

LIVES-IDESO Seminar

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Downward housing trajectories during childhood and its implications for youth exposure to police contact

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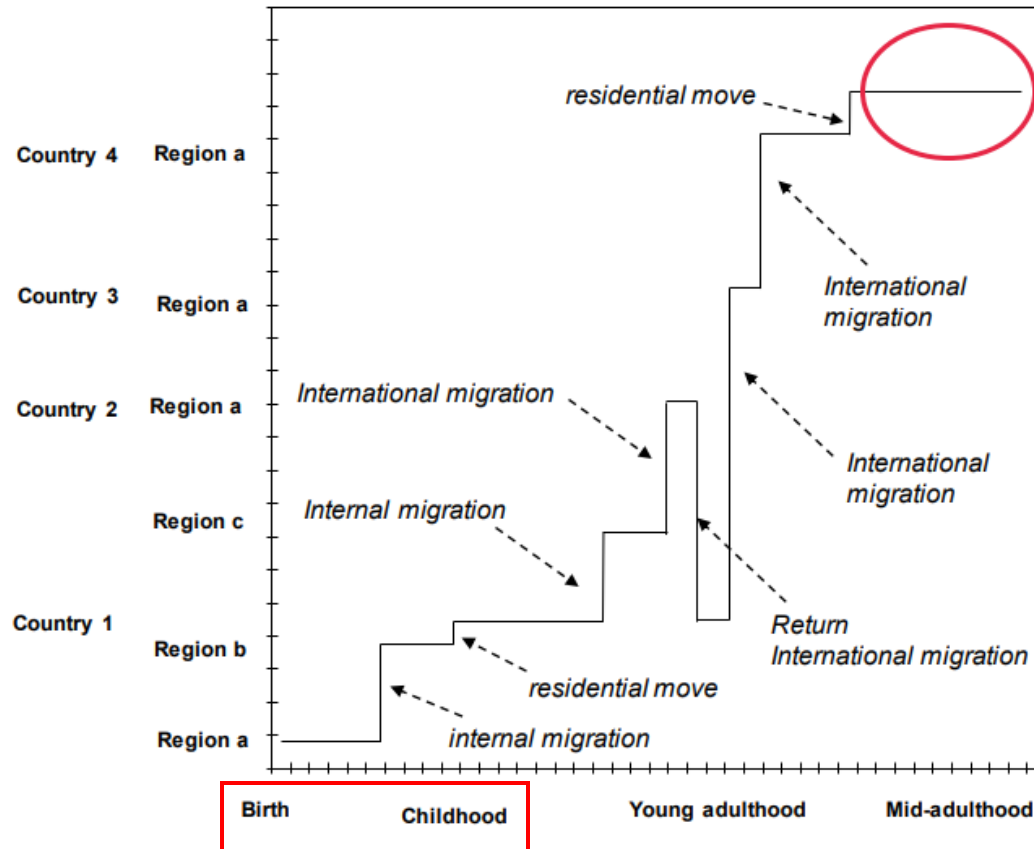
LIFELONGMOVE

Understanding spatial mobility
from early life into adulthood

Period: Jan 2023 – Dec 2027



European Research Council
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Example of a fictitious individual trajectory

There is growing recognition that mobility is more complex and diverse than **binary approaches** suggest, e.g., lifetime sedentarism, chronic residential mobility, circular international migration, return migration, etc.

Hence, underlying axioms of a one-way permanent migration or views that denote that individuals migrate through clearly demarcated life cycle stages **are increasingly obsolete**.

