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Pathways of Homelessness, Housing Transitions, and the Role of Social Services for Mediating Long-Term Housing Solutions

Philipp Schnell & Judith Schnelzer
Institute for Urban and Regional Research

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Project Goals and Research Questions

Project Background

- Need for **biographical research** on **PEH housing pathways** (according to ETHOS Light)
- Impact of different housing solutions and exit scenarios
- Role of **services** by **NGO** network and **public institutions**
- **Cooperation** with local service providers and NGOS: FSW, BAWO, neunerhaus, Volkshilfe, Caritas, Heilsarmee

Project Goals

Evidence/ feedback for **practitioners** on long-term effects on housing pathways and barriers to stable housing

- **RQ1: How can transitions between different phases of homelessness and precarious housing be described from the lifeworld perspective of PEH?**
- **RQ2: How do social service organizations contribute to support transitions into long-term housing and prevent recurring patterns of homelessness?**

Theory – Housing Pathways

Housing Pathways as 'patterns of interaction (practices) concerning house and home, over time and space' (Clapham 2002, p. 63).

- Evolving set of **relationships**, **interactions**, **physical conditions** tied to the consumption of housing
- Including factors that lead to homelessness, personal experiences, and ways out of homelessness
- Based on **housing biographies**, foregrounds the **perspective of PEH**
- Interactions with service provides and **institutional framework** as important **structural factors** for PEH
- **Dynamic nature** of pathways, junctions, and transitions

Theory – Temporal Patterns of Shelter Usage

- Established by Kuhn and Culhane in 1990s (Wong et al. 1997; Culhane & Kuhn 1998; Kuhn & Culhane 1998)
- Based on quantitative data of shelter users
- Refined by McAllister et al. (2011)

Three types of shelter users according to Kuhn & Culhane (1998):

Transitional users	enter the shelter system for only one stay and for a short period
Episodic users	frequently enter and exit shelters, combining different housing options
Chronic users	shelter usage as long-term housing solution, fewer episodes and longer stays

Theory – Causal Mechanisms of Homelessness

Fitzpatrick (2005) argues that causal mechanisms of homelessness can operate on four levels:

- Economic
- Housing
- Interpersonal
- Individual

➡ Focus on complex feedback loops, recurrent patterns, interconnectedness of factors

➡ Each can be relevant for contextualizing pathways of homelessness

➡ Analytic framework for complex experiences of PEH and multiple exclusion homelessness (Fitzpatrick et al. 2012)

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The Case of Vienna

Vienna as a **complex landscape** for navigating experiences of homelessness

Source: Dreamstime.com

- Large **social housing sector**: 60% of households living in subsidized or social housing
- Large and **diversified network of services** for PEH
- Numerous housing offers and potentials for housing pathways
- Strong **emphasis on Housing First** since 2012
- Traditionally **multiple pathways** into subsidized or social housing
- Complex interaction of **institutional layers, organizational networks**, and **services** for PEH

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Methods I

- **20 biographical interviews** with PEH, 19 analyzed
- **Diverse sample** according to gender, age, sexual orientation, migratory and personal background
- Focusing on housing **biographies** and housing **transitions**
- Sourcing of interview partners in **partner organizations**
  - neunerhaus
  - Volkshilfe
  - Caritas
  - Heilsarmee
- **Tracing housing pathway** using the ETHOS Light Typology
- Focus on **interaction** between **housing pathways**, **institutional framework,** and **lifeworlds** of PEH

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ETHOS Light

OPERATIONAL CATEGORY		LIVING SITUATION		DEFINITION
1	People living rough	1	Public spaces / external spaces	Living in the streets or public spaces without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight shelters	People with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homeless hostels	Where the period of stay is time-limited and no long-term housing is provided
		4	Temporary accommodation	
		5	Transitional supported accommodation	
		6	Women's shelters or refuge accommodation	
4	People living in institutions	7	Health care institutions	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing
		8	Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence
		10	Non-conventional buildings	
		11	Temporary structures	
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence

