

**HOME IN FLUX: LEARNING FROM HIGHLY MOBILE WOMEN
IN INNER CITY WINNIPEG**

By
Lindsey Dyck

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

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Winnipeg, Manitoba

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ABSTRACT

To introduce this research project it is important to note that what I have explored is frequent mobility in a marginalised community in Winnipeg, and not the normative mobility that moves people in pursuit of better employment, or in reach of their housing aspirations. Following Fairclough's methods, for this project CDA was used as a technique of analysis to look at how the text obtained from women when discussing their housing histories constructs representations of the world, social identities, and social relationships. The analysis is informed by theories of mobility, communicative action, and structuration. Three major themes that emerged in the analysis are strained landlord tenant relationships, poor housing conditions, and negative neighbourhood characteristics, all of which share undertones of power and dominances. The results of the analysis demonstrate that mobility is the result of limited choice, and a system of barriers and negative community forces that act against housing aspirations.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

As Canadian cities continue to expand, there is an increasing dichotomy of housing experiences associated with the spatial location of neighbourhoods. Across Canada, cities have experienced an out-migration from inner city areas, which has exacerbated neighbourhood decline, a problem that has been combated through innovative approaches to restore social and economic investment in these areas. High rates of residential mobility are viewed as the lynch pin in the instability and decline of these communities. Winnipeg's inner city is no exception to this trend, with a majority of neighbourhoods being listed as either "revitalization areas" or areas in need of significant improvements.

Residential mobility in the most basic sense is a common activity in housing markets as households and individuals progress through life cycle stages and experience changing housing needs and desires. The conventional view is that people move from "starter" homes, to larger family homes, and eventually downsize to match their shrinking housing requirements. Researchers view this as a cyclical process, not usually indicative of a neighbourhood problem or concern. However, as residential mobility occurs more frequently it becomes viewed as a disruptive pattern for both the household and the community. Improvements of housing conditions and of services are the primary vehicles used to address high rates of mobility in order to create more "stable" communities. However, practitioners and policy makers identify the behaviours

of households as the issue of concern, rather than problems in the housing system.

The decision to relocate is often a multi-layered process affected by immediate personal concerns and embedded constraints in housing markets and planning policies. Low-income levels are frequently associated with higher residential mobility rates, especially in inner city or marginalized communities. Bartlett (1997) suggests high rates of residential mobility are by-products of poverty and inadequacies in the housing market.

Rates of residential mobility in Winnipeg's inner city communities are much higher than in surrounding communities, particularly among aboriginal single parent families with young children (Skelton, 2002). Silver (2000) stated, "Aboriginal families were four times more likely than others to suffer a combination of shelter poverty, poor housing and overcrowding, and were highly mobile within the city" (p. 86). Skelton (2002) looked explicitly at residential mobility amongst Aboriginal single mothers, as mobility is more pronounced within this population. Both of these studies explored reasons people move, and to some degree the effects frequent moving has on individual measures of health and well being. There is still little research attempting to understand the movers' perception of mobility based on their own experiences. The present study aims to help fill this gap and enhance understandings by offering the perspective of those affected.

IMPORTANCE OF THESIS

For planners, it is increasingly important to reflect on the literature and challenge the beliefs held in common by planners and society as a whole. One cannot rely solely on conventional beliefs and neglect to attempt to understand the first hand experiences of the individuals affected. For this process to occur, planners must seek out alternate ways of knowing, and listen to the voices of those affected... "If we want to foster a more democratic, inclusionary process for planning, then we need to start listening to the voices of difference" (Sandercock, 1998, p. 109). Sandercock challenges planners to listen to these voices to bridge the gap between traditional planning theory and discourses of marginality and social justice (p. 110).

There is consensus within the planning literature that mobility is labelled as negative when it is perceived as too frequent compared with social norms. The goal of many initiatives and programs is to decrease mobility rates, as lower mobility rates are commonly associated with more stability in communities. This thesis questions whether persons living in highly mobile communities perceive mobility negatively, examines the assumptions associated with highly mobile households and challenges the linking of mobility with instability.

Richard Sennett (1970) proposes the "myth of purified community" in which humans learn to avoid new experiences, the unexpected, the new and the "otherness" surrounding them (p. 192). The risk of not challenging belief systems is accepting the myth of a purified community, and assumptions that communities that appear disorderly must be unstable or unhealthy. There is an obligation for

planners to become more comfortable with otherness, resisting the temptation to try to change it to become more like our own realities. Sennett encourages planners to work for the “concrete parts of the city”, recognizing the individuality of classes, genders and races versus fruitlessly trying to create an “abstract urban whole” where every part of the city follows a homogenous pattern. The desire for homogeneity throughout the city and a coherent image of community leads to unrest when a group fails to conform to this image. Sennett suggests that prejudice and repression of deviants are consequences of this myth, due to the inability of the dominant group to accept otherness (p. 43). Repression may appear in the formation of suburbs and the increasing preference to create distance from inner cities perceived as unsafe or unliveable. In suburbs, residents find a common identity with one another within a family centred artificial cultivation of community. Sandercock (1998) suggests the “privileged classes” are often responsible for defining policy issues, and fail to take the experiences of other classes into account, so consequently they guide policy based on discomfort with the “unknown” or disorderly appearance of other communities and groups.

This thesis encourages planners to question planning responses and whether the behaviour of mobility poses a problem, or the inability of the housing system to support mobility. If movers do not perceive mobility negatively, should the focus move toward creating a housing system that supports higher rates of mobility? Sennett suggests intellectuals often romanticise the past and create a vision of what communities should look like based on their historic reputation (p.

49). Such an outlook fails to consider the needs and lifestyle of the population that presently inhabit an area, and sets out to restore the neighbourhood to its past. This is similar to the reaction toward mobility and the general assumption that it must be an unhealthy behaviour. There is belief that once mobility rates are “normalized” communities will somehow become capable of regeneration.

Participatory planning methods are mechanisms of gaining a shared understanding. Sandercock (1998) states that many theorists question participatory planning processes suggesting they merely solidify social inequities and make them more pronounced. There is a risk in merely uncovering problems if there is a lack of attention and investment in addressing the issues, but proponents of participatory processes feel they increase the solidarity of a group enabling them to define the issue and move forward into the action stages of planning. According to Barber (1984), “participation mandates a permanent confrontation between the me as citizen and the other as citizen, forcing us to think in common and act in common” (p. 153).

This opinion raises the importance of recognizing the relationship between “me as citizen” and “the other as citizen”. Planners must challenge their own belief systems and identities including their gender, race, and personal experiences; in essence, everything that makes them who they are. Once individuals become grounded in the understanding of themselves, it is possible to move forward to explore the understanding and experiences of others, identifying the assumptions and feelings brought to planning discourse. This work emphasises the exploration of the other citizens’ experiences and opinions, and

regards them as the key to developing a more informed understanding of mobility.

PURPOSE OF THESIS

The thesis contributes to the existing mobility literature, and as well questions the applicability of popular theories in the context of marginalized communities. The analysis provides a framework for understanding the housing experiences of marginalized and highly mobile women in Winnipeg's inner city, and aids in the development of a formulated statement of common housing issues as defined by participants. The research and subsequent stages of analysis aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What do the housing stories of marginalised women living in the North Point Douglas community of inner city Winnipeg reveal about mobility issues in the community?
2. What if any similarities exist among the housing experiences of marginalized women in North Point Douglas?
3. How do mobility experiences of marginalized women in North Point Douglas differ from traditional frameworks for understanding mobility?

The first question explores the meanings and knowledge shared in the housing histories of participants that will be created during the research process, in particular the significance of their interpretations of home and mobility. The second question examines the data to look for common themes or shared experiences that arise from the discourse. The third question uses the information obtained in the housing histories to determine whether a relationship exists between these experiences and accepted mobility theories. This question is essential in determining whether the mobility theories examined are applicable to this particular population.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1 gave an overview and brief introduction to the topic of residential mobility, and why this is an important consideration for planners and housing professionals. The focus has been to outline the purpose of the research and what the proposed outcomes will be. The chapter also included the considerations given to ethics protocols involved in carrying out this research.

Chapter 2 discusses the theory of communicative action and its application in this research, along with an explanation of Critical Discourse Analysis and why it was used in the research.

Chapter 3 provides a review of literature and discusses behavioural theories and common indicators of mobility, and highlights the inadequacies of these frameworks in their applicability to marginalized groups. It suggests additional considerations and introduces a modified strategy/constraints model in which mobility is used as an active strategy in overcoming perceived constraints.

Chapter 4 introduces the study area including historical changes in demography, the context of the neighbourhood within the city of Winnipeg, social economic indicators, mobility rates, and an overview of support services located within the community area.

Chapter 5 presents and explains the research findings as interpreted by the researcher from the analysis of the participant's responses, followed by a deeper look at the text using a reflexive analysis approach to uncover hidden meanings.

Chapter 6, the concluding chapter, presents a summary of the research findings and a discussion of the relationship between these and the literature review findings. It also discusses the implications of the research, and makes recommendations based on the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 2 – METHODOLOGY

COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

Thorns (2004) suggests “the meaning of home is thus a ‘negotiated’ reality it is not something that is made and never changed but is about process and how meaning evolved through the complex interactions of those present and part of the household and often including the wider family” (p. 8). These realities can be uncovered through the analysis of language and the rich text obtained in the process of recollecting housing histories. “Home”, for example, may be a place of shared meanings, security, trust and understanding or a place where conflict, domination and control can exist (Thorns, 2004, p. 8).

Habermas’ communicative action (1981) “presupposes the use of language as a medium for a kind of reaching understanding, in the course of which participants, through relating to a world, reciprocally raise the claims that can be accepted or contested” (p. 99). Healey (1995) suggests the process of reaching understanding:

Starts from the recognition that we are diverse people living in complex webs of economic and social relations, within which we develop potentially very varied ways of seeing the world, identifying our interests and values, of reasoning about them, and of thinking about our relations with others. (p. 219)

Communicative Action promotes the recognition of one’s own competencies while considering others’ competencies and incorporating their knowledge into a joint framework of understanding. The theory of Communicative Action encourages groups to engage in dialogue with one another, and acquire sensitivities and skills based on talking and listening (Sandercock, 1998, p. 158).

These skills are vital in the professional development of planners, and are obtained through the knowledge exchange that occurs in language and dialogue. Innes (1995) refers to this knowledge exchange as praxis; a process in which those who have the experiences and knowledge play a valuable role in uncovering assumptions. Healey (1995) suggests this process allows the opportunity to discuss issues in emotive terms, and is founded in principles of “participatory democracy” with the goal of reshaping the systems of our understanding (p. 230).

Such methods have become more widely accepted since the move away from rational planning methods or planning for the “greater good” towards more participatory methods. For the purpose of this study, I have examined the text obtained from interview transcripts in an attempt to uncover the language associated with participants’ housing experiences. For example, language used to describe moving differs significantly according to who is speaking. In addition “frequent mobility” has different interpretations.

In-depth interviews have been the primary research method, used as a tool to engage in active dialogue with marginalized women in North Point Douglas and recreate their housing experiences (Appendix A: Interview Schedule). The transcription of the interview data has been a key step in the discourse analysis method applied. The goal of the interviews has been to gain an understanding about the experiences associated with each residential move, and the feelings the respondent associated with them. Thorns (1992) conducted interviews utilizing a similar method of recreating “housing stories” and concluded people

seemed to engage in “housing journeys” where disruptions and changes took place resulting from work-life, changes in schooling, relationship break down and illness.

As Mason (2004) suggests, in sharing stories about where they have lived and why, people not only provide their residential histories, but in the process they also construct personal biographical narratives which bring into play key features in their life stories, their identities, their sense of self and their values (p. 169).

This is consistent with Lawler’s theory that narratives of one’s history are:

... Interpretive devices, through which people represent themselves, both to themselves and to others. . . (they) are a central means with which people connect together past and present, self and other. They do so within the context of cultural narratives which delimit what can be said, what stories can be told, what will count as meaningful, and what will seem to be nonsensical . . . Narratives . . . neither begin nor end in the research setting: they are part of the fabric of the social world. (Lawler, 2002: 242–3)

In a study examining the impact of residential mobility on children’s school performance, Buerkle & Christenson (1999) used the similar method of in-depth personal interviews to explore families’ mobility-related experiences.

Participants’ “shared honest and riveting stories of their experiences and the lives of their children... and many indicated they were rarely give the chance to tell their stories” (p. 2). These examples suggest the complexity of understanding individual phenomena, and the abundance of data shared in reconstructing past experiences. People’s recollection of their past experiences will be a reflection

not only of an isolated event, but a recollection where one's self is conceptualised as relational, connected and embedded (Mason, 2004).

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a method of analytical research that explores how social power, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted in text and language in the social and political context (Van Dijk, 1993). A main element of CDA is rejection of the possibility to remain "value free" or neutral, particularly in scholarly discourse.

In social sciences, discourse is an institutionalized way of thinking that affects individual ways of viewing things. Discourse has close ties to theories of power and dominance, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) revolves around the notion of unequal access to power and resources. Fairclough's *Critical Discourse Analysis* (1995) outlines three methods of studying discourse: analysis of spoken and written text, analysis of discourse practices, and analysis of discursive events (p. 2). It is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse, which views "language as a form of social practice" (Fairclough 1989, p. 20) and focuses on the manifestation of social dominance in language and conversation. Language shared in housing histories will reveal the significance of specific life events such as moving and the meaning of common language such as home and house. Fairclough's model proposes each dimension of discourse requires three kinds of analysis: text analysis for descriptions, processing analysis for interpretations, and social analysis for explanations. In studies of mobility this may involve uncovering the description of mobility as

portrayed through the associated variables, uncovering the assumptions the reader makes about high mobility based on their own knowledge and experiences, and uncovering the underlying social norms conveyed in the writing which lead us to interpret frequent mobility as either a positive or negative.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) summarized the following tenets of CDA: CDA addresses social problems and inequities; power relations are discursive; discourse constitutes society and culture; discourse does ideological work; discourse is historical; the link between text and society is mediated; discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory; and discourse is a form of social action.

