

Accounting for dynamic families and communities in place-based evaluations

Brett Theodos and Claudia Coulton

*Support for this study provided by the
Annie E. Casey Foundation*



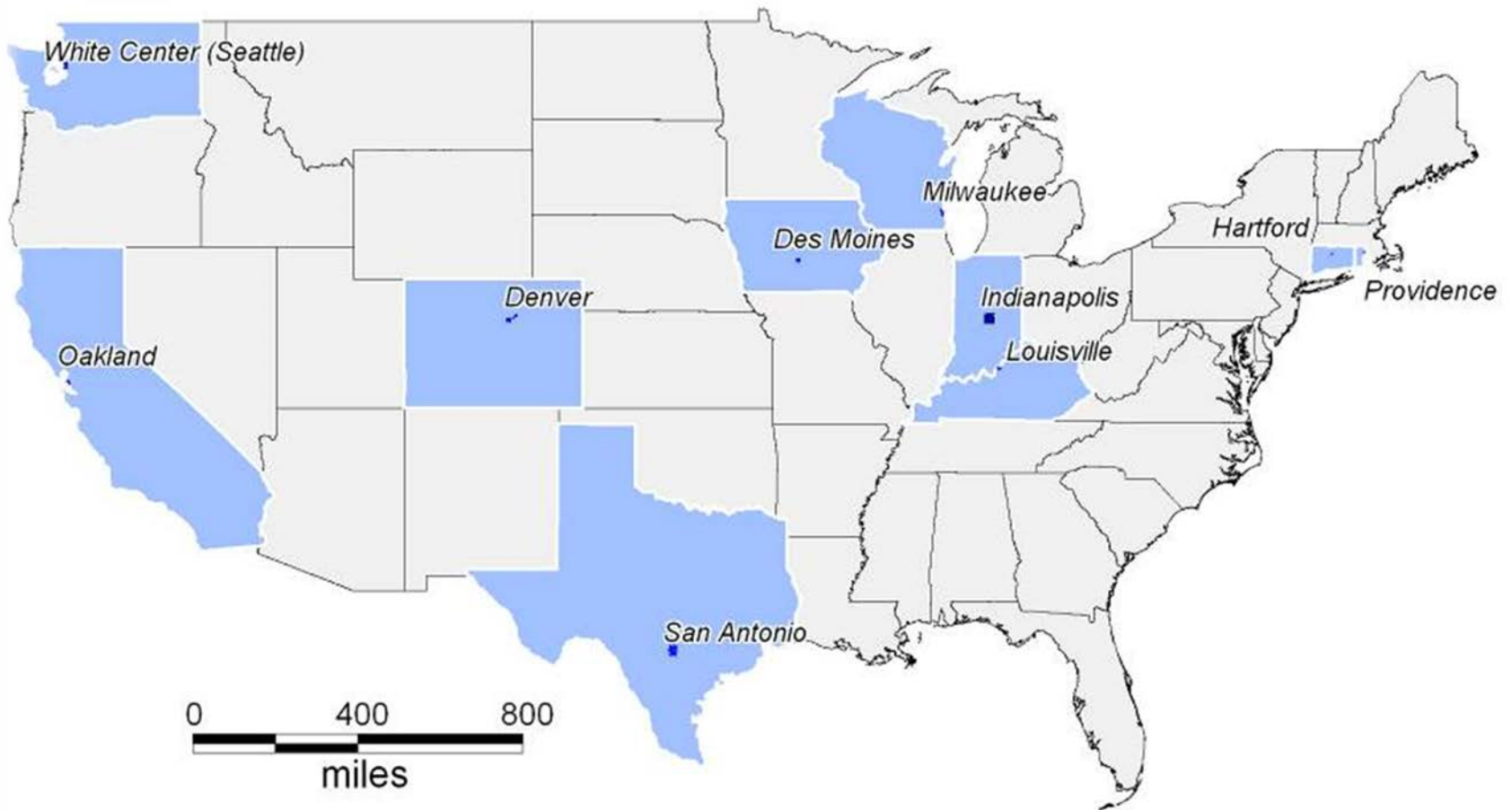
Motivation

- Place-based initiatives have dual aims to benefit people and neighborhoods
- Residential mobility key factor affecting both:
 - Individuals may move to better situations, but moves can also be disruptive
 - Neighborhoods instability can reduce collective efficacy, but neighborhood choice adds vitality
- Elements of theory (e.g. exposure, engagement and social processes) may falter due to mobility

A look at Neighborhood Stability

- Residential instability a concern in poor neighborhoods
 - Churning moves can lead to worse outcomes for families and, in particular, kids
 - Negative effect on collective efficacy
 - Resident engagement and leadership difficult to sustain
- Knowing what types of households, housing units, and neighborhoods are prone to instability can guide stabilization efforts

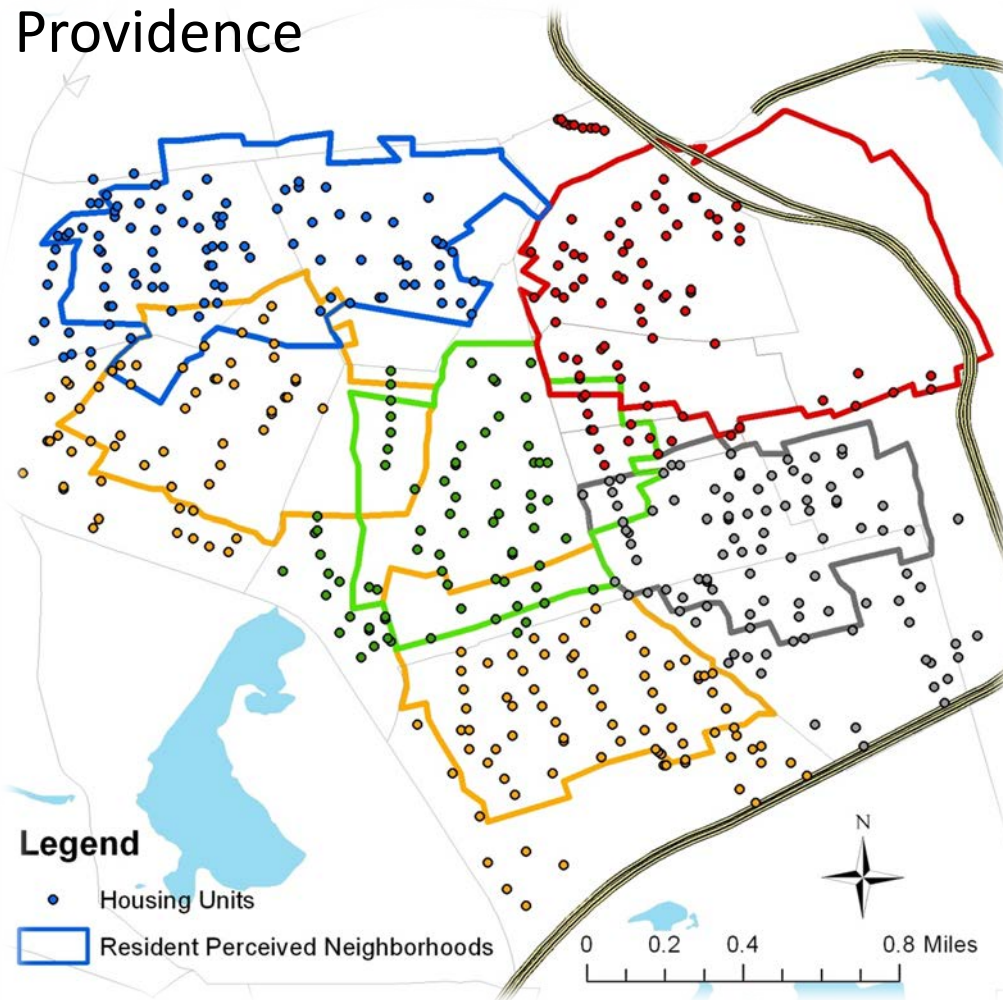
Making Connections Sites



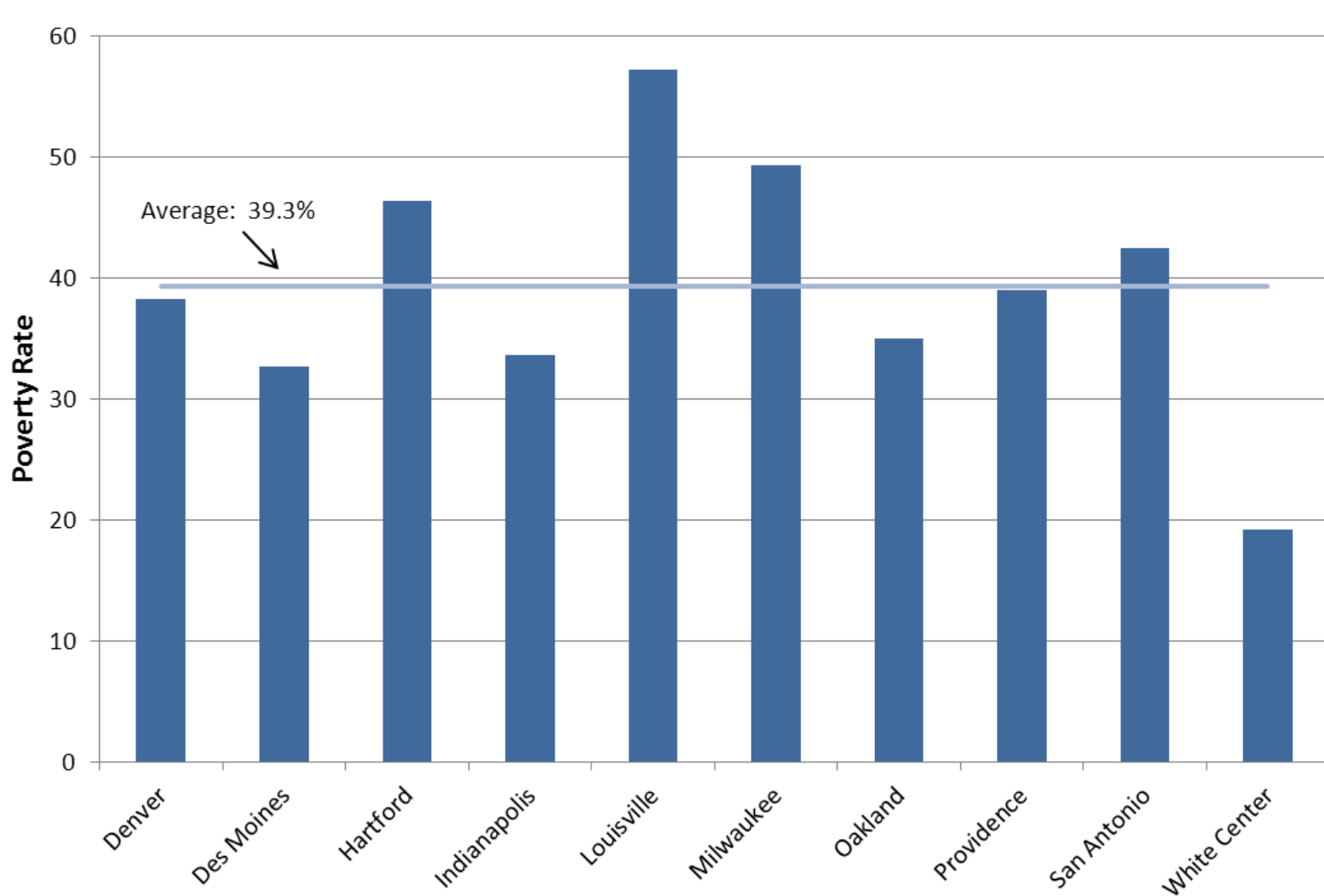
Housing Unit Panel Ideal for Investigating Residential Mobility in Neighborhoods