→ Mobility as a **process** vs. mobility as an **outcome**

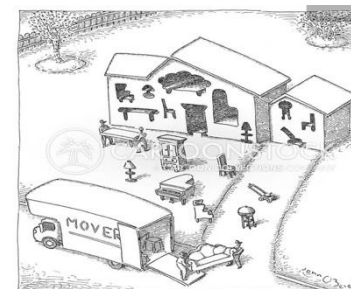
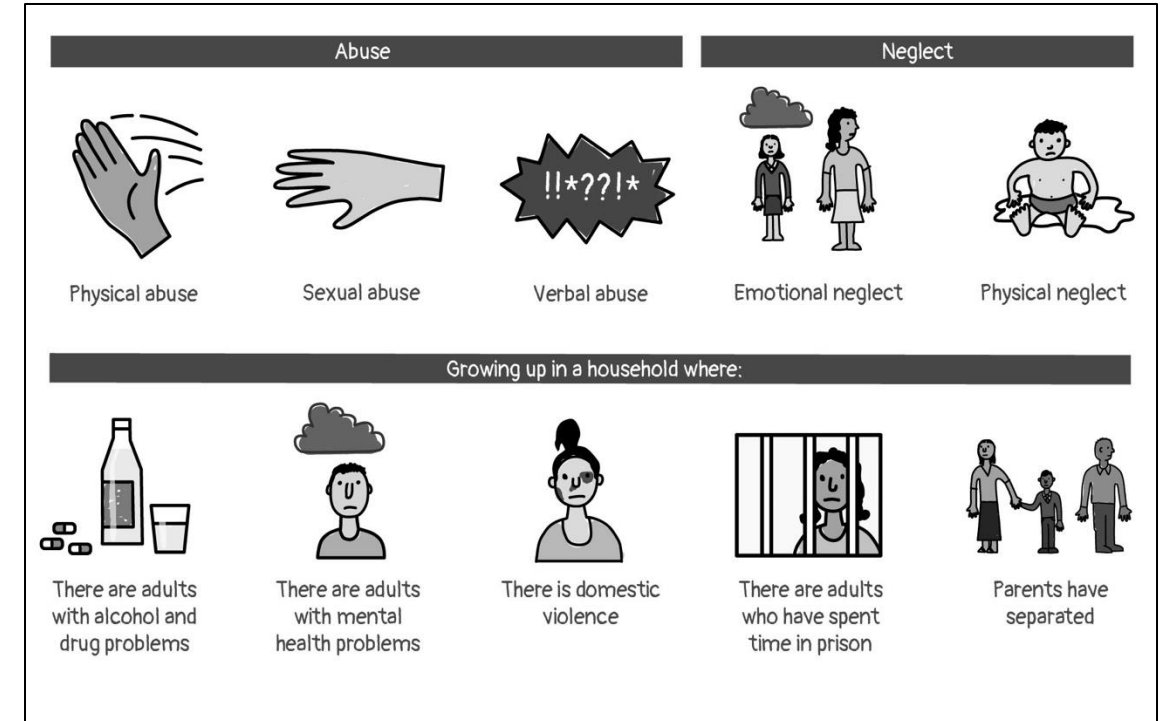
Frequent mobility as a child often correlates with:

- Economic and job instability
- Disrupted social relationship
- Difficulties in forming connections in new communities

Plus:

- The economic burden placed on families can act to impair caregiving capacities
- Exposure to deviant peers

Repeated mobility as an adverse childhood experience?



→ cumulative, timing-specific, and interactive effects



Component 1:

Mapping lifelong mobility

How is spatial mobility “lived”?

Component 2:

Explaining lifelong mobility

How earlier life influences movement?

Component 3:

Outcomes of lifelong mobility

What are the consequences of lifelong mobility?

Outcome

The probability of an adolescent being involved in a **police-initiated contact** (stop and search, formal warning and arrest) by age 14.



Relevance

Youth-police contacts represent the **first entry point to the criminal justice system**. Enduring **effects on multiple life domains** are reported in extant literature, including:

- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse behaviours
- School disengagement
- Diminished educational expectations
- Distrust in police
- Future unlawful activities
- Future arrest
- Legal cynicism

Literature gaps

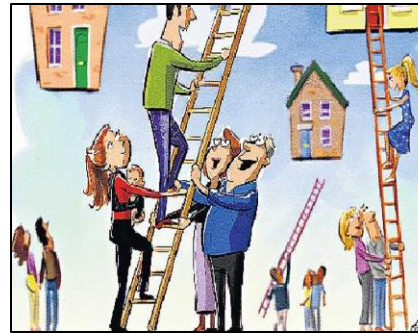
- Legal and policing practices are mainly oriented towards individuals' criminal propensity
- Even within ecological studies, housing tends to be marginalised as an explanatory factor

Why is it important to focus on housing?



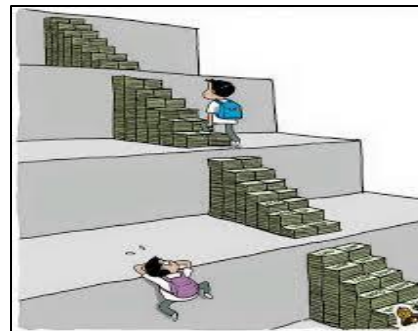
The housing system is in crisis. Accessing homeownership and climbing the housing ladder has become more complex.

