

Housing Pathways of the "Missing People" of Public Housing and Resettlement Programs: Methodological Reflections

Beier, Raffael

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Beier, R. (2023). Housing Pathways of the "Missing People" of Public Housing and Resettlement Programs: Methodological Reflections. *Urban Planning*, 8(4), 279-288. <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v8i4.7058>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more information see: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

Article

Housing Pathways of the “Missing People” of Public Housing and Resettlement Programs: Methodological Reflections

Raffael Beier

Department of Spatial Planning, TU Dortmund University, Germany; raffael.beier@udo.edu

Submitted: 26 April 2023 | Accepted: 17 July 2023 | Published: 26 December 2023

Abstract

This article deals with methodological challenges and presents solutions for the study of people who depart from state-subsidized housing in Ethiopia, Morocco, and South Africa. Having sold or rented out their units, these people have left and now live at dispersed locations. Assuming that many “missing people” leave state housing because of project-related shortcomings, studying the reasons for their departure is crucial to understanding standardized housing programs. “Missing people” urge scholars to emphasize the afterlives of housing policy interventions as a necessary analytical dimension. However, such research is confronted with three major methodological challenges: How is it possible to approach and study people who have disappeared from the area of a housing intervention? How can one link exploratory, in-depth qualitative accounts, rooted in subjective perceptions of the everyday, to potential structural deficiencies of standardized housing interventions? What kind of methodologies may help take into account the temporalities of displacement and resettlement? In order to overcome these challenges, the article presents innovative forms of purposive sampling and discusses analytical strategies, which—based on Clapham’s framework of “housing pathways”—bridge relational and structural perspectives to housing programs.

Keywords

affordable housing; comparative research; displacement; housing pathway; housing programs; informality; resettlement; residential trajectories; slum upgrading; snowball sampling

Issue

This article is part of the issue “Between the ‘Structural’ and the ‘Everyday’: Bridging Macro and Micro Perspectives in Comparative Urban Research” edited by Nadine Appelhans (TU Berlin) and Sophie Schramm (TU Dortmund).

© 2023 by the author(s); licensee Cogitatio Press (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

Since the turn of the millennium, public housing and resettlement programs (PHRP) have been through a renaissance in several African countries and beyond (Buckley et al., 2016). Such government-driven, typically national programs seek to provide subsidized housing to those on a low income, requesting that they leave their previous dwellings and, except for cases of in-situ resettlement, move to another, more distant place. Most often, PHRP are merely called “housing programs,” and are supposed to move so-called beneficiaries to better quality and socially more accepted forms of housing. However, by avoiding the term resettlement, such unilateral notions ignore important challenges for people of adapting to a new place and way of living—even if it

is close to where they lived before (Beier et al., 2022; Deboulet & Lafaye, 2018; Koenig, 2018). Classic scholarly work studying the effects of PHRP on low-income people typically focuses on lived experiences, challenges, and opportunities of those who live in state-subsidized houses on respective resettlement sites (Beier, 2023a; Coelho et al., 2012; Harroud, 2019; Hassen & Soressa, 2018; Herath et al., 2017; Nikuze et al., 2019; Patel et al., 2015; Reddy, 2018; Salcedo, 2010). At first glance, it seems convincing and evident to study the effects of PHRP at the actual sites where the houses are constructed. Methodologically, it sounds straightforward to talk to people who live at the resettlement site and to ask them about their relocation and rehoming experience. However, such common practice contributes to a biased analysis as it leaves out an important group: those who

could not access resettlement housing and those who no longer live there.

In many studies on PHRP, it is acknowledged that some housing units remain either vacant or are not (permanently) inhabited by their original “beneficiaries” (Anand & Rademacher, 2011, pp. 1765–1766; Charlton & Meth, 2017, p. 94; Choi, 2015, p. 586; Coelho, 2016, pp. 123–124; Koster & Nuijten, 2012, p. 193; Patel et al., 2015, p. 249; Planel & Bridonneau, 2017, p. 32). In franco-phone research contexts, such a phenomenon is known as *glissement*, referring to a “dropout” of intended beneficiaries from housing programs (Le Tellier, 2010, p. 63; Navez-Bouchanine, 2012, p. 170). The extent of the phenomenon varies from context to context but tends to be significant. In extreme cases such as Ethiopia, authorities estimate that far more than half of the original beneficiaries no longer live in their resettlement units (Keller & Mukudi-Omwami, 2017, p. 177). However, very few studies have explicitly dealt with this group of people who are “missing” at the resettlement site (Beier, 2023b; Charlton, 2018). This is mostly because of practical, methodical reasons. Such people are likely to live in dispersed locations, so they are hard to find, contact, and interview (Herath et al., 2017, p. 567; Lemanski, 2011, p. 66). However, without integrating the perspectives of non-resident “beneficiaries” (whom I will refer to as the “missing people” of PHRP), any study of the effects of PHRP tends to produce biased results, likely resulting in an overly positive portrayal.