A central focus of discourse work is the social power of groups and institutions, how this power is accessed and how it is used in various forms to control less powerful groups. For example, the privileged groups access power through social and financial resources, status, knowledge, and information. While dominant groups exert power in a variety of means, it is equally important to note the response to power that may be to condone, resist, accept, comply with or legitimize the power relationship (Van Dijk, 1993). Power is seldom absolute, and groups may only control other groups in one or more domains. The power of elites and higher social classes is manifest in laws, rules, norms, habits, and consensus. Van Dijk suggests the exertion of power is characterised by class domination, sexism and racism. Essed noted that power is not always obvious, but may be enacted in every day activities making it more engrained, taken for granted and less noticeable. CDA challenges and examines these taken for granted assumptions and social constructs (in Van Dijk, 1993).

Discursive demarcations or acts of naming, classifying and categorizing are among the basic building blocks of language but are themselves considered expressions of power that demarcate the normal from deviant and accepted from unaccepted (Park, 2005). From this perspective, a goal of CDA is to uncover and contest these constructs and assumptions, enabling the formulation of interventions to challenge the marginalising effects of engrained ideologies.

Cameron (1997), a feminist scholar of discourse, suggests, "whereas sociolinguistics traditionally assumes that people talk the way they do because of who they (already) are, the postmodernist approach suggests people are who they are because of (among other things) the way they talk" (p. 49).

SITE AND SAMPLE SELECTION

This section focuses on the data as it relates to the three research questions. The purpose of the interviews was to understand mobility through the sharing of housing histories and participants' recollections about moving. In the conversations, the informants' recollection of their mobility experiences helps recreate a sense of why they move and how these moves affect them both individually and as families.

Participants for the study were recruited through the North Point Douglas Women's Resource Centre through use of posters, the assistance of staff, and visiting the centre to introduce the project. The sample group was largely recruited through word of mouth and participants mentioning the study to friends or relatives in the area.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Interviews varied in length from just over 20 to 60 minutes due to willingness to share and the individuality of housing experiences. The participants ranged in age from late teens to late forties, and included single mothers, heads of larger families, individuals, and empty nesters.

DATA ANALYSIS

After the interviews were transcribed, they were imported into HYPERresearch© software, a qualitative analysis tool used to begin the initial analysis process, created codes, and determine the relationship between and frequency of these codes within the data. This open coding process identified feelings and thoughts the women expressed. Examples of codes used in this process include conflict, poor housing conditions, and mobility constraints.

The first step was to begin reading through the data to generate a broad list of codes assigned to certain phrases and segments of the data. Once this stage was complete, the codes were then reviewed to determine which ones were redundant or duplicates, and more importantly, which ones were more valuable in response to the research questions.

Once completed it was possible to determine where some codes could be included under broader themes that emerged, creating larger tree codes. Each theme contains quotations, which illustrate the particular exchange of discourse that supports the theme. An example is the theme of negative community aspects which has beneath it gang activity, drug dealers, neighbourhood violence, and graffiti. This theme then relates back to the research question of

what similarities exist among the housing experiences of marginalized women in North Point Douglas.

It is important to recognise that each code is not mutually exclusive, and identifying the relationship between the codes adds to the depth of the analysis where it is apparent that certain themes reappear throughout the data. These relationships are useful in interpreting the data and reflecting on the analysis, particularly in trying to discern what was coming through in the dialogue.

Within the framework of CDA, Mason (1996) described three levels of analysis or readings of the data: *Literal Readings* where the meaning is taken to be that which is literally said by respondents. *Interpretive Readings* where the analyst constructs a version of what he/she thinks the data means or represents, or what the respondents are inferring. And lastly, *Reflexive Readings*, where the analyst reflects on their own role in interpreting the data and how interpretation is based on understandings of theoretical bases.

For the purpose and goals of this research, the interview data has been analysed using a reflexive approach. This reflexive level of reading as described by Mason informed the process and reinforced the need to be aware of what I may be missing in what was being said, and how my own interpretations acted to shape my conclusions and what I heard in their words. This process stressed the importance of self-reflection, and consideration of how personal experiences, and the theoretical basis of knowledge on the subject affects the analysis of what is being said. This is important to assure the analysis is reflecting what is actually being shared by respondents versus an interpretation based on the researchers

own knowledge. This process mandates recognising ones inability to be completely objective, yet allows the analyst to consider how they may be interpreting data based on the analytic frameworks adopted and their value orientations.

CHAPTER 3 – LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The following discussion first reviews the indicators of mobility as outlined by key theorists using a behavioural framework. This review of literature will discuss behavioural theories and common indicators of mobility, highlight the shortcomings of such theories with respect to marginalized communities, and suggest that planning policy could affect mobility through altering the environments in which mobility occurs. Finally, it considers the underlying assumptions in previous research and examines how these assumptions affect the understanding of mobility in marginalized communities. It suggests additional considerations and introduces a modified strategy/constraints model in which mobility is used as an active strategy in overcoming perceived constraints.

MOBILITY DECISION MAKING

Residential mobility draws attention from researchers and policy makers because it is generally seen as the cause of negative outcomes such as neighbourhood decline, disruption of family systems and the disintegration of community (Shumaker & Stokols, 1982). These negative consequences raise concerns due to the impact on macro economic systems through mechanisms such as local disinvestment and loss of jobs, which perpetuate further decline.

For the most part, theorists depict mobility decision-making as a rational process of weighing the costs and benefits associated with relocating and making an informed decision. Wolpert (1965) refers to this as a “place utility” model, which measures the social and economic benefits of residential

alternatives against the adequateness of the current residence. These theories are behaviour based approaches that consider the relationship between the household and the home, and the behaviours that affect the decision making process.

Golant (1971) suggests three main variables that influence mobility decisions: the individual, the environment, and the interaction between the two. Personal characteristics of the household interact with the physical attributes of a house and the surrounding neighbourhood, and ultimately lead towards a state of contentment or discontentment with the housing situation.

Sabagh, Van Arsdol and Butler (1969) examined household characteristics and suggested mobility decisions are organized in part around the structural elements of family life cycle. The relationship between age and mobility is attributed to the major life cycle changes that occur in younger years such as leaving the family home, leaving school, beginning a new career, or starting a family of one's own. The timing of life events coincides with a household's mobility decisions including the expansion of a household, dissolution of a household, career changes, and the leaving or returning of adult children. These events require a negotiation of space and location and are key contributors in the choice to relocate. As societal norms have evolved, research has expanded to accommodate changes and phenomena such as "boomerang kids" and "sandwich generations" that have altered housing and family life cycles. Today these events are less predictable due to a greater diversity of life cycles and stages related to evolving social norms. In evaluating these developmental

theories, researchers have expanded the models to account for life events once seen as non-normative (Aldous, 1996; McGoldrick, 1999).

Reflecting the universalism characteristic of the 1960s Lively & Tauber in the attempt to incorporate the role of attitudinal factors in decision-making stated “the controlling element in whether or not to move may not be the objective reality [sic], rather it may be the individual’s subjective evaluation of the various alternatives which he [sic] is considering” (in Sabagh, Van Arsdol & Butler, 1969, p. 89). This work suggests that the household’s perceived satisfaction with the residential environment could prevail in mobility decision making in spite of less than desirable housing or neighbourhood conditions.

Brown and Moore (1970) further suggest that elements of household stress also factor into the evaluative process, and view migration as a response to the stress that occurs when the residence no longer satisfies the needs of the household. Their work incorporates life cycle stages and changes in the residential environment, but emphasises the individual’s responses to their residence over the residence characteristics that drive mobility decisions. Attitudinal factors play an important role in decision-making and directly affect thresholds for stress, perceived levels of satisfaction, and personal preferences.

Building upon the work of Brown and Moore, Alden Speare introduced variables of satisfaction versus stress as the intervening factors in the propensity to move, and in particular a threshold of satisfaction unique to each individual. Speare’s “residential satisfaction model” (1974), examines how variables commonly associated with migration such as life cycle, form of tenure, and

socioeconomic status have impacts on the decision making process. This theory predicts that residents who are highly satisfied with their current housing would not consider moving even where it might result in improved living conditions.

Residential satisfaction according to Speare (1974) is dependent on household characteristics, geographic location, and social ties or networks established by the household. Alternatively, dissatisfaction results from a change in household needs, a change in social or physical amenities, or a change in personal standards that the current residence fails to meet. Speare's model divides the mobility decision-making process into three stages; stage one involves reaching a level of dissatisfaction with the home environment creating a desire to move, stage two involves the weighing of alternatives or a cost/benefit analysis as proposed in previous models, and stage three is the decision to stay or relocate.

Molin et al. (1996) investigated particular housing related predictors of mobility and proposed a "housing bundle" or group of considerations a household examines when considering relocating, which includes size, type, price and tenure as well as the proximity of the dwelling to places of employment or educational facilities. Dielman (2001) suggests households in relatively large dwellings are less mobile, perhaps due to less crowding or "room stress" (p. 250).

Earhart and Webber (1996) studied the role of tenure status in particular and suggest it is the greatest predictor of residential mobility, with homeownership being the preferred form of tenure as renters perceive less stability in their

housing and experience greater mobility desires. According to Kemeny (1978), the widespread preference for home-ownership has resulted in the unquestioned acceptance of homeownership as the superior form of tenure. Among the perceived benefits of homeownership are financial gains, household stability, and the realization of a social achievement based on societal norms.

Shumaker and Stokols (1982) suggest homeowners who have lived in an area for a long period are less likely to move than newcomers and renters due to a greater bond to their residential community. The authors also suggest that home ownership signifies a greater commitment to an area and promotes a sense of security not experienced by renters. Affordable home ownership is the primary mechanism planners and policy-makers use in an attempt to decrease mobility and promote long-term residential stability, but this response remains a source of debate mainly because of the weak linkages made between ownership and community stability, and the larger neglect to consider that ownership may be neither attainable nor suitable for many households.

While there is no sole predictive model of residential mobility, Dielman (2001) suggests three regularities prevail in mobility literature: a strong correlation between life cycle stage and relocation, an interrelationship with life course events, and the size of dwellings and form of tenure. In evaluating the work of Speare, Landale & Guest (1985) suggest satisfaction plays a more "circumscribed" role in the mobility process, and propose that although dissatisfaction may lead a person to consider moving, they may not always have the resources or capacity to act. The theoretical orientation discussed so far

relies solely on the notion of voluntary mobility, and neglects to consider the external and sometimes-uncontrollable forces at play in mobility decisions.

Landale and Guest (1985) introduce constraints into the model such as the lack of knowledge about alternatives, unstable employment, insecurity of tenure, and a lack of financial resources.

CONSTRAINTS VERSUS CHOICE

The introduction of constraints in mobility research accounts for the differences across socioeconomic status and considers the possibility of barriers that act to constrain or sometimes encourage mobility. Mobility models are limited in scope and applicability to all subpopulations and economic levels, as the experience of relocation differs in both the intentions behind the moves and the ability to relocate (Michelson, 1977). Researchers recognised the need to pay more attention to the disparities amongst different classes, and sought to discover how individual characteristics differed amongst marginalized mobile groups, and more importantly began to uncover an embedded system of inequities in the housing market that acts to limit residential choice.

South & Crowder (1997) examined mobility patterns amongst different socioeconomic groups, and developed a “human capital/life-cycle” model of mobility. They suggest there are several factors that influence the probability of moving including socioeconomic factors, lifecycle characteristics, and “place stratification” variables such as racial segregation and prejudice in housing markets.

Socioeconomic status strongly affects the type, affordability, and adequacy of housing people can secure and in many cases, this translates into substandard housing for marginalized populations. Socioeconomic status and market functions are interrelated in both the residential choices offered and a household's ability and resources to take advantage of these choices.

Housing needs are mediated by the institutions in the housing market. Issues such as eligibility criteria for housing funding or subsidies, and the role of institutions from banks to mortgage brokers are elements which set the context within which residential relocation decisions are made (Clark & Onaka, 1983, p. 56).

Lifecycle events and stages are associated with mobility in marginalized communities, as in the general population, but the experience is markedly different than in middle to upper income communities. For example, this group may experience a much higher turnover of employment, increased household stressors induced by relationship breakdown or marital dissolution, lifelong obstacles attributed to poverty, and low levels of educational attainment that confine them to marginalized neighbourhoods.

The introduction of constraints provides insight into mobility amongst marginalized communities, but still depicts mobility as a largely voluntary process, only sometimes inhibited by external forces. The notion of involuntary mobility is one that needs further consideration, because it challenges the assumption that mobility always occurs by choice. Buerkle and Christenson (1999) suggest mobility is best viewed through a multidimensional framework that examines: the type of mobility, reason for mobility, time frames, distance involved in relocation, fit of the new residence for the household, and the

household's attitudes toward the move(s). They divide residential moves into four categories: "coping, forced, upward, and lifestyle" (p. 9). "Coping" moves were often a result of inadequate housing, unaffordability, or dissatisfaction with the current residence. "Forced" moves on the other hand most often occurred due to eviction, condemnation of housing, the need to escape a dangerous situation, or due to poor tenant-conduct. Eviction may result from financial problems, landlord/tenant disagreements or racial and gender discrimination in housing markets. The notion that relocation may be forced acknowledges that moves are not always voluntary or part of a decision-making framework. While it is clear that institutional interventions create many forced moves, it is not always possible to distinguish voluntary from forced moves, as an element of choice is often detectable in some form (Clark & Onaka, 1983).

There is a suggestion that mobility can become a chronic behaviour, and that people who move once are more likely to move again potentially becoming entrenched in a cycle of mobility. For some individuals mobility may become a "lifestyle" or habitual behaviour that stems from the need for change or the excitement associated with each move. Buerkle & Christenson (1999) refer to this pattern as *lifestyle mobility*, where families move for a change, a different experience, excitement, or "just because" (p. 150). Lifestyle movers are less likely to reveal the negative effects they have experienced because of mobility, indicating a disassociation of mobility with negative outcomes. Cook (1989) suggests that mobility is not viewed negatively by these individuals because only

the short term impacts are considered, and there is a failure to acknowledge the possibility of long term or detrimental effects.

Barrett (1978) suggests the mobility decision-making process of this cohort is not irrational, but rather less understandable within the current frameworks and recommends future studies examine the disparities amongst different socioeconomic classes and the tendency toward chronic mobility. Barrett compared these frequent movers to Rossi's "windfall movers": "...young, small, poor households, free from ties of owning, dissatisfied with their old abodes, but reconciled to remaining on. When opportunities presented themselves, they crystallized into immediate action" (In Barrett, 1978, p. 298). However, Barrett disputes the use of the term 'windfall' because it presumes something is gained in a residential move whether it is an improvement in housing conditions or individual satisfaction.