- income-house price gap



The housing crisis is contributing to deepening social inequalities.

- parental financial support
- owner-occupiers v. tenants



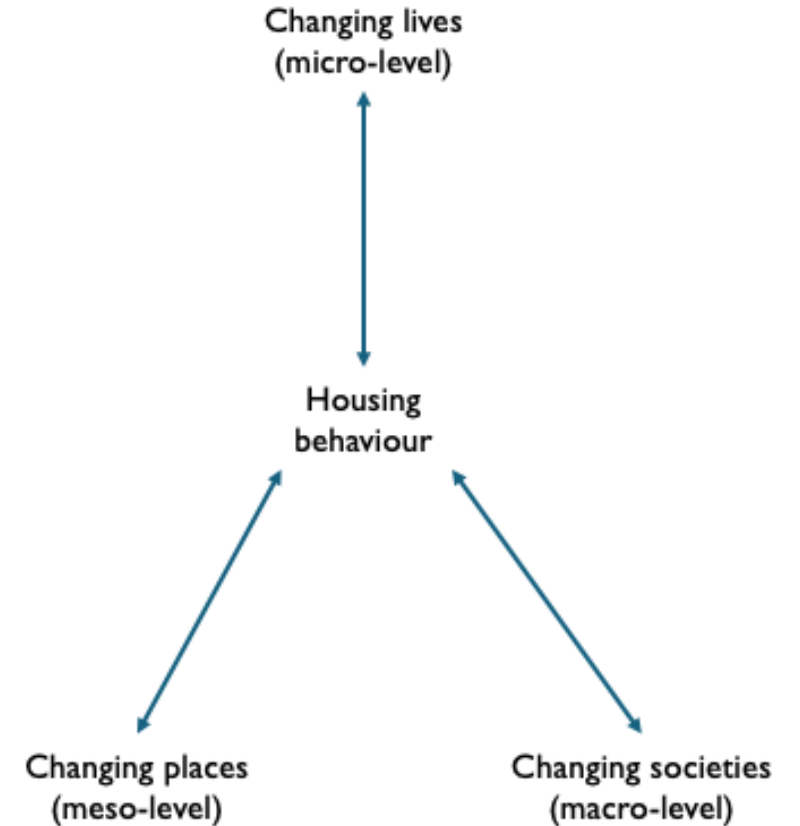
Deciphering within-individual variability in residential mobility frequency.

- housing insecurity and instability



Housing is also integral to **vertical intergenerational relations**

- Contemporary younger adults trying to overcome monetary barriers to leaving home and entering homeownership often rely on **financial transfers for parents or grandparents**.
- People's ability to **exchange (child)care and physical support with non-resident kin** is shaped by their residential proximity to one another.
- Current housing circumstances influence **later-life care demands**. Access to housing wealth may further help determine the form of later-life care support (e.g., private or family provision).





Millennium Cohort Study (S1-S5)

- Cohort members are children born in England and Wales between Sept 2000–Aug 2001, and in Scotland and Northern Ireland between Nov 2000–Jan 2002
- Selection criteria:
 1. families who entered the cohort in S1 and were still there in S5
 2. complete information about youths' contact with the police at age 14
- Analytical sample (N=11,176)

**CHILD OF THE
NEW CENTURY** 

Outcome=Youth-police contacts at age 14

- *'ever been stopped or questioned, given a formal warning or caution, or arrested'*
- Binary (0-1)

Exposure=Housing tenure trajectories between 0-11

→ Shifts in tenure

↑ upward

← stable homeownership or later access

= stable tenancy

← private rent

← social rent

↓ downward

← irregular tenure or lost ownership

→ No. of moves (ref.=0, 1-2 v. 3+)

Police-initiated contacts at age 14 (weighted proportion)

