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Mary Ann Erickson PhD ^a, John Krout PhD ^a, Heidi Ewen MA ^b & Julie Robison PhD ^c

^a Ithaca College Gerontology Institute, USA

^b University of Kentucky, USA

^c University of Connecticut Health Sciences, USA

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Should I Stay or Should I Go? Moving Plans of Older Adults

Mary Ann Erickson
John Krout
Heidi Ewen
Julie Robison

ABSTRACT. Data from a longitudinal study of older adults in an up-state New York county (N = 333) show that poor housing “fit” increases the likelihood that older adults are currently considering a move, as does lower residential satisfaction. Those adults who said only that they “might consider moving” focused on health transitions that might signal a need for a new housing situation. Residential satisfaction predicts actual moves even when controlling for moving plans. Older adults may be “pushed” to make a move by a crisis, but those older adults planning moves tend to be “pulled” into housing arrangements with desirable features. doi:10.1300/J081v20n03_02 [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2006 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

Mary Ann Erickson, PhD, and John Krout, PhD, are affiliated with Ithaca College Gerontology Institute. Heidi Ewen, MA, is affiliated with University of Kentucky. Julie Robison, PhD, is affiliated with University of Connecticut Health Sciences.

Address correspondence to: Mary Ann Erickson, PhD, Ithaca College Gerontology Institute, 421 Center for Health Sciences, Ithaca NY 14850 (E-mail: merickson@ithaca.edu).

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INTRODUCTION

Housing can be viewed from both policy and research perspectives as an important aspect of the larger residential environment in which older persons seek to optimize their quality of life. A growing body of research has examined older adults' housing preferences and choices, the behaviors they engage in to fulfill these preferences and the "fit" between housing and quality of life, often seen as the ability to perform ADLs (Activities of Daily Living) and IADLs (Instrumental Activities of Daily Living) independently (Wahl, Scheidt, and Windley 2004). Studies have repeatedly shown that the desire to "age in place" in their homes is by far the most preferred housing arrangement among older adults (Harper and Bayer 2000).

A variety of strategies exist for older adults to attain a preferred housing arrangement given their needs and personal/social resources. Older adults may move seasonally to avoid environmental factors such as cold weather, arrange for in-home services or modify their existing home to compensate for (or avoid) functional declines. Another option in the housing/quality of life nexus is residential relocation. Elders may move to live with or be closer to adult children or other relatives or to communities seen as providing a variety of "amenities" related to cost of living, weather, recreational opportunities, or health care services. Other older persons move to more supportive forms of congregate housing because they can no longer stay in their current dwelling. Various conceptual frameworks have been proposed to explain these types of residential mobility in later life: person-environment frameworks, developmental frameworks, push-pull frameworks, and frameworks focusing on residential satisfaction.

What has been missing from much of this research is the study of residential relocation as a process. While we know that many people do not change housing arrangements until they find themselves unable to manage in their current home (Golant 1992), older individuals may be thinking about different housing options long before they actually move. Decision-making research characterizes individuals as planners, but we know little about how older people think about and plan for residential relocation, and whether the same factors related to actual moves are related to the moving plans of older adults. Older people themselves believe in the value of planning, although few plan thoroughly for future living arrangements (AARP 2003).

This paper examines the relationship of health, social and financial resources, housing characteristics, and residential satisfaction to the moving

plans of older adults and how moving plans are related to actual moves. Our aims are to explain both why older people move as well as why they remain in their current homes and identify the factors that surround the transition from intent to action. In addition to changing how we conceptualize residential mobility, a better understanding of the process through which older adults come to make housing decisions will be of practical value to both the housing industry and to those counseling older adults about their housing options.

Conceptual Frameworks

Four related conceptual frameworks inform existing literature on the residential mobility of older adults. First, the importance of a person's interaction with the environment has long been recognized by person-environment theory (Lewin 1935, 1951). In gerontology, the best-known person-environment framework is Lawton's ecological model of aging (Lawton and Nahemow 1973), in which individual well-being and behavior is the result of a balance between demands imposed by the environment (press) and the individuals' ability to meet these demands (competence). Research using this framework often focuses on how declining competence leads to a poor fit between the individual and that person's housing, which can then lead to further decline in quality of life. Health decline, for example, may lead to difficulty navigating stairs, increasing the likelihood of a fall and increased disability. In addition, the environmental docility hypothesis suggests that the environment has a greater impact on the well-being of those with lower levels of competence (Lawton and Simon 1968).