Within marginalized communities, there exist separate subpopulations with different housing needs and experiences. Lone parent female-headed households are one of the most mobile groups and often must bear the burdens and financial strains of child rearing, which places them in a more precarious situation when trying to secure and retain housing for their families. Cook (1989) examined mobility amongst single mothers and suggests they encounter a unique set of housing challenges related to women's vulnerability to poverty, increased cost burden of shelter, and housing market discrimination related to marital status and the presence of children. Many landlords and property

management companies put restrictions on the presence of children in their buildings, further reducing the choices available.

Bartlett (1997) found that women acknowledge the costs of relocation for their children, as well as the financial costs associated with moving such as the loss of damage deposits, yet relocation often prevails over such concerns. "When tension builds, problems pile up and both housing and neighbours become intolerable, then moving can be not only a relief and distraction but also a way of claiming control over the situation, a way of doing something radical" (p. 130). Moving thus becomes a solution, a relief from multiple stressors, and in some cases a learned pattern passed on from one generation to the next.

For single mothers adequacy of housing takes on a paramount role in mobility decisions. When families have adequate housing, they are able to remain in one place and can cope constructively with other problems in their lives. Good housing alters the equation and makes staying more attractive than the alternatives, and reduces the likelihood of mobility as a default response to increasing stressors (Bartlett, 1997, p. 131). Research also shows that women living in inadequate housing state less dissatisfaction with their housing. Winter & Morris (1982) explain this finding and suggest "Female headed households have avoided the dissatisfaction usually resulting from living in non-normative housing by developing unconventional preferences" (p. 557). Cook (1989) studied mobility intentions amongst female single mothers and found that participants who expressed low expectations for the future and saw limited

opportunities for themselves also had low residential satisfaction, but this dissatisfaction did not always affect mobility intentions (p. 558).

Skelton (2002) suggests that choice/constraint models fall short because they fail to account for the rationalities behind mobility decisions, due in part to societal norms and accepted residential mobility patterns that view frequent mobility as irrational (p. 131). Recognizing the presence of constraints that limit choice and opportunity addresses the disparities amongst socioeconomic classes, but tends to associate mobility with only negative outcomes. Alternately, mobility is viewed as a source of excitement, change, or an expression of power or retaliation against oppressive social structures. A modified choice/constraint framework can be used to attempt to establish a sense of the choices and constraints as perceived by participants, whether the constraints they identify reflect those identified in the literature.

There is a considerable body of research identifying how constraints in marginalised communities act to inhibit resident's choice and opportunities (Buerkle, 1999, Clark & Onaka, 1983, Rossi, 1982). Inner city areas often experience higher rates of mobility due to a multiplicity of conditions including inadequate housing, lower rents that attract a more mobile population, greater proportions of rental properties, and community fractures that decrease cohesion and neighbourhood stability. Inadequate housing conditions may involve elements of overcrowding, safety concerns, hazardous toxins (such as mould), structural deficiencies and a lack of overall property maintenance. Poor housing is often located in areas with higher crime rates and gang activity, which

motivates people to relocate out of concern for their family's safety (Buerkle, 1999). Inability to secure the resources required to move upward in the housing system encourages horizontal mobility which can lead to a cyclical pattern of mobility in which an improvement in housing or neighbourhood conditions is seldom realized (Rossi & Shlay, 1982).

Institutional theory considers the process by which social structures become embedded and accepted social behaviours. Although there is no single agreed definition of an institution, Scott (2001) suggests, "institutions are social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience. [They] are composed of cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life" (p. 100). These institutions are then reproduced and upheld by the more powerful actors in society, leading them to be continuously reproduced by society as a whole.

Anthony Giddens (1981) suggests there is a duality of social structures in which they act as both the "mediums and the outcomes of the practices which constitute social systems" (p. 27). He proposes that structures influence people's practices, as much as people's practices influence structures (Sewell, 1992). This approach unites the dichotomies of structures and individuals, and suggests that they exist in balance with each equally affecting the other in a fluid process, evolving with the changes in both spheres and the subsequent reactions or restructuring.

Sewell (1992) expanded Giddens' theory and developed the definition of structures as: "sets of mutually existing schemas and resources that empower and constrain social action and tend to be reproduced by social action" (p. 19). Following this theory of *structuration* mobility may be viewed as reaction to oppression in the market, or as a proactive response, with the potential to eventually reshape or alter the structure. For example, the demand for certain types of property in an area may work to shape the market response to meet this demand. Alternately, pressures from community members to bring attention to issues of poor safety in a neighbourhood may act to increase awareness and ultimately police presence in that area.

The literature shows a progression from viewing mobility as normative housing activity to the later incorporation of constraints and recognition that the mobility decision-making process can be altered in marginalised communities. This research suggests that there is a gap in understanding of how personal life circumstances alter residential mobility. This research attempts to understand these experiences and how they relate to mobility decision-making, incorporation of a modified choice/constraint framework and tenets of institutional theory.

PLANNING POLICY

Planning and policy measures have generally been understood as constraints that act by altering the context or structures that influence mobility behaviours.

Shumaker and Stokols (1982) suggest:

The prototypical transient community results from local planning measures, land use policies and housing discrimination that combine to produce disintegration in the physical aspects of an area and that limit people's

abilities or willingness to improve the quality of neighbourhood amenities (p. 15).

In this view, “disintegration” of neighbourhoods perpetuates a lack of social ties and sense of community, undermining communities’ ability to establish a sense of cohesion.

Shumaker & Stokols (1982) suggest local land use policies and zoning restrictions act to influence both people’s decisions to relocate and the housing options available to them. Planning policies in inner city neighbourhoods have a significant effect on the housing stock and overall condition of the neighbourhood, and the results of such policies have not always left a positive mark in communities. Rossi and Shlay (1982) suggest, “the structuring of residential location choices creates barriers to area-based opportunities that may affect residents’ socioeconomic outcomes” (p. 27). Zoning restrictions on the type of dwellings allowed in a community area influence the affordability of housing when emphasis is placed on single-family homes and home ownership over more affordable options. The decreased likelihood of low-income families to qualify for mortgages due to market constraints and discrimination increases the likelihood of absentee or slum landlords in a neighbourhood.

The planning system is an example of a system reflexive to the actions of individuals or agency. Although sometimes viewed as a constraint it can also act to offer choices and options to highly mobile households. For example, in Manitoba’s urban centres, higher rates of residential mobility may be attributed to the existence of a home in First Nation reserves as well as in the city (Walker,

2003). The uniqueness of migration patterns to and from reserves plays an important role in the mobility of Winnipeg's Aboriginal population. For some, it may be a necessity to return to a home community to immerse themselves in the Aboriginal culture, surrounding themselves with family and friends who are supportive and understanding of that way of life. "Many people who live in urban areas retain ties with their non-urban communities of origin, and these ties represent an important component of their cultural identities" (Peters in Andrew, Graham, & Phillips, year: p. 56). In such instances, a household may relocate at least twice per year, thereby inflating the rates of mobility in their urban communities.

WIDER IMPACT OF HOUSING ON HEALTH

Also important in the discussion of mobility is the implications of poor housing on the holistic well being of individuals. The impact of housing on the health and well being of individuals is evidenced by a wide body of research and the far-reaching effects of poor housing are a topic of increasing interest for health practitioners, policy makers and economists.

A research study completed for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) suggests, "when looking at the health status of groups with different socio-economic status, a decline in health is seen for each decline in socio-economic position" (Dunn, 2004). For marginalized communities, it is to be assumed then that their health status will be considerably lower than their more well off counterparts. The aim of the study was to understand the relationship between health and housing; building upon existing models, they suggest three

dimensions of housing that impact health: the material, spatial, and psychological.

Material dimensions include the physical aspects of the indoor environment and potential exposure to health threats (i.e. mould and toxins) along with the structural condition and physical design that may contribute to falls. Also in this category are financial aspects of the home such as the overall affordability, and tradeoffs that occur to improve housing conditions while having negative impacts on health. As previously mentioned, financial difficulties are often linked to higher rates of mobility where rent payments are missed, resulting in eviction notices and increased difficulties securing future tenancies.

Spatial dimensions include the proximity to services and immediate local environment, crowding, the health status of the neighbourhood the home is located in, and the social environment.

The *psychological dimension* considers the psychological meaning and significance of “home”, the stress associated with the material and spatial dimensions, how people view their own housing and how others view it, and the level of satisfaction with ones housing.

Interestingly, these dimensions closely resemble those in mobility frameworks and where they are linked to health concerns, they are linked to increased mobility. This suggests socioeconomic status, health, and housing are all interrelated at some level (Dunn, 2004). This research is particularly important for

this study, as it indicates there are multiple issues faced in marginalized communities, none of which can be viewed entirely in isolation.

Poor housing has both direct effects on physical health and indirect effects on the mental and psychosocial well being of tenants. Mould in homes has been linked to respiratory problems along with dampness and poor heating. Allergens can also lead to or exacerbate conditions such as asthma and upper respiratory infections.

Less noticeable, but equally significant effects of poor housing are seen in the negative impact on self-esteem and the mental health of inhabitants. In 1986, the World Health Organisation's *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* recognised shelter as a basic prerequisite for health citing work by Dunn (2002) that emphasised how inadequate or insecure housing can seriously damage health. According to Dunn, the chronic anxiety caused by insecurity, low self-esteem, social isolation and lack of control over home triggers stress levels that have been linked to cardiovascular problems, and depressed immune systems. Adding to this, individuals who suffer income, housing and food insecurity experience far greater stress – corresponding increased risk of illness and premature death.

Another topic area when considering health and housing is the role of mental health and how this influences housing lifecycles and mobility. Individuals who suffer from mental illness are more likely to end up homeless, and inadequate housing puts them in a precarious situation when it compromises treatment plans and makes them more vulnerable to violent attacks (Peralta, 2007, p. 29). The effect may be even more pronounced amongst women afflicted by mental illness

as they face a greater set of housing challenges that arise with motherhood, the lack of safe housing when violence in the home is experienced, the precarious situation when there is a loss of a partner, and the overall poor availability of adequate affordable housing (Peralta, 2007).

This relationship between health and housing is significant when considering mobility, and suggests that the consideration of dimensions of health may also factor in to mobility decisions. What is less apparent is how health is influencing these decisions. In some instances, health conditions may produce the need for adapted housing, while in others a health condition may be the source of an eviction as suggested by mental health research.

CHAPTER 4 – North Point Douglas Community Profile

INTRODUCTION

This research is particularly concerned with the study of mobility in marginalised communities, it is therefore important to set out the housing and neighbourhood conditions that may act to influence mobility decisions based on the literature findings. As the literature indicates, mobility in marginalised communities requires a different understanding due to the constraints and barriers that are present. For this particular research, the neighbourhood and wider context are important keys to understand mobility behaviours.

WINNIPEG CONTEXT

In Winnipeg as a whole, fewer affordable homes are available now than there have ever been in the past. Dating back to the devolution of housing responsibility from the federal government to the provinces, the involvement of municipal governments in the provision of affordable units has decreased dramatically in Winnipeg. Coupled with this decreased investment in housing were cut backs in social assistance and housing allowances, which served to further limit the choice and availability of housing. In a research report completed for CMHC, Finkel, Climaco, Khadduri, & Steele found that the housing allowance for individuals and families on social assistance has risen in very small increments since the 1980s, and has failed to respond to inflation and increasing rents in a more pressurised housing market (2006). The Manitoba shelter benefit is currently \$285 for a single parent with one child.

A possible goal of a housing allowance program is to increase the housing consumption of recipients, increasing the quality of their

unit, reducing crowding, or improving their neighbourhood. Usually a move is required for renters to increase the quality of their unit. Obviously, a move is required if an improved neighbourhood is desired. The Canadian provincial housing allowance programs do not accomplish these goals (CMHC, 2006).

Given the current market rates for rented housing and limited supply, finding decent accommodation in this price range can be extremely challenging. At these rates, individuals are increasingly likely to end up in Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units where the conditions can be appalling (Distasio, 2005). These factors may be significant contributors in mobility decisions, and the need to relocate to escape poor housing. A problem arises when there is difficulty securing better housing in a market with little to offer.

Employment statistics may also have a link with mobility patterns, particularly with regards to the affordability of accommodation, the ability to sustain a tenancy long term, and poor credit that may act as a barrier in lease agreements.

NORTH POINT DOUGLAS

North Point Douglas is located in the inner city of Winnipeg along the shores of the Red River and just north of the downtown area. The community borders include the Red River to the east and north, Redwood Avenue to the north, Main Street on the west, and the CPR rail line to the south (see figure 1.2).