- Track representative sample of same units (nested within neighborhoods) over multiple waves
 - Wave I (2002-03)
 - Wave II (2005-06)
 - Wave III (2008-09)
- Follow families over-time after they leave the neighborhood

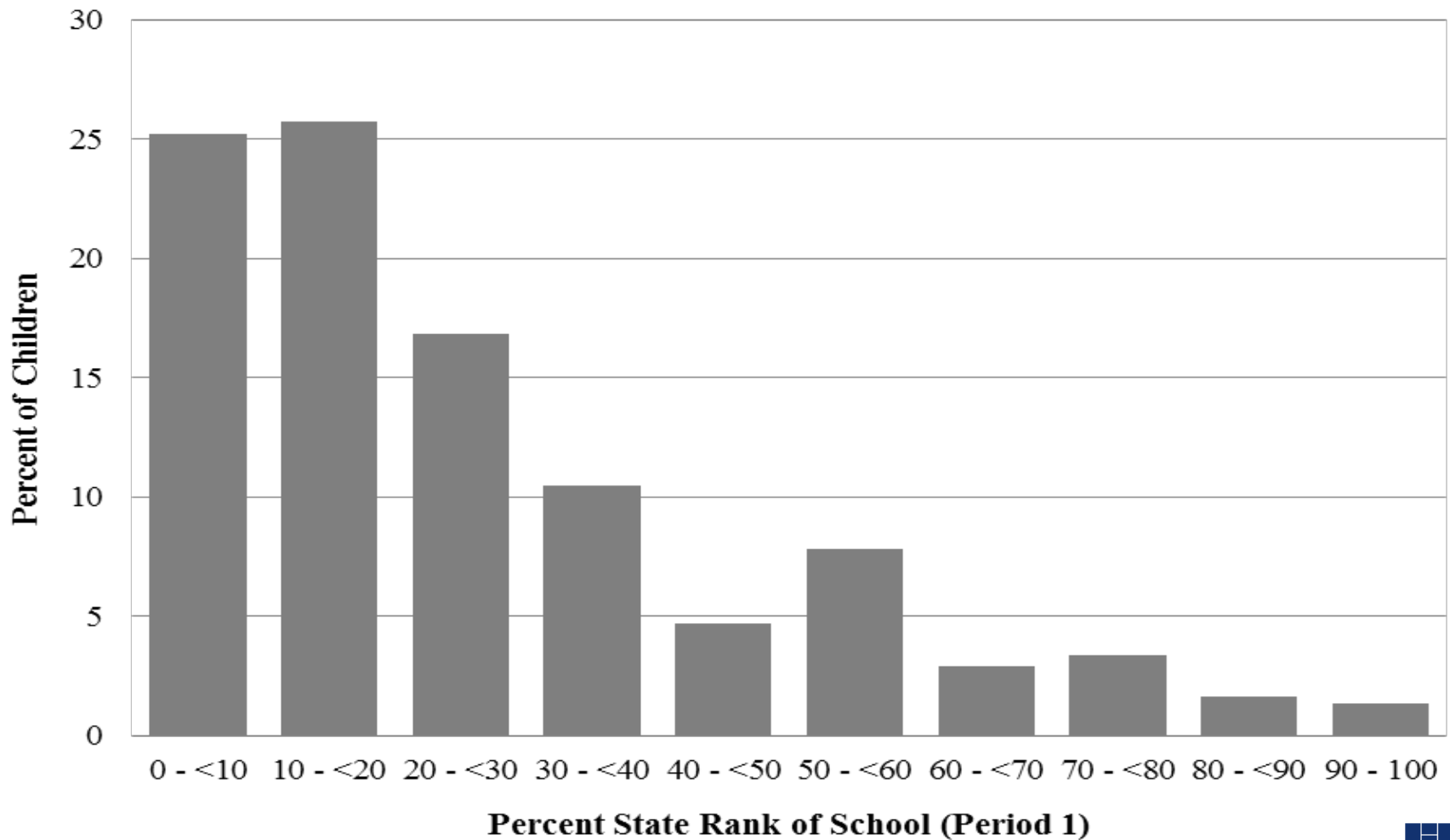
Using Resident Defined Neighborhoods



Target neighborhoods Disadvantaged:



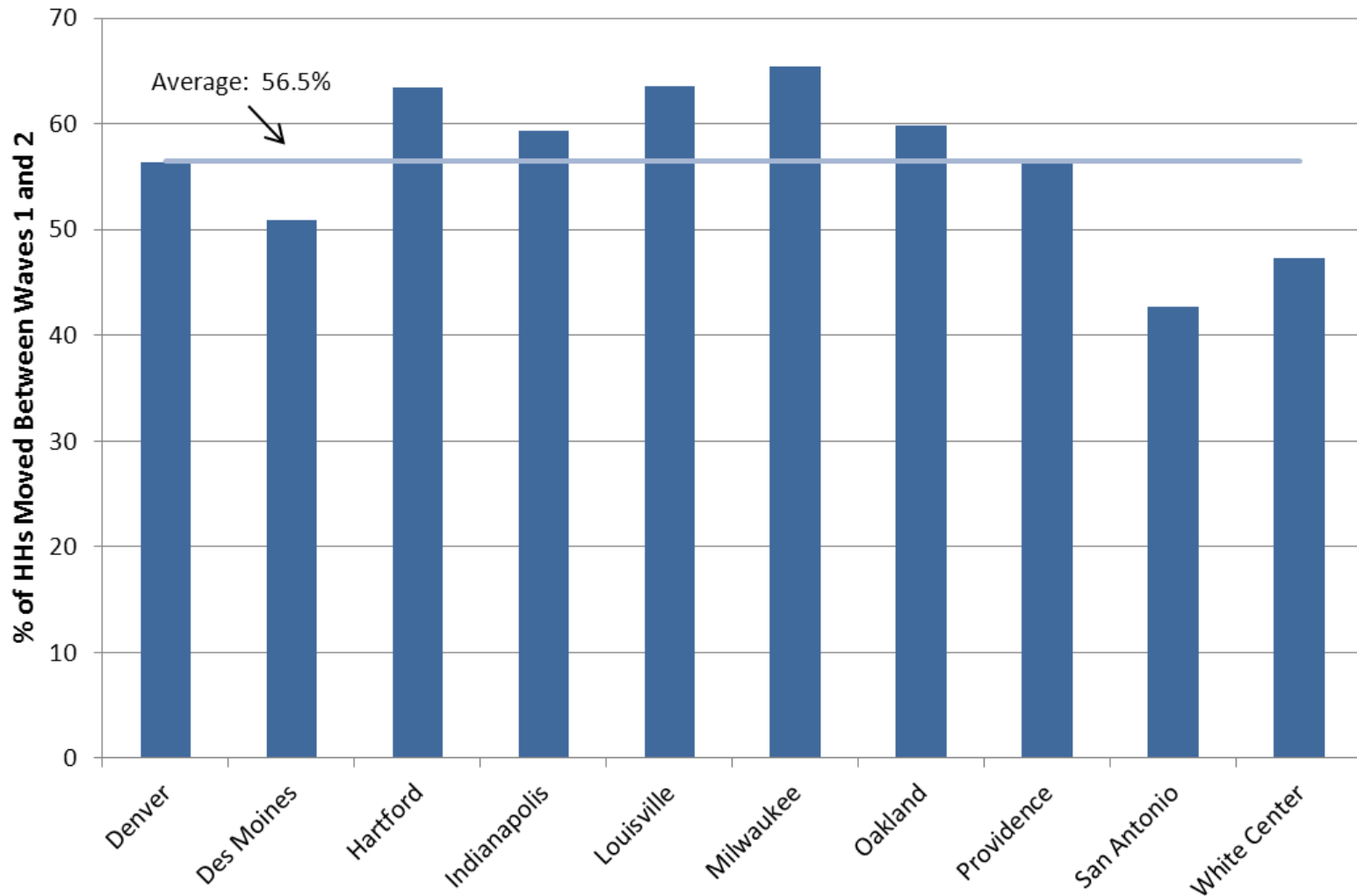
Children Start in Low Performing Schools



Question 1

- How mobile are families?