Source: https://www.feantsa.org

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Analysis

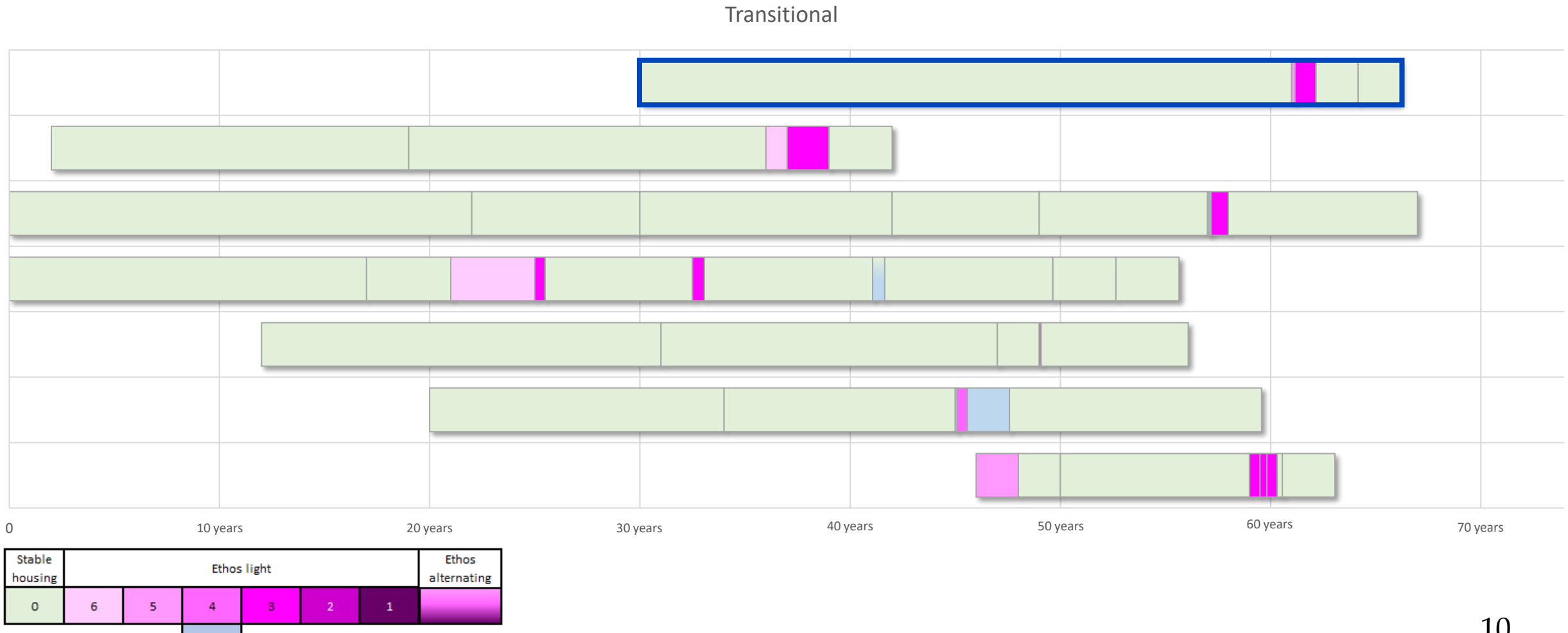
Deductive Coding along Fitzpatrick's (2005) levels of causal mechanisms of homelessness

- ➡ Economic/ Housing/ Interpersonal/ Individual
- ➡ **Added as fifth analytic level:** *Institutional*

Adaptation of Kuhn & Culhane's (1998) typology of shelter users to wider network of housing offers

Transitional pathways	Persons experiencing homelessness as transitional phenomenon	**< 3 years, 1-3 episodes**
Episodic pathways	Persons experiencing multiple episodes of homelessness	**< 5 yrs., multiple episodes < 1 yr.**
Chronic pathways	Persons chronically affected by homelessness	**> 5 years, multiple & longer episodes > 1 yr.**