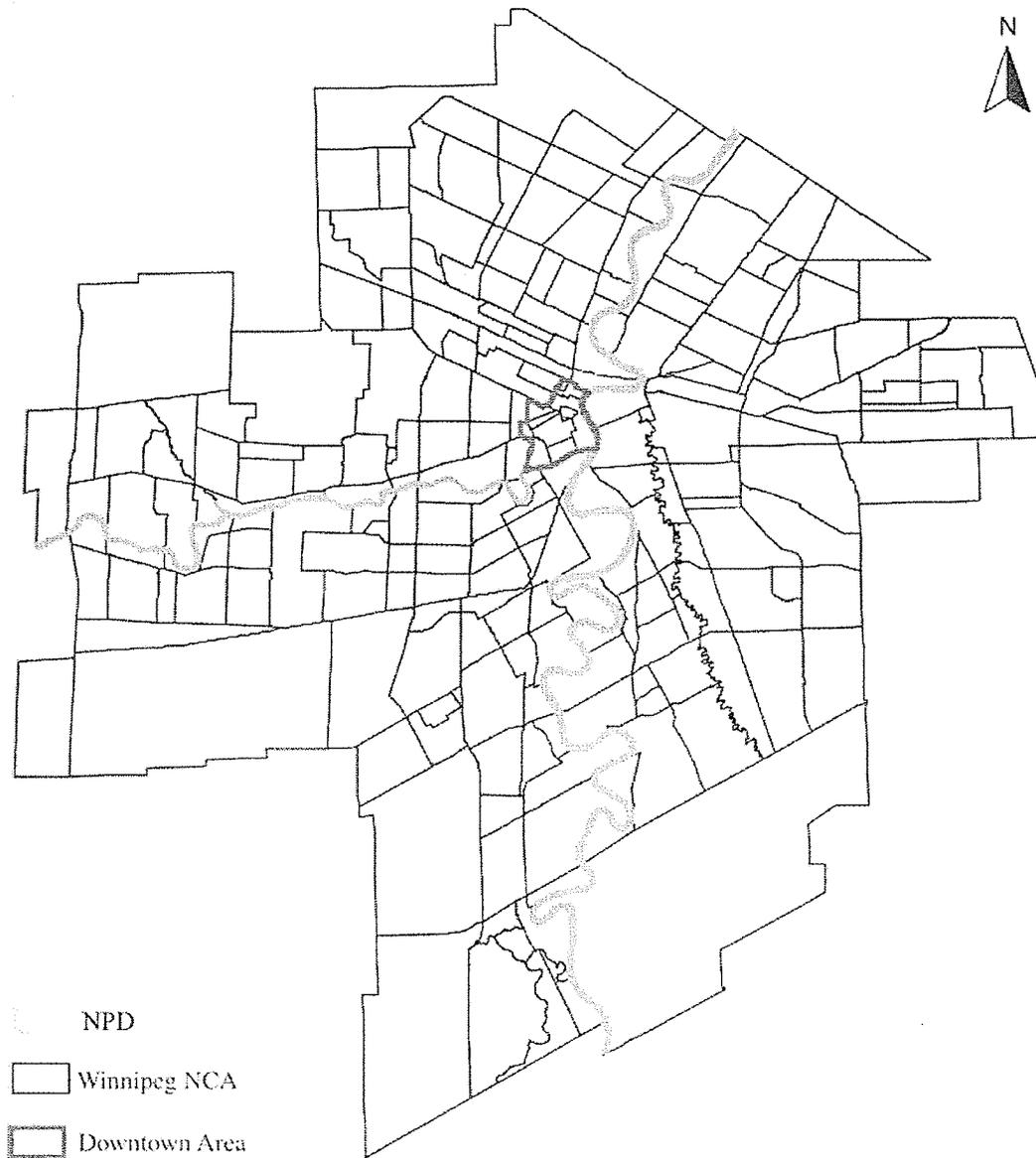


Figure 1.1 Map of North Point Douglas Community Area. Source: City of Winnipeg

The CPR rail line boundary has a historic significance to the neighbourhood, as it was the driving force behind much of the industrial development. Main Street on the west was at one time home to grand hotels and businesses, and now houses smaller strip mall developments and older hotels used for single room occupancy units. Small restaurants, clinics, and grocery stores dot the residential areas and draw business from the surrounding communities. The

area contains a substantial amount of industrial zoning confined mostly along the CPR rail line, a primary transportation hub during the neighbourhoods early years. This land use takes the form of scrap yards, milling, pulp & paper and lumberyards. There are also several commercial businesses serving the local community primarily along Main Street and Euclid including convenience stores and a local butcher.

HISTORY

The Manitoba Historical Society (2008) in their historical walking tour of North Point Douglas provide valuable data that helps recreate a picture of how the area looked in its initial formation in the late 1800's and up to its present condition. The area now known as North Point Douglas was originally populated by First Nations people who set up camp in the area due to its close proximity to the forks; a traditional summer meeting spot. In 1815, European settlers established Fort Douglas and the Aboriginal population disappeared from the area for some time. British settlers used the areas primarily for farming until the incorporation of Winnipeg in 1873 and subsequent arrival of wealthy families into the area. For much of the 1880s North Point Douglas was an affluent residential area with large single-family homes.

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) from 1883-1896 attracted new industrial developments that sought to take advantage of this new transportation route. With the industrial expansion, Vulcan Iron Works moved into the area and became one of the largest foundries in Western Canada employing hundreds of workers. The area maintained a mix of industry and residential

developments, as workers preferred living close by their places of employment. The CPR passenger line also introduced a new Ukrainian and Polish immigrant population to North Point Douglas, as the neighbourhood was very close to the primary passenger train depot. As the area became increasingly industrialised and greater numbers of immigrants arrived, affluent residents relocated to the more sought after areas of Winnipeg (Manitoba Historical Society, 2008).

Within two decades from the incorporation of Winnipeg in 1874, Point Douglas had changed from an attractive residential area where its most important citizens resided, to an area bisected by train yards, with factories belching smoke and dirt, trains rumbling through the area, their smoke darkening the skies (Manitoba Historical Society, 2008).

With increasing levels of industrial pollution, the neighbourhood began to appear run down and neglected. It was around this time that North Point Douglas became home to Winnipeg's sex trade workers, a reputation that further tarnished the neighbourhood. (Contrary to popular belief, Lusted Street in North Point Douglas was named after a blacksmith, Thomas Lusted, who operated on McDermot Avenue in the 1870s, and not as an indicator of the red light district). Rachael Street was the prominent prostitution venue, and was later renamed Annabella.

Several additional events inhibited the successful revitalisation of North Point Douglas. The depression of the 1930s saw a mass exodus of young people from the area in search of work, contributing further to neighbourhood decline.

Winnipeg's great flood of 1950 destroyed over 400 area homes, and this resulted in an intense period of reconstruction. Emergency flood relief funds resulted in

significant housing restoration and the area recovered to an extent. The introduction of the automobile and Winnipeg's Electric Street Railway system offered new means of transportation for workers and negated the necessity of living close by one's place of work. The out migration of workers from North Point Douglas fuelled by suburban infrastructure development resulted in a further population decline.

The demographics changed further as the out migration of older residents was balanced by a large in-migration of Aboriginal and Métis peoples. Absentee landlords often rented existing housing stock to newly arriving Aboriginal families. The low-income levels of this population quickly changed the North Point Douglas area (*Timelinks*, 2008).

STATISTICS & DEMOGRAPHICS

The statistics used in this study were derived from the North Point Douglas community profile obtained from the 1996 statistics, as the 2001 profiles will not be available until early 2009. The total population of North Point Douglas in 2001 was approximately 2,260 with a mixed ethnic community that is primarily Aboriginal, Ukrainian and Polish. Nearly 40% of North Point Douglas residents self-identify as Aboriginal or Métis versus 8% in Winnipeg as a whole.

The 2001 Census data indicates that the average income is approximately \$21,750 with fifty percent of households earning less than \$20,000 a year. Fifty percent of area adult residents have below grade 12 education levels and the unemployment rate hovers around twenty percent. Single parent households constitute forty five percent of area households, which is more than double the

city average. (Note: 2006 Neighbourhood profiles are expected early 2009 once the data becomes available from Statistics Canada).

AMENITIES & SOCIAL NETWORKING

There is one elementary school in the area, Norquay School, which is attended by students from North Point Douglas and surrounding North-End communities. North Point Douglas Women's Centre is a non-profit organization offering counselling services and programming for area women and children. The Centre serves as a major source of support and encouragement, assisting women to secure employment, training, and housing as needed.

The North Point Douglas Community Centre offers various programs for area residents, primarily children and youth. For example, there is an after school program which provides snacks and activities for those who attend. The satellite centre to the Community Centre also houses activities for the community including boxing, which is quite popular among the Norquay School children.

During the developmental phase of the *North Point Douglas Neighbourhood Housing Plan*, residents identified various amenities their community was lacking such as park space, payphones, a swimming pool, childcare, grocery stores and local banking facilities (Skotnitsky, 2003 p. 30). The lack of childcare is of particular importance due to the high proportion of single parents in the area. Childcare is often a barrier for parents trying to secure employment, or obtain training or post-secondary education. Positive aspects community members identified included the convenient location of North Point Douglas, the small town feel, and the people and spirit of the community (p. 29).

HOUSING CONDITIONS

Winnipeg's first great boom of 1881-1881 saw the construction of large family homes in the area as affluent families settled the area and replaced farmland settlements. By the time the CPR mainline was constructed, all farmland was hastily subdivided to make way for development. It was at this time that the development of Granville, Hallet, and Grove Street in North Point Douglas morphed the area into a primarily urban development.

Today, the housing stock in North Point Douglas is in a state of disrepair, and little evidence remains of the original architectural character. The majority of homes in North Point Douglas constructed before 1914 have undergone conversions into multiple family units and single room occupancy dwellings.

The flood of 1950 and subsequent renovation of homes contributed to the modernization of homes and loss of character buildings, and failed to address the root problems the community was dealing with such as unemployment and low incomes, and did not improve the standard of living for most residents. Ownership of homes by absentee landlords persisted, and a lack of property maintenance left North Point Douglas in a state of disrepair. Presently, North Point Douglas is one of fourteen Major Improvement Areas (i.e. areas requiring significant improvements due to decline of conditions) in Winnipeg due to the condition and age of housing, average selling price, percentage of renters versus owners, and demographic statistics of income, employment and crime rates (Skotnitsky, 2003, p. 7).

According to Winnipeg 2001 census data, sixty two percent of dwellings in North Point Douglas are rental units; nearly double the Winnipeg average. Sixty percent of homes were constructed before 1946, and approximately fifty percent of homes are in need of minor to major repairs. Approximately fifty percent of community members experience shelter poverty, spending greater than 30% of their incomes on shelter costs. The average rent is \$420, only slightly lower than the city average despite unsatisfactory shelter conditions (*Winnipeg, 2001 Census data*). In 2003, there were twenty-six licensed rooming houses in the area, and it is unknown how many were operating without a license.

MOBILITY DATA

From 1996 – 2001, mobility rates in North Point Douglas were higher than the city of Winnipeg average for residential moves within the city and province. Mobility statistics track moves within the past 5 years, but do not track the precise number of residential moves. Still, the data does offer some insight into mobility rates in North Point Douglas, and in particular highlights the differential in mobility between North Point Douglas and the greater Winnipeg area. It is also important to note that residents of North Point Douglas move more often within Manitoba, which may be indicative of migration from reserves to the urban area given the large presence of Aboriginal households in the area.

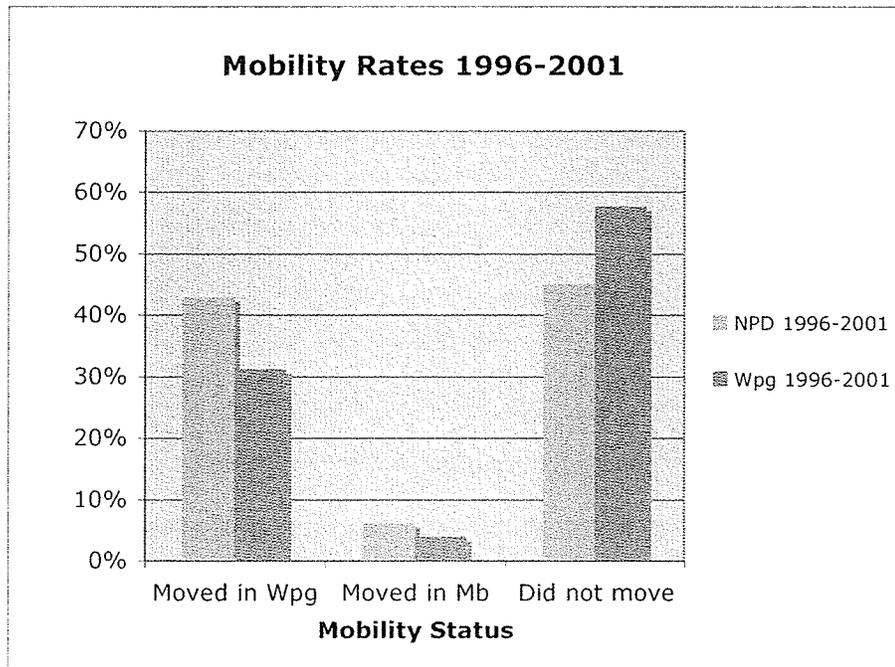


Figure 1.2 Mobility rates in NPD and Winnipeg
Source: Winnipeg Census Data, 2001

In recent years, there has been an attempt by government agencies and non-profits to provide adequate housing in the area for low-income households and individuals. Organizations have developed infill housing and new apartment style units subsidized through various funding grants and government initiatives. The community requires either assistance in securing adequate housing, or an innovative approach to housing that will meet the unique needs of the community.

The North End Housing Project (NEHP), a not-for-profit housing organization in Winnipeg's inner city, has developed new subsidized apartment units in the North Point Douglas community. The housing is intended to meet the needs of single parent families in the neighbourhood and consists of one, two and three bedroom apartments. Initiatives such as these are becoming more important

since spending cuts on subsidized housing have resulted in a lack of affordable housing throughout Winnipeg's inner city (*Manitoba News Release, 2002*).

The North Point Douglas Neighbourhood Housing Plan (Skotnitsky, 2003), a document developed in consultation with community members, identifies several initiatives that support the revitalization of the community. The five main priorities include fixing up owner-occupied homes, improving and maintaining rental properties, cleaning up the neighbourhood, promoting home ownership and alternative tenure options, and improving safety in the community (p. 10).

When community members were asked to complete a survey regarding what they liked most about living in Point Douglas responses that ranked highest included the central location and access to amenities, knowing their neighbours, dedication of community members, historic charm, and a sense of home (p. 29). These responses indicate there is a strong sense of community shared by residents who value North Point Douglas and that they are committed to the revitalization of their neighbourhood. Residents such as these will be vital in the restoration of North Point Douglas while still maintaining the history and charm of the area.

The neighbourhood is located on desirable waterfront real estate during an intense period of development in Winnipeg's downtown. These assets make North Point Douglas vulnerable to gentrification, as the surrounding area becomes the focus of revitalization.

In a recent news article in the Winnipeg Free Press, Turner (2008) documented the plans under consideration for a new Winnipeg Stadium, one of which proposes a location in the North Point Douglas area. Turner noted that the low property values in the area are attractive because tax increment financing could be used. The location in a 'blighted' area would also qualify the arena as an 'urban renewal' project making it a candidate for city funding. The proposal has been met with opposition from some of the community who are angered by the prospect of being displaced by upscale developments. This united community front presents an opportunity for this community to retain homes and property, and develop new housing options that maintain long-term affordability for residents.

CHAPTER 5 – ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS: WOMEN’S MOBILITY EXPERIENCES

The participant in this study represented a range of ages and backgrounds, and shared a wealth of knowledge about mobility in the North Point Douglas area and their decision-making processes. For the purposes of confidentiality, the participants in the study have been given pseudonyms, and any references to specific addresses have been omitted. The following provides a brief introduction to the participants, and the unique characteristics and personal histories they brought to the discussions.

Beth, a woman in her mid forties, had returned to Winnipeg just over 10 years ago after living in Calgary. She shared many housing experiences and recalled the poor housing conditions that led to her decisions to move. She often fears for the safety of her children who are nearing adolescence, and her husband who has a disability from a work accident.