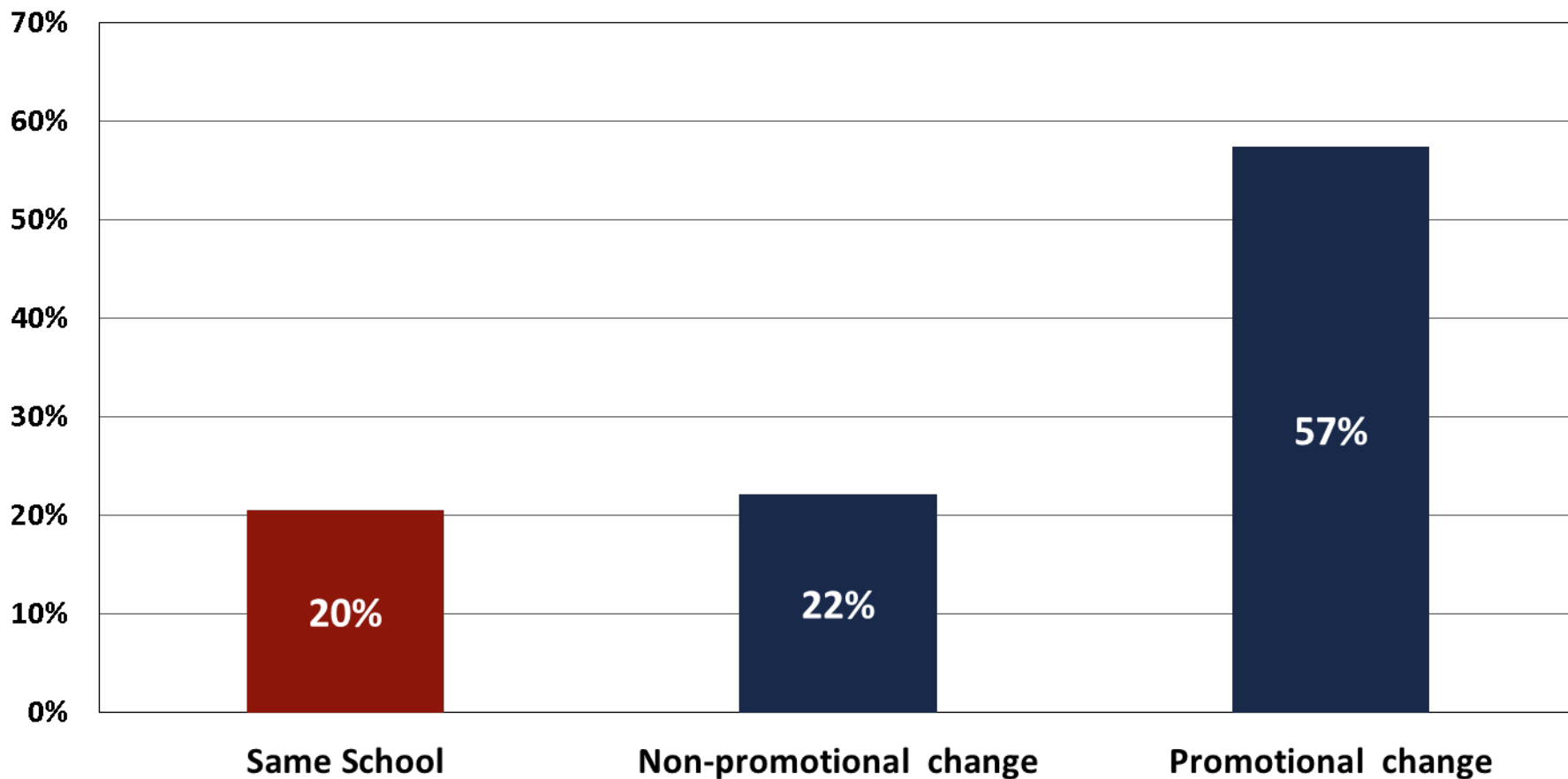
High Mobility Rates Over ~3 Years



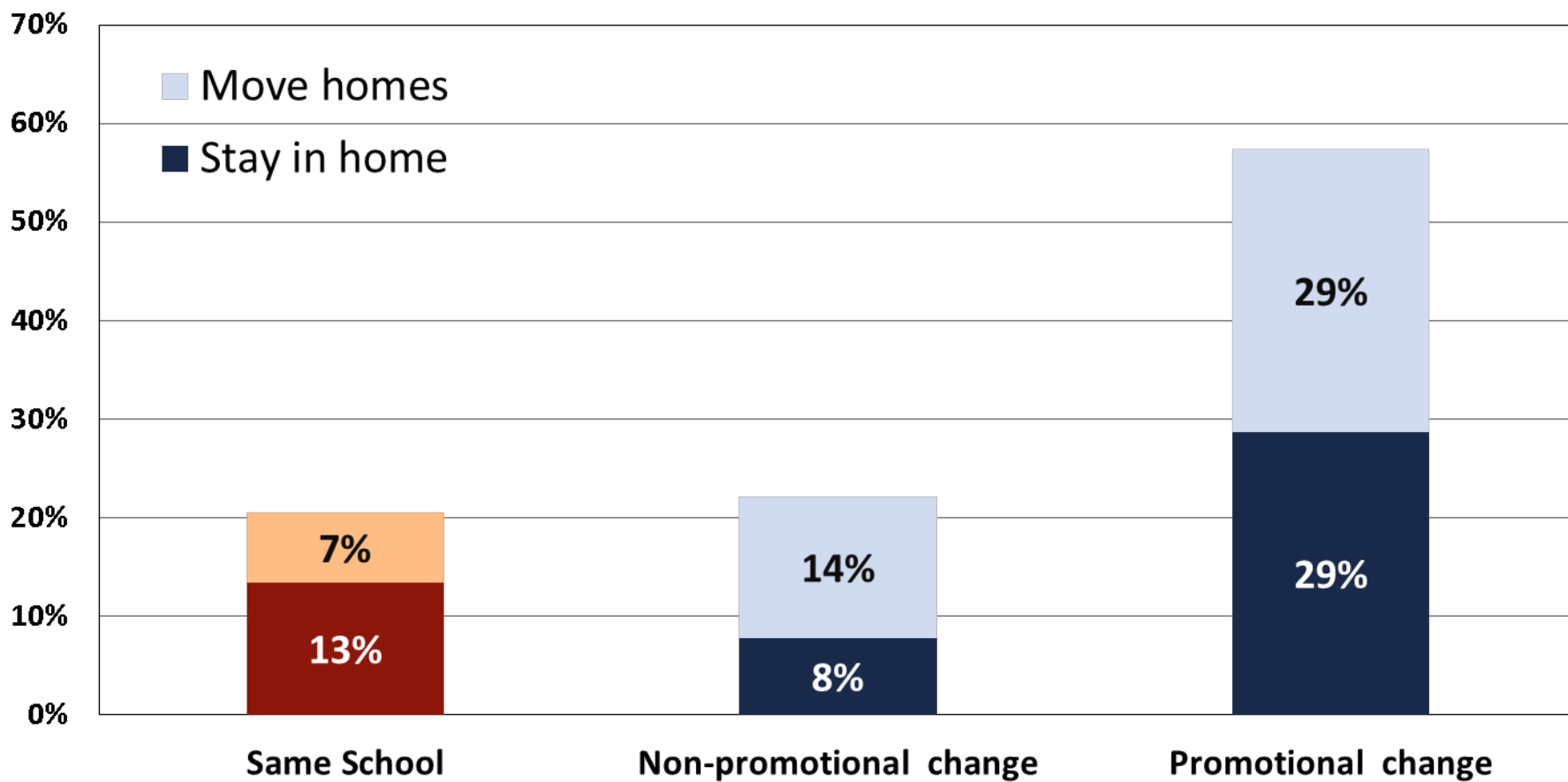
Questions 2a and 2b

- How often do children switch schools?
- How does school switching intersect with residential mobility?

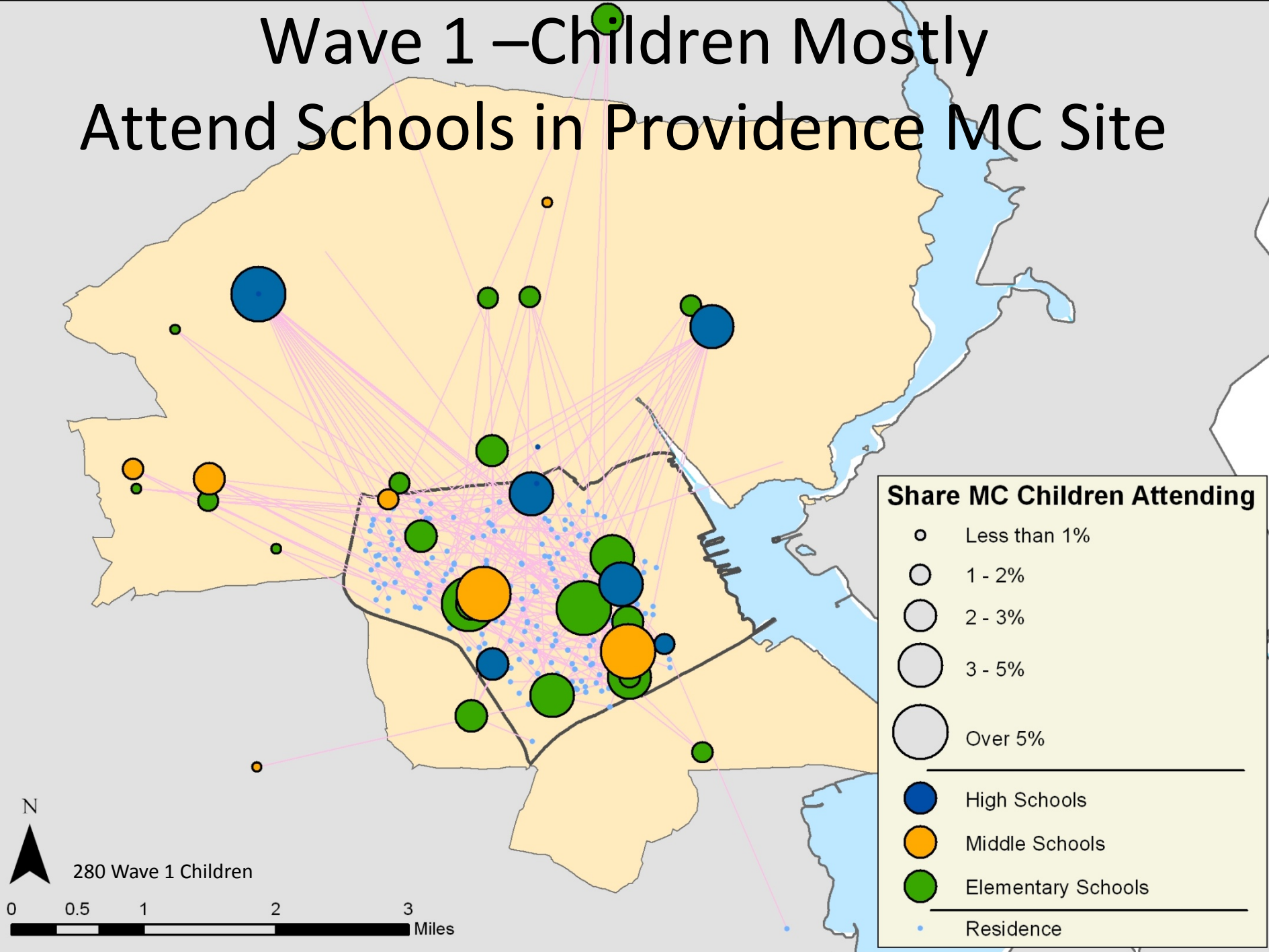
80% of Children Changed Schools in 3 Years, Of Those Who Could Stay, Half Left