Rather than presenting and discussing the results of empirical research about “missing people” of PHRP, this article’s interest is methodological. The principal objective is to discuss methodological strategies to integrate perspectives of “the missing people of resettlement sites” into studies of PHRP. Based on my own experience with field research about “missing people” in Ethiopia, Morocco, and South Africa, I will elaborate on practical questions of sampling, outlining strategies to find, contact, and interview what I call an “unconsciously hidden population.” Beyond that, the article shows how such methodological practice, which is necessarily of a qualitative and exploratory nature, can bridge between its deep embeddedness into (different) subjectively perceived contexts and the ambition to complement more structural analyses of large-scale and standardized PHRP. For this purpose, the article will outline the “housing pathway” approach (Clapham, 2005) as a suitable analytical framework to grasp the shifting meanings people attach to their different dwellings over time, one which is embedded within a dialectical interplay of structure and agency. Housing pathways can contribute to a biographical understanding of how resettled dwellers perceive and experience the (attempted) provision of state-subsidized housing over a longer period. In addition, and beyond a contextual understanding of such housing pathways, the article advocates for a comparative analysis of housing pathways of people missing from PHRP in order to discern typical patterns and to under-

stand how specific characteristics of PHRP complicate the inhabitation of new dwellings.

While focusing on methodological questions and challenges, the article reflects on my own experiences with field research about people missing from PHRP in the growing capital regions of Ethiopia (Addis Ababa), Morocco (Rabat/Salé), and South Africa (Gauteng City Region). To increase the variety of investigated cases in Morocco, 10 additional interviews were conducted in Casablanca, the country’s economic capital. In total, the author conducted 101 narrative interviews across all three case studies. Representing typical examples of a millennial renaissance of PHRP in the Global South (Buckley et al., 2016), all three countries have implemented large-scale housing and resettlement programs to cater for a growing need for affordable housing. At the same time, all three PHRPs are part of national agendas to reduce the number of people living in informal, self-constructed housing and shacks (cf. Huchzermeyer, 2011). Whereas the Moroccan PHRP is only about the direct resettlement of residents of *bidonvilles* (shantytowns), the other two programs use waiting lists in addition. In the latter case, they are open to all people who do not own property and fall below a certain income threshold. Another significant difference concerning the phenomenon of “missing people” is the fact that despite the South African PHRP, the target population has to make a financial contribution to be able to access their new dwellings.

In the following, I will first briefly introduce the concept of “missing people,” arguing that it is crucial to integrate them into analyses and evaluations of PHRP. After that, I will focus on sampling challenges and discuss practical ways to cope with the hidden nature of the target group. Finally, I discuss the methodological framework of a housing pathway as a way to grasp the subjective reasoning behind decisions not to stay in new PHRP units—without ignoring the structural constraints.

2. The “Missing People” of Public Housing and Resettlement Programs

The phenomenon of people who depart from state-subsidized housing in the context of PHRP, which I am here referring to as the “missing people” of PHRP, can be divided into (1) those who depart after they have actually lived in resettlement housing and (2) those who have never accessed the units. The first category includes people who either sell or let their resettlement-housing unit—a contested practice, which I show below. Households belonging to the second category might have been unable to prove official eligibility criteria, which is, for example, common in the Indian context (Bhan & Shivanand, 2013, p. 57), or unable to afford relocation due to financial constraints and still high prices despite subsidies, common, for example, in Morocco (Le Tellier & Guérin, 2009, p. 662). In both categories, PHRP have forced people to leave their place of

residence (i.e., in an informal settlement). As they are not living in resettlement housing (anymore), both categories of missing people are now living in an unknown third place.

The missing people of PHRP are of both analytical and practical significance. As outlined briefly above, analytical significance relates to the inability to draw an accurate analytical picture of the effects of resettlement without including those who no longer live in resettlement housing at the precise moment of field research. Related to this, it is relevant to ask to what extent housing projects reach their intended target group and, beyond this quantitative interest, to understand whether and how standardized housing is improving the living conditions of resettled people. Why is it difficult for some people to access or stay in state-subsidized housing? Practically, such information could help to improve future PHRP. From a public finance perspective, a high share of non-intended residents at the resettlement site may signal gentrification and, hence, an undesired diversion of public money to less vulnerable population groups who would not be eligible for state support (Le Tellier, 2010, p. 64). Moreover, it is crucial to understand where the missing people have moved to and why. Most PHRP have the goal to reduce or even eradicate informal settlements (Beier, 2021; Dupont & Gowda, 2020; Erman, 2016; Hassen & Soressa, 2018; Meth, 2020; Planel & Bridonneau, 2017; Salcedo, 2010). If formerly resettled people return to informal settlements, this may thwart such political objectives. In Morocco, for example, high numbers of *glissement* of up to 50% have led to the introduction of some participatory planning elements in the early 2000s and a third-party scheme a few years later to improve resettlement acceptance and affordability, ultimately to prevent people from returning to informal settlements (Navez-Bouchanine, 2007, p. 418; Toutain, 2016).

As such, departure from state-subsidized housing is a deeply moralized phenomenon, which renders missing people prone to criticism and accusations. Especially if people are assumed to have returned to informal settlements, wide parts of society—notably politicians, housing activists, and other low-income people waiting for a house—see departures as signs of betrayal and profiteering by people who neither *need* state assistance nor *deserve* state housing (Anand & Rademacher, 2011, p. 1765; Beier, 2023b; Lemanski, 2014, p. 2947; Zaki, 2005, pp. 65–67). Consequently, many states that run PHRP—including all countries of this study—have introduced temporary resale bans that should prevent quick cash-ins of state housing. Even if resales happen on a legal basis, they often remain morally contested. In South Africa, public authorities conducted occupancy audits to check whether the original owners actually lived *in* their state houses, threatening non-occupants with sanctions, although many practices of non-occupation had never been unlawful (Lemanski, 2014, p. 2947). Because of that, many resales happen informally, which

lowers the price while increasing the risk (Beier, 2021; Mbatha, 2022).