Results I – Transitional Pathways I



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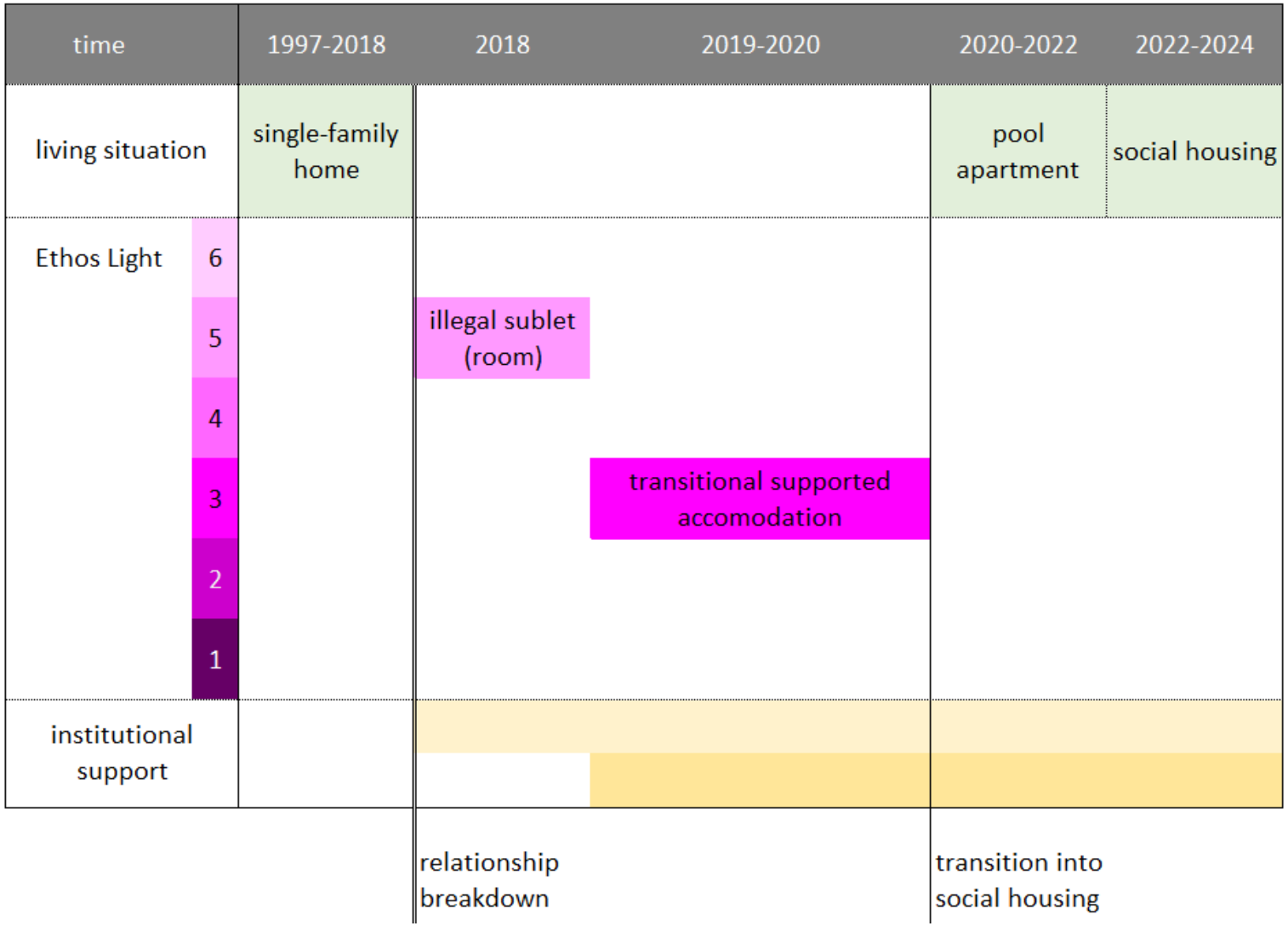
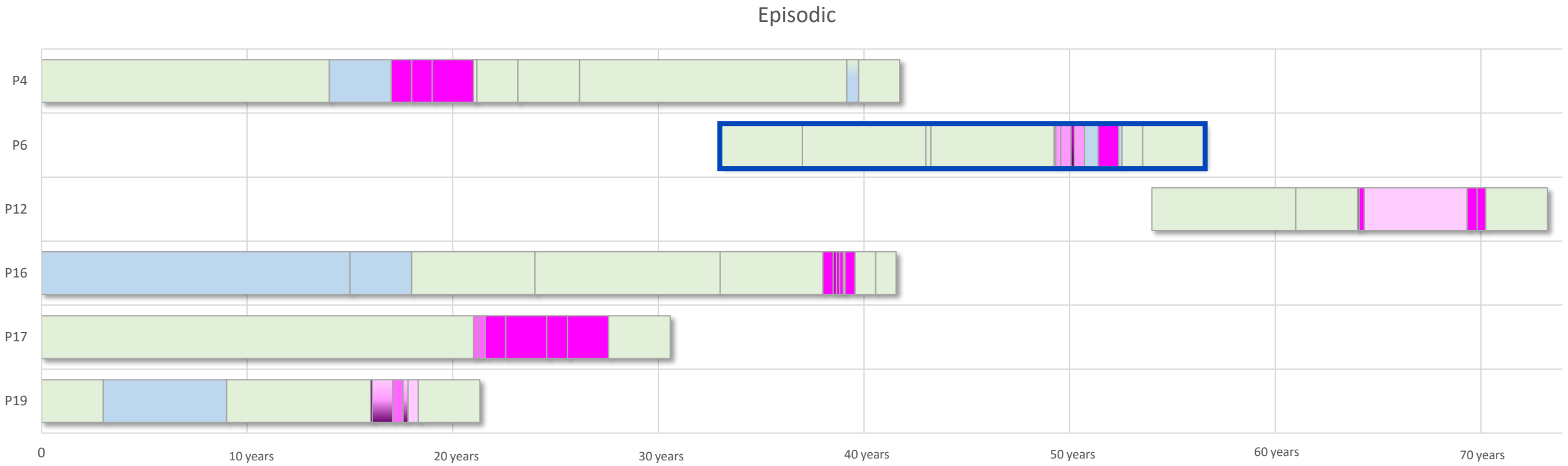
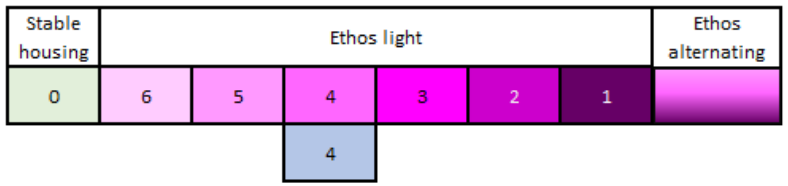
Results I – Transitional Pathways II (P1)



Results II – Episodic Pathways I





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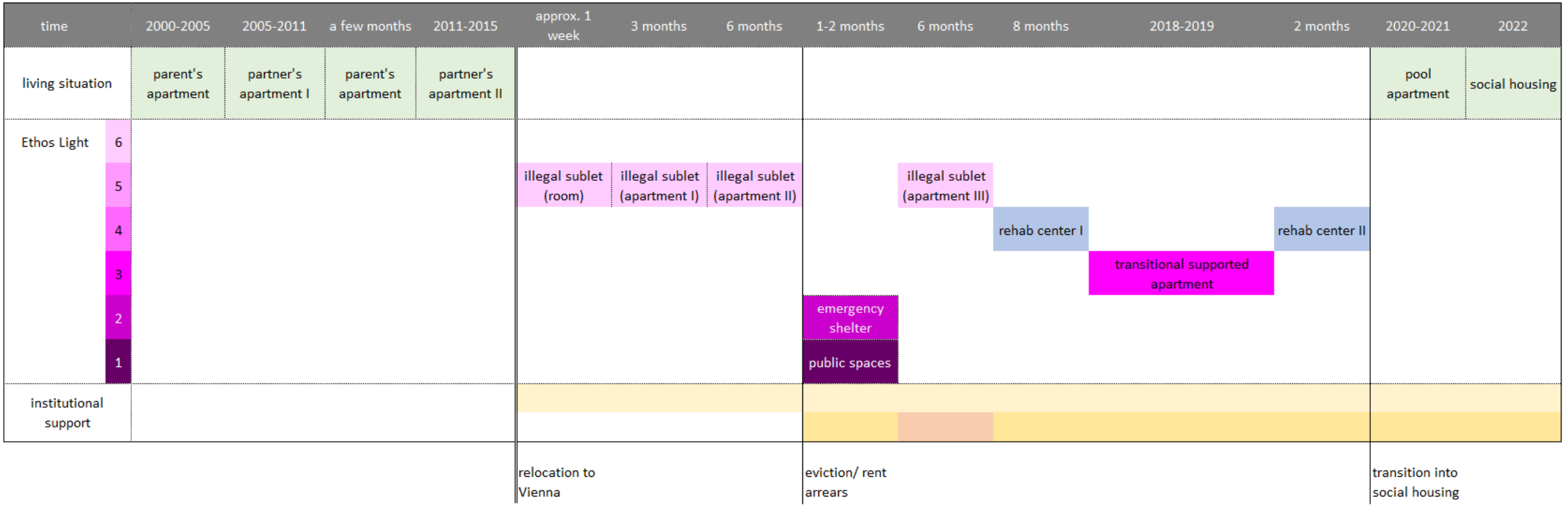
Results II – Episodic Pathways II (P6)