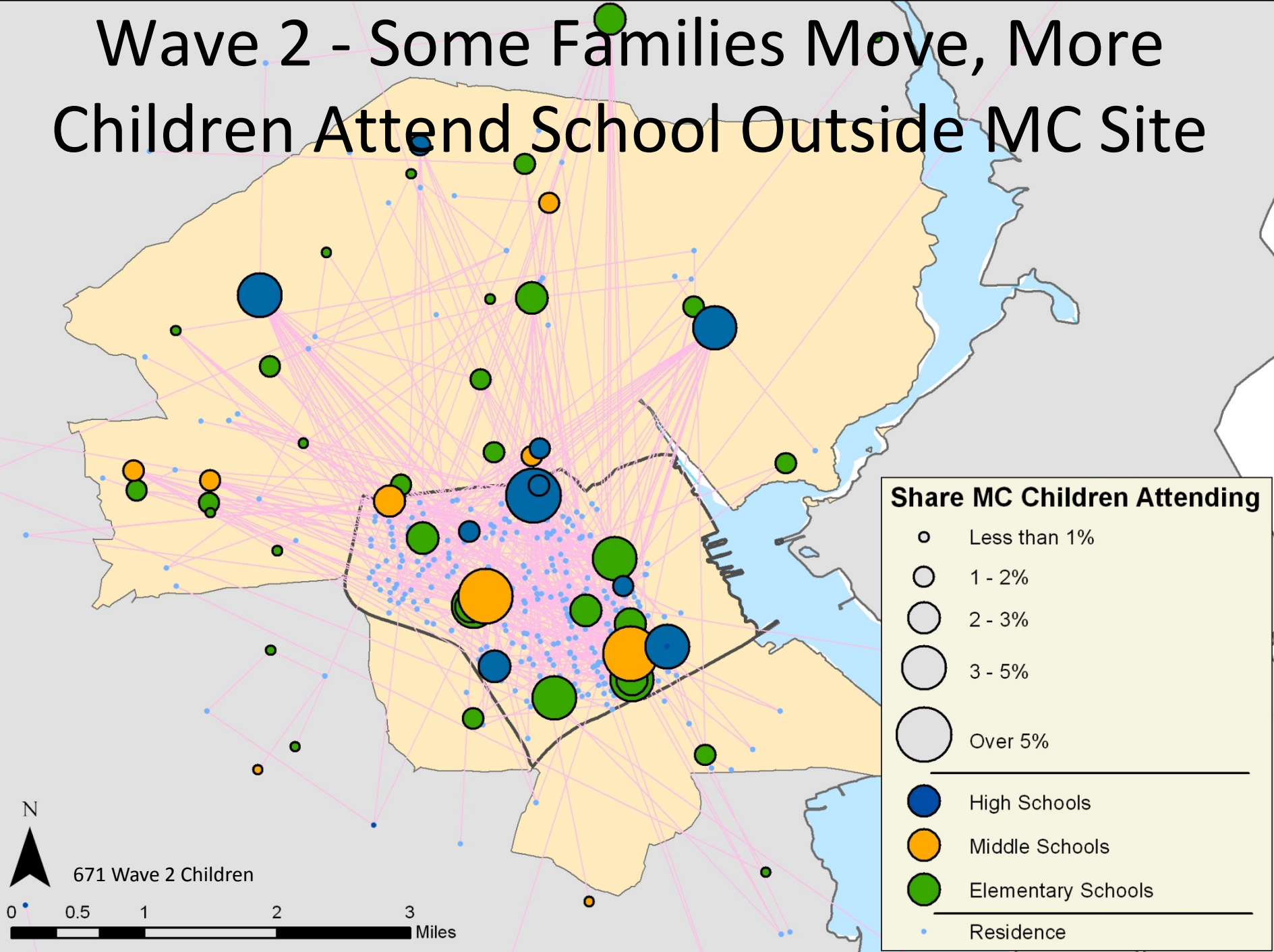
Most Children Making a Non-promotional School Change Move Homes



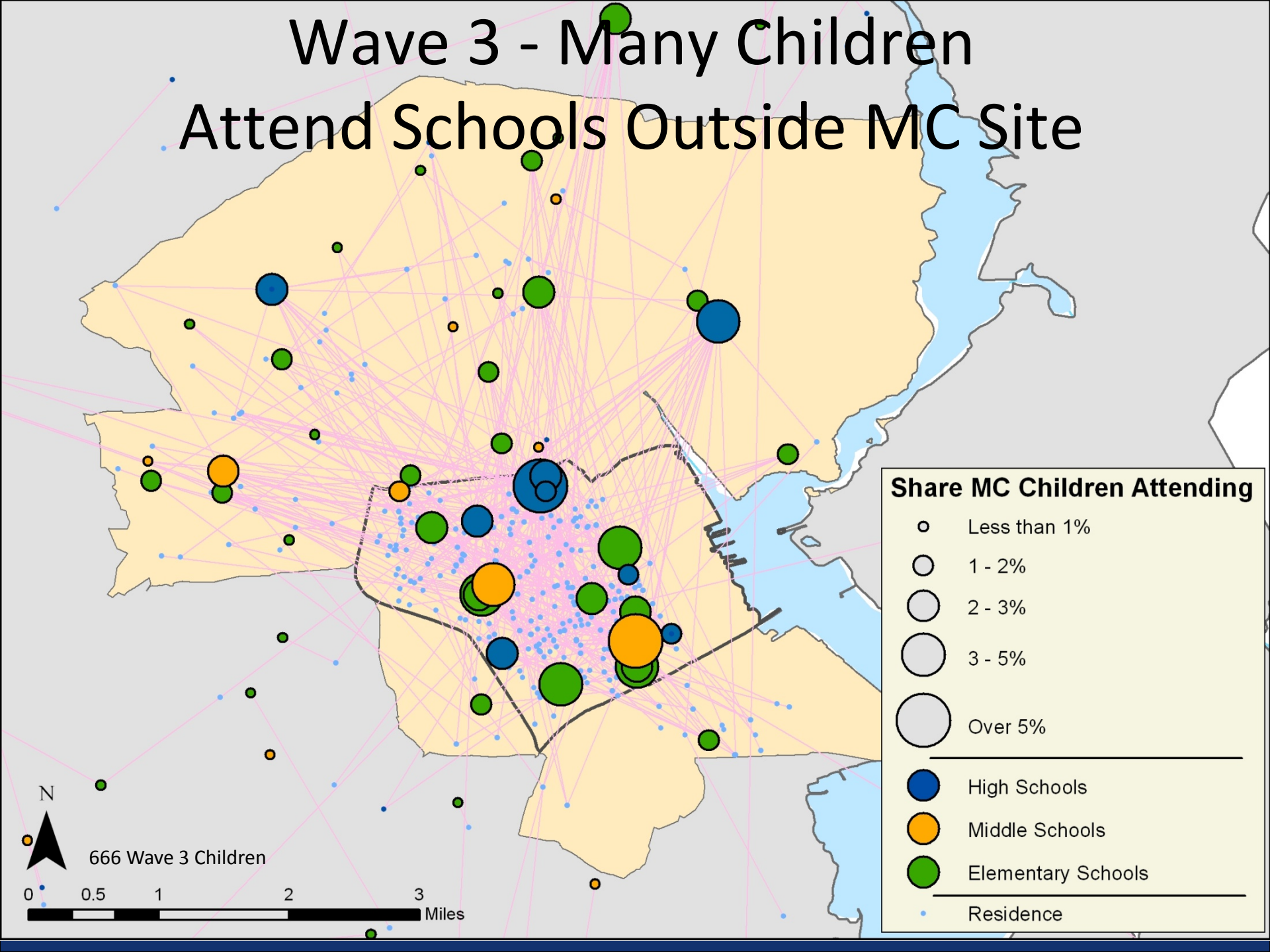
Wave 1 –Children Mostly Attend Schools in Providence MC Site



Wave 2 - Some Families Move, More Children Attend School Outside MC Site



Wave 3 - Many Children Attend Schools Outside MC Site

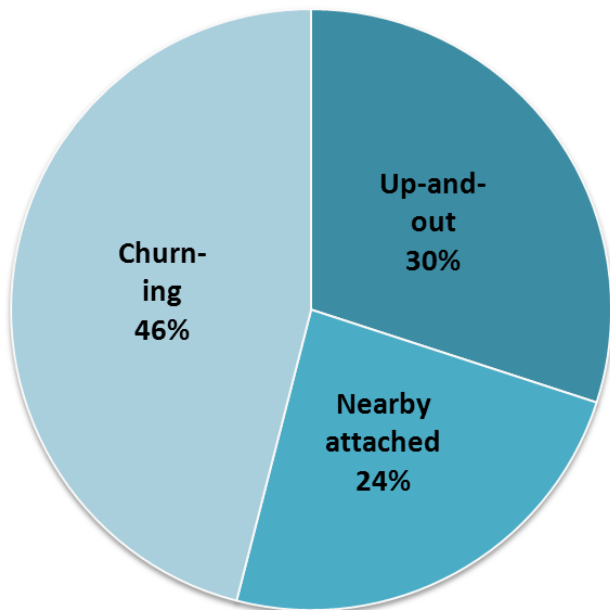


Questions 3a and 3b

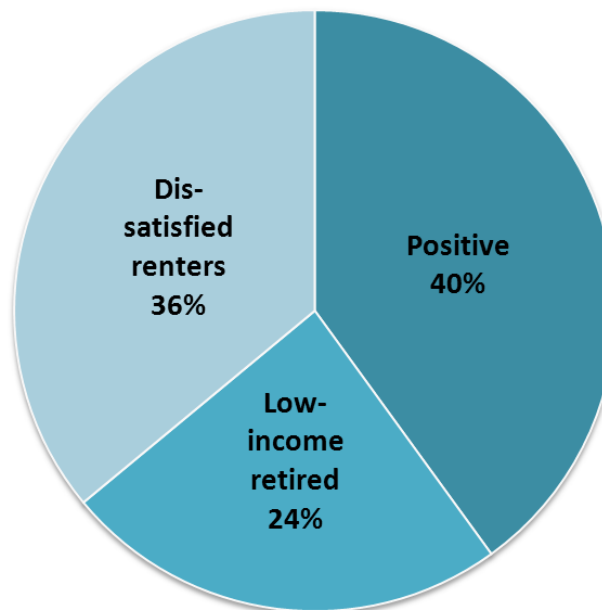
- Are moves helpful or harmful for residents?
- How often do children switch to higher performing schools, and which types of children do so?