Other than blaming people who depart from state-subsidized housing, some scholars tend to passivize missing people, assuming that they are forced—typically for financial and locational reasons—to move out and accept worse conditions as a consequence of downward raiding and gentrification (Lemanski, 2011, 2014; Navez-Bouchanine, 2012, p. 170). Notwithstanding the existence of severe constraint and force, such accounts leave little room for peoples' own perspectives and rationalities (Anand & Rademacher, 2011; Charlton & Meth, 2017; Doshi, 2013). Moreover, they do not aim for an in-depth understanding of what happens *after* people acquire state housing (Beier et al., 2022; Meth et al., 2023). In the next sections, I outline methodological pathways toward including the missing people of PHRP, focusing on both advanced methods of sampling and a people-centered framework for analysis.

3. Sampling and Interviewing an Unconsciously Hidden Population

It is widely acknowledged that finding and researching the “missing people” of PHRP at dispersed, unknown locations is challenging. Exemplarily, Lemanski describes her frustration with the impossibility of locating people who had left state housing (so-called “RDP houses”) in Cape Town:

Tracing previous owners (i.e., RDP beneficiaries who had sold or let their houses) proved impossible because current residents were reluctant and/or unable to provide specific locations for previous owners....I suspect that the problems I encountered in finding these people is linked to concerns surrounding the illegality of selling RDP houses. (Lemanski, 2011, p. 66)

Accordingly, the missing people of PHRP fulfill all criteria of a hidden or hard-to-reach population: “No sampling frame exists, so the size and boundaries of the population are unknown; and second, there exist strong privacy concerns, because membership involves stigmatized or illegal behavior” (Heckathorn, 1997, p. 174). Hidden populations have become a subject of discussion related to studies on HIV, drug addiction, sex work, and illicit activities. However, unlike these classic “hidden populations,” the missing people of PHRP do not necessarily form a conscious group with shared interests and clearly defined attributes (e.g., HIV infection, drug addiction, previous incarceration, etc.). This complicates research, as typical access points for field research, such as specialized NGOs, anonymous support groups, medical centers, illegal vending spots, etc., hardly exist. The shared group attribute (“departure from state housing”) is also less likely to stir specific support networks with strong social ties, as most people depart individually. Furthermore,

missing people of PHRP rather pursue ordinary lives that do not look different from those of their current neighbors, who might not have departed from state housing. Thus, I refer to missing people of PHRP as an “unconsciously hidden population,” which creates further challenges for sampling.

For people that are hard to reach, nonprobability purposive sampling is more suitable than probability sampling, which aims at statistical representativeness. Concerning hidden populations, chain-referral sampling (typically snowball sampling) is a classic, useful, and frequently applied sampling strategy (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015; Goodman, 2011; Heckathorn, 2011). In the absence of better alternatives and besides general weaknesses of nonprobability sampling, researchers have to deal with specific shortcomings of snowball sampling, including a potential referral bias that may lead to undesired sample homogeneity and self-selection bias, as well as the difficulty of reaching isolated respondents. However, concerning the study of people who leave PHRP, the above-mentioned characteristics of unconsciously hidden populations lead to three additional challenges for snowball sampling. First, as illustrated by the quote from Lemanski (2011) above, initial access can be difficult as typical access points are lacking. Second, effective snowball sampling is difficult when interviewees are unwilling to identify other people who are missing from PHRP due to the (perceived) illegality of state housing resales. Third, if we assume that departure is a rather individual practice and unlikely to inspire the formation of specific local support networks, missing people might not even know each other. Hence, interviewed people might be not only unwilling but also unable to identify others, and sampling chains are unlikely to be long.

Because of that, and based on my sampling experience with missing people of PHRP in three countries, I argue the diversification of access points and strategies for snowball sampling is even more relevant than for classic “hidden populations.” This requires a comprehensive understanding of local contexts and especially the social structures that shape the ways people depart from state housing, their destinations, and which group of people would be able and willing to identify them. For example, in South Africa, some people rent out their so-called RDP houses. A typical access strategy, as outlined by Lemanski above, would then be to ask tenants for the contact details of their landlord. Initially, my research assistant and I tried the same strategy, and through several leads, we found a tenant who gave us their landlord’s contact details, whom we subsequently interviewed on the same day. However, because of occasional (rumors about) sanctions by public authorities, many people in South Africa falsely believe that renting out an RDP house is illegal (Gordon et al., 2011, pp. 44–48). Although we ensured strict confidentiality and explained the purpose of our research several times, later, relatives of the landlord convinced them that the tenants wanted to betray

him to get his house, which made him consider evicting them. Only after another visit to the site did the issue begin to slowly calm down.

This experience made us reconsider our strategy. To reduce failure and mistrust, and to avoid escalation, two strategies seem to be most effective: (1) insider snowball sampling and (2) anonymous and individual contacting via publicly available phone numbers. Combinations and repeated adaptations of both methods (see below) may help overcome bias and achieve a diversified sample covering a solid spectrum of realities.