Second, recognition of the importance of transitions informs the developmental framework of Litwak and Longino (1987), which describes transitions that some older persons move through as they attempt to optimize their living environment. In this framework, pressures for three kinds of moves are associated with key life events. The first move is generally precipitated by retirement and is typically undertaken by healthy married individuals with higher incomes. The second move is in response to health problems which make it difficult for individuals to maintain an independent household. These moves will often be made to bring individuals closer to relatives who can provide assistance, thus the term "compensatory migration." The second stage move has also been seen by some researchers as an "anticipatory" move, one taken in anticipation of declining abilities (Speare and Meyer 1988). Finally, increasing illness and limited kin resources combine to create pressure for the third move, to institutional care.

This developmental framework points out the importance of life stage and has served as a useful framework for analyses of census data, helping to differ-

entiate various migration streams (Carter 1988; Longino 1990). It has also framed a substantial body of research demonstrating the importance of changing needs for migration, primarily health changes (Speare, Avery, and Lawton 1991; Longino et al. 1991; Jackson et al. 1991; Miller et al. 1999) and widowhood (Bradsher et al. 1992; Chevan 1995). Related research has also demonstrated that social resources, especially the availability of a child as a potential caregiver, can reduce the likelihood of moving in the later two stages (Zimmerman et al. 1993; Silverstein and Zablotzky 1996).

Third, both person-environment theory and the developmental framework focus on problems with the fit of older adults' current housing. Older people, however, report a wide variety of reasons for moving, including comfort or a desire to be near friends or family in addition to triggers such as concerns with functional independence, health, economic security, and getting on with life after a family crisis (De Jong et al. 1995). Indeed, a single individual may report a number of reasons for moving (Oswald et al. 2002). The idea that moving can indicate a desire for new housing features as well as a rejection of current housing features fits with the tradition of the "push and pull" framework in migration research (Lee 1966). Declining health is a common "push" factor, while anticipation of future health declines may "pull" older adults into housing with less upkeep and maintenance.

Finally, what is missing from these three frameworks is a way of thinking about the factors that keep older adults in their homes, the "inertial forces which inhibit residential relocation" (Wiseman and Roseman 1979, p. 328). Even in the absence of major life events, older adults constantly evaluate their residential satisfaction, which is a function of factors such as ties to the community and the cost of living (Wiseman 1980). Research confirms that residential satisfaction is a key influence on mobility in later life (Johnson-Carroll, Brandt, and McFadden 1995), but residential satisfaction can be conceptualized in a number of different ways. Residential satisfaction can be seen as a function of: the housing unit and neighborhood (Fernandez, Perez, and Abuin 2004; Kahana et al. 2003); structural, informal, and formal domains (Phillips et al. 2004); or neighborhood-level social bonds and other neighborhood and individual characteristics (Oh 2003).

Despite the heterogeneity of these definitions of residential satisfaction, some commonalities emerge. First, the neighborhood is an important component of the environment (Fernandez, Perez, and Abuin 2004; Kahana et al. 2003), distinct from satisfaction with the living unit (Morris, Crull, and Winter 1976; Windley and Scheidt 1983; Jirovec 1984). Second, place attachment can reduce the likelihood of moving (Rowles 1983; Earhart and Weber 1996; O'Bryant 1983; O'Bryant and Murray 1986). Living in one place for a long time can be seen as a proxy for place attachment. Indeed, length of residency

and home ownership decrease the likelihood of relocation (Sommers and Rowell 1992; Miller et al. 1999; Oldakowski and Roseman 1986).

Research based on the person-environment, developmental, push-pull, and satisfaction frameworks together identify a variety of factors related to older adults' residential mobility, from health declines to desires for recreation amenities to place attachment. However, little attention has been paid to how these factors influence older adults' housing decision-making process. Decision-making theory suggests that older individuals consider possible gains and losses when considering different housing options, and that they consider these options in the light of both their current circumstances and of future risks (Kahneman and Tversky 1983; Robison and Moen 2000). The complexity of this decision is clear in recent exploratory research by Longino, Perzynski, and Stoller (2002). Our focus on the moving plans of older adults allows us to begin to see how health, social and financial resources, housing characteristics, and residential satisfaction affect older adults' evaluation of the likelihood of a move.