Most Stayers and Newcomers Stay or Come for Positive Reasons; Most Movers are Churning

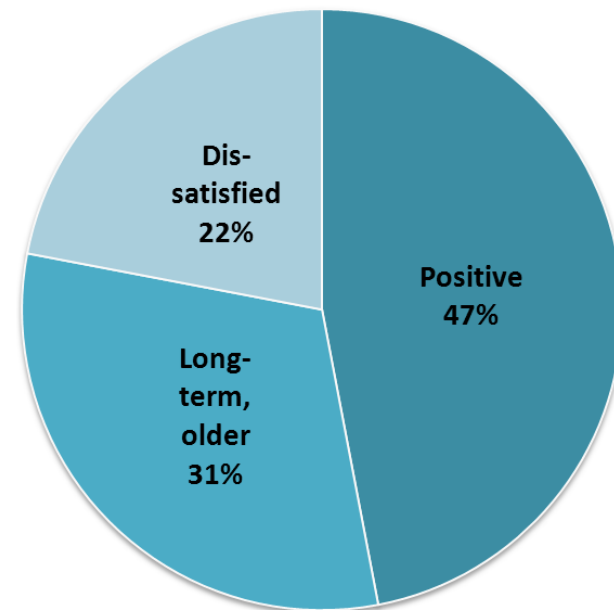
Movers



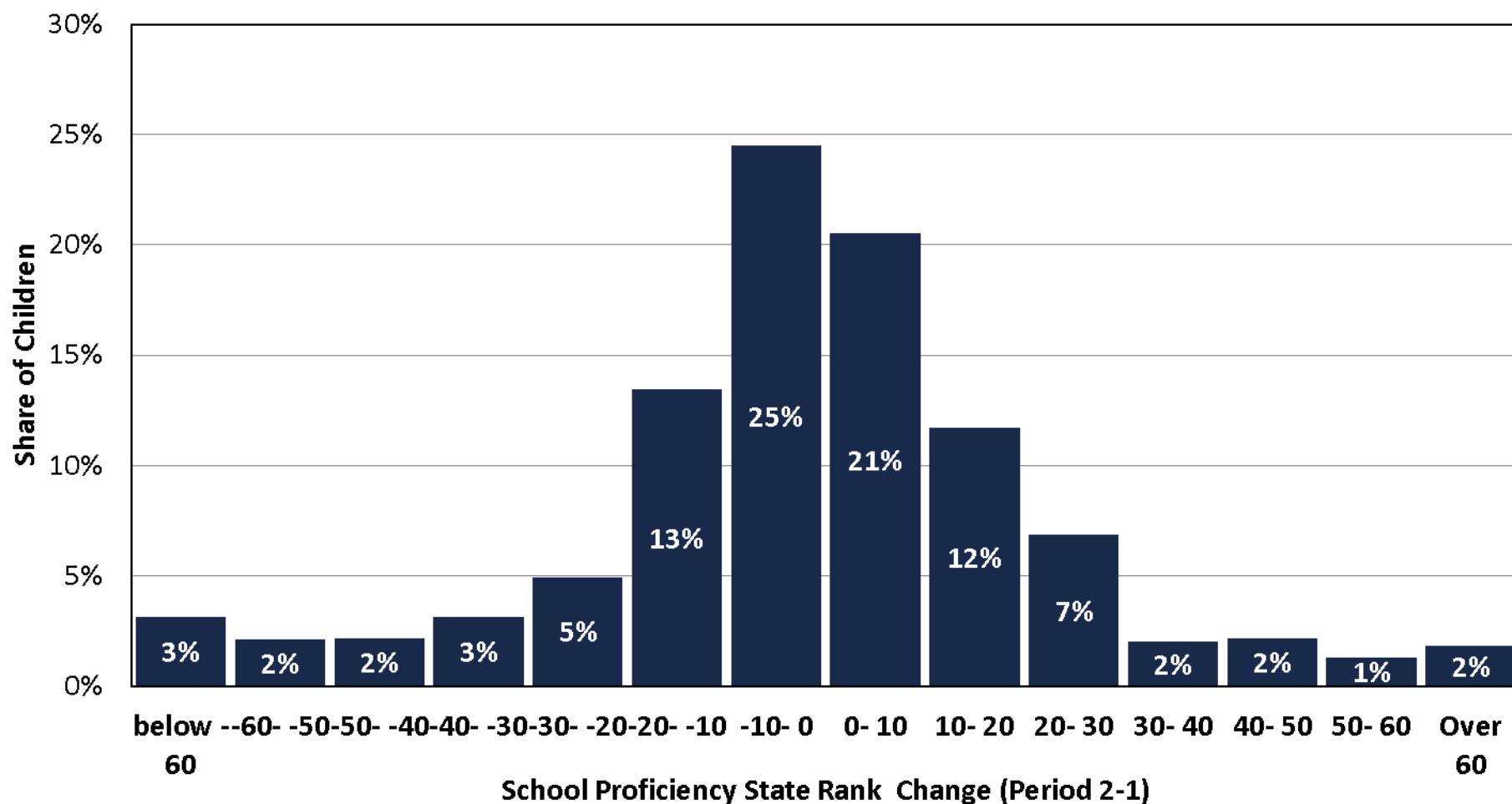
Newcomers



Stayers



Large Variation in School Performance Change



Getting to better/worse schools

- Controlling for other factors (including site and period 1 school performance)
- Better schools
 - Residential move to a new school district
 - Higher parental education
- Worse schools
 - Children with Black or Hispanic parents
 - Children in families that experience hardship (unable to afford food)

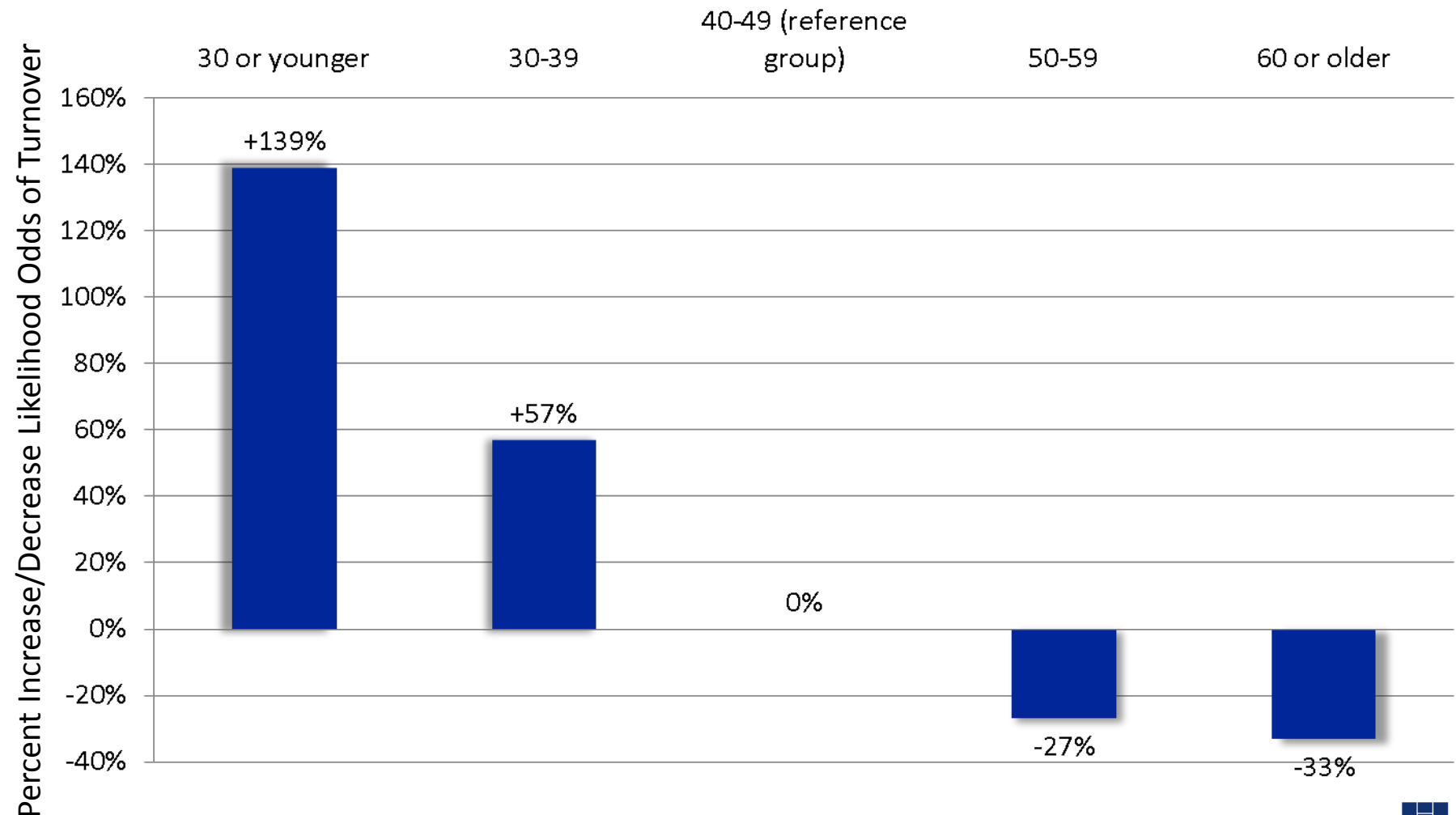
No Association with Switching to Better/Worse Schools (all else equal)

- Age of child
- Gender of child
- Promotional/non-promotional change
- Parental employment, income, homeownership
- Parental satisfaction with school at time 1
- Neighborhood poverty, racial conditions