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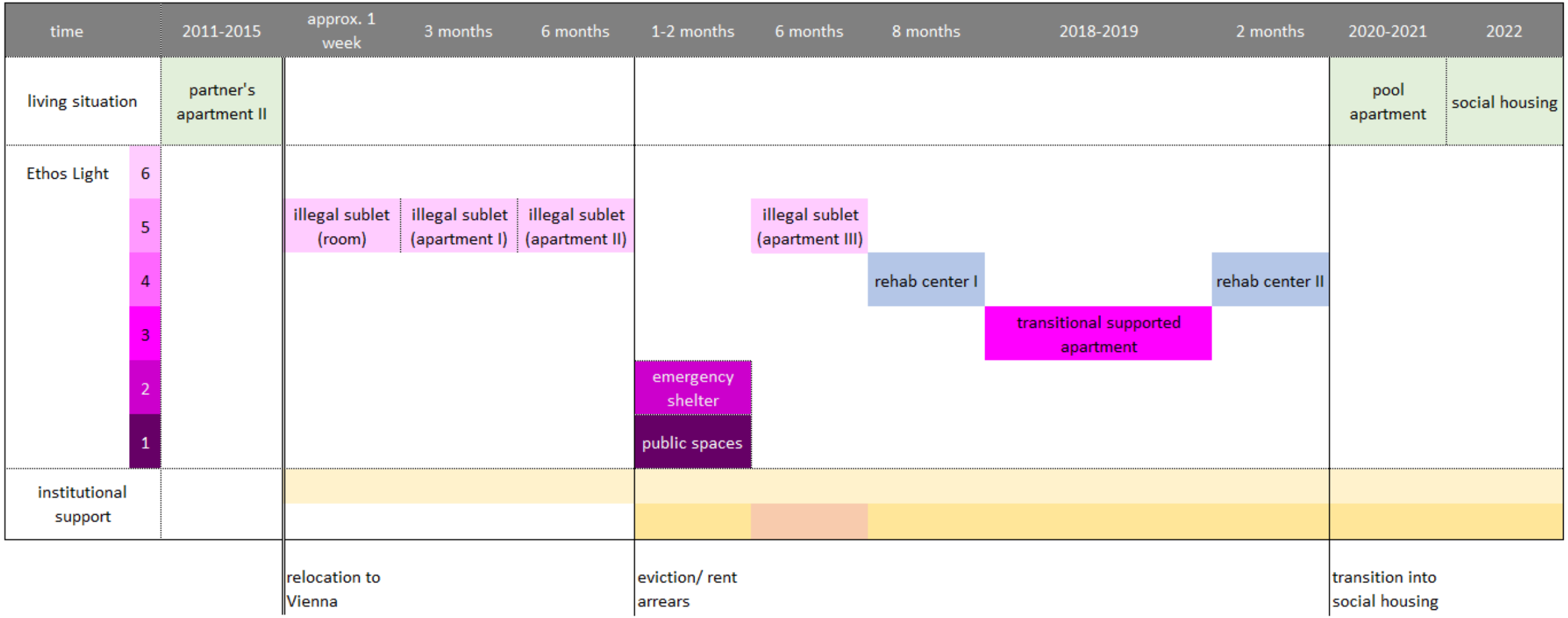
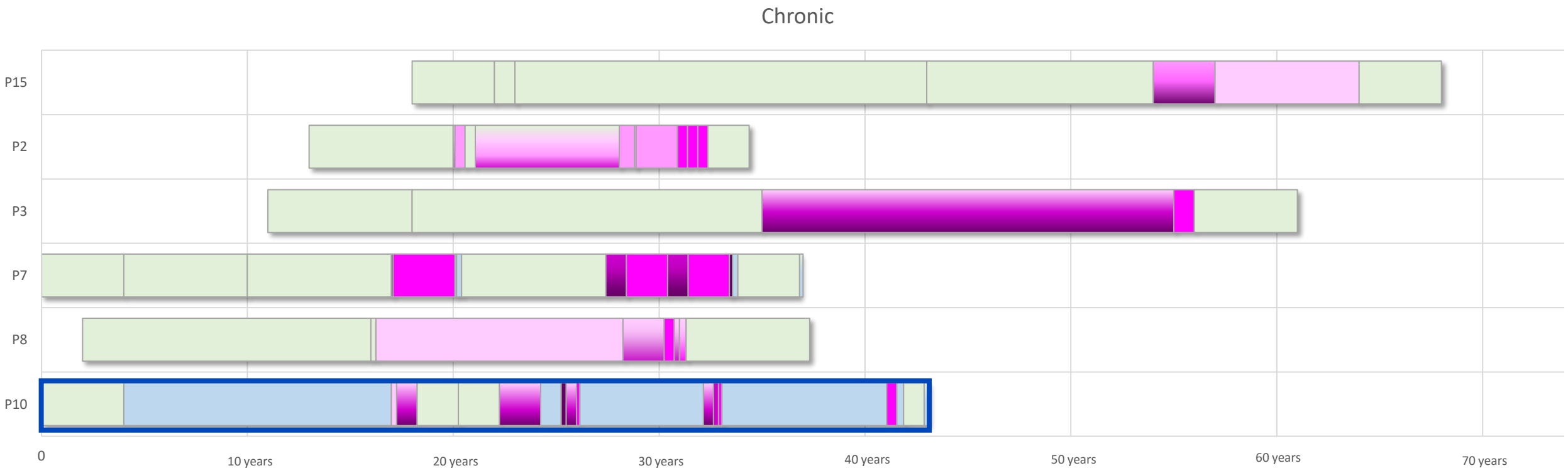
Results II – Episodic Pathways II (P6) – Detail

