constraints to moving.

7. The new housing project was ineffective on four counts:

(1) the monthly rent was too high,

(2) no provision was made for ownership,

(3) there were not enough large units, and

(4) the quality of the units was not as good as it should have been.

AN ANALYSIS OF A HOUSING ALTERNATIVE: HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS, HOUSING SATISFACTION, RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY AND HOUSING EXPENDITURE OF MOBILE HOME AND CONVENTIONAL HOME RESIDENTS

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This dissertation compares demographic characteristics, mobility, housing satisfaction, and housing expenditure of 95 mobile home residents and 722 conventional home residents. The underlying hypothesis is that observed differences in housing behavior of residents of the two housing alternatives are primarily due to demographic differences, not to social-psychological differences in types of people, or differences caused by the nature of the housing.

This dissertation is a part of Hatch Project 404, "A Study of Residential Mobility, Life Style, and Housing Needs and Choices," conducted at the College of Human Ecology, Cornell University. The location of the study was Tioga County, New York, an urbanizing region in the Binghamton SMSA. Data used for this dissertation were the interview responses of 817 households, selected by random sampling techniques of three types of areas — rural, hamlet, and village. No special techniques were used to insure inclusion of mobile homes. As the sample selection was based upon households, the mobile homes included happened to be the type of housing in which the household lived. This method of selection allows for a naturally occurring subsample of mobile home residents.

Cross sectional analysis with frequency distributions was used for comparisons between mobile home residents and conventional home residents.

Multiple regression analysis with controls for life cycle characteristics was used to assess the salient demographic characteristics of mobile home residents and determinants of 1) residential mobility, 2) housing satisfaction, and 3) expenditures for housing. Income elasticity for housing was computed to compare the relationship between income and housing expenditures of mobile home residents, conventional home owners, and conventional home renters.

Four hypotheses relating to demographic characteristics, residential mobility, housing satisfaction, and expenditures for housing were tested. Conclusions for these four areas of study are:

1. Mobile home households have a younger head, fewer and younger children, lower family incomes, and higher *per capita* incomes than conventional home households.

2. There is no difference in mobility history of families who were conventional home residents five years prior to the interview. Therefore, mobile homes *per se* neither precipitate nor predict greater rates of mobility than conventional homes. The best predictors of mobility remain the age of the household head, the age of the children, and tenure.

3. There is no difference in housing satisfaction found between mobile home residents and conventional home residents. Although mobile home residency has no effect — either positive or negative — on satisfaction, it is suggested that mobile homes may offer greater housing satisfaction to its residents than other alternatives available to them, as the mobile home offers ownership.

4. There is no significant relationship between income and housing expenditure of mobile home residents, whereas income is a positive, significant factor in housing expenditure of conventional home residents. The income elasticity for housing found for mobile home residents is lower than the income elasticity for housing of conventional home renters.

The mobile home appears to solve the housing problems of many households. It is inexpensive, easily financed, readily available, and provides a means of ownership. No basis was found for opposition directed towards mobile homes other than they are nonconventional housing. Mobile home residents appear satisfied with their housing, and are no more mobile than residents of conventional housing. The major differences between mobile home residents and conventional home residents are income and demographic characteristics.

The fact that the mobile home is serving a different segment of the population than the conventional home indicates a need to consider mobile homes in planning and policy decisions. Clearly, to restrict mobile homes is to eliminate many young families and lower income families from a community.

THE EFFECT OF SOCIOECONOMIC LEVEL AND HETEROGENEITY ON THE DETERMINANTS OF RESIDENTIAL SATISFACTION AND RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY: A RELATIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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The central premise of the dissertation is that residential satisfaction and mobility depend on both the socioeconomic level of households and the socioeconomic heterogeneity of the neighborhood. A review of the literature developed the idea that subgroups of society adapt to the conditions of life that their socioeconomic level imposes on them by characteristic interaction patterns.

Data for the analysis were derived from a sample of hamlet residents in Tioga County, New York, in the Spring of 1971.

The method of path analysis was chosen in order to show the relationships among the variables. The effect of fourteen independent variables measuring length of residence, time married, transportation available to the wife, wife's education, husband in the household or not, resale value of the house, tenure, type of structure, amenity level, size of the lot, deviance in use of spouses' leisure time from the median for the neighborhood, attendance at formal organization meetings, and aspirations for social mobility on four dependent variables (number of visits from neighbors during the week preceding the interview, satisfaction with the house, satisfaction with the neighborhood, and propensity to move) was tested for the total sample and eight subsamples.

A relational analysis divided the households into high and low income subsamples and the contextual analysis divided the hamlets into heterogeneous and homogenous subsamples. Four subsamples combined these divisions into (1) high income households in homogeneous hamlets, (2) high income households in heterogeneous hamlets, (3) low income households in homogeneous hamlets, and (4) low income households in heterogeneous hamlets. The 5 percent level of significance was used throughout the analysis. The nine specific hypotheses tested were:

Hypothesis 1. Low income households have a higher propensity to move than high income households.

Hypothesis 2. Propensity to move will be higher in heterogeneous neighborhoods than in homogeneous neighborhoods.

Hypothesis 3. Visits from neighbors would have a negative effect on satisfaction for high income households.

Hypothesis 4. Visits from neighbors would have a positive effect on satisfaction for low income households.

Hypothesis 5. Low income households' satisfaction would depend on person-oriented factors.

Hypothesis 6. High income households will have a higher average attendance at organizations than low income households.

Hypothesis 7. Households in heterogeneous hamlets will have a lower length of residence than households in homogeneous hamlets.

Hypothesis 8. Satisfaction with the neighborhood will be lower in heterogeneous neighborhoods than in homogeneous neighborhoods.

Hypothesis 9. Patterns of interaction (percent visits by relatives) will differ by income; low income households will have a higher percent of visits from relatives than high income households.

Hypothesis 1 was supported; hypotheses 2 through 9 were rejected. General findings were:

1. determinants of satisfaction were person-oriented in homogeneous neighborhoods regardless of income
2. determinants of satisfaction were material measures in heterogeneous neighborhoods
3. higher levels of organization attendance were found in heterogeneous neighborhoods
4. higher percentages of visits from relatives were found in homogeneous neighborhoods for low income households
5. ownership had a negative effect on satisfaction in heterogeneous neighborhoods

TWO STRUCTURAL MODELS FOR FAMILY INCOME, HOUSING CONSUMPTION, HOME OWNERSHIP, AND THE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF MARRIED WOMEN

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Two structural models for family choice behavior were derived. Both models, A and B, had four endogenous variables: family income, housing consumption, and dummy variables for homeownership and the labor force participation of married women. The exogenous variables used were family size, age of the husband, education of the husband, race, the unemployment rate of the county of residence, the occupation of the husband, city size, family public housing status, region, age of the youngest child, an index for the relative price of housing in the area, and the difference between the husband's age and the wife's age. Cross-section interview data from the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center Panel Study of Income Dynamics for the 1971 interviews were used in this study. A subsample consisting of families with both husband and wife present, with an income between 1,000 and 30,000 dollars, and with various other exclusions was used to estimate the two structural models. The two models were identical except in the ownership and wives' labor force participation, where housing consumption was used as a proxy for normal income in Model B. Two Stage Least Squares regressions were used to estimate the parameters of the two models. The results suggest that the structural model approach may improve analysis of family choice behavior.