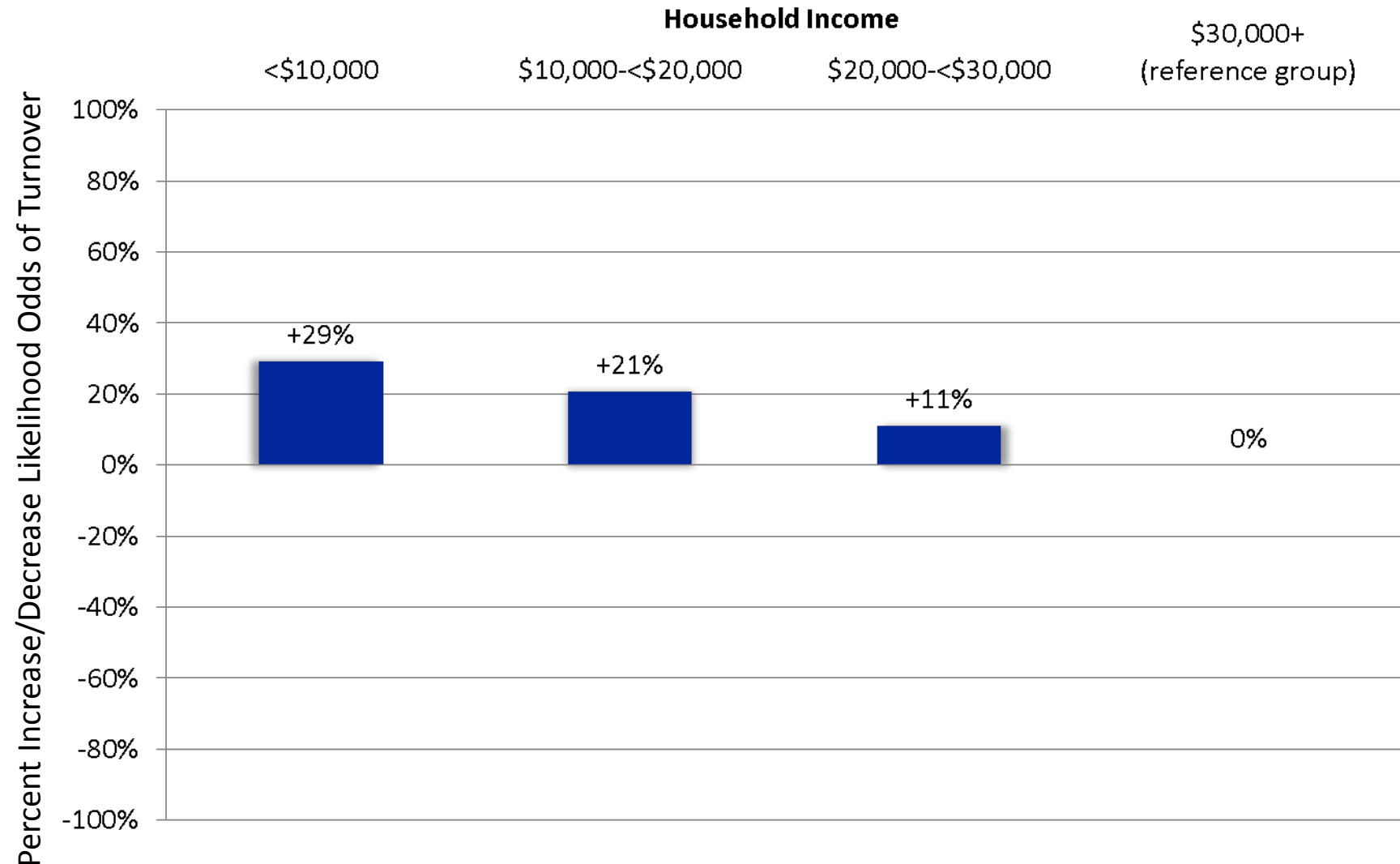
Research Question 4

- What characteristics of households, housing units, and neighborhoods are associated with the higher rates of turnover?