Hypotheses

This review suggests that a wide variety of factors might “push” older adults to consider moving in the future. Research using person-environment, developmental, and push-pull frameworks suggest that health problems, fewer social and financial resources, and lower housing quality might affect the moving plans of older adults. The residential satisfaction framework suggests additional factors such as length of tenure, neighborhood satisfaction, and home satisfaction. This suggests the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1. Older adults are more likely to consider moving in the future if they have fewer social resources, more health needs, and poorer housing characteristics, as well as lower levels of home and neighborhood satisfaction.

Older adults may be at different points in the housing decision-making process. Those “currently considering moving” are probably already looking at new housing and may be focused on the benefits of the new residence (“pull” factors). Those who are not currently considering a move but who “might consider moving” are probably not yet looking at new housing, but might be aware of potential problems with their current housing (“push” factors) as suggested in the next hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2. Older adults “currently considering moving” are likely to give “pull” reasons for moving while those who “might consider moving” are likely to give “push” reasons for a possible move.

Thinking of residential mobility as a decision-making process suggests that moving plans may be an important intermediate step before an actual move takes place (Ferraro 1981; Hypothesis 3).

Hypothesis 3. Moving plans mediate the impact of health, social and financial resources, housing characteristics, and residential satisfaction on actual moves.

METHODS

Sample. The study analyzes data collected in 1997-2001 as part of the Pathways to Life Quality Project. The sample for this analysis was recruited through a random sample of county residents aged 60 and above located through municipal records. Participants were residents of small cities and towns, as well as rural areas of the county. Comprehensive, in-home interviews were completed in 1998, 2000, and 2002 (see Krout and Wethington 2003 for a more detailed presentation). While the response rate was low (39%), the demographic characteristics of the sample closely match those of older people countywide.

Respondents included in the present study completed at least two interviews and did not live in congregate housing at the initial interview. We include those who moved between W1 and W2 ($N = 20$), those who moved between W2 and W3 ($N = 11$), and those who stayed in the same residence between W1 and W2 ($N = 302$). Thus for some respondents “time 1” for this study will be W1; for others it will be W2. In this way, we maximize the number of movers in the sample. Not included are respondents who have no data for the home observation at Time 1. Analyses indicate that missing data were missing at random and had no relationships with other significant variables within the analyses.

Variables. Moving plans are assessed by respondents’ answer to two questions. Respondents were first asked, “Are you currently considering moving?” If they responded negatively, they were then asked, “Are there any circumstances that might lead you to consider moving?” This divides respondents into those currently considering moving, those who might consider moving, and those who would not consider moving. Those who are currently considering moving or might consider moving were then asked, “What would be your main reasons for deciding to move?” Responses to this open-ended question

were coded and checked by project staff. Respondents could give multiple reasons.

An integral part of the Pathways to Life Quality interview is the home observation. Interviewers trained to administer the instrument were shown around the respondent's home or apartment, looking for characteristics in three key categories. First are possible mobility hazards, which include 16 characteristics such as poorly lighted hallways, holes in the floor, throw rugs, cords to step over, and not having grab bars in the bathroom. A second set are features that improve accessibility; these five features are a ramp, doors that fit wheelchairs, other wheelchair modifications, a call device, and shower seat. The final set of characteristics related to poor maintenance of the home or living unit. These ten characteristics include ceiling water damage, holes or cracks in the wall, plumbing problems, and exposed wiring. Variables are a count of the number of characteristics identified in the living unit in each category.

Feelings about the home were assessed in the interview for both privacy and size of the home. The privacy scale consists of four Likert-type items: "In general, I have as much privacy as I want here," "I have a place I consider to be my own here," "I often must interact with people when I would prefer not to here," and "It is easy to find a quiet spot somewhere here" (Marshall 1972). Within the Pathways data, the alpha reliability for this scale is .74. A "good" size home is indicated by the response to "Do you feel that the size of your home is too small, too large, or just about right?"

The home satisfaction scale consists of four Likert-type items: "This is a comfortable living unit," "I do not like living here," "This place is close to my ideal living environment," and "This is a pleasant living unit" (Utamura 2001). Alpha reliability for this scale is .80. Neighborhood satisfaction is a scale consisting of eight Likert-type items reflecting accessibility to neighborhood amenities and social integration (Fernandez, Perez, and Abuin 2004). Respondents rated their satisfaction with location near friends, location near relatives, easy access to shopping, location near medical services, location near a park or pleasant outdoor space, availability of public transportation, location in a safe, crime-free neighborhood, and location near downtown. Alpha reliability for this scale is .73.