Eve is a young mother who has moved throughout Winnipeg’s North end. She lives in the North Point Douglas area with her partner and young children. She recalled several experiences with neglectful landlords and a past confrontation with a neighbour that led to her eviction. She is on a waiting list for Manitoba housing at this time.

Claire is a single woman who lives alone. She has had very interesting experiences in housing and a journey that has taken her from supported housing for mental health outpatients to homelessness and using hotels for

accommodation. She also shared her past experience with addictions issues and how this affected her housing situation.

Faith is an older woman with two grown children, and has been living alone for a few years. She recounted moving very frequently when her children were young, and then in later years moving through bouts of homelessness. She has a strong opinion about landlords and the role they should play, and the standards accommodation should have.

Hannah is in her late twenties and lives with her young children in North Point Douglas. She is well known in the neighbourhood and provided a lot of insight into the behind the scenes issues in the area. She has had many housing experiences, and as moved throughout the North End. She also has a strong attachment to the area, and comes across as protective of the residents and the areas reputation.

Diane lives with her young children in the North Point Douglas area. She has lived throughout many North End communities, and sometimes travels back to her small home community outside the city. Diane had moved for several reasons in the past that put her in fear of her safety, namely domestic abuse and threatening behaviours from her partners family.

WOMEN'S MOBILITY EXPERIENCES

This section addresses the research question about what the housing histories shared by marginalised women living in North Point Douglas reveal about mobility issues in the community. The experiences participants shared

offered unique insight into the decision making process surrounding moving, and each respondent's perception of moving.

Images of Moving

When the women spoke of mobility, they recreated an image of moving and a sense of the feelings they associated with the experience. For some, there was a sense that moving was not that big an event, and there was a sort of *laissez faire* attitude associated with moves. When stress was mentioned, it was attributed to tasks associated with moving rather than moving itself. For example Dana, when asked if she felt stress when moving said she only felt stress when it came to waiting for the moving truck to arrive.

When I move I pack everything as I'm moving like taking everything. I don't pre-pack everything. I'm bad for that. When the truck comes that's when I start packing everything. But that's the only stressful part... (Diane).

In Beth's experience, stress was associated with the packing and preparation indicating contrasting views amongst the respondents and reinforcing the individuality of mobility experiences.

Very stressful! I really really do, because like packing... It's ok, but the thing is it's just looking for a place in a matter of time. (Beth)

This general lack of preparation for moves may suggest either that the event is not of utmost priority, the decision was made in the spur of the moment, or perhaps it has become clouded by the urgency of other events and life stressors. This attitude toward moving can be described as a "whatever" attitude, where moving is not viewed as consequential. This reinforces Barret's proposal that

there does not necessarily have to be something to be gained from each residential move.

In situations where there was little time to prepare for moves, or decisions had to be made quickly, time frames may not allow time to think about moving as they handle the burdens of additional stressors. For example, in situations where eviction has occurred or there was a conflict with a partner or neighbour, these concerns may take precedence.

When moving is associated with a fresh start it was viewed as less stressful because of the excitement and new opportunities that arise. As Diane shared, the feeling of starting over again and the newness of each experience were what she associated with moving.

It's exciting, like I'm looking forward to starting over again. It's just nice. I think that's the reason why I've always moved is because of the new place, the new location... That's the reason I like moving
(Diane)

Not all the women I spoke with shared this attitude, particularly those concerned about the consequences and impacts from moving. Beth spoke of the negative influence moving has had on her children and expressed a desire to stop the cycle of moving to prevent her children from falling into a similar pattern.

I've been working very hard on getting good credit under my name so that I can buy a house one of these days so that my children don't have to keep moving. Because I'm afraid that if I keep moving due to these houses that my children are going to get used to the idea of moving moving moving and don't feel settled, don't feel like they have roots. That they are going to get into a pattern themselves to keep moving moving moving and don't feel like settled. I want to provide stability for my children, in a good healthy house. (Beth)

Meanwhile, Faith commented that despite moving sometimes more than once a year, her children always had good homes. Interestingly, she saw moving as an opportunity to teach her children not to put up with slum landlords and poor living conditions.

My kids had like 30 places growing up... I'm not kidding, we were moving like every half a year... I told my kids if you don't do something for yourself it's not going to get done. You don't listen to nobody and that's where they get it from. They know mommy knows all about life already. (Faith)

Health Issues

During the conversations, it became evident that health problems also factor into mobility decision making, particularly when housing is exacerbating an existing health condition, or contributing to the formation of a new one. Physical impairments and disabilities are another health issue that contributed to mobility decision-making, in particular when properties had stairs that proved too difficult.

My husband had chronic lower back pain and he couldn't do the stairs, so we had to move from there. (Beth)

It is interesting to point out the use of the phrase "had to" which indicates a lack of choice.

The women were well aware of the health hazards associated with mould, and this was one of the major motivators to relocate in several women's experiences. Another health concern was the dust in ductwork as mentioned above, and the unsanitary condition of carpets, which some women believed contributed to their or their children's respiratory problems. Allergies were also a common concern, again related to dust and mould.

I have to make sure it's clean, because my son and I do have allergies and my daughter is developing allergies. From the mould, the dust. Because the landlord doesn't take consideration and check. Some of them don't, actually a lot of them don't clean out their furnace or their ducts. When the heat comes up or the air flows up it's pushing all the dust and I can smell it and taste it in the air. Plus, I had a landlord that covered up mould, they painted over it. (Beth)

The stress and emotional burden associated with poor housing conditions poses a mental and physical health risk for residents. Faith, who lived in a rooming house at the time attributed her recent health concerns to the stressors she was experiencing in her housing.

I got a lot of medical problems, I'm usually sick once a week if I'm lucky. I have sciatica and a bad back, and I usually get pneumonia. I had surgery, and since my surgery I've been catching colds and whatever, I'm always sick. And I can't sleep properly either at night... depression and dealing with all the pressure from that place. Like some days I feel like there's a brick on my head because of all the pressure I deal with from this place. (Faith)

Addiction issues contribute to residential mobility through a complex relationship where either addiction can attract a person to a community where there is an available supply of drugs, or related behaviours can lead to evictions and loss of housing. Alternately, a person may choose to leave a community to escape and recover. The women explained this dynamic in various ways. From Beth's perspective, addictions sometimes serve as mechanisms for coping with poor housing conditions.

It's to cope. To ease a little bit of pain, or frustration or stress. They turn to that. Meanwhile, it's even worse when they come down from the high. The problems are still there. (Beth)

Claire when speaking of her own addiction issues recalled how stability in her housing had helped her to live a healthier lifestyle.

When I was living out on the street I went to Elizabeth Fry and they helped me a lot with clothes and different things. And eventually I got into counselling where I straightened myself out and I found a room and drank all my money when I was out on the street. But then I found a place and I started bettering myself. (Claire)

Conflict

Conflict with neighbours, landlords, and management staff was cited as a reason for moving as a result of evictions or the need to move away from the source of conflict.

We were asked to move out of that place because my husband had a short temper and he had an argument with the resident manager. (Beth)

Domestic violence spurred a move for Diane who had to escape her partner and family members that lived on her old street.

It's not safe there because my ex-partner is very abusive. Yeah and he knows where I live plus his whole family lives on the same block. So I'm just waiting for housing again. I'm on priority so I should get it by the end of this month. (Diane)

In Eve's experience, it was the rules and regulations imposed by Manitoba Housing that led to an eviction after a dispute with a neighbour. In this case, the move was not attributed to concerns over personal safety, but was a form of compliance with housing rules.

What happened was um I got into a dispute with a neighbour that was supposed to be a friend. And she actually pulled a knife on me and I ended up fighting her in front of her door. But I got kicked out for fighting with tenants, but they still gave me a good reference and more or less she was the one who started it. (Eve)

Other times, the women may not necessarily be involved in episodes of violence themselves, but the constant presence of violence around them serves as catalysts for moves.

There was lots of violence there including when I was there and when I moved some place else somebody got stabbed in there, somebody got their face slit in there because of the pimps, two brothers prostituting one girl. And then she ended up taking a knife and she slit that guy's face. You know so lots of violence, I mean the police were called. You know you move into places and there's different things. (Claire)

Lack of Choice

Single persons on Employment and Income Assistance have fewer housing options available to them, and often resort to taking accommodation in Single Room Occupancies (SRO) or in local hotels that offer long-term room rentals. Two of the women I spoke with had experienced living in both SROs and local hotels, and had both positive and negative things to say about these experiences.

Sometimes you know, if you think it's easy to rent a hotel room there's none available so you have to live outdoors on the street. And that's very difficult especially in this day and age, including for women. So I mean it's really hard and there should be places for women to go to if they're out on the street but I mean there's nothing... (Diane)

When faced with homelessness women were more likely to lower their expectations for housing and take whatever accommodation they could get. In such instances, they often sacrificed their personal safety, their standards for the physical cleanliness of properties and the amenities available to them.

While some power struggles are more evident, some are hidden in the expressions of frustration with lack of choice, and feelings of discrimination or hurt. When speaking of the limited housing budgets provided to social assistance Beth and Claire alluded to the constraints the housing subsidy placed on choice, and having to settle for whatever accommodation was available.

The reason why families are renting these run down mouldy houses is because they don't get enough from welfare either. They may be asking for high rent, and the only area that is this cheap is our area... Point Douglas. But if you go anywhere else it's higher.
(Beth)

If welfare gave you enough money to afford a decent place to live in then you could pick and choose where you could live. But without the funding and the rent that they control at their \$285 price you can't find a decent place. (Claire)

This diminishes any sense of choice and runs contrary to the understanding of mobility decision-making and the weighing of options. For these women, accommodation is prescribed by budgetary confinements and the scarcity of affordable rental housing which too is often limited to certain neighbourhoods.

It's down to caring, you know... it just drives me crazy when the landlords think they can get away with things like that. It's one of the reasons why I don't want to rent anymore. I'm tired and tired and tired of renting. You know I'm 42 years old and I don't want to rent anymore. I've been working really hard towards getting good credit to buy a home and I see myself not buying a house in the city. I just don't want to do that. I prefer to just go out to the country and just go live out there. Live my life, the way I want to live my life. It's crazy it's nuts, I'm not the only one who's fed up with the city. The women who come here are sick of it. (Beth)

Affordability

Affordability was a recurring concern that had a significant impact on mobility behaviours. Concerns about affordability were expressed in a variety of ways

such as limiting housing choice, or making it more difficult to budget for basic needs. The women made a link between affordability and having to lower their housing expectations due to the realities of what was available to them in their affordability range.

...there are so many people in our community that cannot afford the rents that landlords raise up. They are paying almost double of what they get off of assistance. Like a family of 4 only gets \$451 for rent from welfare, so where are a family of 4 going to find a home around here or out of the area for \$450? And when the going rate around here is like \$650/\$700. (Beth)

... There's good and there's bad in housing... in this area rents are really sky high you know for housing for families \$600/\$700 that's a lot of money. Plus there are no good rooming houses in this area. Or decent places to rent, I'm just one of the lucky ones that found a good place to rent. (Claire)

It is very stressful because you always think like I only got this much now... how am I going to pay for this thing you know I have other bills to pay for besides just rent. (Hannah)

Housing allowance subsidies were seen as insufficient because the assistance provided does not correspond with current rent rates in the property market, so households have little choice plus a more competitive market with high turnover rates. It may also be that those landlords who are paid directly through social assistance have less incentive to respond to tenant needs since they are guaranteed their rent money regardless of the service they deliver.

I don't know how this is going to go, I mean it's up and down. Because where do you find a place that welfare allows you to rent at a decent price? I pay \$275 and they allow \$285. So you can't find a decent place....If welfare gave you enough money to afford a decent place to live in then you could pick and choose where you could live. But without the funding and the rent that they control at their \$285 price you can't find a decent place (Claire)

Beth recalled more positive renting experiences years ago when rents were much more affordable.

When rents were cheaper you'd get a lot for your money. A one bedroom 30 years ago was \$65/month. Now a room costs \$250 at least.... rents have been like that for 26 yrs or more. And if you see a psychiatrist you get a little more money... \$420 a month. If you don't need to pay bills and your getting a cheque every month you can buy food. If your living in a place where you have to pay for the bills and the phone and you smoke, there goes your money.
(Claire)

This dialogue about affordability reinforces the presence of constraints in mobility decisions and begins to provide an explanation for why these families are often relocating several times within the same area. The concentration of lower rent prices in particular areas of the city constrains and limits housing choices, forcing households to settle in neighbourhoods that may or may not be up to their personal standards. In many cases, areas with lower rents are also the areas experiencing greater decline, and with more exposure to negative neighbourhood influences such as gang and drug activity, and heightened crime levels.

Affordability, acting as a constraint and a barrier, contributes to a cycle of mobility within the same community area when the most affordable housing is concentrated in that area. The women I spoke with had spent most of their lives moving throughout marginalised communities, which suggests they are somehow confined to these areas despite frequent moves. An aspiration for better housing perpetuates residential moves, but market constraints limit households to blighted areas with poor housing conditions.

Manitoba Housing & Mobility

Housing waiting lists and the allocation of housing contributed to mobility decisions, and predicted the community areas women would move to. The location of Manitoba housing and other housing agencies units in inner city areas limits households to these areas and the opportunities present in them. Long waiting lists result in the need to secure interim housing that is suitable, especially when wait times are unpredictable and lengthy.

Positive aspects however were the quick response when dealing with maintenance problems and being able to easily contact the managers of the property. Women were more confident that the property would be well maintained, and if they did have a problem, there would be a quick response from caretakers. In addition, rent-geared-to-income lessens the likelihood that money will be displaced from other areas of household expenditure in order to make rent.

Yeah they [Manitoba housing] come right away. Not only that, but they make it so you can have a place, and have a space within your budget. What they do is they take your monthly budget, and then I think your rent is half of your budget or something. (Hannah)

Despite these positive aspects, Manitoba housing is not necessarily the best alternative to the private rental market. Women spoke of feeling constrained by the strict rules and regulations, had fears of eviction, and had experienced conflict with the tenants in their buildings. Securing Manitoba housing does not necessarily decrease mobility behaviours either, because stressors present in women's lives before securing housing still remain and can conflict with housing

desires. For example, the regulations in Manitoba housing were cited as a negative aspect, which in some cases contributed to evictions.

I've lived in housing and they throw you out for stupid reasons.They always have an excuse. I was living at [address removed] in Manitoba housing and they told me I tried to kill a guy with a TV set, trying to throw it out my window. And that wasn't true because there was no report, no cops came, I was never locked up and there was no proof. So I had to get that appealed with the housing minister at the legislative grounds (Claire).