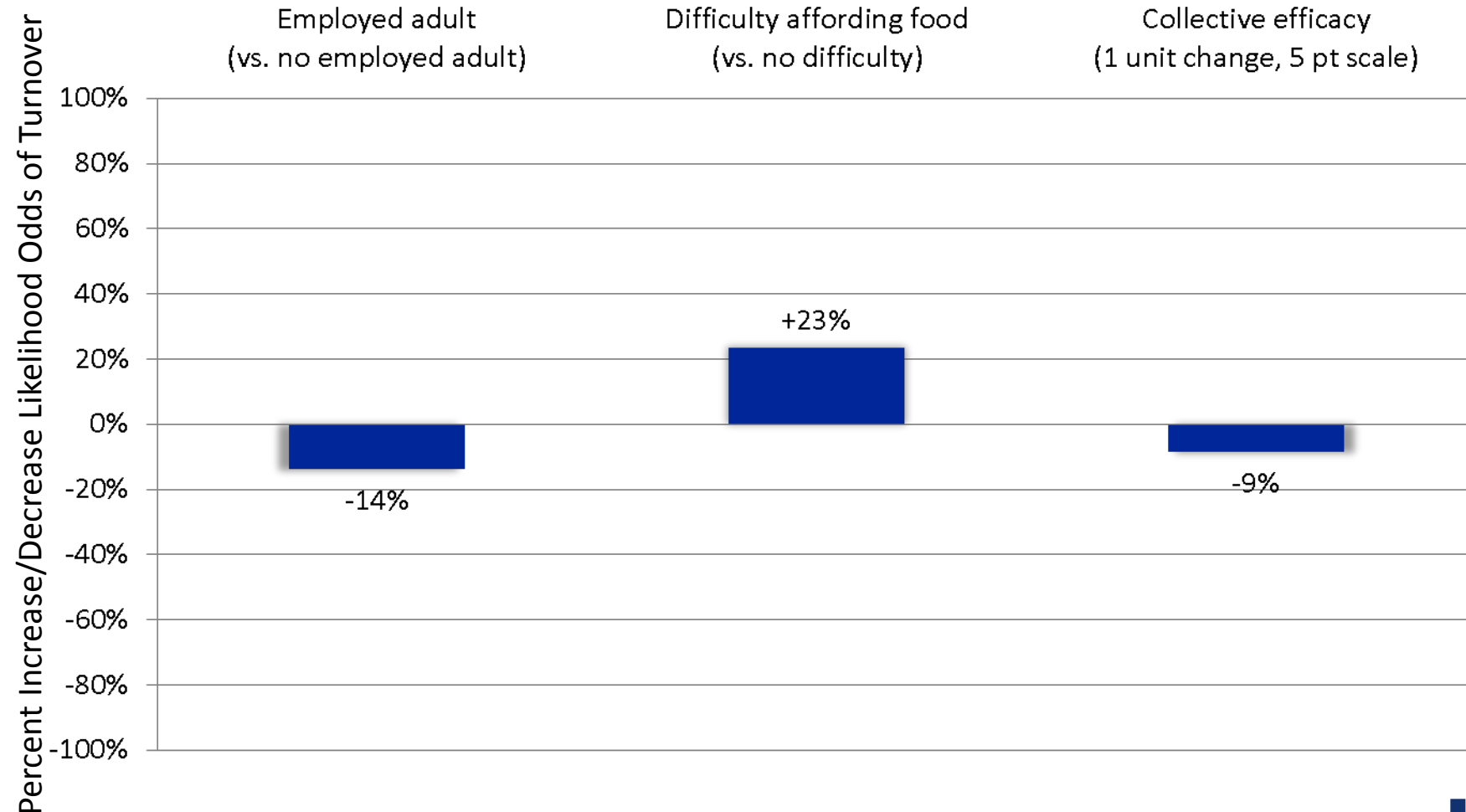
Age a big driver in turnover



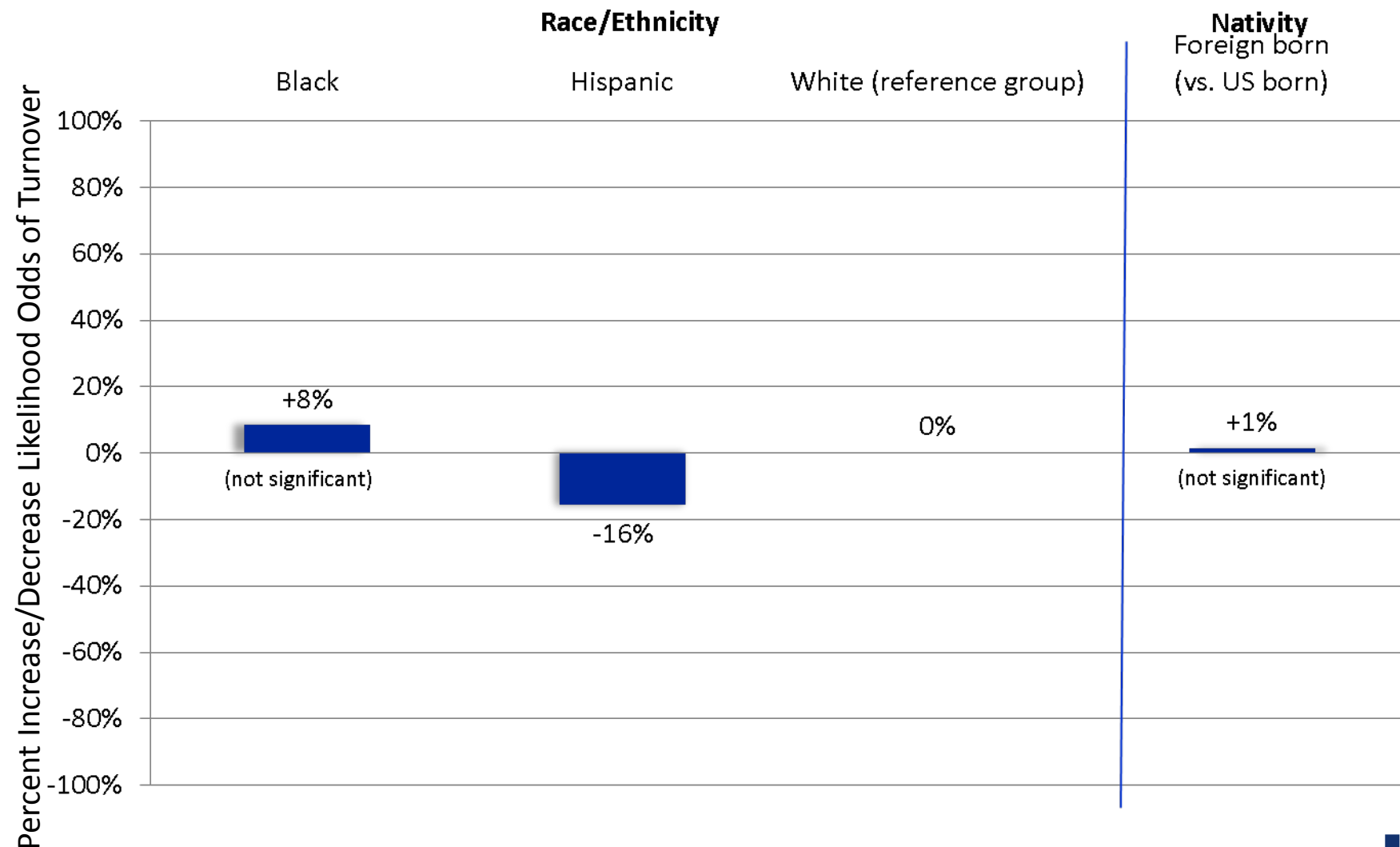
Low-income households turn over more



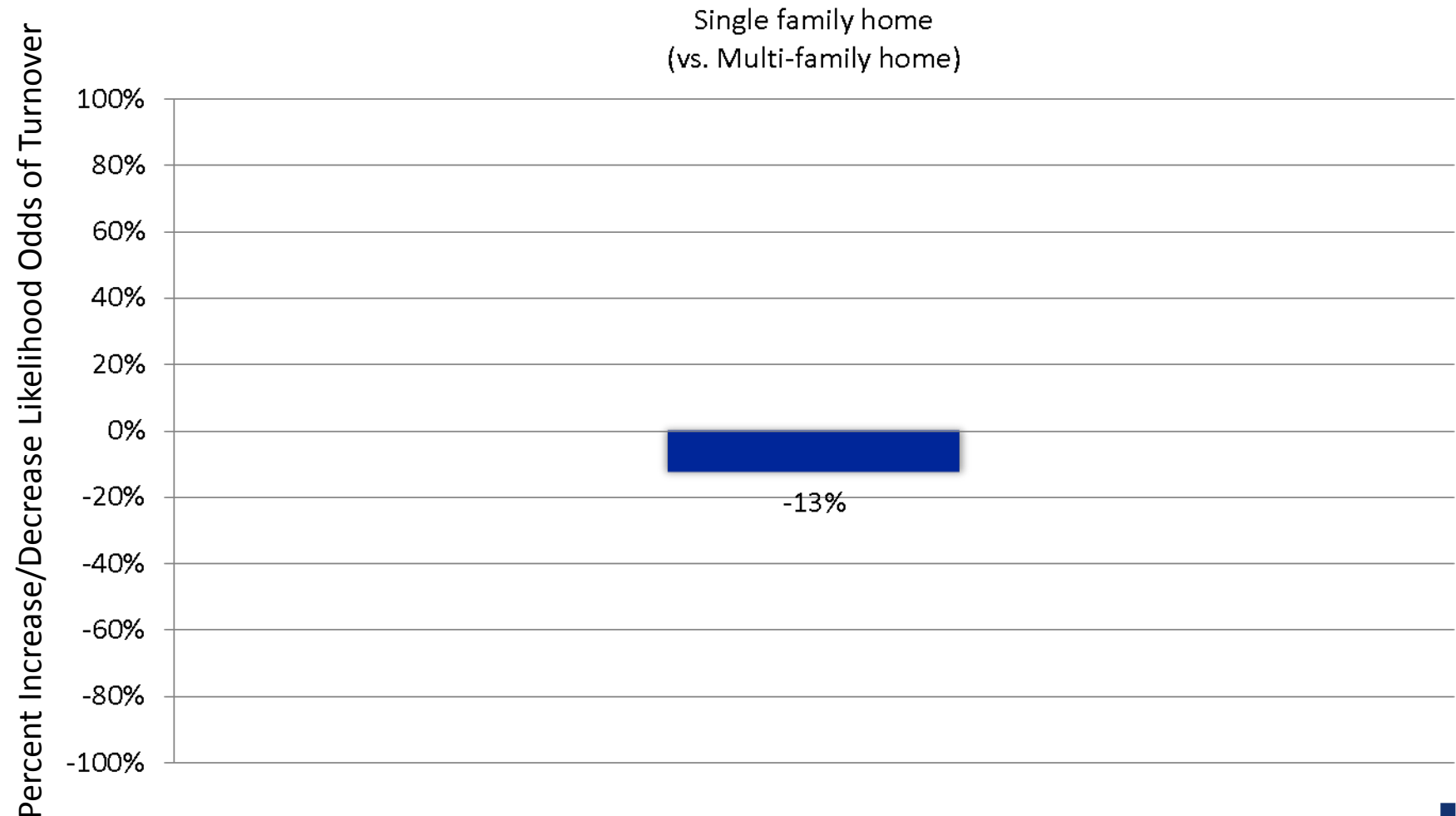
Employment, Financial Distress, and Collective Efficacy Matter



Small difference by race/ethnicity or nativity

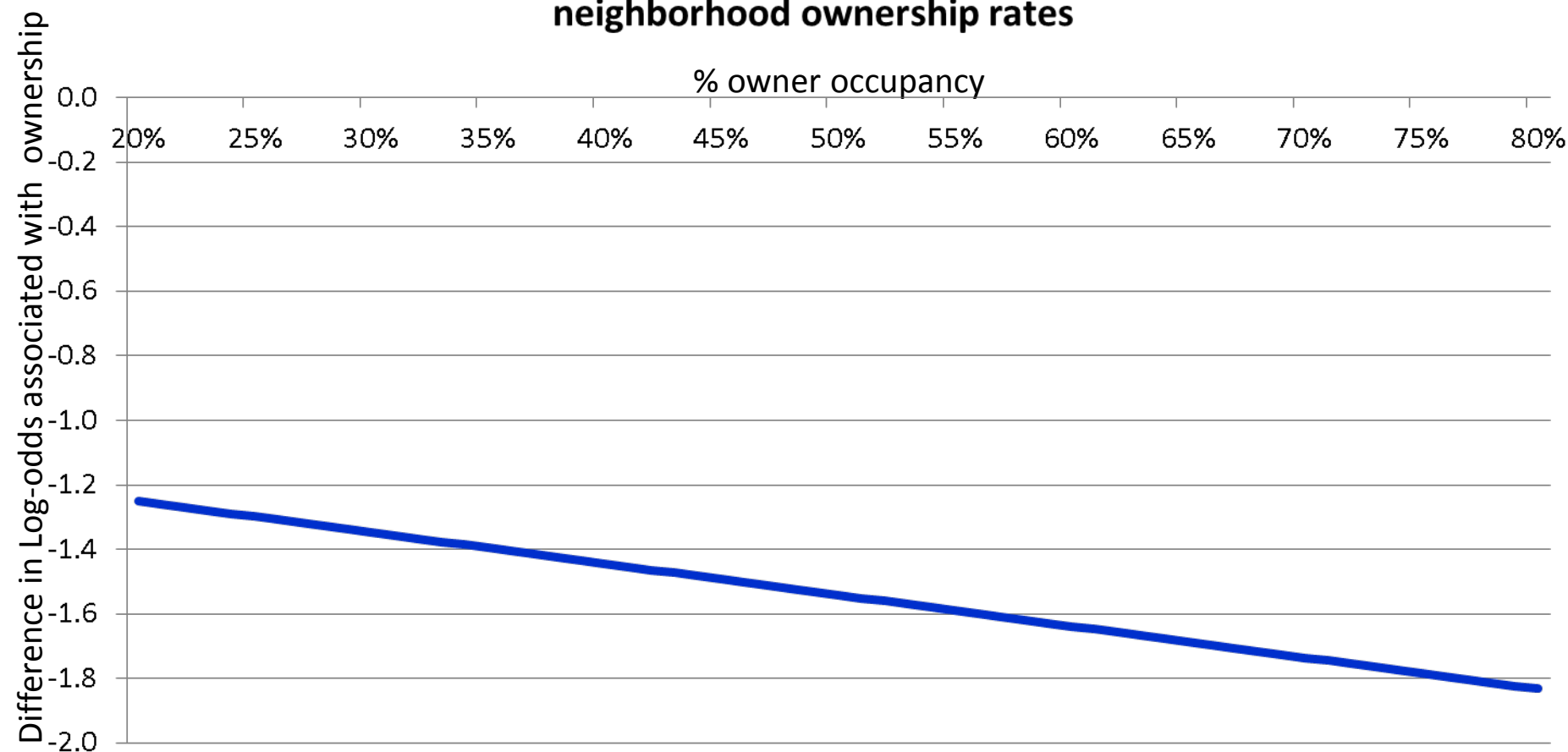


Turnover lower single-family homes



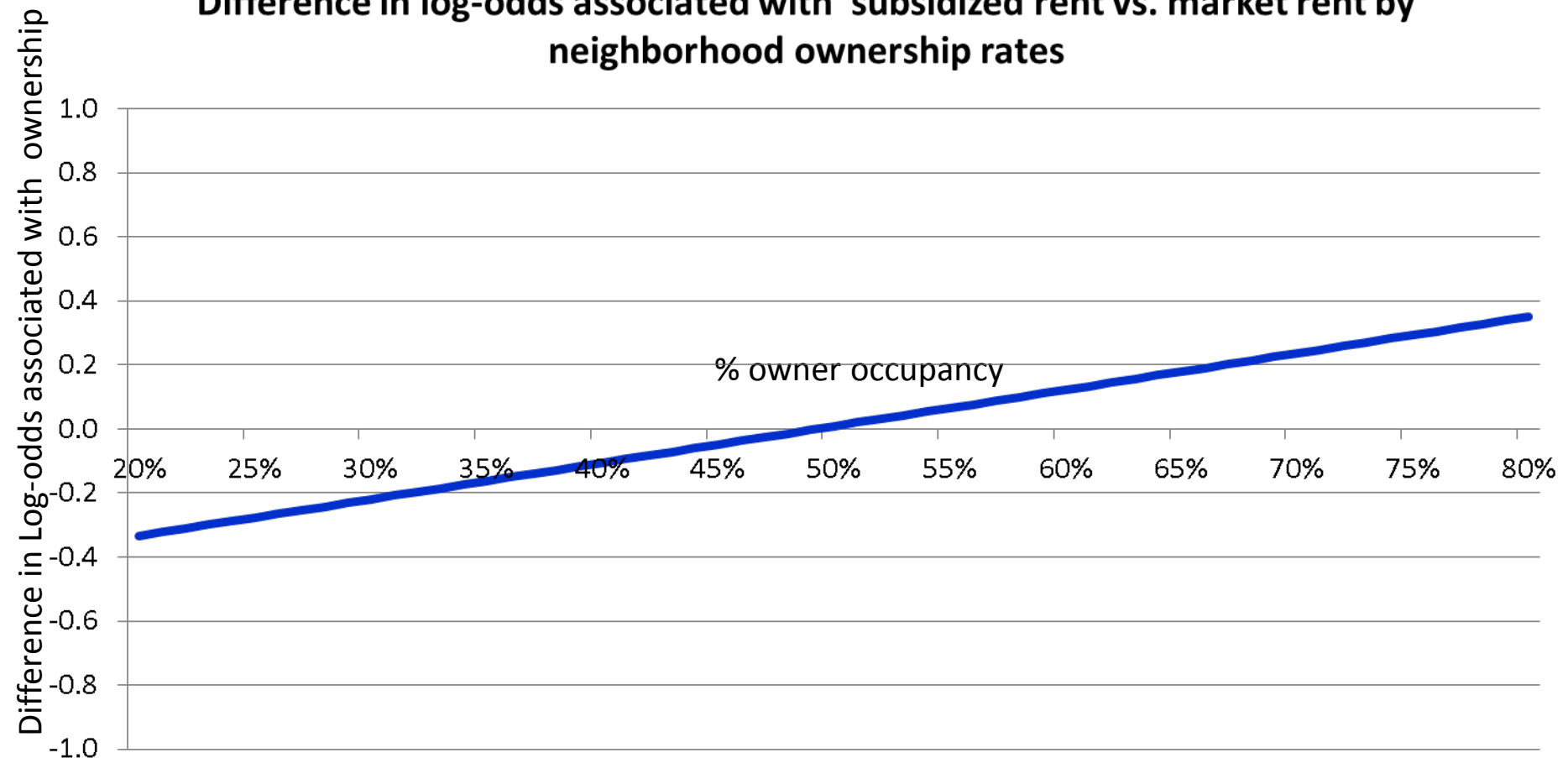
Individual & neighborhood ownership associated with less turnover