The first makes use of trusted insiders. In the Gauteng case study, this was a person, who belonged to a state housing community, aware of implicit risks and fears, and known to be trustworthy. She contacted former neighbors who had sold and current community members who were in the process of selling, planning to let, or staying in the area while renting their house out. Unlike leads from people outside the community, the contacted missing people were less concerned that third persons might find out they were not using the house in a “morally appropriate” way because they knew that community insiders would know which original owners still lived in their houses. Moreover, unlike renters who are hierarchically dependent on their landlord, the intermediate did not fear personal consequences. However, such insider strategies only work where some sense of community exists, which is not necessarily true in state housing communities.

In Morocco, insider snowball sampling did not concentrate on communities at the resettlement site but focused on established networks among former neighbors in now-demolished *bidonvilles*. While, in general, the neighborhood plays an important role in identity construction in Morocco, neighborhood pockets within *bidonvilles* are characterized by even stronger social ties (Arrif, 1999; Beier, 2019; Zaki, 2007). I built on previously established relationships with two resettled residents of two former *bidonvilles* in Casablanca and Salé with whom we tried to identify former neighbors who no longer lived in resettlement housing. They spread the word and contacted them via phone or through other contacts. There was very little reluctance to talk and widespread willingness to share further contacts of other missing people. However, social networks may erode with time if people live at dispersed and isolated locations. Whereas in Salé, about one year had passed between the demolition of the *bidonville* and field research, in Casablanca, it had been at least four years, making it more complicated to find interlocutors. In Morocco, 37 out of 39 interviews resulted from insider snowball sampling, compared to nine out of 27 interviews in South Africa.

In Ethiopia, people’s reluctance to talk was less due to widespread and negative public discourses about departure from state housing. Instead, people were concerned about commenting on housing policies in general, as Addis Ababa’s physical expansion is partially fueling

violent ethno-political conflicts (Alem, 2021). Therefore, also in Addis Ababa, trust was an important condition for successful snowball sampling. However, Ethiopia's capital's comparatively high share of departure (approximately 70% according to government estimates; Keller & Mukudi-Omwami, 2017, p. 177) offered the advantage that it was rather simple to find "insiders." Through personal contacts of my research assistant and others, we found a relatively large number of people who had got a so-called condominium and were no longer living in it. For respondents, the initial contact with the help of people they knew marked the trustworthiness of the researcher and helped to overcome initial skepticism. The interview often enhanced trust and—unlike in the case of South Africa—subsequently enabled us to pursue rather classic chain-referral sampling. In total, 31 out of 35 interviews could be realized in this way.

Thus, chain-referral sampling may be more likely to fail in contexts with greater mistrust and stigmatization around the departure from state-subsidized housing. Because of that, except for Ethiopia, where snowball sampling was most effective, my research assistants and I applied an alternative, more anonymous, and individual access strategy by calling people who had publicly advertised their housing units for sale or rent. In South Africa, this happens mainly on online platforms such as Facebook but also on blackboards in supermarkets. In Morocco, people write their numbers either on house walls or on electrical boxes on self-build plots. Notwithstanding comparatively high reluctance and refusal, this worked for 11 out of the 27 interviews in South Africa and two in Morocco. However, in South Africa, many people sell via agents who, except for one case (additional two interviews), did not share the contact details of their clients. Three other interviews in South Africa were realized by randomly talking to people in the streets—a tactic employed at different places while waiting for interviews. Through the same tactic applied in one resettlement community and one other further place in Addis Ababa, we were able to also generate four additional interviews in Ethiopia.

4. Comparing Housing Pathways of the "Missing People"

Another methodological challenge of the study of the missing people of PHRP is to produce knowledge that can fill the gap and complement existing research on the impact of PHRP on resettled dwellers in a meaningful way. As research about people's rationales behind departure (for technical reasons explained above) is necessarily of qualitative nature, research on missing people faces limitations for generalizations. However, suppose the interest is to enlighten general black spots of existing quantitative and qualitative research as well as to inform policy. In that case, the challenge is to move beyond empirical particularism: How to make use of in-depth data, which is inextricably linked to people's everyday

lives, for a more structural critique of PHRP? How to be mindful of people's agency without ignoring structural constraints (e.g., exclusionary program designs, widespread unemployment, or state-enhanced insecurity of tenure) that may push people to leave PHRP?

To address these challenges, I suggest comparing the housing pathways of people who depart from state-subsidized housing across contexts. The analytical framework of "housing pathways" goes back to Clapham (2002, 2005), who sees it as an approach that foregrounds the interactions that shape and the meaning that individuals attach to housing, how they change over time, and how they interrelate with other aspects of life, including employment and family matters (Clapham, 2005, p. 27). Epistemologically, the housing pathway approach is rooted in social constructivism, but—mindful of a potential overemphasis of micro-level interactions and individual agency—builds on Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration, emphasizing social practices as dynamic products of a dialectical and inextricable interplay of structure and agency. For Giddens, human activities may not be seen as purely individual practices but are embedded within space and time. He argues for an analysis of *social practices* that are shaped through individual agency yet always occur within the structural framework of social systems that such practices may reproduce and alter over time. Focusing on the dynamic everyday of regular, often routine-like social practices, he conceives individuals to be knowledgeable and reflexive agents who know—sometimes unconsciously—about the social systems in which they act and who may articulate their reasons for action (for a detailed review of the theory of structuration, please refer to Held & Thompson, 1989). Translating Giddens' time-sensitive notion of social practices to the field of housing, Clapham's analytical framework of a housing pathway sits at the interface of structure and agency, best designed to understand *why* people choose particular kinds of housing at a certain time under certain conditions at a certain place. Housing pathways always mark the dynamic analytical link between households' housing-related decision-making and its wider social structures, shaped, among others, through housing policies and related discourses (Clapham, 2005, pp. 29–32).