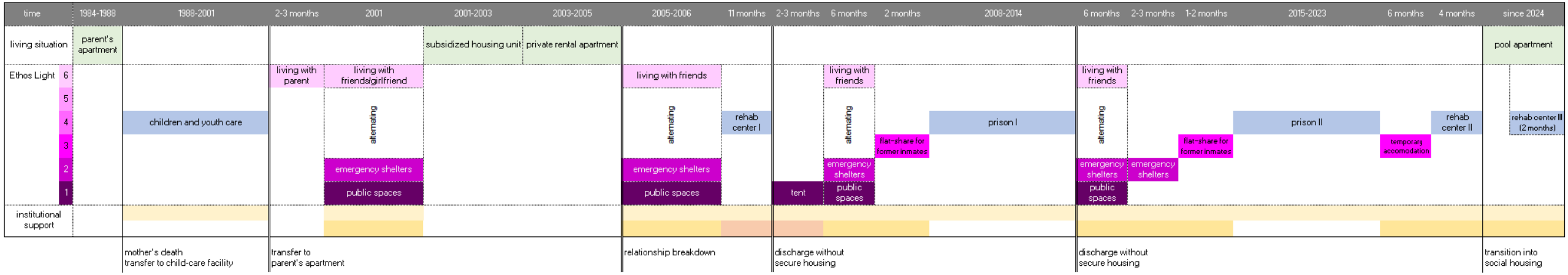


Results III – Chronic Pathways I



Stable housing	Ethos light						Ethos alternating
0	6	5	4	3	2	1	
			4				

Results III – Chronic Pathways II (P10)



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Results III – Chronic Pathways II (P10) – Detail

time	1984-1988	1988-2001	2-3 months	2001	2001-2003	2003-2005
living situation	parent's apartment				subsidized housing unit	private rental apartment
Ethos Light 6			living with parent	living with friends/girlfriend		
5				alternating		
4		children and youth care				
3						
2				emergency shelters		
1				public spaces		
institutional support						
		mother's death transfer to child-care facility	transfer to parent's apartment			

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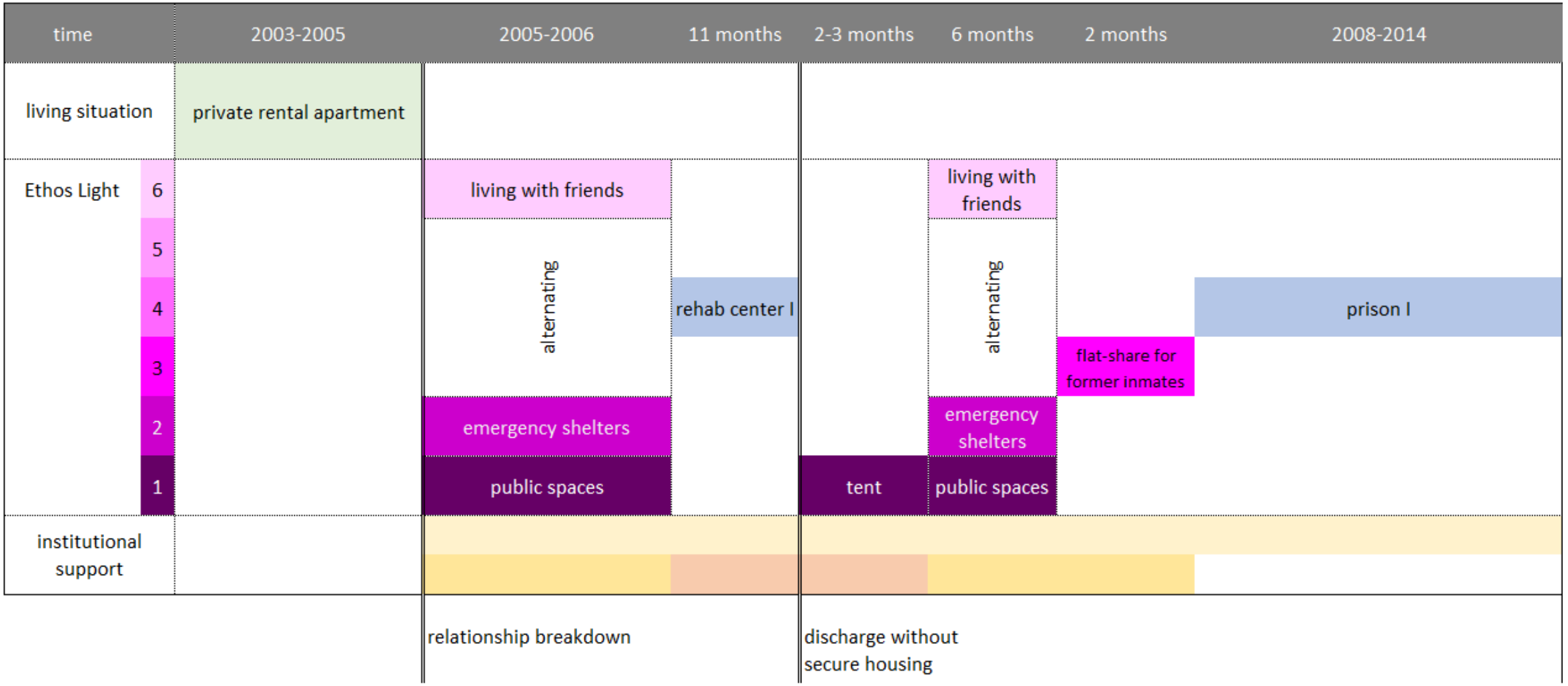
Results III – Chronic Pathways II (P10) – Detail