Neighbour conflict remains an issue in spite of the tenant regulations imposed. Eve recalled an incident of physical violence with a neighbour that led to her eviction from Manitoba Housing:

...She got an immediate eviction and I got 3 months because they knew it wasn't my fault. They knew I was defending myself... so that's why I moved from housing to a tiny tiny one-bedroom apartment again. (Eve)

Manitoba Housing, while perhaps not the ideal housing arrangement for everyone, does provide a positive alternative to the negative experiences that occur with slum landlords particularly when dealing with maintenance and upkeep of property.

Landlord/Tenant Dynamics

Anti-landlord sentiments were among the most common dialogue exchanges, with most women reporting at least one negative encounter with a landlord ranging from disputes over maintenance of property to eviction for a violent incident. The frequent use of the term "slum landlord" by respondents implies that there was disappointment not only within the landlord/tenant relationship, but also with the condition of the property.

I know some landlords, they may fix up the place... but they do it the cheapest way possible. And the next thing you know it won't even last, and here they are putting more and more money into it the cheapest way. And meanwhile they could have got someone in to do a quality job, up to standards, up to code. Then they complain that I just got that fixed... I did this and I did that. Well if you would take the time to get a good quality person to do the work it will not fall apart. (Beth)

Oh some of the problems are the landlords, they don't keep up with the place. You tell them one thing and you know it's not done. (Faith)

There were shared feelings that the landlords' first and foremost concern was the collection of rent money before showing concern for their tenants or property. Landlords were reported as being very difficult to get a hold of, and once they were able to contact them, there was little or no guarantee that complaints would be heeded. In addition, landlords were seen as having little concern over the type of tenants they rented their property to, which caused stress for renters who felt unsafe living with the tenants in their buildings.

If you get in a rooming house at first it's good, then the landlords just take anybody in there and it doesn't matter who it is. It's a real awful awful kind of situation to be in, and there's lots of unsafe places to live. Doors were booted in, they weren't locked after a while, and people were coming and going at all times of the day and night

It's give and take but if you get booted out of one you can go back to another and some rooms are decent and some aren't in hotels. The Sutherland I was terrified of even going up and down the stairs. Because there was always somebody fighting, it stunk, if you complained they didn't care because you were the culprit and nobody else. And they know what's going on. There's a lot of junkies and prostitutes in hotels. (Diane)

Faith, whose mother had been a landlord herself, had particular disdain for 'slum' or absentee landlords because she felt she had been shown by her mother's example what a good landlord should do for their tenants.

My mom is a landlord and I've learned from my mom all the landlord stuff. There's tenants out there that are terrible too you know, it's not always the landlord's fault. But most of the time it is the landlord's fault, but you do got your bad tenants. (Faith)

Women also shared feelings of disrespect and discrimination from landlords, on the grounds of gender, race, age, income, and the presence of children. Eve reported facing discrimination because of her income level, while another recalled losing out on a property because of her young children and fear they would cause damage to the property.

I think maybe it's because I'm young and they try to take advantage. If you were in like your thirties or forties they'd be treating you different. They think you know a bit more but now a days it's pretty much the same. I know quite a bit... I have two kids, I've been living alone since high school... I know quite a bit. (Eve)

Claire experienced discrimination based on symptoms related to her mental health status, and was labelled as noisy and a troublemaker.

Right, and if your on medication it's another way of them saying you know you're too much trouble and you're noisy so that's another excuse for them to throw you out. And sometimes maybe they need the place for someone else. But you know it's not fair that you have a big label on your head, you know we can't help how we are. (Claire)

Among the women there seemed to be a desire to tell someone how they felt about how the landlords had been treating themselves or people in the community. There was also evidence of the power struggle that occurs between

landlords and tenants. Beth spoke of her experience renting from friends, and recalled the landlord saying things such as “this is my house”, which seemed to take away her sense of ownership.

...when you put your personal life along with your landlord/tenant it doesn't mix. You know, because they always come and complain about each other, and that kind of relationship isn't good. Just have it strictly landlord and tenant. Never rent off people you know, it just turns out to be a disaster. (Beth)

It seems like the women often felt powerless in the landlord/tenant relationship, and saw few people who could act as advocates on their behalf. Under such circumstances, mobility may serve as a means to escape the strained landlord/tenant relationship. It is unclear whether this mobility decision is an expression of individual power or choice, or rather a more passive reaction to the dominance of landlords. Within the constraints of market choice and financial constraints, moving may be one of the only ways women can reclaim power not condoning how they are being treated.

Poor Housing Conditions

Poor housing conditions were a focal point of conversations, with women providing vivid descriptions of the issues they had encountered in both their past and present homes. Mould on ceilings and walls is a recurring problem, and often a cause for distress because of the associated health risks and the lack of cooperation from landlords to properly remove it.

I only had two kids and um, I explained to him that you need the ducts cleaned. Because there was dust in there and you could smell it and I told him it's not healthy for my kids. And he wouldn't do it. So I only lived there for 2 months. (Diane)

In some instances, structural problems due to poor maintenance posed safety hazards for women and their families. Faith shared particular concerns about fire safety and was quite knowledgeable about the fire safety legislation.

I actually just took a board out of my window because the place ain't safe... all the windows got smashed a few weeks ago and I put a board on my window just to protect myself at night you know. But then I had to take it off because it's a fire hazard... I know it is a fire hazard because I shut a landlord down for that. I was getting scared with that toaster and what if something else like that happened and I couldn't get out. If the hallway ever got on fire how would I get out? (Faith)

Beth spoke of a malfunctioned furnace in the basement of her duplex, and reported that although the fire department had been out to review the situation, there was yet to be any action taken.

I have a furnace that is no good. My furnace in my unit is shot, it's a fire hazard and I haven't had word from the landlord yet when they're going to be bringing a new one. (Beth)

Poor housing conditions in the area are also seen to attract drug dealers to the area because the houses are already run down, and it may be easier to start drug operations in them. It is likely that the addicts move to the areas where the drug dealers are, because it supports their addictions. Moving away from the area may be a means of escaping the drug culture and the links that support addictive behaviour. Irene, who herself was a recovering addict, spoke of how negative influences can disrupt people's lives despite good intentions to lead a clean life.

Because they think the area brings them down and 'oh well when I moved to point Douglas I started smoking crack, and I started doing this, and I became a prostitute and' like they all have similar stories and ... I've had my ups and downs with that drug, especially that

drug. In this neighbourhood like there's people that will smoke you right under 'til you have nothing. They'll sit there and take your life away with you. (Irene)

Concerns related to physical conditions included infestations and pest problems, mould, structural problems, poor heating, broken windows, and fire safety. Interestingly, the women seemed to negotiate one poor housing condition for another, moving to escape a bad situation but often into another poor housing situation. Recalling her experience, Beth cited several moves within a short time frame that simply recreated subsequent housing issues for her.

...It was cold and everything, but I never saw any mice in that house. And then the landlords decided to sell. So from that place we moved to (address omitted)... that was mice infested. It was mouldy, it was awful. Then after that from that place we moved to (address omitted), that house had major mould and it was... every time we moved somewhere there was always a problem. (Beth)

Respondents mentioned problems with vermin infestations in their homes. Beth recounted her first experience in Winnipeg, which had particularly bad mice infestation and was the primary reason she moved from that home.

The first place that we rented was mice infested. So I had to move out of there real quick so it took me less than 2 weeks... as soon as I got there, the first night I was there I saw mice. So I got a hold of the landlady and told her it's infested, it's awful. There was lots of them, they were in the walls. (Beth)

There seems to be a level of compromise where women must consider what they are willing to live in and what they cannot bear to live in. This is disheartening, and suggests these women acknowledge that the housing they are in is 'as good as it gets' for them. Perhaps it is years of poor housing and the cycle of moving from bad to worse and back that leads women to lower their

expectations for themselves and their families in terms of the adequacy of their housing. This relates to a lack of choice as well, particularly housing within their range of affordability. It also speaks to the neglect of lower income people and the failure to set a housing standard that respects basic housing rights and needs.

I mean if anything isn't up to standard and code why do they leave these places open. They should shut them down...If I was a landlord I'd be embarrassed to rent a dump. Because some apartments you freeze in the winter because they're too cheap to turn the heat on. In summer you don't need much heat but in the winter it's totally different. (Claire)

Negative Neighbourhood Influences

Analysis of the data revealed a reoccurring reference to poor neighbourhood conditions and the desire to escape negative influences in the community. There were issues raised that were particular to North Point Douglas as well as issues experienced throughout much of Winnipeg's north end and marginalized areas. The women interviewed expressed similar concerns with the state of the area and in particular mentioned the overwhelming presence of drug dealers and drug houses in the community.

From the stories they shared, North Point Douglas seems to be a community that is constantly battling negative forces as seen by the presence of gangs, drugs, and prostitution. The women I spoke with raised concern over these issues, and told vivid stories of their own experiences. Of particular interest was Irene's reference to North Point Douglas as being different from the North End and much more overrun with drugs and drug dealing.

Some people that move here I hear them telling people you can't come to Point Douglas because you're from the North End and were going to beat you up. And I'm like come on now. I feel like it's all the North End... we're just more north or something. (Irene)

Although the woman could not provide any explanation for why people might view North Point Douglas in this way, she did speak of gangs in the area that may have contributed to negative perceptions of the community. Interestingly, respondents often referred to North Point Douglas as being part of the North End so it is unclear where this division occurs. An outsider visiting the community would likely be unable to distinguish it from other North End communities.

It seems there are distinct community boundaries defined by something more than the physical features of the area. Even within the community area, there is a sense of boundaries where one street is perceived as being more run down than an adjacent street. Sometime these boundaries are more noticeable such as the distinct differences in housing quality from street to street or an increase in gang tagging. For example, Irene reported that close to Portage Avenue the housing conditions tend to decline.

It is bad here though. It's like the land of the living dead [I laughed] I'm not lying, you can see the crack heads walking around like zombies. They're just like... when they're walking they just look at the ground and they're like focusing on everything thinking that they dropped some of their drugs. Like they weren't even there they think that they have them there it's like a real psychosis thing. And I see the same people every day. (Irene)

For some of the women negative influences in the community were particularly troubling because they feared for their children's safety and the effects these community problems may have on their children. A few of the

women referred to their children as 'street wise' in part because they had been surrounded by these negative influences and had learned at a young age the reality of drugs and gangs and the need to protect one's self.

Right now the side-by-side unit that we're in, the people next door they do drugs and the smell comes into our side. So they are endangering my children's lives and my life by them doing drugs. It's just the scent, it makes you nauseous. (Beth)

Along with the poor maintenance of property, graffiti and vandalism also contribute to the declining appearance of the neighbourhood. The general disrespect for property is evidenced by the graffiti on community buildings and houses, and lack of maintenance of yards, sidewalks and greenspace.

It is discouraging, I know Austin Street, the houses are awful. Even the yard we have to share... the kids on the other side have no respect for the yard or the house. They graffiti with chalk on the house, all over the sidewalk. They put bad names on there... cuss words stuff like that. To me, I like clean and tidiness. I like my yard to be nice and neat, that way so it's nice to look at.

That's why people move into here to sell or make drugs, because there's already mould in there so they start doing a drug operation in there. Cause if the landlord doesn't check up on his tenants, if he says "oh just drop off a cheque over here"... (Beth)

They also felt if landlords had more involvement in their properties, bad tenants could be screened out and they could set higher standards for the type of tenants allowed in their homes.

And if you walk into some of these rooming houses they're disgusting. And they have the nerve to rent to people? Some of them are scary even to go in there. (Claire)

Irene shared how drug dealers in the area use their influence to intimidate and force people out of North Point Douglas to protect the area that they 'work'

in. Local drug dealers targeted one family in particular, burglarising their property just days after moving in. This provides an understanding of what it must be like for people living in communities where they feel unsafe or victimized by others, and raises questions about how some people are able to withstand these community pressures. The drug dealers in the area seem to control what happens in the area and make it more difficult to revitalise.

Either those boys were going to get them out one way or another or like... They just have ways I don't know. But then this is what they did, the stupid move they did. They pulled a big giant truck to the front of their house and everything on that truck was brand new, like defehr and furniture and big TVs and stuff. The next day they got robbed. Like really really badly. I didn't even hear about it. I was wondering why there was curtains up in that house and then all of a sudden there was nobody in there. They moved the same day they got robbed, and uh then they shut the house up again and boarded it up. (Irene)

For some, negative neighbourhood characteristics were seen to inhibit a sense of community or belonging in North Point Douglas because they felt their safety was compromised which deterred them from being more involved in the community.

But now that I'm living in a community it doesn't even feel like a community. You know, community means to me that people pull in together and try to make it a safe place for our children and future children to live in. But that's not happening because they are just tired and stressed with looking and feeling unsafe in their home. You know clean, healthy safe home. (Beth)

However, some women proved to be more resilient to the negative aspects and despite feeling frustrated with the problems in the community they maintained an outlook that neighbourhood conditions could be improved if the community worked together.

North Pont Douglas just has a bad rep, a bad name. And it's because the people move here and give it a bad rep.... There are lots of people in this community who want to make it a better place to live. When I first started getting involved with the community, I was determined to help, because I... it was very very sad for me when I moved here to find what kind of people were wandering our streets. (Beth)

Of the women I spoke with, many felt a connection to North Point Douglas.

For some, this community attachment outweighs the negative aspects in the area.

I can't move, even though I've seen everyone in this area leave. I'm like the queen of PD [laughing]. I'm not even lying, everyone knows me by my name. They come to my house to visit, they bring me things. (Irene)

...They do like this area because they have families here, they have friends here.... The community is trying to make this area look more attractive, but there's a lot of run down homes. (Beth)

Other women who spoke of their desires to move away from the neighbourhood seemed to have reached a breaking point where they could no longer withstand the stressors in the area. However, even when this breaking point is reached, other constraints inhibit mobility outside the inner city area.

Housing conditions and negative neighbourhood influences play prominent roles in the mobility decision-making process. Financial status constrains housing choice and contributes to a cycle of mobility when housing that is more suitable cannot be obtained. This issue can be resolved through either supplementing incomes or providing more affordable housing options. The following chapter discusses initiatives and policy changes that could improve

housing conditions and the more predominant themes that emerged in the analysis.