From a methodological point of view, biographical and narrative interviews are best suited to grasp the dynamic meanings that constitute housing pathways (Clapham, 2005, p. 240). As demanded by scholarship on urban resettlements, biographical interviews may be suitable longitudinal methods to grasp meanings related to changing environments over time (Beier et al., 2022; Beier & Strava, 2020; Meth et al., 2023). Likewise, biographic narration may represent a helpful way to forward the decolonizing project—especially if such methods invite marginalized and largely unheard urban groups to voice their stories and alternative readings of hegemonic urban policies (Ortiz, 2023). Thus, in my own research on missing people, people's narratives contained reflections

on all previous places of residence and future plans. This approach not only allows the collection of the reasons for people’s departure from state housing, but in line with the theory of structuration, biographic reasoning further enables us to understand unconscious aspects of decision-making anchored in people’s implicit contextual knowledge, their embedded experiences, and housing aspirations. Borrowing the words of Clapham (2005, p. 240), the aim is to “explore the unconscious meanings and actions, bearing in mind the constraints and opportunities that structure them.”

Concerning the interview analysis, I suggest combining a more thematic analysis (practically, this may be done through open coding and categorization, as inspired by grounded theorists such as Charmaz, 2003) with elements of a more sequential and reconstructive approach rooted in the work of Schütze (1983) and Riessman (1993). Such a combination is relevant because of the practical limitations of thematic-oriented coding to understand—in its hermeneutic sense—the more implicit meanings within longer narrative accounts of decision-making (Riessman, 1993, p. vi). While thematic analysis helps to grasp and structure meanings in relation to the subthemes of housing (access to employment, quality of shelter, community, etc.) as well as structural frameworks (e.g., housing policies), reconstructive analysis allows for more time-sensitive and in-depth interpretation of subjective reasoning related to variegated notions of progress and setback. If the number of housing pathways to be analyzed is relatively high, it is possible to integrate sequential and reconstructive approaches into analysis by creating schematic representations of pathways. As shown by Figure 1, these schematic representations capture all places of living (including type of dwelling) since birth, the most significant meanings respondents attach to each of them, as well as reasons for moving from one place to another.

Schematic representations may function as a first step towards a comparison of individual housing pathways and as a basis for typification. Developing typologies is an accepted practice in qualitative research that could function as a further bridge between the “everyday” (individual housing pathways) and the “structural” (e.g., housing discourses and policies, macroeconomic conditions, etc.). They represent careful generalizations

that are indispensable to inform and criticize policymaking (Clapham, 2005). To give an illustrative example, community belonging was a major factor in Morocco, influencing both people’s desire to depart and their search for appropriate alternatives, highlighting the adverse effects of Morocco’s PHRP-driven individualization (Beier, 2021, 2023a). In South Africa, a repeated pattern was people’s emphasis on the possibility of departure from state housing as a way to increase their resilience against potential shocks such as the sudden loss of their job during the Covid-19 pandemic (Beier, 2023b). In Ethiopia, the research reflected a severe housing crisis in the capital. Several people considered their condominiums a protection against future displacement from their desired neighborhoods due to rent increases and eviction. Anchored in the research objectives, typologies may set different thematic priorities, such as notions of subjective progress and relegation, major reasons for departure, types of destinations, and relationships to housing policy.

A last step towards an effective use of housing pathways of missing people for an advanced understanding of the effects of PHRP is comparative analysis across case studies. As the aim of the research project is to complement a larger gap in research about PHRP, a comparative analysis could help to identify more structural deficiencies of resettlement and large-scale quantitative housing supply—beyond contextual specificities. Thus, if housing pathways could help to identify structural frameworks that influence and constrain individual agency concerning place and time, a comparative analysis across contexts may help to discern repeated patterns of departure and to see missing people as a more structural phenomenon of PHRP. This could help to identify specific characteristics (or deficiencies) of PHRP that may promote the non-inhabitation of new dwellings. Robinson (2016) noted that such generative comparative analysis is useful to generate and revise concepts while being open towards a multiplicity of (previously underestimated) perspectives that may challenge dominant discourses. Again, it is possible to use certain recurrent themes and types of pathways to draw comparisons, for example, by focusing on the different expressions of the crucial relationship between housing affordability and departure. For example, in a first step, if the data were

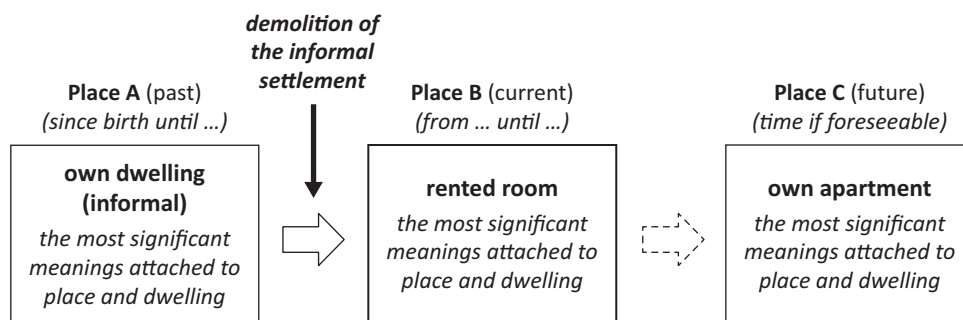


Figure 1. Possible schematic representation of a housing pathway.