15.1%

ever been stopped or questioned, given a formal warning or caution, or arrested

13.9%

stopped or questioned

7.4%

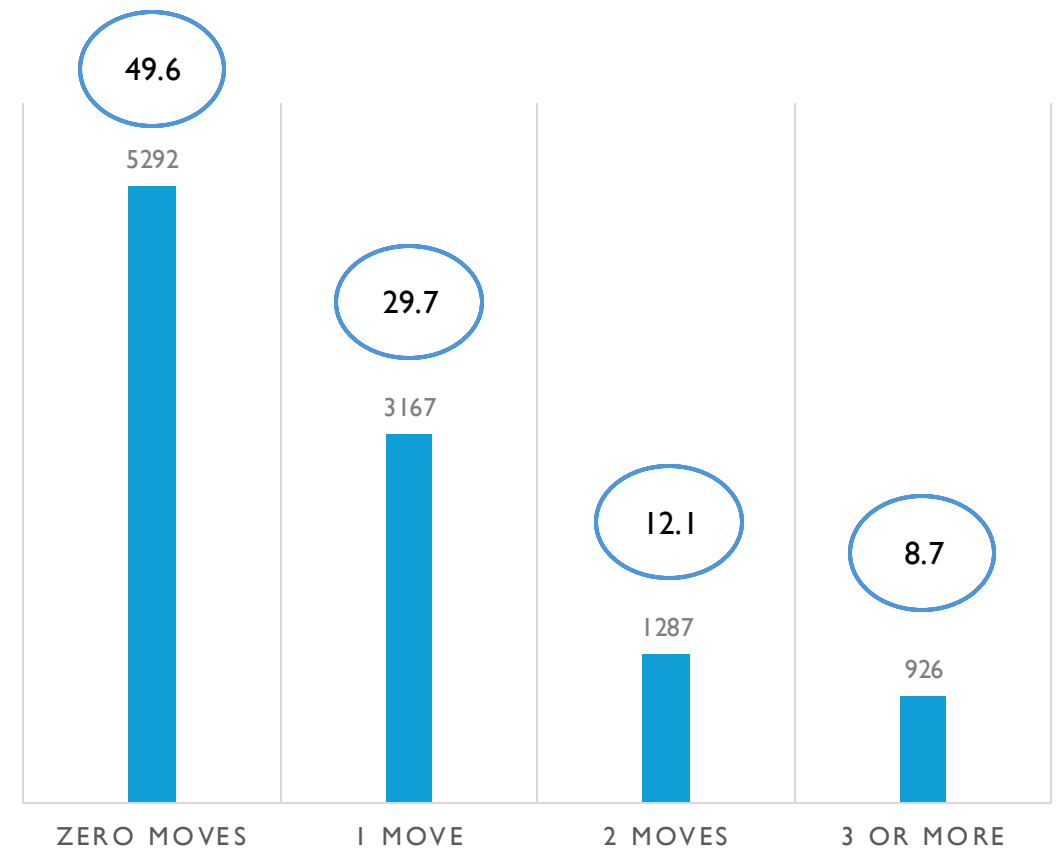
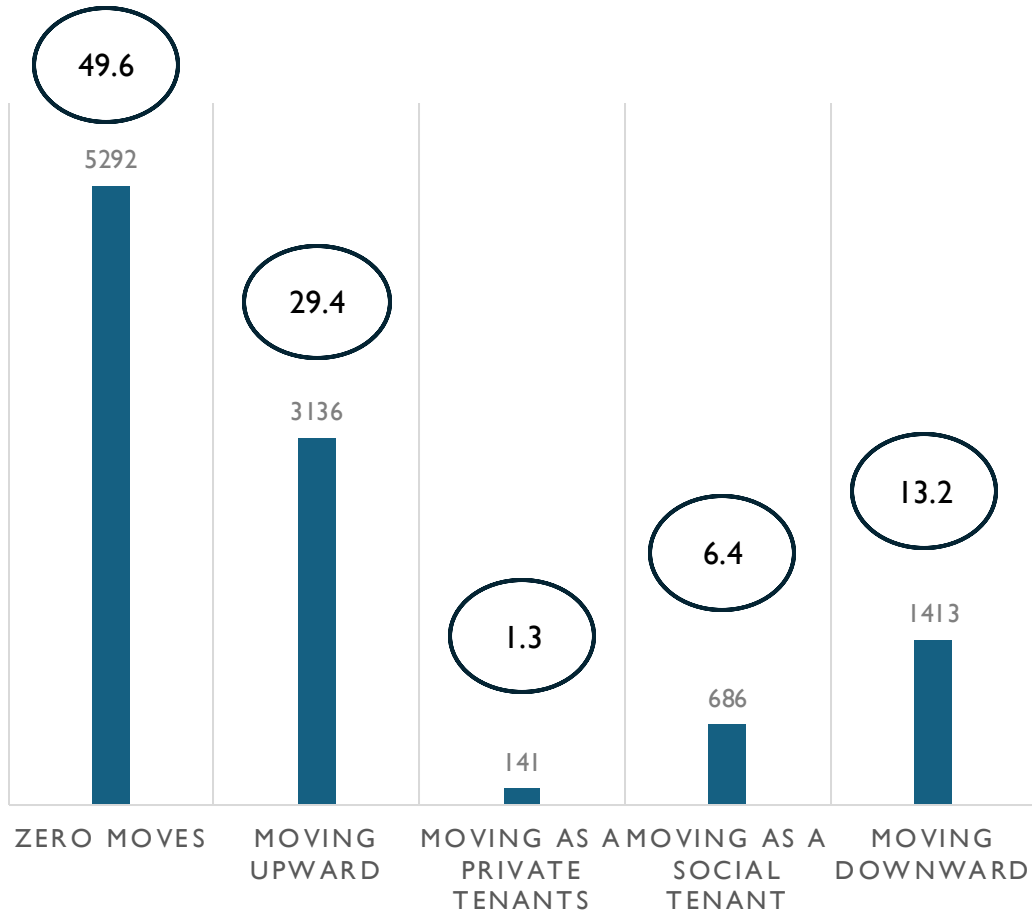
given a formal warning or caution