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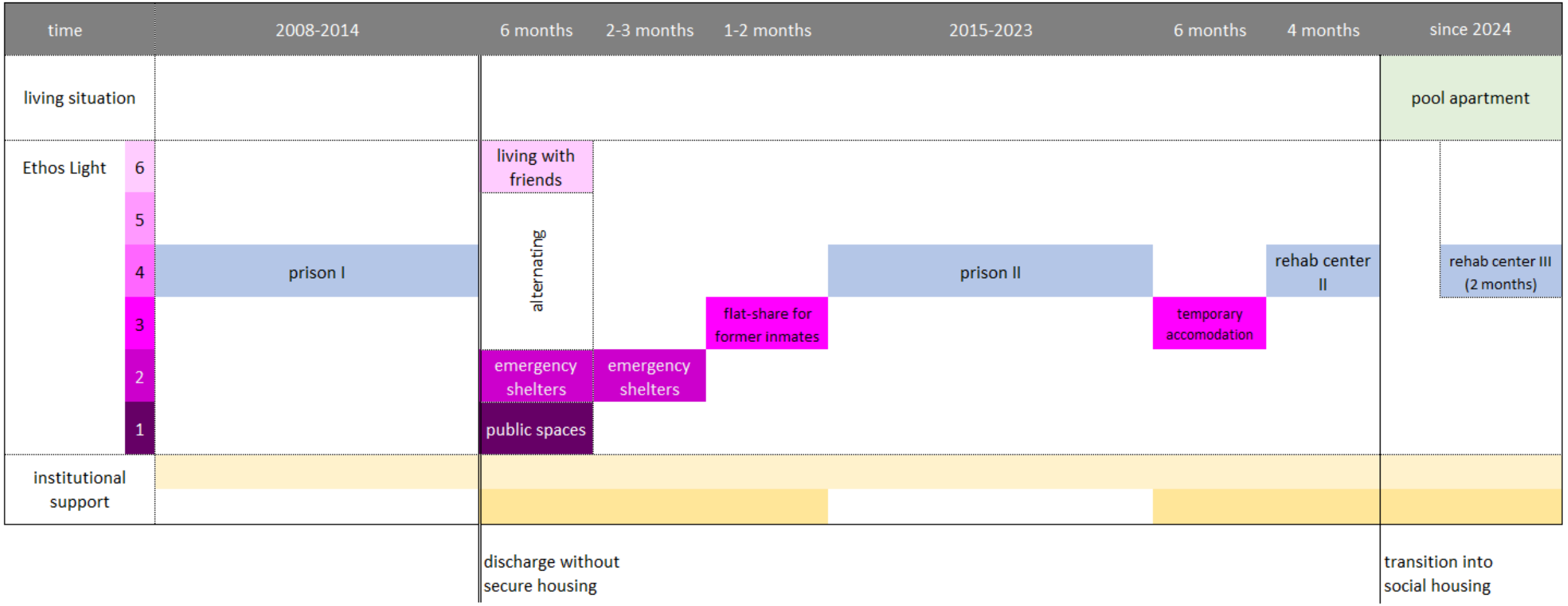
Results III – Chronic Pathways II (P10) – Detail