to suggest that among all respondents of all case study samples, housing affordability issues were a major reason for departure. In a second step, one may analyze different expressions that could be linked to housing policy, such as the impossibility of affording access to state housing in Morocco versus the impossibility of affording continuous presence in state housing in South Africa or the impossibility of affording a desired life in rental accommodation outside state housing in Addis Ababa. The cross-case comparison increases the significance of repeated observations and allows for careful generalizations about the implications of particular modes of PHRP policy and implementation (including effects of resale bans) on people's inclination to depart, as well as their practices and destinations. Here, any attempts at generalization benefit from the analytical advantages of housing pathways as interfaces between people's everyday realities and structural conditions, showing how people who are missing from PHRP interact with policy discourses and frameworks.

Careful generalizations based on sound comparative analysis can serve to not only relativize the statistical representativeness of samples and findings of classic studies on the effects of PHRP but may offer multiple possibilities to further describe potential bias. The latter may be combined with basic descriptive statistics, such as counts of destinations and major reasons for departure, to increase the significance of results further. As such, it might be possible to argue why, for example, it is too simplistic and potentially stigmatizing to assume that people would return to informal settlements.

5. Conclusions

The departure of "beneficiaries" from PHRP is an under-researched but crucial phenomenon. This lack of attention may result from methodological challenges in finding the missing people of PHRP at unknown, dispersed locations. Being part of a larger research project about the missing people in housing programs in Ethiopia, Morocco, and South Africa, this article has proposed methodological strategies to integrate "missing people" into research on PHRP. Addressing sampling challenges, it discussed two innovative sampling strategies adapted to access an "unconsciously hidden population": snowball sampling through the help of insiders (local residents, former neighbors, personal contacts) and a more anonymous approach of making contact through house sellers' publicly available telephone numbers. Beyond sampling, the article sought to outline methodological strategies to understand the individual reasons for departure and how they relate to more structural conditions such as housing and urban renewal policies and affordability constraints. Therefore, the article foregrounded Clapham's "housing pathway" framework as a useful analytical tool inspired by Giddens' theory of structuration. In particular, the cross-case comparison of different housing pathways may offer a chance to bridge people's subjective and con-

textually embedded lived experiences and more structural deficiencies of housing programs. Comparative analysis makes it easier to enlighten the gaps in existing research on the impacts of PHRP and to put their findings up for discussion. As such, it is possible to link affordability, which appears across all case studies as a crucial structural constraint explaining departure, with people's own notions of unaffordability and the coping strategies that they employ, including the possibility of departure. In addition, the identification and establishment of typologies and repeated patterns (e.g., unaffordability) offer the chance to point at a significant bias of classic PHRP studies that focus only on the current inhabitants of resettlement sites.

Acknowledgments

This research was funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation), project number 456455682. It received financial support from the laboratoire Mosaïques LAVUE UMR 7218 CNRS. Besides, I feel indebted to my research partners Sawssane Bourhil, Soufiane Ching, Melisa Dlamini, Seble Fekadu Deyaso, Ghizlane Orkhis, Ntombizawo Qina, and Manon Trous who made this research possible. Furthermore, I would like to thank the Centre for Urbanism and Built Environment Studies (CUBES), Johannesburg, as well as the French Centre for Ethiopian Studies (CFEE), Addis Ababa, for their institutional support.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

- Alem, G. (2021). Urban plans and conflicting interests in sustainable cross-boundary land governance, the case of national urban and regional plans in Ethiopia. *Sustainability*, 13(6), Article 3081.
- Anand, N., & Rademacher, A. (2011). Housing in the urban age: Inequality and aspiration in Mumbai. *Antipode*, 43(5), 1748–1772.
- Arrif, A. (1999). Les compétences citadins à l'épreuve de l'exclusion: L'exemple du bidonvilles de Ben M'Sik à Casablanca (Maroc) [The capacities of urban citizens challenged by exclusion: The example of shantytown Ben M'Sik in Casablanca (Morocco)]. In P. Signoles, G. El Kadi, & R. Sidi Boumedine (Eds.), *Etudes de l'annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord. L'urbain dans le monde arabe: Politiques, instruments et acteurs* [Yearbook North Africa. The urban in the Arab world: Politics, instruments, and actors] (pp. 297–317). CNRS Éditions.
- Beier, R. (2019). *From the city to the desert: Analysing shantytown resettlement in Casablanca, Morocco, from residents' perspectives*. Logos.