1.1%

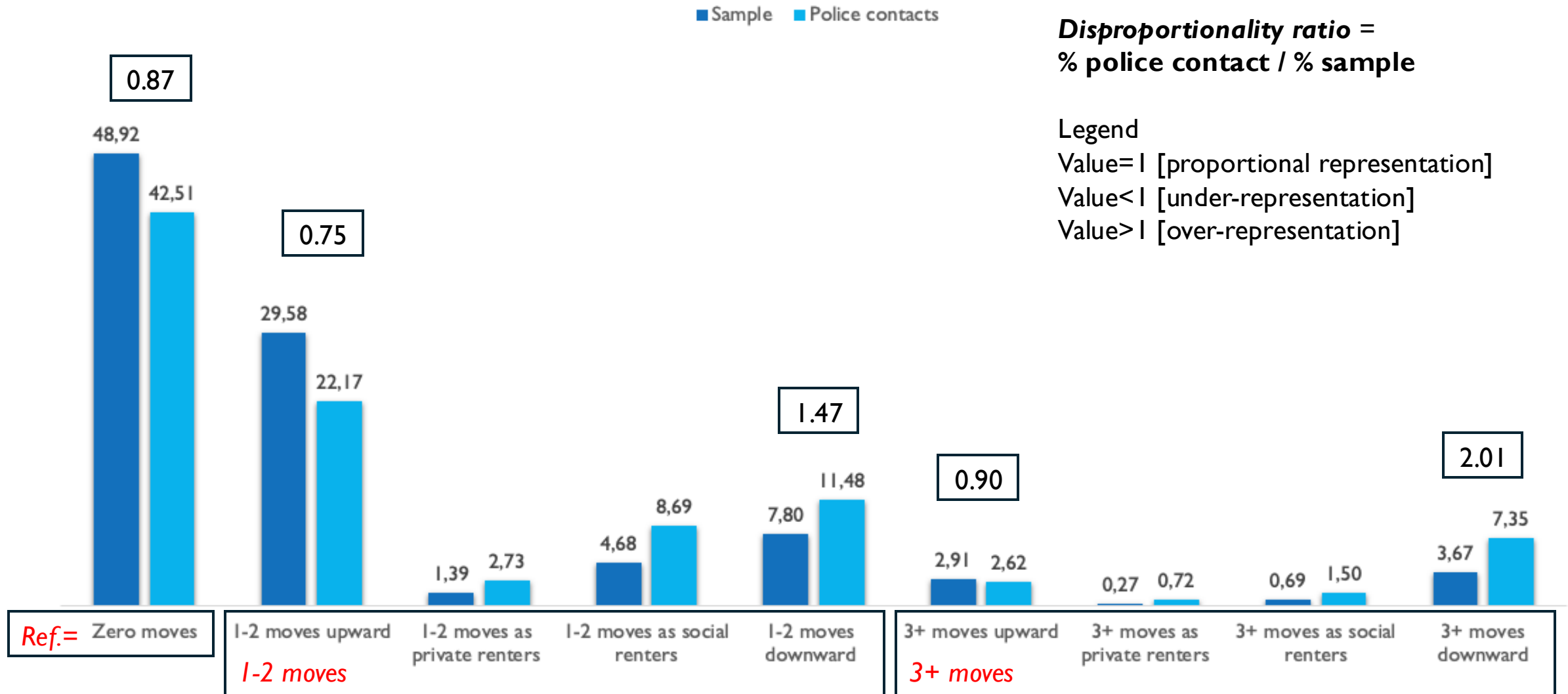
arrested



Housing tenure and residential trajectories (descriptives)