The analysis of discourse on housing histories demonstrates that individuals have varied approaches to mobility decision-making, and the individuality of life experience alters these processes significantly. It can however be discerned that there are similarities present which have been discussed here. The analysis demonstrates the significance of looking beyond mobility rates to explore the constraints present and the barriers which are contributing to mobility, particularly where there are actions that reduce barriers and limit the constraints.

UNDERSTANDING MOBILITY: DEEPENING THE ANALYSIS

The following analysis explores the hidden meanings of what was being said and how the statements of the participants can be further interpreted in a reflexive manner to see more than the perspectives reported above. These themes are based on the researcher's interpretation of what is being said, and uses her understanding of the subject and context to look deeper into the text. This also uses the theory of structuration mentioned earlier, and explores these structures and their connection to the dialogue.

Reflexivity requires awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research. Reflexivity then, urges us "to explore the ways in

which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research" (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999, p. 228).

Barrett (1978) stated that powerlessness manifests as lack of choice and a sense of resignation from blocked housing aspirations. This was evidenced in observations such as negative comments about residences and participants' seeming resolve to the fact that housing conditions would not get any better. For example comments such as:

You can't be too picky you just got to take what you can... (Eve).

I mean I have a closet so if that guy was more considerate maybe things would run smooth. But I don't know if I'm going to move or stay, I'm undecided right now. But I like this place (Diane).

Like this landlord I have right now, I've had him for four years and he's never done nothing for me. Nothing! No matter what I tell him it's like I'm the one who's responsible for everything in there (Beth).

You could tell the landlord and he would do nothing about it. Where do people go if they aren't willing to do anything? (Diane).

The theory of structuration offers a theoretical understanding of the relationship between structure and agency. In the data analysis and the experiences women shared, several actions suggest that the women do engage in certain actions that can act to influence the housing system. For example, moving in response to poor landlords draws attention to the fact that there are problems with that landlord, which in turn may decrease the likelihood of others renting from them if they don't improve their landlord/tenant relationships.

However, the constraints in the market and barriers in housing often alter the response where others have no choice but to live in poorly managed tenancies.

A market that offers more choice and freedom would make it more likely that these actions would reshape the structures, so ensuring choice is available is a key proponent of structuration in this example. This relates back to the discussion of constraints and how one's social status influences mobility patterns, and in this example low socioeconomic status acts to inhibit upward mobility.

Because the nature of the housing market these women are moving within is one of high demand and low availability within their budgets, the likelihood of their actions to 'restructure' the system in the short term is small. Therefore moving from one place to another will not have the same effect as in a suppressed market where landlords desperately seeking tenants were forced to improve their housing to attract tenants. These reasons along with many others make it less likely that moving as an expression of power will have significant impact in the housing sector. It does however fit well with the affirming of self worth and maintaining that a person does deserve better and does not have to withstand the poor housing conditions and landlords that were so often mentioned.

Looking at the discussions collectively it became apparent that the word "tenant" was used to refer not only to one's self but other people in shared accommodation. While this seems insignificant in isolation, the reoccurrence is significant as it reinforces the power differential between landlords and tenant. Especially of note, is the phrase "just a tenant" which further minimises the status or position of the person and gives insight into feelings of self worth. In addition,

when referring to tenants, there seemed to be inference to the role of tenants in a property versus the roles of the landlord. While the landlord was expected to fulfil certain duties, there were inconsistencies in the role of the tenant and reluctance for the tenant to take on more roles than they felt they should.

Affirmation of Self worth

In acknowledging that they should be entitled to better housing for themselves and their families, participants showed that they felt there were things in place inhibiting them from achieving this. Self worth is closely tied to an individual's housing, both by how they feel about it themselves and by how others might perceive it. There was an overwhelming sense of disbelief about how another person could treat another human being in such a way... with few standards and as though they meant little more than monthly rent. Phrases such as "I deserve better than this" and comparing themselves to landlords living in "big comfy houses" displayed a certain sense of feeling small, or at least being made to feel small by the people in positions of power (i.e. landlords, banking services, housing providers and others).

I mean here, I guess they figure you know you're living in the ghetto in Point Douglas so they don't really care.... Nobody goes out to see, welfare workers don't even care where you're living. They don't care what your paying for rent. (Claire)

Expressions of poverty

When there are fewer chances offered to move up, women may end up trapped in a particular community and unable to escape the negative influences surrounding them. Being confined to a particular area often results in moves within the same area, where the new housing is seldom much improvement over

the previous situation. In most cases, the housing presented new issues and challenges, and it was apparent that some of the moves resulted in the negotiation of one problem for another. For example, movers may be willing to sacrifice the physical quality of their housing if they have better neighbours or vice versa.

The lack of choice women in North Point Douglas experience results in fewer opportunities to move upward in the housing market than other people might have, and restricts the type, location, and quality of housing that can be secured. Added to this the experience of fearing for their individual and their families' safety, worry about drug dealers on a daily basis, and feeling unable to make the changes they want to see in their lives. This is an awakening contrast with individuals who are able to choose where to live, what kind of layouts they would like their houses to have, how to decorate their homes, and have security in their tenure. It is important to recognise the constraints and barriers that these women face, and express so candidly, to move closer toward a better understanding.

The use of the word "pay" frequently throughout the discussions suggests that the affordability of housing and household expenditures is a consistent thought for participants. This reinforces the importance of affordability in housing, and may suggest that this causes greater stress than alluded to by the participants. Even when mentioning the amount of rent paid in a casual manner, it signifies it was an important element in housing and mobility decisions. It was mentioned by one woman in particular, that the rents in North Point Douglas were one of the attractions for low-income families who simply cannot afford to rent in other areas

of the city, which reinforces that income and affordability confine residents to an area and limit choice.

Protection of family

Many of the women spoke of their families in our conversations, and although they were speaking about their own experiences the stories they shared and the language they used made it apparent that they often put their families' aspirations and needs before their own. Moving away from areas to protect children, moving to new houses to accommodate family members' disabilities, and protecting infant children from health hazards were all amongst the reasons when recalling residential moves.

This suggests that there is a greater focus on the weighing of options than originally perceived, but perhaps the gravity of the situation sometimes leads to hasty decisions. It is unfortunate that feelings of fear preside over other factors in mobility decisions. Perhaps mobility would be viewed differently if researchers paid greater attention to the communities people are 'escaping' from, and how fear or concern alters the rationality in decision making processes. Situations where abuse occurs require quick solutions and unfortunately, these situations can reoccur throughout a person's live necessitating residential moves.

Regret and Loss

In some instances, moving is dictated by a life event that leaves a household with little choice but to relocate, or a partner or family member makes a decision for the household. Beth, who recalled such an example, revealed how saddened she was by the experience:

It was upsetting for me yeah, because my son and myself we didn't want to move to Winnipeg. I know how Winnipeg is... and it wasn't nothing new to me. We weren't happy when we moved here, it was my husband's decision for us to move back home here, and I didn't want to come because I felt Calgary was my home base... was my home. And then he just like tore the roof apart, that's how I felt like, like he just ripped me apart when he did that. (Beth)

Another woman expressed feelings of regret, and could not recall why she even chose to move in the first place. Perhaps this indicates this move resulted more from boredom, or just the need for a change.

I didn't have to move, I don't know why I moved, like I still... I don't know I just regret it still (Agnes)

This statement also signifies that the decision making process may be fragmented at times, and other life pressures may be altering the process. This is not necessarily the case in each move however, and cannot be viewed as a generalised approach toward mobility decisions.

Summary

This section demonstrates that the language used when discussing housing histories reveals deeply felt feelings and ideas about mobility. The emotions attached to each move are significant and often directly related to the mobility outcome or the decision made. The relationship between mobility and self worth and in particular the reference to feelings of powerlessness demonstrates that there is a need to address mobility at a level much deeper than simply shelter and accommodation. The lack of these elements in the theoretical frameworks indicates there is much to be learned about mobility, in particular within marginalised areas where decision-making is significantly constrained and altered by larger social issues.

MARGINALIZED WOMEN'S MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN RELATION TO TRADITIONAL FRAMEWORKS OF UNDERSTANDING

This section addresses the question of how the mobility experiences of marginalized women in North Point Douglas differ from the traditional frameworks of understanding mobility, societal reactions to mobility, and the methods used to address mobility.

Each woman with whom I had the chance to speak brought to the research a different set of experiences, and different methods of negotiating these experiences. It is clear that the uniqueness of these experiences makes it unlikely that they would fit neatly within any of the mobility frameworks; however, the frameworks do make it possible to begin to understand mobility from a theoretical standpoint when they are evaluated in relation to the concrete experiences elaborated above. It is almost immediately identifiable that constraints must be embedded in any framework aiming to explain mobility within a marginalised community. What is less clear is how different constraints shape people's mobility experience, and there is often an overlapping of multiple constraints making it difficult to identify both which constraints are most influential and more importantly how to establish a possible solution.

What is also evident is that life events play a large part in mobility experiences and decisions; however, the events themselves are less predictable than the most basic mobility theories predict. If mobility decisions are in fact made in conjunction with specific life events and life stages, frameworks fail to account for the vast variation in life events and those events that are anomalies or fall outside the 'traditional' life timeline. Women in marginalised communities

may be more likely to experience major life events or traumas that significantly alter their housing experiences, and thus mobility patterns. In most cases these are unplanned events, and do not correspond with the experiences of the majority, often used in devising these theories. Non-normative life events, their nature being unplanned, more stressful and in some cases traumatic, would likely have a significant impact on the mobility decision-making process.

The role of satisfaction is one that reoccurred throughout the discussions, however there were few accounts of actually being satisfied with the neighbourhood, the property, or the living conditions. This suggests there is an element of lowered expectations or standards for housing. In a sense the women seem to have resolved themselves to the notion that they won't find anything better or this is as good as it gets. This seems to be an issue of self-esteem, perhaps the result of multiple experiences where they have been dealt poor housing conditions and have given up on the hope that they can have the type of housing they aspire to. This, like the presence of constraints, is something that is less obvious but nevertheless a poignant expression of oppression by the less powerful societal groups. It leads us to ask what the underlying reasons for these women's mobility experiences might be, and when in life they begin.

As noted in the literature review, dissatisfaction with housing is a motivator in mobility decisions, and poor housing quality standards in the community often spur the decision to relocate. This has been substantiated in the analysis; however, constraints and barriers that limit households to certain areas of the city often mean relocating within the same area on multiple occasions. Improvement

in housing conditions in the North Point Douglas area may act to lessen levels of dissatisfaction and stabilise mobility rates. The development of housing quality standards that apply to a specific community area or blanket the city as a whole could ensure people are being housed in accommodation that is adequate, and guaranteed to be of a certain quality. The poor standards that are currently allowed without consequence are detrimental to the health and well being of residents and may be contributing to higher mobility rates within these areas.

Part of the difficulty is the inconsistency across the rental market due to the high number of private landlords who are often held unaccountable for the state of their property unless either a significant health risk is posed or an accident occurs. Even then, there are examples of properties that continue to house people despite posing significant health and safety risks, and often after receiving warnings or fines from inspection authorities. The Province, through the Residential Tenancies Branch or the City through code enforcement could impose the standards with an ability to regulate and inspect properties. The benefits of housing people in healthy homes would likely outweigh the costs and resources needed to develop these standards.

There is a great deal of work being done to improve housing conditions in the area, as evidenced by the area housing plan and other initiatives aimed at improving the quality and supply of homes (Skotnitsky, 2003). However, such initiatives need to reflect the needs of specific groups in the community such as marginalised households, as one blanket strategy is unlikely to encompass the needs of everyone. One method of ensuring this is through community

participation and listening to the discourse exchanged to enable practitioners to respond to community needs. Too often, projects are completed that respond to funding and budgetary parameters in precedence over what the community actually wants or needs. Ideally, the community would come together and voice their own concerns and aspirations for their community taking ownership of future developments and ensuring they are a response to their verbalised needs.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of the analysis has been to understand the experiences of women in North Point Douglas and their mobility decision-making processes. In order to learn from experiences, it is critical to listen to the discourse and contrast the different views expressed. Discourse has been the focus of this work, primarily because the literature revealed little concern or investigation into what individuals were actually saying about moving, and in particular, what mobility experiences were in marginalised communities.

The analysis focused specifically on what discourse reveals about women's individual and shared mobility experiences from both literal and reflexive interpretations, and how they compare to the frameworks of understanding mobility. There were three main research questions identified for the research process to guide the purpose of the interviews. These questions are as follows:

1. What do the housing histories of marginalised women living in the North Point Douglas community reveal about mobility issues in the community?
2. What if any similarities exist among the housing experiences of marginalized women in North Point Douglas?

3. How do mobility experiences of marginalized women in North Point Douglas differ from traditional frameworks for understanding mobility?

A number of factors emerged that seem to play key roles in the mobility decision-making process, namely dissatisfaction with the current housing conditions or arrangements, conflict with the landlord or neighbours, or dissatisfaction with the community area. The findings that emerged from the analysis begin to answer the research questions.

1. *What do the housing stories of marginalised women living in the North Point Douglas community reveal about mobility issues in the community?*

Analysis of the conversations with the women reveals that there are significant issues with housing conditions, affordability, and negative community influences that are spurring residential moves. In most instances, it was a combination of these three variables that acted together to crystallise into residential mobility. The frequency of moves reflects the inadequacy of the housing environment to provide for women's housing needs and suggests that frameworks for understanding residential mobility are less applicable in marginalised communities as they fail to account for many of the barriers present and the way in which they convolute the mobility decision making process.

The analysis reveals that mobility in North Point Douglas takes place in a context that is less understandable to researchers unfamiliar with the housing market oppression these women experience.

2. *What if any similarities exist among the housing experiences of marginalized women in North Point Douglas?*

In sharing stories about where they had lived the women offered insight into not only their experience with residential mobility, but also their life experiences attached to each move. The overwhelming influence of social relations in mobility decisions is one that cannot be overlooked, and mobility decision-making cannot be understood in isolation from the social relations through which practices, values and outlooks are expressed.

There is a significant power imbalance between landlords and tenants in North Point Douglas as evidenced by both numerous recounts of negative encounters and experience with landlords in the area. Addressing this power relationship will prove difficult and it is vital that women receive the supports necessary to ensure there is more equality in housing. One way in which this could be addressed is encouraging dialogue between landlords and tenants in the area to air their concerns. Addressing the generalisations and stereotypes both landlords and tenants have of one another would be a vital step in moving forward and improving relationships through a shared understanding of what the real issues and concerns are.