- Beier, R. (2021). From visible informality to splintered informalities: Reflections on the production of “formality” in a Moroccan housing programme. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 45(6), 930–947.
- Beier, R. (2023a). Displaced but happy? Making sense of shantytown dwellers’ divergent views and experiences of resettlement in Casablanca. *City*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2023.2213462>
- Beier, R. (2023b). Why low-income people leave state housing in South Africa: Progress, failure or temporary setback? *Environment and Urbanization*, 35(1), 111–130.
- Beier, R., Spire, A., Bridonneau, M., & Chanet, C. (2022). Introduction. Positioning “urban resettlement” in the Global Urban South. In R. Beier, A. Spire, & M. Bridonneau (Eds.), *Urban resettlements in the Global South: Lived experiences of housing and infrastructure between displacement and relocation* (pp. 1–21). Routledge.
- Beier, R., & Strava, C. (2020). Losing or gaining home? Experiences of resettlement from Casablanca’s slums. In A. D. Storey, M. Sheehan, & J. Bodoh-Creed (Eds.), *The everyday life of urban inequality* (pp. 3–22). Lexington Books.
- Bhan, G., & Shivanand, S. (2013). (Un)settling the city: Analysing displacement in Delhi from 1990 to 2007. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 48(13), 54–61.
- Buckley, R. M., Kallergis, A., & Wainer, L. (2016). The emergence of large-scale housing programs: Beyond a public finance perspective. *Habitat International*, 54(3), 199–209.
- Charlton, S. (2018). Spanning the spectrum: Infrastructural experiences in South Africa’s state housing programme. *International Development Planning Review*, 40(2), 97–120.
- Charlton, S., & Meth, P. (2017). Lived experiences of state housing in Johannesburg and Durban. *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*, 93, 91–115.
- Charmaz, K. (2003). Grounded theory. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology—A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 81–110). SAGE.
- Choi, N. (2015). Metro Manila through the gentrification lens: Disparities in urban planning and displacement risks. *Urban Studies*, 53(3), 577–592.
- Clapham, D. (2002). Housing pathways: A post modern analytical framework. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 19(2), 57–68.
- Clapham, D. (2005). *The meaning of housing: A pathways approach*. Policy Press.
- Coelho, K. (2016). Tenements, ghettos, or neighborhoods? Outcomes of slum clearance interventions in Chennai. *Review of Development & Change*, XXI(1), 111–136.
- Coelho, K., Venkat, T., & Chandrika, R. (2012). The spatial reproduction of urban poverty: Labour and livelihoods in a slum resettlement colony. *Economic & Political Weekly*, XLVII(47/48), 53–63.
- Deboulet, A., & Lafaye, C. (2018). La rénovation urbaine, entre délogement et relogement: Les effets sociaux de l’éviction [Urban renewal, in-between de-homing and re-homing: The social impacts of eviction] *L’Année sociologique*, 68, 155–183.
- Doshi, S. (2013). The politics of the evicted: Redevelopment, subjectivity, and difference in Mumbai’s slum frontier. *Antipode*, 45(4), 844–865.
- Dupont, V., & Gowda, M. S. (2020). Slum-free city planning versus durable slums: Insights from Delhi, India. *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development*, 12(1), 34–51.
- Ellard-Gray, A., Jeffrey, N. K., Choubak, M., & Crann, S. E. (2015). Finding the hidden participant: Solutions for recruiting hidden, hard-to-reach, and vulnerable populations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 14(5), 1–10.
- Erman, T. (2016). Formalization by the state, re-informalization by the people: A Gecekondu transformation housing estate as site of multiple discrepancies. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 40(2), 425–440.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Polity Press.
- Goodman, L. A. (2011). Comment: On respondent-driven sampling and snowball sampling in hard-to-reach populations and snowball sampling not in hard-to-reach populations. *Social Methodology*, 41(1), 347–353.
- Gordon, R., Bertoldi, A., & Nell, M. (2011). *Housing subsidy assets: Exploring the performance of government subsidised housing in South Africa*. Shisaka Development Management Services. <https://housingfinanceafrica.org/app/uploads/RDP-Assets-MAIN-OVERALL-REPORT-FINAL-Nov11.pdf>
- Harroud, T. (2019). D’une marginalité à l’autre: Droit à la ville et pratiques de réadaptation des «bidonvillois» dans les nouvelles marges urbaines de Rabat [From one marginality to another. The right to the city and shantytown dwellers’ tactics of readaptation at the Rabat’s new urban margins]. *Annales de Géographie*, 2019(729/730), 14–37.
- Hassen, I. M., & Soressa, Y. A. (2018). Experiences of the poor in the contemporary urban resettlement of Addis Ababa. In E. Y. Alemayehu & L. Stark (Eds.), *The transformation of Addis Ababa: A multi-form African city* (pp. 127–160). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Heckathorn, D. D. (1997). Respondent-driven sampling: A new approach to the study of hidden populations. *Social Problems*, 44(2), 174–199.
- Heckathorn, D. D. (2011). Comment: Snowball versus respondent-driven sampling. *Social Methodology*, 41(1), 355–366.
- Held, D., & Thompson, J. B. (Eds.). (1989). *Social theory of modern societies. Anthony Giddens and his critics*. Cambridge University Press.