Health status is measured by both self-reported health and functional limitations. Self-reported health is a response to "Which step on the ladder indicates how your health has been lately?" with 0 being "very serious health problems" and 10 being "very best health." Respondents also indicated whether they had any health problem (physical or mental) that limited their capacity to walk six blocks, climb a flight of stairs, do day-to-day household tasks, move about inside the house, care for personal needs, go shopping for groceries, keep a doctor's appointment, do volunteer work, drive a car, participate in rec-

reational activities, use public transportation, or bend, kneel, or stoop. The functional limitations score is the number of items to which they responded "yes."

Social resources include indicators of whether respondents lived alone and whether they have any children living within a half-hour drive. Financial difficulty is assessed by responses to "How much difficulty do you have in meeting monthly payments on your bills? No difficulty (= 1), not very much difficulty, some difficulty, or a lot of difficulty (= 4)?" We also control for some key demographic factors: age, gender, and education. Education is dichotomized as an indicator of a high school education or less. These factors may also be important in the decision to move (Colsher and Wallace 1990).

Analyses. First, we present descriptive statistics to characterize the "movers" and the "stayers" in the sample. We test Hypotheses 1a and 1b using multinomial logistic regression to examine correlates of the three categories of moving plans. Descriptive statistics are used to explore the relationship between moving plans and reasons for moving (Hypothesis 2). We use logistic regression to determine if moving plans mediate the relationship between our independent variables and actual moves between Time 1 and Time 2.

RESULTS

Movers and Stayers. Table 1 shows that about two-thirds of the respondents in this study (64.6%) are women, and the average age of the respondents is 72. Only about a quarter (26.4%) has a high school education or less. While 28.2% live alone, more than half (61.9%) have a child living in the local area. At both time 1 and time 2, about one-quarter of the sample reported that they would not consider moving, while more than half said they might consider moving.

Table 1 also shows that many of the independent variables differentiate those respondents who moved ($N = 31$) from those who stayed ($N = 302$). Those who moved are more likely to live alone and less likely to have a child in the local area. The homes of those who moved had more mobility hazards and fewer accessibility features. In addition, those who moved reported lower home and neighborhood satisfaction, were less likely to say their home was about the right size, and on average had lived in their homes for fewer years than those who stayed. More than half of those who moved said that they were "currently considering a move" at T1, compared with only 7.9% of those who stayed. At T2, the moving plans of the two groups are not significantly different.

Reasons for Moving. Respondents who said they were either currently considering a move or might consider a move were asked to freely respond to

TABLE 1. Sample Characteristics by Residential Context

Variable	Total Sample	Movers	Stayers	Sig.
Demographics				
Female (%)	64.6	77.4	63.2	+
Age	71.6 (7.5)	72.0 (7.6)	71.6 (7.6)	ns
Education HS or less (%)	26.4	29.0	26.2	ns
Health				
Self-reported health	7.90 (1.75)	7.87 (1.38)	7.90 (1.79)	ns
Functional limitations	.58 (.97)	1.58 (.81)	1.33 (.71)	ns
Resources				
Lives alone (%)	28.2	45.2	26.5	*
Child in local area (%)	61.9	41.9	63.9	*
Financial difficulty	1.36 (.72)	1.58 (.81)	1.33 (.71)	+
Housing				
# mobility hazards	4.86 (1.81)	5.48 (1.39)	4.80 (1.84)	*
# accessibility features	1.00 (.84)	.68 (.87)	1.03 (.83)	*
# maintenance problems	.60 (1.12)	.58 (1.12)	.60 (1.12)	ns
Residential satisfaction				
Residence about right size (%)	77.8	48.4	80.8	***
Years in residence	23.4 (16.3)	16.1 (15.4)	24.1 (16.2)	**
Privacy	3.48 (.45)	3.39 (.42)	3.48 (.46)	ns
Home satisfaction	3.48 (.45)	3.09 (.43)	3.53 (.43)	***
Neighborhood satisfaction	3.46 (.40)	3.29 (.49)	3.48 (.39)	*
Moving plans T1				
Would not consider move (%)	29.7	3.2	32.5	***
Might consider moving (%)	57.1	32.3	59.6	
Currently considering moving (%)	13.2	64.5	7.9	
Moving plans T2				
Would not consider move (%)	27.0	32.3	26.5	ns
Might consider moving (%)	64.3	58.1	64.9	
Currently considering moving (%)	8.7	9.7	8.6	
N	333	31	302	

+ p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

“What would be your main reasons for deciding to move?”(Table 2). Clearly, health declines were uppermost in the minds of these respondents: 42.9% of respondents gave “own illness” as a reason and 42.1% said “death of illness of spouse.” Others reasons for considering a move were mentioned by less than 12% of those responding to the question.