One of the ways power manifests itself is in the discrimination against women by landlords. This is a systemic issue that will prove challenging in a largely private rented sector with little regulation or controls in place. There is a responsibility for advocates to ensure community members aren't living in substandard housing conditions, and there needs to be greater attention drawn to the fact that these conditions exist within our cities instead of turning a blind eye.

Taking time to listen to the other and self reflect, one can begin to imagine that in a similar situation they too may become highly mobile individuals in search of better housing, and a better standard of life. However, one must also recognise how social roles can be the force that discourages upward mobility and simultaneously distances others from understanding the problem.

This may require a shift in thinking, as it is clear that adequate and affordable housing is not seen as or delivered as a basic right for everyone. Establishing housing standards would likely decrease mobility rates, as it is clear that in many cases moving is not a choice but rather a necessity due to the poor conditions in the community. Housing standards are an implication for planners on multiple levels through legislation and policy planning that is inclusive of and responsive to community need.

3. *How do mobility experiences of marginalized women in North Point Douglas differ from traditional frameworks for understanding mobility?*

Expanding upon traditional choice constraint frameworks, this research has attempted to identify how proposed constraints operate to limit choice in a marginalised community. While the literature indicates that constraints have a role to play in mobility decision-making processes, the understanding of this relationship is limited. Because researchers established these frameworks, they often have underlying assumptions that everyone aspires to the same social norms, for example the goals of owning a home and moving up in the property ladder. Identifying constraints in this matter is a shortfall because it fails to consider the aspirations of marginalised communities, and the constraints that

are acting against the realisation of these goals. Where aspirations differ, the ways in which constraints are experienced and dealt with will also differ.

The analysis of this research reveals a number of overlapping constraints in the housing market, and embedded within societal structures that act to significantly influence mobility decisions. However, it is less consequential to identify constraints if there is a lack of understanding around how these constraints are experienced on an individual basis, and what the response is to address them.

For example, where affordability issues are identified as a constraint, there will be a milieu of responses to this constraint ranging from seeking financial assistance to finding ways to supplement income where possible. In addition, where a constraint is present it is often interwoven with other constraints. For example, if a single mother is experiencing affordability constraints and the prescribed solution is to supplement income, this may not be possible due to the additional costs of child care this would impose.

There is also a gap between theory and practice where constraints are identified based on social norms not necessarily subscribed to in marginalised communities. For example, home ownership is a housing aspiration that may not be shared by everyone. If income is viewed as a constraint because it limits the ability to get onto the property ladder and into home ownership, but fails to consider that ownership may not even be a universal aspiration. Instead, income may be a constraint on housing conditions and the ability to secure safe, well-maintained housing. This failure to understand individual aspirations, limits the

ability to clearly understand how constraints operate, and what the solutions could be.

Promoting affordable home ownership is an example of devising a solution based on the social norms and aspirations of the dominant class, failing to consider whether ownership is something that is desired, achievable or in the best interest of all individuals. It is important to look deeper into what people really want, whether it is ownership, or rather the security and elements of individual control associated with ownership. For example, subsidised rent or other tenure types may be a method to address income constraints while still providing the perceived benefits of ownership.

An improved understanding of how constraints are experienced would aid in the design of a housing system that accommodates people in an environment that is safe, affordable, adequate and responsive to changing life circumstances. This could be obtained through wider engagement with community members to identify what challenges they are facing. Future research could build upon constraints frameworks to explore what the individual response is to constraints and how they could be assisted in this process. For example, where the response to constraints in the housing system is more frequent moves, mobility itself is not what requires attention but the constraints that are leading to mobility. Addressing mobility alone fails to account for many of the constraints present, and more importantly neglects to consider why women are moving.

Future research should also explore housing aspirations through engaging in dialogue to improve the understanding of how constraints act as barriers to these

aspirations, and the actions that could be taken to remove or lessen these barriers. Any response to mobility must account for these constraints and barriers and devise means of empowering and putting women in a stronger position to tackle their housing issues and achieve a level of stability in housing that also corresponds with their individual housing aspirations.

LIMITATIONS

The interview data was elicited during interviews with a small sample group of women from the North Point Douglas area in Winnipeg. For this reason, the data cannot be considered representative beyond the sample group, yet it provides an interesting range of perspectives, which offer insight into the experiences of highly mobile women. One limitation may be the size of the sample, and the lack of parameters set on who was eligible to participate in the study.

It is important to note that the analysis and conclusions are drawn from the perspective and interpretations of the researcher. The use of CDA is inadvertently accompanied by the intentions and biases of the analyst, however recognition of these biases helps the analyst reach conclusions that allow the reader to see the transparency of the process and draw out their own opinions and conclusions. While this study did involve conversations with women experiencing mobility, there is a limitation in that mobility was self-assessed by attendants at the local women's centre who had formed significant links in the North Point Douglas Community. This group does not incorporate women in the area who are not linked with local services and supports, who may also experience residential mobility as a much higher rate. In addition, as the study

group were only residents within North Point Douglas, the finding can only be considered indicative of the experience of these women in this particular area.

CHAPTER 6 –IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

From the analysis it was possible to draw out recommendations that would first and foremost improve housing conditions for marginalised women in North Point Douglas, which may in turn act to influence mobility.

When representing mobility statistics it is important to distinguish that simply representing figures fails to account for the constraints and societal factors that are contributing to incidence of mobility. Statistical representations should not be relied on as the only indicative signpost for issues such as residential mobility where a housing system that does not allow people to move onward or upward can be as negative or more detrimental as one that does.

Where the goal is to decrease mobility, the context of mobility must be considered, especially the community characteristics where mobility is higher and whether the goal is in fact necessary or a desired outcome for the community members most affected.

A better indication of housing conditions is required, and could be obtained by conducting a neighbourhood survey on housing conditions but the response rate is unlikely to be representative. A conclusive inventory of housing conditions would not overcome or address the problem of landlords simply not caring about their property, but it may enable the introduction of legislation mandating them to maintain their properties.

Related to an inventory of house conditions, it may be possible to introduce a minimum standard for property maintenance, particularly to address the

adequacy, affordability and safety of dwellings. By creating enforceable standards, it would be possible to encourage and monitor landlords' compliance with this. There may also need to be an incentive in place to encourage compliance such as tax breaks or innovative grants to repair properties to get them up to the set standard.

There is a need for an accountability structure to ensure more positive landlord tenant relationships. These two areas were among the most common predictors of mobility for interviewees, and in many cases contributing to repetitive mobility patterns.

Barriers that constrain and spur residential mobility need to be identified at a local level before they can be addressed. Initiatives that are introduced at the community level need to take account of local need, for example housing designed through participatory methods with community members will provide for better uptake of units and can begin to further develop a sense of community.

Housing choice needs to be re-established where possible to make sure that housing needs and aspirations are better catered to, despite the constraints that may be present. When the only available option was to move into poor housing the opportunity was often taken, but unfortunately this contributed to a cycle of mobility when the conditions of the new house proved just as unsatisfactory as the previous. If there was a greater element of housing choice restored or introduced, it may result in lower rates of mobility if the decision proves to be successful and better housing is obtained.

The analysis revealed a sense of pride in the community and attachment despite the concerns over the housing quality in the area. Many of the women interviewed had been involved in community led activities in the past, and conveyed a desire to improve the community. One way to harness this commitment could take the form of a tenant organisation that could act as both a venue for voicing complaints, and as an advocate body on behalf of local tenants. A similar approach is currently operated by the North Point Douglas women's resource centre to purchase and repair abandoned buildings. This service could evolve to become a wider housing focussed initiative, furthering the work already being done and at the same time requiring landlords in the area to be accountable to another form of community governance.

Capacity building and empowerment may be key strategies in addressing mobility where women are provided with the tools and support that enables them to identify and challenge the constraints and barriers they are facing. In some instances there were constraints revealed which were far more embedded in societal structure and these constraints require societal changes in order to address mobility. There is a body of knowledge on prejudice and discrimination in housing markets, and recognising that it exists in our communities will be an important first step in putting guidelines in place to combat it.

Finally, it is inherent that if any of these recommendations are to be put in place, it must be done through a participatory process, allowing the community to define their issues and needs, and the response they would like to see.

There are implications for planners, policy makers and practitioners to raise the housing quality standards, and pay greater attention to affordability issues. There needs to be a value for money approach where rent is not being spent on substandard housing, which in some cases is contributing to health and safety concerns of residents. The revitalization of blighted areas should continue to be a focus, as the decline in the physical characteristics of a neighbourhood contributes to its further decline.

THE ROLE FOR CITY PLANNERS

A significant finding drawn from the analysis is a need to address the issues behind mobility rather than viewing it as a behavioural issue. Policy makers and planners have a role to play in establishing a better understanding of why mobility is occurring, and to ensure that the context mobility occurs within is improved.

Planners often act as proponents for the development of affordable housing that stems beyond single-family units. Given the results of this research, a co-housing model with shared resources such as cooking and childcare may be one successful strategy. It is imperative that innovative planning strategies that attempt to revitalize these areas such as inclusionary zoning, community economic development, and participatory processes are employed. The benefits of such an approach could better the lives of residents who experience chronic mobility through promoting involvement and sense of community cohesion.

This research can help us go farther with developing useful alternatives in our planning system that are more responsive to diversity and cultural differences.

This research indicates that planning has a role to play in assisting in the creation and sustainability of healthy communities that are responsive to local needs. The failure of the planning system to be responsive to the community members can have detrimental effects, and in some instances acts as a barrier and constraint. Positive planning practices can be a vital tool in the restoration of communities through participatory processes and localised approaches.

Cultural planning may be a relevant issue that requires further investigation to determine the role it could take in addressing mobility. The need for supportive housing types and tenure forms related to this cultural mobility is slowly being addressed through the development of transition housing that can support cultural needs to return to homes of origin, while ensuring adequate housing is available in urban communities.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Because this number of participants in the study was small, future research could engage in dialogue with a greater number of North Point Douglas residents to draw conclusions that are more representative. As mentioned in the limitations, it would be beneficial to expand the interviews to include participants other than residents to gain insight into what outsiders or service providers believe contributes to and hinders residential mobility in the North Point Douglas community. For example, social housing providers and not for profit groups working in the front lines of community service delivery may have valuable insights to share on this topic. Apart from research on relocating for employment purposes, there has been little research on how employment affects mobility. In

many cases, marginalised individuals do not fit into these frameworks of mobility where the employment opportunity often results in upward mobility. The effect of under employment on mobility is one that requires further investigation if a conclusion is to be drawn that employment and job skills programs could have a hand in decreasing mobility.

Finally, dialogue with landlords in the area would provide the fairness of hearing the other side of the landlord/tenant relationship and what they see as some of the major obstacles and issues in the community.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The above suggestions and opinions have been reached as result of the discursive analysis of conversations shared between the researcher and the participants. Mobile women in Winnipeg's North Point Douglas area shared their stories, and the resulting analysis is based on my interpretation of what was said, combined with the literal meanings in the dialogue.

Having had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with these women and hear each of their stories, it is apparent that there is much to be learned from listening to the experiences of others and letting it shape our perceptions of a particular issue. In this instance, the women have allowed me to see into their experiences and view mobility from a much different perspective: one of struggle, one of expression, and rarely one of choice.

The implication for planners and those working in the delivery of housing and housing support services is one of ensuring there are standards in place that provide decent housing for every member of a community, allowing for

discrepancies in age, gender, income, and physical abilities. Once this is achieved, the context in which mobility occurs will be altered significantly and the behaviour will be more discernable from the barriers that both encourage and discourage residential mobility.

The analysis has revealed that mobility is not a simple statistic that can be easily altered, if the contributing reasons for frequent mobility are not uncovered and addressed. To ignore that the housing system itself contributes to mobility is an oversight, and creates the illusion that mobility is always a behaviour of choice. The findings demonstrate that mobility is often the result of poor and limited choice, and a system of barriers and negative community forces that act against housing aspirations and can entrap people in a cycle of mobility from one poor house to another. It will be key that this systemic failure of housing to meet people's needs is addressed if mobility rates and patterns are to see any lasting change.

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APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Can you remember the first home you ever lived in?
 - a. What was that home like?
 - b. Who were you living with at the time
 - c. Did you rent or own the home?
 - d. What was your income like at that time? (Employment, social assistance, shared rent etc.)
2. Can you recall the first time you moved to a different home?
 - a. Why did you move?
 - b. What was the moving experience like?
 - c. What was the new home like?
 - d. Would you say the new home was an improvement on the previous one?
 - e. How long did you stay in that home?
3. Each time you have moved, have you managed to remain in contact with people in your old neighbourhood?
 - a. If no, what are some reasons you lost contact? (Choice, distance, etc...)
4. Have there been reasons you chose to move not related to the housing conditions?
5. Have you ever wanted to stay in a home but could not due to other reasons?
 - a. Did you feel you could find assistance to stay in your home?
 - b. If not, what assistance could you have used?
6. What feelings do you associate with moving?
7. Do you anticipate moving within the near future? Why or why not?

*APPENDIX B – CONSENT FORM***RESEARCH PROJECT TITLE:**

Home in Flux: Learning from Highly Mobile Women in Inner City Winnipeg

Researcher:

Lindsey Graham

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This study was designed to gather valuable information from participants regarding their housing histories, and moving experiences. Participants will take part in interviews with the primary researcher where they will be asked questions about where they have lived in the past, number of moves they can recall, and what their moving experience(s) was/were like.

There is minimal risk involved for participants, and interviews will be much like everyday conversations. Participants have the option to stop the interview at any time. A tape recorder will be used to record the interviews, and the data will then be transcribed for analysis purposes. No names will be used in the reproduction of the results, and anonymity will be preserved.

Participants will receive a small honorarium for their participation.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions for their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

This research had been approved by the Fort Garry Campus Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail Margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's signature

Date

Researcher and/or Delegate's signature

Date

APPENDIX C – ETHICS CERTIFICATE



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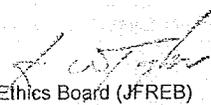
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APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

21 February 2007

TO: Lindsey Graham-Dyck (Advisor I. Skelton)
Principal Investigator

FROM: Wayne Taylor, Chair 
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: Protocol #J2006:149
"Home in Flux: Learning from Highly Mobile Women in Inner City
Winnipeg"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:

- if you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to Kathryn Bartmanovich, Research Grants & Contract Services (fax 261-0325), including the Sponsor name, before your account can be opened.
- if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/crs/ethics/crs_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html) in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.

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