- Herath, D., Lakshman, R. W. D., & Ekanayake, A. (2017). Urban resettlement in Colombo from a wellbeing perspective: Does development-forced resettlement lead to improved wellbeing? *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 30(4), 554–579.
- Huchzermeyer, M. (2011). *Cities with slums. From informal settlement eradication to a right to the city in Africa*. University of Cape Town Press.
- Keller, E. J., & Mukudi-Omwami, E. (2017). Rapid urban expansion and the challenge of pro-poor housing in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *Africa Review*, 9(2), 173–185.
- Koenig, D. (2018). Problems endure despite policies: Urban livelihoods after forced displacement. In M. M. Cernea & J. K. Maldonado (Eds.), *Challenging the prevailing paradigm of displacement and resettlement: Risks, impoverishment, legacies, solutions* (pp. 75–94). Routledge.
- Koster, M., & Nuijten, M. (2012). From preamble to post-project frustrations: The shaping of a slum upgrading project in Recife, Brazil. *Antipode*, 44(1), 175–196.
- Le Tellier, J. (2010). Regards croisés sur les politiques d’habitat social au Maghreb: Algérie, Maroc, Tunisie [Perspectives on social housing policies in the Maghreb: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia]. *Lien Social et Politiques*, 63, 55–65.
- Le Tellier, J., & Guérin, I. (2009). «Participation», accompagnement social et microcrédit logement pour la résorption des bidonvilles au Maroc [“Participation,” social accompaniment, and housing microcredit for the fight against shantytowns in Morocco]. *Revue d’Économie Régionale & Urbaine*, 2009(4), 657–682.
- Lemanski, C. (2011). Moving up the ladder or stuck on the bottom rung? Homeownership as a solution to poverty in urban South Africa. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35(1), 57–77.
- Lemanski, C. (2014). Hybrid gentrification in South Africa: Theorising across southern and northern cities. *Urban Studies*, 51(14), 2943–2960.
- Mbatha, S. (2022). *Informal transactions of low income houses in South Africa: A case study of eThekweni Municipality*. transcript.
- Meth, P. (2020). “Marginalised formalization”: An analysis of the in/formal binary through shifting policy and everyday experiences of “poor” housing in South Africa. *International Development Planning Review*, 42(2), 139–164.
- Meth, P., Masikane, F., Buthelezi, S., & Belihu, M. (2023). Not entirely displacement: Conceptualizing relocation in Ethiopia and South Africa as “disruptive replacement.” *Urban Geography*, 44(5), 824–849.
- Navez-Bouchanine, F. (2007). Évolution de la politique urbaine et résorption des bidonvilles au Maroc: Succès et avatars de la «maîtrise d’ouvrage sociale» [Evolution of urban policy and shantytown clearance in Morocco: Successes and embodiments of “social contracting”]. *Revue internationale des sciences sociales*, 2007(193/194), 403–426.
- Navez-Bouchanine, F. (2012). Les nouvelles voies de la négociation dans les politiques de résorption des bidonvilles au Maroc: Entre recasement et accompagnement social [The new avenues for debate about slum clearance policies in Morocco: Between resettlement and social accompaniment]. In F. Navez-Bouchanine & A. Deboulet (Eds.), *Effets sociaux des politiques urbaines: L’entre-deux des politiques institutionnelles et des dynamiques sociales: Algérie, Maroc, Liban, Mauritanie* [Social impacts of urban policies: In-between institutional policies and social dynamics: Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon, Mauritania] (pp. 166–218). Éditions Karthala; Centre Jacques Berque; Emam-CITERES.
- Nikuze, A., Sliuzas, R., Flacke, J., & van Maarseveen, M. (2019). Livelihood impacts of displacement and resettlement on informal households: A case study from Kigali, Rwanda. *Habitat International*, 86, 38–47.
- Ortiz, C. (2023). Storytelling otherwise: Decolonising storytelling in planning. *Planning Theory*, 22(2), 177–200.
- Patel, S., Sliuzas, R., & Mathur, N. (2015). The risk of impoverishment in urban development-induced displacement and resettlement in Ahmedabad. *Environment and Urbanization*, 27(1), 231–256.
- Panel, S., & Bridonneau, M. (2017). (Re)making politics in a new urban Ethiopia: An empirical reading of the right to the city in Addis Ababa’s condominiums. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 11(1), 24–45.
- Reddy, A. A. (2018). Involuntary resettlement as an opportunity for development: The case of urban resettlers of the New Tehri Town. *Journal of Land and Rural Studies*, 6(2), 145–169.
- Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. SAGE.
- Robinson, J. (2016). Thinking cities through elsewhere: Comparative tactics for a more global urban studies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 40(1), 3–29.
- Salcedo, R. (2010). The last slum: Moving from illegal settlements to subsidized home ownership in Chile. *Urban Affairs Review*, 46(1), 90–118.
- Schütze, F. (1983). Biographieforschung und narratives Interview [Biographical research and narrative interview]. *Neue Praxis*, 3, 283–293.
- Toutain, O. (2016). The experience of private investment and funding: The relocation of the Karyan Thomas and Douar Skouila households. In J.-C. Bolay, J. Chenal, & Y. Pedrazzini (Eds.), *Learning from the slums for the development of emerging cities* (pp. 137–147). Springer.
- Zaki, L. (2005). *Pratiques politiques au bidonville, Casablanca (2000–2005)* [Political practice in Casablanca’s shantytowns (2000–2005)] [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Centre d’Etudes et de Recherches Internationales, Paris.
- Zaki, L. (2007). Après le bidonville: Les relogés de Lahjajma (Casablanca): Entre déni et nostalgie [After the shantytown: The resettled people of Lahjajma (Casablanca): Between denial and nostalgia]. In S. Mazzella (Ed.), *L’enseignement supérieur dans la mondialisation libérale* [Higher education in the context of liberal globalisation] (pp. 277–294). IRMC.

About the Author



Raffael Beier (PhD) is deputy chair of the “International Planning Studies” research group at TU Dortmund University. Trained as an urban geographer in Germany and France, he obtained a joint PhD from the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague, and Ruhr University Bochum (RUB). His main research interests include housing, informality, and inequality, as well as displacement, resettlement, and urban migration. Recently, he published the co-edited volume *Urban Resettlement in the Global South* (Routledge, 2022).