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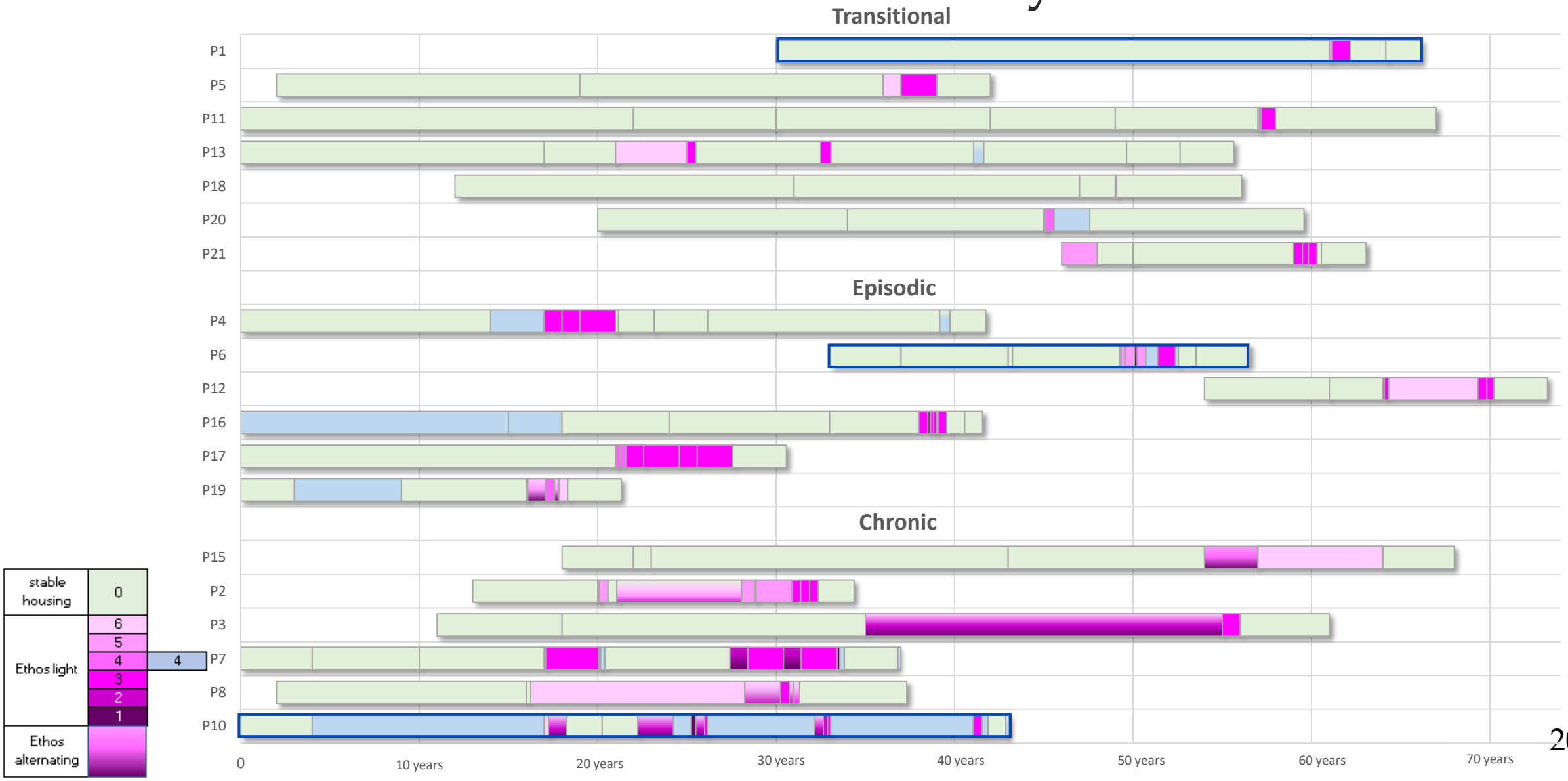
Results IV – Overview Pathways



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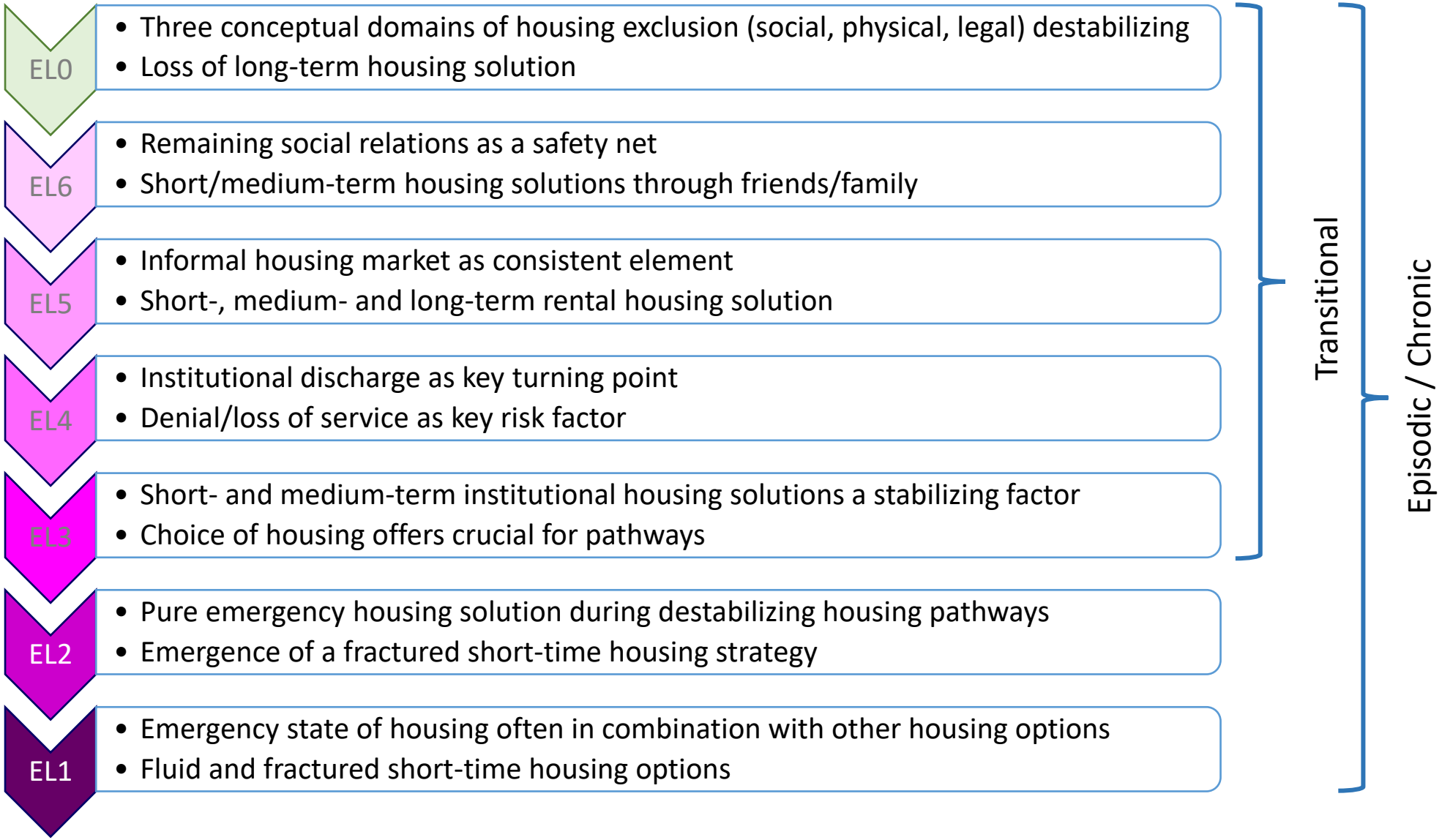
Results V – Pathway Transitions into Homelessness



