A Displacement Process Revealing Secrets of Successful Rehousing after Homelessness – but too Late

A mixed-methods study of housing after long-term homelessness

Veera Niemi / European Research Conference on Homelessness, September 15th, 2023 (Leuven, Seminar 8)

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

Fighting segregation and homelessness among the most vulnerable through housing social work (SEGRA)

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Case study

about 200 residents in vulnerable housing situation displaced during 2020-2021

urban development

near city center of a Finnish metropolitan area

affordable social housing (partly Housing First -apartments)

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→ **surprisingly many had long history of homelessness AND long history of living in the area**

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Thoretical concepts

housing pathways (Clapman 2002)
- of especially vulnerable populations (Moore & Goodchild 2022, Skobba et al 2022, Wiesel 2014)

displacement (Marcuse 1985, Slater 2021)

housing (in)stability and mobility (Meeus & de Decker 2015)

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Data

Quantitative

- 187 (194) displaced residents
- source demographic database of the city
- previous and following housing and/or homelessness, death

Qualitative

- 18 displaced residents
- Semi-structured interviews

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Research questions

Quantitative: What were the housing pathways of the residents?

Qualitative: How do the residents account for their housing pathways from the point of view why long-term continouous living in the area was possible for them?

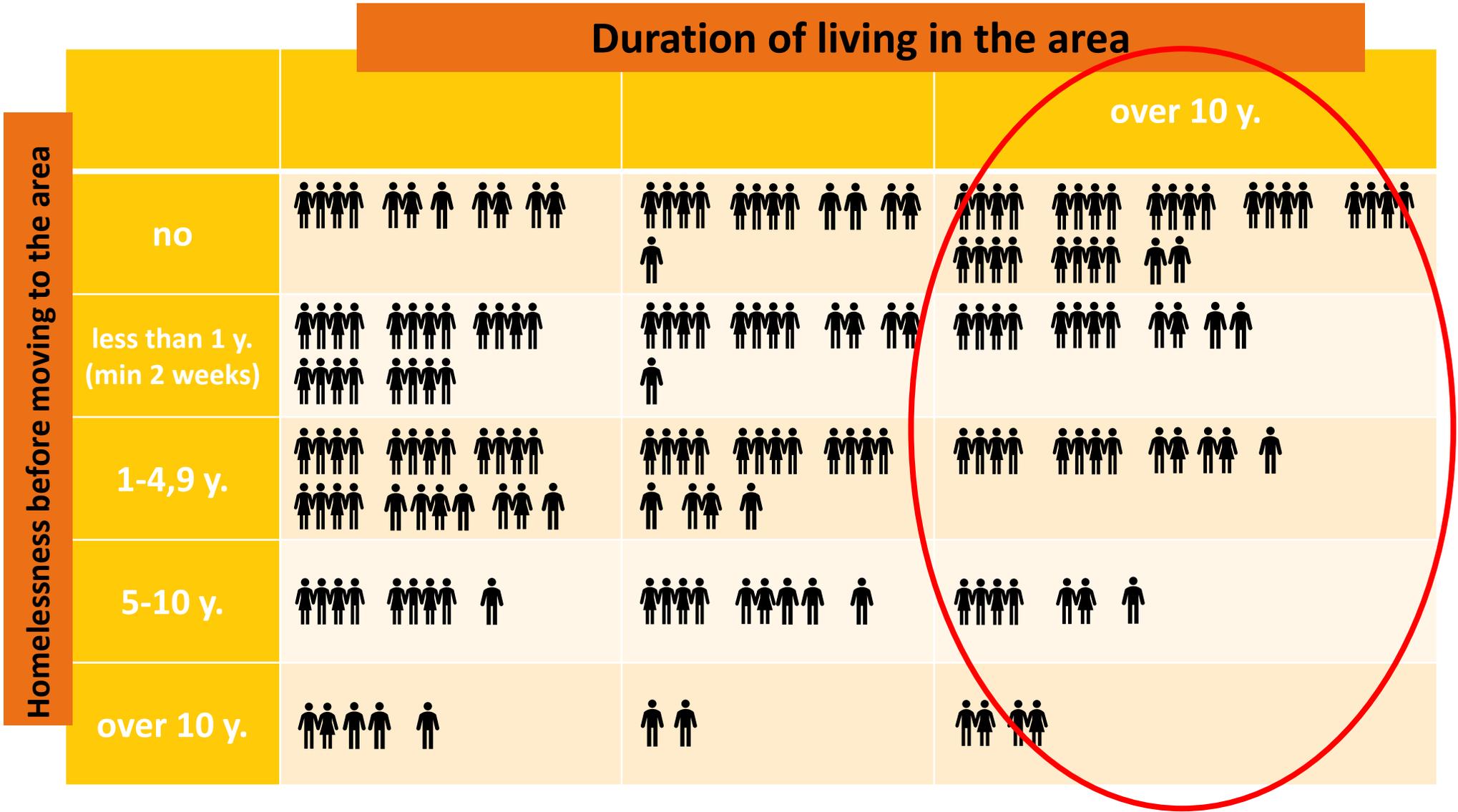TURUN YLIOPISTO

Homelessness before moving to the area

29 %	no		
13 %	5-10 y.		
6 %	over 10 y.		

Duration of living in the area / Homelessness before moving to the area

	Duration of living in the area		
Homelessness before moving to the area	less than 5 y.	5-10 y.	over 10 y.
no			
less than 1 y. (min 2 weeks)			
1-4,9 y.			
5-10 y.			
over 10 y.			

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Thematic map produced in the analysis

- Positive factors related to the area
  - Neighbors and community spirit (48)
  - Supportive meeting place in the area (20)
  - Closeness to nature and services (17)
- Positive factors reflecting history of homelessness
  - Housing stability after homelessness (2)

Thematic map produced in the analysis

- Negative factors forcing to stay
  - Other housing options were not available (14)
- Factors discussing the possibility to continue living in the area despite of its renewal plans
  - Assumption that living in the area can go on, the hope that the renovations are made for the current residents (3)
  - Not believing that the renewal or displacement actually will happen (7)

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Discussion

- Housing pathways not straightforward sets of individual choices but reflect unique situations, meaning making and structural and cultural norms

- Housing instability as goal of many housing policies? Meaning for vulnerable populations?

- Public sector first provided housing and stability, but later took both away?

- Succesfull housing after homelessness here vs. Housing First?

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Thank you!

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