Difference in log-odds associated with ownership vs. market rent by neighborhood ownership rates



Subsidized rent protective in high rental neighborhoods, but not high owner

Difference in log-odds associated with subsidized rent vs. market rent by neighborhood ownership rates

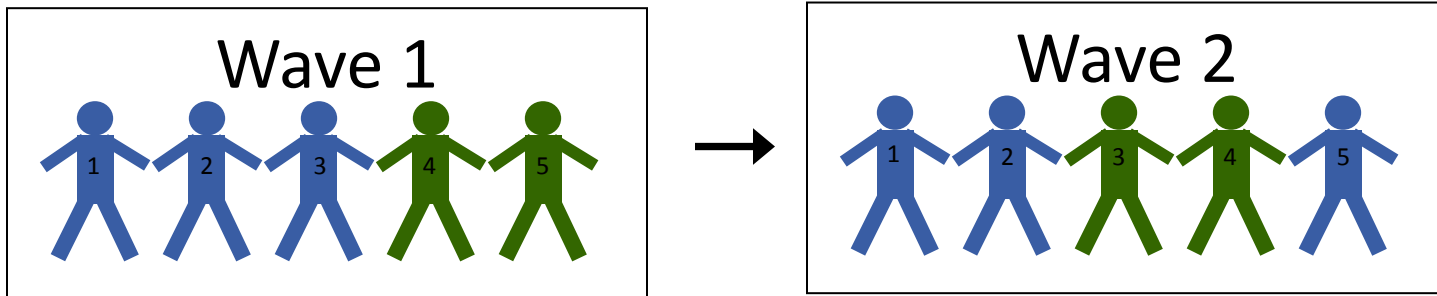


Research Question 5

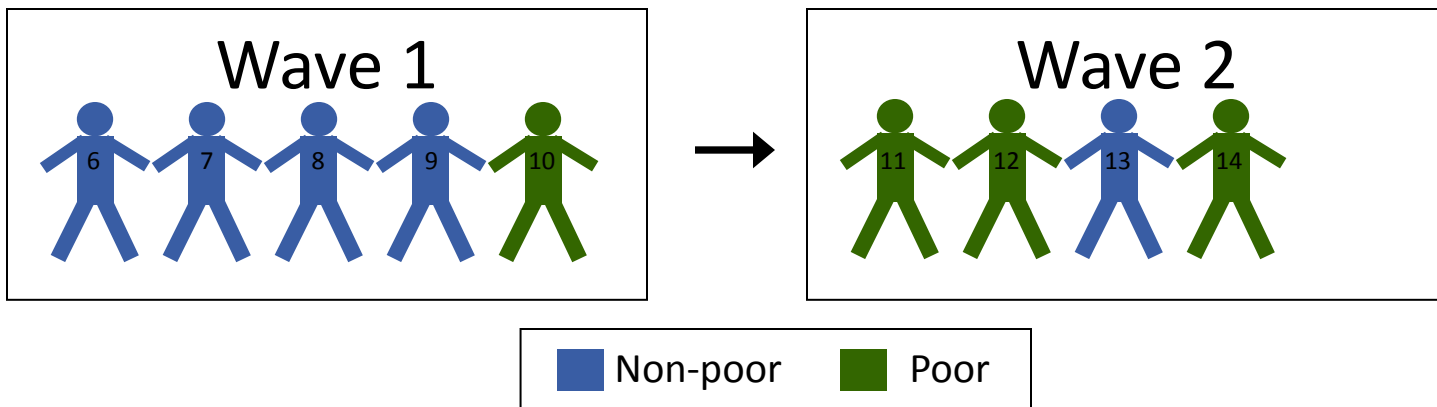
- How much does mobility contribute to neighborhood change

Components of Neighborhood Change: Conceptual Approach

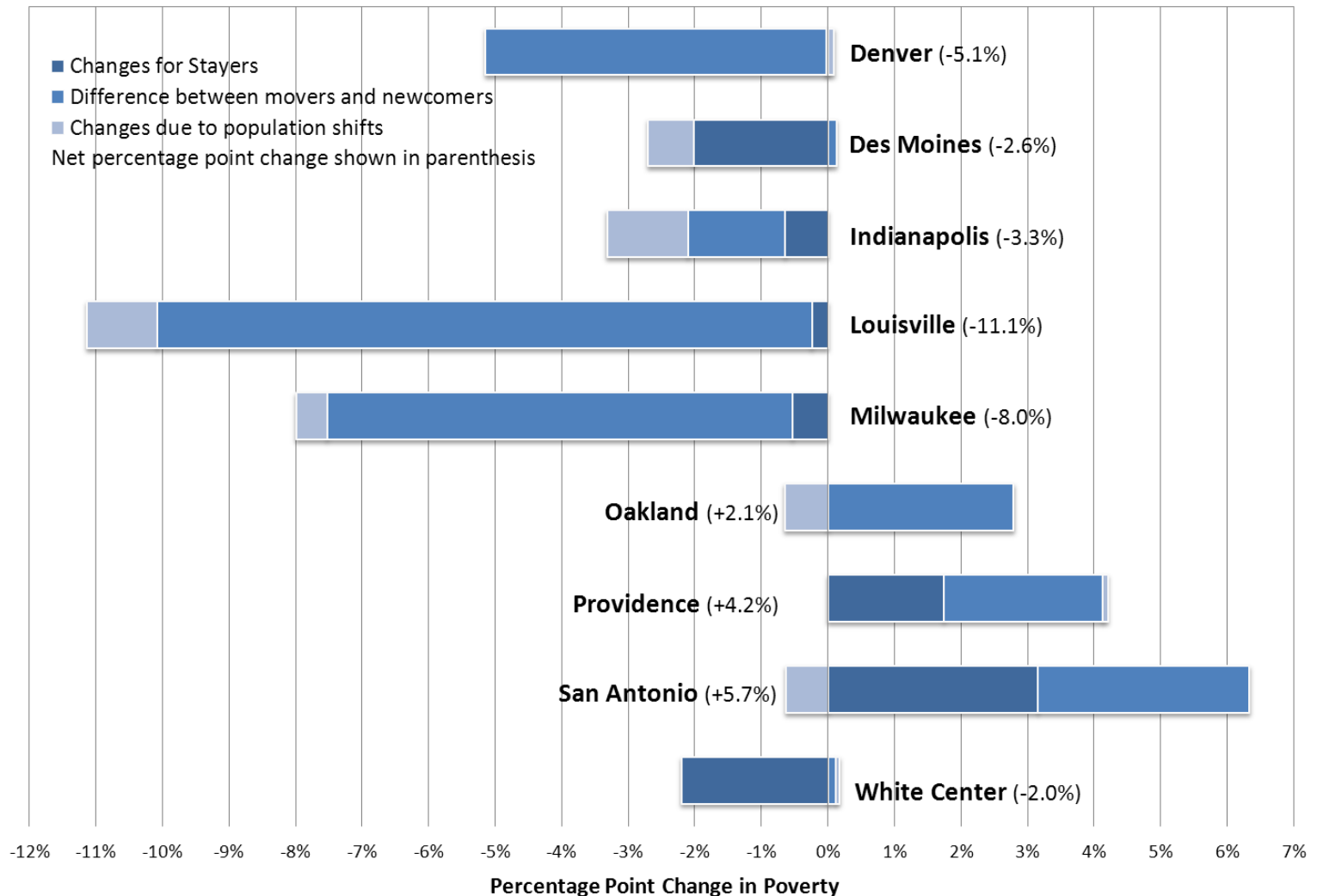
Changing Circumstances for Stayers



Changes as Out-movers replaced by Newcomers



Components of Neighborhood Change



Takeaways

- Poor neighborhoods experience high residential mobility
- There are positive and negative reasons for moving out, staying put and moving in
- Age and homeownership are strongest predictive factors, but economic factors, collective efficacy, and built environment matter too
- Subsidized housing may be platform to reduce instability
- Right mix of tenure, income and age can lower neighborhood turnover, but poor, young renter families may continue to churn

Takeaways 2

- Changes in poverty occurred primarily through mobility, not because of changing circumstances for stayers
 - Few communities with poverty-rate reductions among stayers
- Reductions in neighborhood poverty occurred
 - Through a sizable departure of poor residents, or
 - Through an influx of better-off households
- Fates of stayers and movers were linked in surprisingly few neighborhoods—only in worsening neighborhoods did they change in the same direction

Takeaways 3

- Complexity of residential mobility and neighborhood change pose critical challenges for community-change initiatives
 - Theory of change assumes duration of exposure
 - But being able to move to opportunity a sign of family success
 - Focus on the characteristics and needs of households moving through a neighborhood as well as those of longer-term residents
 - Qualitative differences in the way neighborhoods function demonstrates the limitations of point-in-time and one-dimensional metrics

Questions for Practice

- How best to support families who will move homes or switch schools, so they can reach areas of opportunity?
- How best to reduce residential and school moves to worse schools or neighborhoods?
- How best to help families and children remain in higher performing schools and neighborhoods?
- Can investments in community participation/collective efficacy reduce instability?

Resources

- *Residential Mobility and Neighborhood Change: Real Neighborhoods Under the Microscope*, available at <http://www.huduser.org/portal/periodicals/cityscpe/vol14num3/article3.html>
- *Getting to Better Performing Schools: The Role of Residential Mobility in School Attainment in Low-income Neighborhoods*, under review, available upon request
- *Neighborhood Stability and Neighborhood Change: A Study of Housing Unit Turnover in Making Connections Neighborhoods*, draft, available upon request