Housing tenure trajectories v. police-initiated contacts (descriptives)



Technicalities

We estimated **unadjusted and adjusted logistic regressions** of the association between childhood internal mobility and exposure to police-initiated contacts in adolescence at age 14.

Robustness checks were also run for each feature of youth-police interaction separately (i.e., stops, warnings, and arrests).

All analyses were conducted in RStudio (version 2023.06.1+524), using **multiple imputations by chained equations** (20 imputed datasets) and **weights** to generate results that are nationally representative of the UK.

Confounders

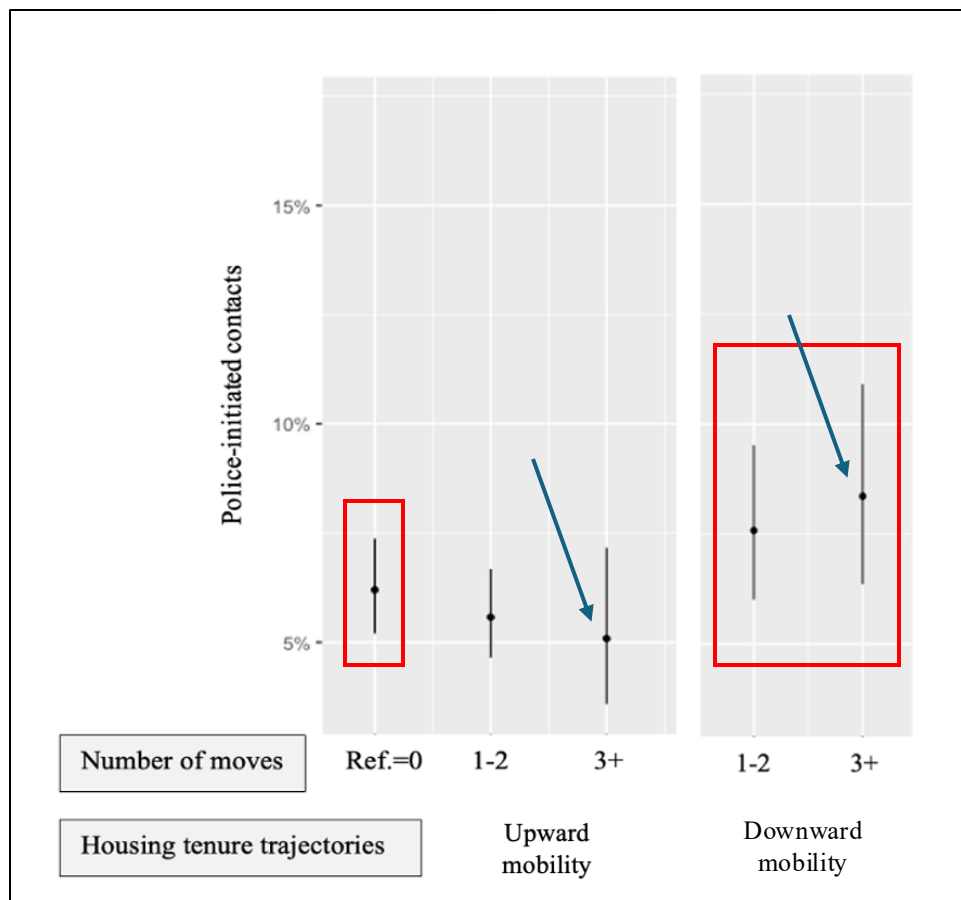
- Mother's age at CM's birth
- Parent's highest academic level (ref.=NVQ levels 4-5)
- Adverse childhood experiences

- CM's Age in months (mean-centered)
- CM's Sex (ref.=female)
- CM's Race (ref.=White)

- ONS urban-rural classification (ref.=urban less sparse)
- Country of residence (ref.=England)

- Cost-burned households and eviction

Main takeaways



Adolescents whose families have experienced repeated downward housing mobility are more likely to be involved in a police-initiated contact compared to stayers.

