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A Longitudinal Analysis of Moving Desires, Expectations and Actual Moving Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

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Many theories of residential mobility contend that individuals express a sequence of moving desires, intentions and expectations prior to moving. Much research has investigated how individuals form these pre-move thoughts, with a largely separate literature examining actual mobility. Only a few studies have attempted to link pre-move thoughts to subsequent actual moves, but these often do not explicitly distinguish between different types and combinations of pre-move thoughts. Using 1998-2006 British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) data, this study is the first to investigate whether moving desires and expectations are empirically distinct pre-move thoughts. Using multinomial regression models we demonstrate that moving desires and expectations have different meanings, and often occur in combination: the factors associated with expecting to move differ depending upon whether the move is also desired (and vice versa). Next, using panel logistic regression models, we show that different desire-expectation combinations have different effects on the probability of subsequent moving behaviour.

JEL Classification: J61, R21, R23

Keywords: residential mobility, moving desires, moving expectations, satisfaction, longitudinal data

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INTRODUCTION

Moving home enables households to adjust their residential location to meet their changing locational and housing needs and preferences (Clark and Huang 2004). In the year preceding the 2001 UK census, approximately 10.3% of British individuals changed their place of residence, with the bulk of these individuals moving only over short distances (Bailey and Livingston 2007). Given the importance of mobility for households and the economy, it is unsurprising that there is a long and rich research tradition exploring how individuals form and act upon decisions to move home. Following Rossi's seminal contribution (Rossi 1955), studies have generally conceptualised moving as a lengthy and multistep process (Kan 1999; Kley and Mulder 2010). Typically, individuals are thought to move following a series of preference formation and move decision-making steps (see Brown and Moore 1970; Kley and Mulder 2010; Rossi 1955; Speare, Goldstein and Frey 1975 for examples). Following such models, researchers have focused their attention on what leads people to desire a move (Buck 2000; Landale and Guest 1985; Speare et al. 1975), to intend to move (Kearns and Parkes 2003; McHugh 1984), to plan to move (Kley 2010; Van Arsdol Jr, Sabagh and Butler 1968) or to expect to move (Bach and Smith 1977; Kan 1999). A largely separate literature has explored actual moves in detail (see Clark and Dieleman 1996).

There are two major gaps in the literature exploring mobility as a process. Firstly, there are conceptual and methodological problems with the ways researchers have analysed the pre-move preference formation and moving decision-making stages. Many studies lack clarity about the specific concepts under investigation, with terms such as moving 'desires', 'intentions', 'plans' or 'expectations' often used interchangeably. These terms are also often deployed without reference to the actual phrasing of the survey questions used. This lack of conceptual and methodological clarity hinders the empirical testing of mobility models, as different pre-move thoughts are likely to be distinct concepts produced by specific sets of factors (see Kley 2010). In addition, different pre-move thoughts are likely to reflect different levels of commitment to mobility. As a result of the above, few studies have considered more than one aspect of the pre-move phase or that multiple pre-move thoughts could exist in combination (see Kley 2010; Kley and Mulder 2010 for exceptions). Ignoring such combinations presents an over-simplified and linear picture of mobility decision-making. For instance, it seems likely that the factors associated with expecting a move will differ strongly depending upon whether the move is also desired. This study therefore aims to develop our understanding of how people form moving desires and expectations, both separately and in combination.

A second gap in the literature concerns the empirical testing of theoretical mobility models. Many papers have focused solely on individuals' stated housing preferences or pre-move thoughts, without exploring their actual moving behaviours (see Molin, Oppewal and Timmermans 1996; Sirgy, Grzeskowiak and Su 2005). Recently, several longitudinal studies have addressed this deficiency, investigating the mobility behaviours of individuals who had, or had not expressed pre-move thoughts (Buck 2000; Ferreira and Taylor 2009; Lu 1998, 1999; Kan 1999; Kley and Mulder 2010).

However, such studies typically only link the expression of one (often seemingly randomly chosen) pre-move thought to actual mobility behaviours. In this study we hypothesise that the *combination* of moving desires and expectations affects the likelihood of actual moving behaviour. For instance, a moving desire may be much more likely to be realised if accompanied by a moving expectation. Examining desire-expectation combinations is also of relevance given that some individuals may be more likely to express certain combinations than others. For example, we might expect those desiring but not expecting to move to have less access to resources than those able to expect to act upon their desires. The second objective of this study is therefore to explore how moving desire-expectation combinations affect subsequent moving behaviours.