A distinction between “push” and “pull” factors appears when looking at reasons for considering a move by moving plans. The moving plan variable distinguishes between those who say they are “currently considering moving” and those who say there are “circumstances that might lead you to consider moving.” The reasons typically given by those who “might consider moving” were *hypothetical situations*—their own illness (54.1%) and illness or death of a spouse (42.6%). Only about 10% mentioned anticipating future needs as a reason to consider moving. In contrast, the reasons for moving given by those who say they are currently considering moving mention *current concerns*: upkeep and maintenance (33.3%), anticipating future needs (27.8%), size of home (21.1%), and a desire to be near family (15.6%). Only 12.2% of these respondents mentioned their own illness and only 12.2% mentioned death or illness of a spouse as a reason they were currently considering moving.

Factors Relating to Moving Plans. Multinomial logistic regression analyses compare the three categories of moving plans—would not consider moving (the reference category), might consider moving, and currently considering moving—to test Hypothesis 1. The independent variables include demographic factors, health needs, social and financial resources, housing characteristics, and residential satisfaction. Table 3 shows the odds ratios from this analysis. While being female increases the likelihood that respondents are currently considering moving, a number of other factors are associated with a lower likelihood of currently considering moving: having a child in the local area, more accessibility features in the home, having a home the right size, and higher neighborhood satisfaction. Few factors distinguish those who might consider a move from those who would not consider a move; those with a high school education or less are significantly less likely to report they might consider a move. This could reflect the fact that education in the sample correlates highly with income, and those with more income perceive themselves to have more choices. It may also reflect a difference in the willingness of those of different education levels to entertain hypothetical situations.

Moving Plans and Actual Moves. Table 4 shows the results of logistic regression on actual moves, first without moving plans in the model (column A). A number of our independent variables reduce the likelihood of moving during the two-year interval between T1 and T2: having a child in the local area, having a home the “right size,” more years in the home, and higher home satisfaction. Column B shows that moving plans do predict actual moves, net of the

TABLE 2. Reasons for Considering Moving, by Moving Plans

Reason for Moving	All Those Considering Moving (%)	Might Consider Moving (%)	Currently Considering Moving (%)	Sig
Size of residence	7.7	1.1	21.1	***
Concerns about maintenance and upkeep	11.2	6.5	33.3	***
Death or illness of spouse	42.1	42.6	12.2	***
Desire to be near family	10.7	6.1	15.6	**
Desire same-age setting	1.3	0.7	5.6	**
Own illness	42.9	54.1	12.2	***
Don't want to be dependent	3.4	2.2	8.9	**
Anticipate future needs	9.9	10.4	27.8	***

† p < .10 *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

TABLE 3. Odds Ratios Predicting Moving Plans at Time 1 (Comparison with "Would Not Consider Moving")

Variable	Currently Considering a Move	Might Consider a Move
Demographics		
Female	4.06**	1.58 ⁺
Age	.95	.98
Education high school or less	.54	.43**
Health		
Self-reported health (0-10)	1.20	1.12
Functional limitations (0-5)	1.31	1.22
Resources		
Lives alone	1.23	1.04
Child in local area	.38*	.98
Financial difficulty (1-4)	1.30	1.09
Housing		
Mobility hazards	1.05	.95
Accessibility features	.51*	1.09
Maintenance problems	.84	.96
Residential satisfaction		
Home is the right size	.17***	.61
Years in home	.99	1.00
Privacy	1.84	1.40
Home satisfaction (1-4)	.36 ⁺	.60
Neighborhood satisfaction (1-4)	.23**	.64

⁺p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

other independent variables. However, even accounting for T1 moving plans, more years in the home and higher home satisfaction are still significantly associated with lower likelihood of moving. These results support the hypothesis that moving plans are an important step in the relocation process (Hypothesis 3).