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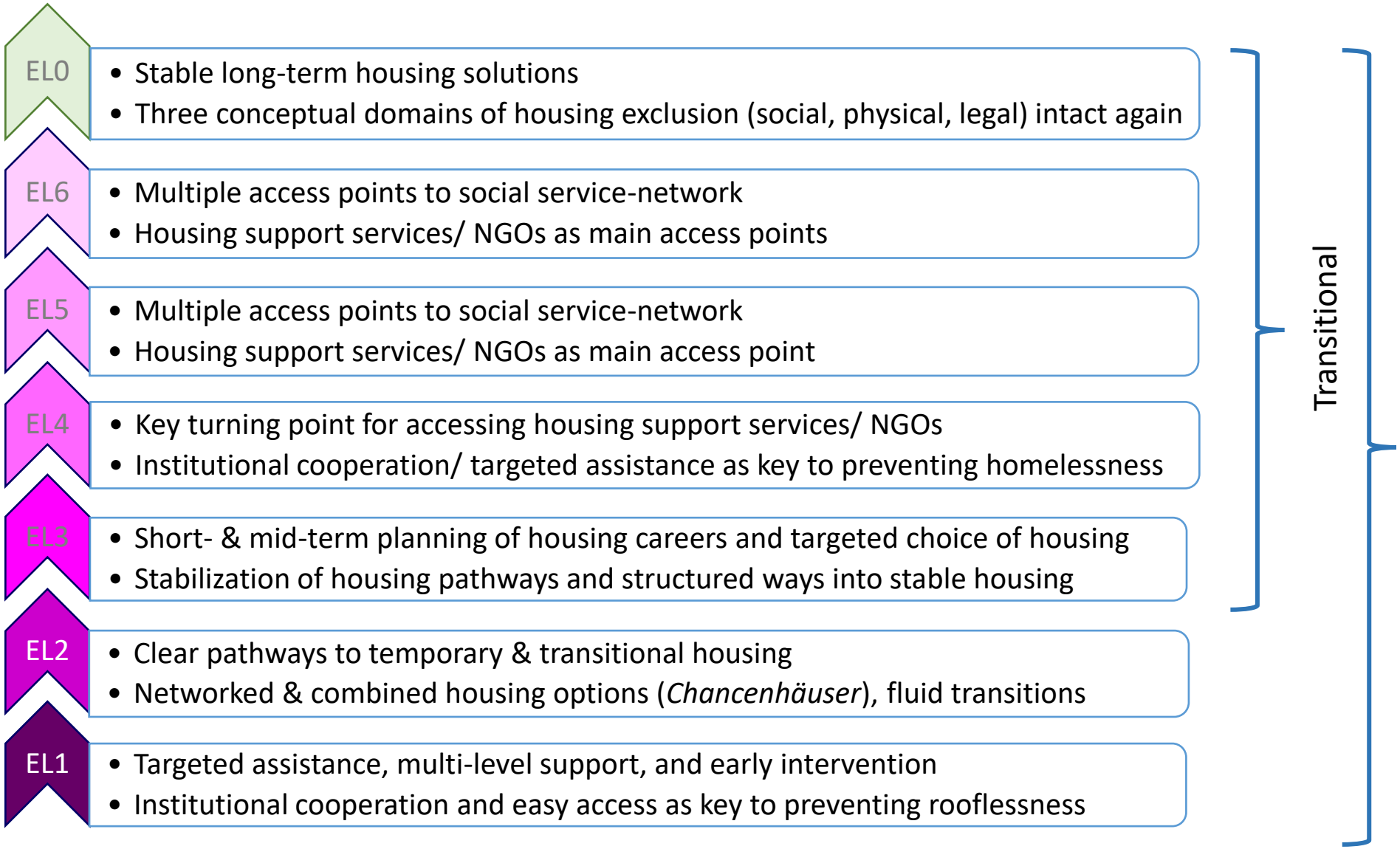
Results V – Pathway Transitions out of Homelessness



Conclusions

Housing pathways and needs of PEH **significantly vary according to 3 analytic types:**

Transitional: ➡ early intervention, quick and direct transitions

Episodic: ➡ tailored approach and cross-sectional support

Chronic: ➡ multi-dimensional and long-term support

All types: ➡ efficient **combination of and interaction with services in times of crises**

➡ **easy access to medium- & long-term housing** to stabilize housing pathways

➡ **multi-level assistance in pathway turning** points

➡ housing as potential first step to **stabilize other areas of life** and **gain new life perspectives**

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