This study contributes to the mobility literature in several ways. Firstly, the paper explores whether moving desires and expectations are empirically distinct concepts. The paper then progresses to analyse who is most likely to express different moving desire-expectation combinations. Finally, the paper investigates the links between moving desire-expectation combinations and subsequent mobility behaviours in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of the mobility process. This is achieved by using 8 waves of British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) data and panel regression models.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The majority of residential moves are made to reduce some form of housing stress. Housing stress is generated when individuals reside in a dwelling, or live in a neighbourhood, which does not meet their needs and preferences. This disequilibrium between actual and desired housing consumption can motivate an adjustment move to a dwelling or a neighbourhood where housing stress levels are expected to be reduced (see Clark and Ledwith 2006). Much spatial mobility is therefore reactive and consumption driven (Duncan and Newman 1976), with most moves made over short distances in order to minimise the disruption to the household (as workplaces, services and social contacts are still accessible from the new location) (Clark and Dieleman 1996). Housing needs and preferences which can produce housing stress can change as a result of events in the life course of household members, such as job losses (Böheim and Taylor 2002; Clark and Davies Withers 1999), or household formation and dissolution events (Feijten and van Ham 2010; Flowerdew and Al-Hamad 2004).

Although the importance of stress as a mobility trigger has been generally accepted, our understandings of how this stress is generated have evolved over time. For Rossi (1955) and other early theorists, housing stress is intimately linked to individual ‘life cycles’ (see Doling 1976). This life cycle approach contends that individuals move through a common series of household structures as they age, with transitions between these household structures generating housing stress and subsequent adjustment moves. For instance, a young married couple may live in a small city apartment which provides convenient access to their workplaces. With the arrival of a child, this

apartment becomes too small to accommodate the family and the household consequently makes a move to a larger suburban property in a more 'child friendly' environment. Later researchers formalised these insights into place utility theories of mobility (see Wolpert 1965). For Wolpert, housing stress is generated when households derive a lower level of utility from their current dwelling than is accessible elsewhere. Households therefore move in order to maximise the utility they derive from their housing consumption (Brown and Moore 1970; De Jong and Fawcett 1981). Life cycle transitions may still motivate moves by reducing the level of utility a household derives from their housing, for instance if a dwelling becomes too small for an expanding household. These insights were developed by Speare et al. (1975; Speare 1974), who introduced the concept of residential satisfaction as a mediating construct between the factors altering place utility calculations (such as a shortage of space) and the formation of a moving desire. For Speare, households respond to dissatisfaction rather than sub-optimal utility levels, with the two not always being equivalents.

Since the 1980s, researchers have embraced more nuanced 'life course' understandings of mobility (Feijten 2005; Geist and McManus 2008). The life course approach is less normative than the life cycle model and better deals with household careers including events such as divorce and separation, and long spells of being single. Within the life course framework, individuals are understood to experience events across several parallel life careers (such as the labour market or household careers). Such events can trigger residential moves, either directly (for instance to form a new household or to change job) or more subtly by generating stress, disequilibrium and a moving desire (see Mulder and Hooimeijer 1999). This approach incorporates the insights provided by earlier theories (for instance that certain events are typical of specific life stages), while also recognising that individual mobility behaviours are varied, dynamic and influenced by other household members.

Within all mobility theories, there is a general agreement that moving is a process and not a discreet event. Moves are usually thought to be preceded by some form of preference formation, deliberation and destination choice processes (see Brown and Moore 1970; Kley 2010; Rossi 1955; Speare et al. 1975 for examples). For instance, in the life course model, individuals are thought to experience life events which trigger housing stress or alter residential preferences, creating a desire to move home. Over time, this desire to move can strengthen and stimulate the formation of a moving intention and finally lead to an expectation of moving. This strengthening of preferences involves weighing up the desirability and feasibility of the move. Those individuals facing intense micro-level restrictions (such as having a low income) and macro-level constraints (such as living in a tight local housing market) are unlikely to intend or expect to act upon a moving desire. Much is known about the factors influencing individuals to express each of these pre-move thoughts, although little research has so far considered the whole process in its entirety or recognised that multiple pre-move thoughts could exist in combination.