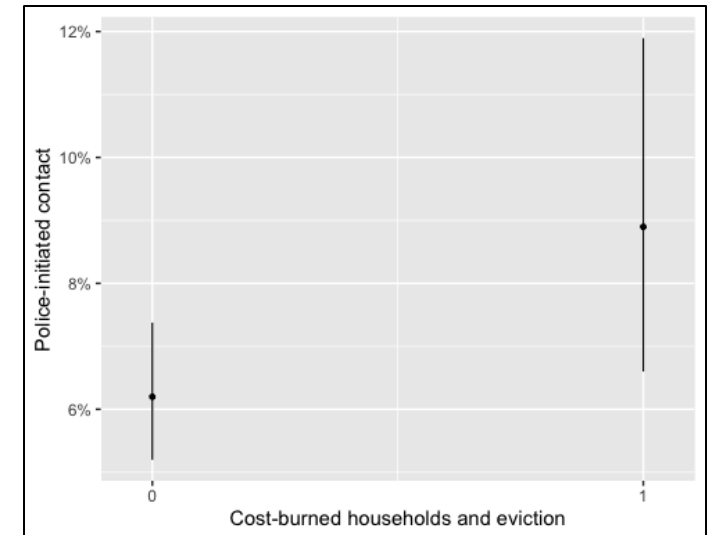
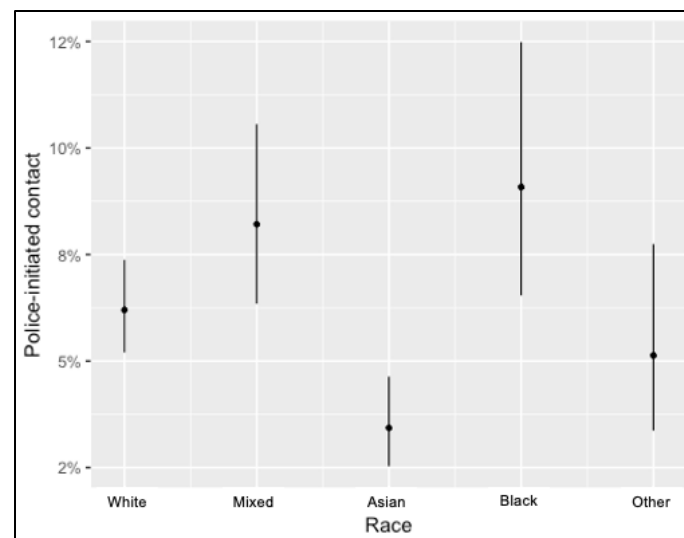
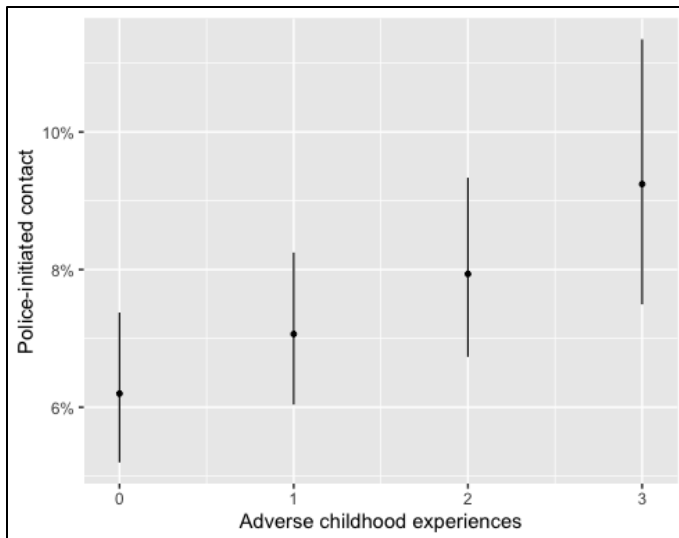
Results of the Wald test ($\chi^2=6.9$; $p<.01$) show that the same number of moves (3+) correspond to statistically different levels of exposure to youth-police interactions depending on whether they were undertaken in an upward ($OR=0.81$; $CI=0.57-1.12$) vs. downward trajectory ($OR=1.38$; $CI=1.06-1.77$).