DISCUSSION

Both descriptive and inferential statistics support parts of Hypothesis 1. Indicators of poor housing fit—a less accessible home, no child in the local area—increase the likelihood that older adults are currently considering a move, as does lower residential satisfaction (a home not the right size and lower neighborhood satisfaction). However, these factors distinguish only those who are

TABLE 4. Odds Ratios Predicting Moves by T2

Variable	(A) Predict Actual Moves Without Moving Plans in Model	(B) Include Moving Plans in Model
Demographics		
Female	2.18	1.09
Age	1.03	1.06
Education high school or less	2.01	1.92
Health		
Self-reported health (0-10)	1.16	1.11
Functional limitations (0-5)	1.08	.98
Resources		
Lives alone	1.35	1.27
Child in local area	.36*	.50
Financial difficulty (1-4)	1.10	.91
Housing		
Mobility hazards	1.25	1.22
Accessibility features	.60	.80
Maintenance problems	.71 ⁺	.75
Residential satisfaction		
Home is good size	.31*	.56
Years in home	.96*	.96*
Privacy	1.52	1.20
Home satisfaction (1-4)	.16**	.18**
Neighborhood satisfaction (1-4)	.78	1.56
Moving plans		
Would not consider moving		–
Might consider moving		6.39 ⁺
Currently considering moving		71.13***

⁺p < .10 *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

currently considering moving from those who would not move; only education level is significantly associated with choosing “might consider a move” over “would not consider moving.” Perhaps the willingness to think about “what might happen” is a first step towards looking more closely at your own particular housing situation.

Results also confirmed our hypothesis that older adults further along in the housing decision-making process would be focused on desirable features of

new housing situations (Hypothesis 2). While concerns about upkeep and maintenance, for example, could be seen as a “push” factor, it is also a clear criterion by which to evaluate housing options. Similarly, a more appropriately sized dwelling, help with future needs, and a location near family are also features that older adults might look for in new housing. Those adults who said only that there were circumstances where they might consider moving mostly focused on health transitions that might signal a need for a new housing situation.

While many of our respondents saw health changes as a primary reason for moving, poor health in the sample did not predict moving plans or actual moves. Housing features were also a poor predictor of moving plans and actual moves. Factors consistently related to our outcome variables were having a child in the local area and several measures of residential satisfaction. Indeed, several measures of residential satisfaction were significant predictors of actual moves even when controlling for moving plans.

These results show that studying moving plans is a way to examine the housing decision-making process in more detail. The data clearly show that moving plans are significantly related to actual moves two years later. The data also show that being able to imagine circumstances that might force a move is quite different from planning to move. Most of those who actually moved in this sample were “pulled” rather than “pushed”—closer to family, into residential arrangements with less upkeep and maintenance.

The Pathways Study provides unique prospective data on moves and moving plans, but the data are limited in several ways. The sample is small and racially homogeneous, with only 2.2% non-white respondents, reflecting the sample county, although there is significant diversity in income. A longer time frame could probably have increased the number of moves available for study and may have allowed for more changes in resources and needs.

In future research, additional factors should be examined. Awareness of realistic housing alternatives could frame the housing decision (Tversky and Kahneman 1981). For example, a person with some functional limitations may be very satisfied with her single family dwelling if the only alternatives she is aware of are her own home and a local nursing home. If, however, a lifecare community or a new assisted-living facility is built in the community, her evaluation of her own housing may change. These “framing effects” often result in different ways of viewing gains and losses. An individual’s decision frame may also be affected by “futuraity” or the person’s expected life span (Wister 1990). The gains realized from moving to an attractive housing option may not outweigh the costs of moving for those who do not expect to live much longer.

Another fruitful area for future investigation into residential mobility is probing further into the nature of the housing decision-making process. There is a significant body of literature on decision making, particularly decisions under conditions of uncertainty, which could inform future research (Lipshitz and Strauss 1997; Kuhn and Budescu 1996). We need to know not only how people weigh decisions and conceptualize alternatives, but whether or not they even consider changes in their housing. In addition, other individuals (especially older adult children) may be involved in the decision process. Some research suggests that individuals who feel secure in their current housing are not concerned with possible future crises (Kulys and Tobin 1980). Future research could describe those who are reactive in housing choice and those who are proactive (Aspinwall and Taylor 1997; Moen and Erickson 2001). Understanding this process could help ensure that older adults make the best possible decisions to preserve both their autonomy and their health.

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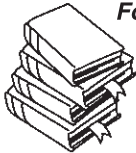
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