Other highlights

→ Accumulating **adverse experiences in childhood** is significantly associated with exposure to police contact at age 14

→ **Black adolescents** had 51.2% more odds of being stopped, warned, or arrested by the police than **White adolescents**

→ Any experience with **eviction or unwanted mobility** due to the need to cut housing costs down was associated with a 47.8% increase in the odds of police contact (OR=1.47; CI=1.06–1.77)



Mediation tests | KHB decomposition

Criminal offending and risky behaviours

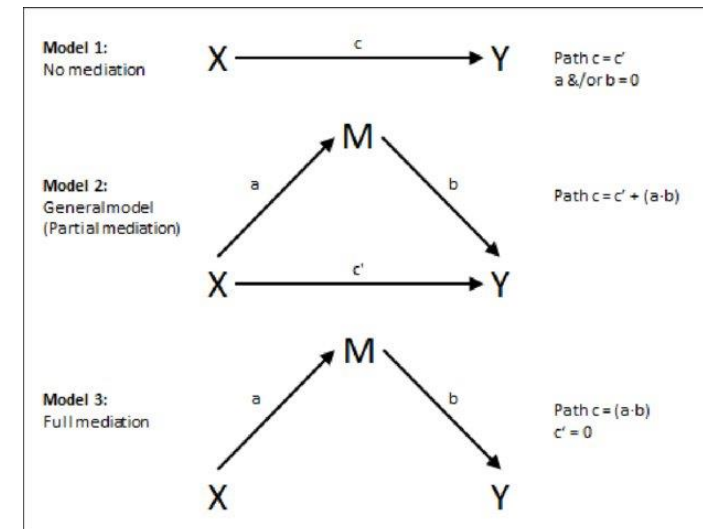
- **Property delinquency** (taken something without paying it, written things or spraying paint on a building or urban furniture, and/or damaged things on purpose in public spaces)
- **Substance use** (tried a cigarette, and/or had an alcohol drink)

Social severance

- **Social severance**, based on the MCS grid of social support ('family and friends help [them] feel safe, secure and happy', 'there is someone [they] trust whom [they] would turn to if [they] had problems', and 'there is no one [they] feel close to')

Individual-level risks

- **Externalising behaviour scale** from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
- **School disengagement index**, retracing how often children self-report trying their best at school, find school interesting, feel unhappy at school, get tired at school, feel school is a waste of time, and misbehave or cause trouble in class





Results – mediation tests

- Two mediators consistently mediate the association with police-initiated contacts: **externalising behaviour problems** (13.2–21.5%) and **school disengagement** (7.1–11.7%), measured at age 11 (i.e., the last year of primary school, which overlaps with the end of our trajectories of housing tenure)
- The mediating effect of **social severance** ranges from 1.5–6.3%
- **Unlawful behaviours against the property** significantly mediate this association (5.5–12.5%) as it does, to a lesser extent, **substance use** (2.1–11.6%)
- On average, however, mediation analyses show that, for adolescents enduring housing hardship, **engaging in property delinquency and substance abuse mediate only about a third of the association between moving and the outcome**



Conclusions

Ceteris paribus, childhood residential mobility is not detrimental per se for youth-police encounters, not even when relocations occur repeatedly in a matter of a few years. Results from logistic regression models indicated that the same number of moves may lead to opposite outcomes.

Upward housing tenure trajectories, defined as moving within stable homeownership or to access it, might compensate for the negative impact of moving and show a negative association with adolescent police contact.

Conversely, even one isolated move can make a massive difference if undertaken in the social rented sector, which typically reduces neighbourhood choices to disadvantaged areas or in a deregulated private rented sector with related housing affordability problems.

Housing hardship emerges in our analyses as a significant driver of social isolation and conduct problems.



Limitations

- Attrition rates
- Self-reported reasons for a move are measured inconsistently in the MCS (i.e., multiple-choice questions vs. dichotomous yes-no answers, depending on the survey's sweep)
- There is unobserved heterogeneity within the category of stayers as well. Future studies should look at cases where staying put means degrading the housing conditions

Implications

- A definition of mobility as the frequency of moves alone might be somewhat misleading
- It is reasonable to assume that redirecting public spending to alleviate housing insecurity (the source of the problem) rather than to its symptoms (criminal behaviours) will have positive spill-over effects in other spheres

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Thanks!

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