The stages of mobility

According to Rossi (1955:99), "wanting to move may be viewed as the initial step in a sequence leading eventually to the act of moving itself". Moving desires represent pure housing preferences, formed and expressed without consideration of whether it would actually be possible to make the desired move (Van Ham and Feijten 2008). Restrictions and constraints should therefore not deter people from desiring to move. Much prior research suggests that dissatisfaction with home or neighbourhood is a key motivation for individuals to desire to move (Deane 1990; Landale and Guest 1985; Speare et al. 1975). Desiring a move is also linked to social mobility aspirations. Households may desire a move if their current housing situation differs from socially constructed norms (Morris, Crull and Winter 1976). Although these norms vary with stage in the life course and social group, generally in Western societies such norms prioritise single family (detached) properties, homeownership and the availability of surplus dwelling space. Those individuals living in housing not fitting the norm may feel dissatisfied with their housing situation, stimulating a desire to move to attain these valued attributes (Morris et al. 1976; Morris and Winter 1975). Desires are therefore the first step in the mobility process, although they also continue to affect later stages. While seldom considered, the presence of a moving desire at later stages in the mobility process is a crucial factor in determining the welfare outcome of a move. For instance, those not desiring but expecting a move may lose welfare if they move, while those desiring and expecting a move probably stand to benefit from moving.

Over time, moving desires can strengthen and feed the formation of moving intentions (Rossi 1955). Existing studies suggest that intending to move is closely linked to housing dissatisfaction (Lu 1998). Moving from solely desiring to desiring and intending to move requires the individual to judge that the moving desire is also achievable. Expressing a moving intention therefore involves a greater commitment to actually moving than simply desiring a move. Kley (2010) argues that making this transition from desire to intention involves psychic investment or 'crossing the Rubicon'. Individuals are typically less likely to relinquish a moving intention than a moving desire as they have more psychological investment in intentions. However we need to consider the *coexistence* of desires and intentions before evaluating the consequences of relinquishing a moving intention. Abandoning a moving intention as the move is no longer desired is likely to have fewer negative repercussions for an individual's wellbeing than abandoning a desire and intention due to the belief that actually moving is impossible. Although many studies have explored moving intentions, few have clearly articulated what constitutes an intention or how intentions differ from moving desires or expectations (see Kearns and Parkes 2003; Kleinhans 2009; Moore 1986). The terms are often used interchangeably, which impedes our understanding of the mobility process.

The final step in the mobility process is the formation of an expectation of moving within a given timeframe. Individuals expecting to move have assessed the move as more likely than not to occur in the specified period. Expectations of moving should therefore closely predict actual moves (Kan 1999), although previous work suggests that the link is much weaker than might be expected (Duncan and Newman 1976). Housing

dissatisfaction appears to play a weak role in the formation of a moving expectation, with McHugh, Gober and Reid (1990) arguing that dissatisfaction is only associated with long term move expectations (see also Bach and Smith 1977). Yet research has so far failed to consider that the factors associated with expecting to move may differ depending on whether the expected move *is also desired*. We might hypothesise that satisfaction is strongly associated with desired, expected moves. In contrast, dissatisfaction is likely to be less associated with undesired expected mobility, as such individuals anticipate moving either against their will or for reasons other than housing adjustment (for instance job moves). Conversely, the factors associated with desiring a move should also differ depending on whether the move is also expected.

This leads to the first two hypotheses of this study:
1) The factors associated with desiring to move differ from those associated with expecting to move
2) The factors associated with expecting to move differ depending upon whether the move is also desired (and vice versa)

Little research has attempted to investigate how the various pre-move thoughts are linked to actual subsequent moves. Only a few studies attempt to link moving desires (Buck 2000; Ferreira and Taylor 2009), moving intentions (Lu 1998, 1999) or moving expectations (Duncan and Newman 1976; Kan 1999) to actual moves. In addition, most studies have only linked one pre-move thought to actual moves and few have considered that the non-linearity of the mobility process may mean that the *combination* of thoughts expressed alters subsequent behaviours (see Kley 2010; Kley and Mulder 2010 for exceptions). We might anticipate the likelihood of a desire to move being realised to partially depend upon whether or not the move is also expected. Those desiring but not expecting a move may be unlikely to move, perhaps as they lack access to the resources needed to overcome moving costs. Those desiring and expecting a move may be much more likely to actually move, as their greater ability to mobilise resources (perhaps due to higher education levels or higher incomes) enables them to act upon their moving preferences with greater ease. Those expecting undesired moves are likely to fall between these extremes, as although a forced move is expected (perhaps due to recent unemployment or to meet the career needs of a partner) such individuals may attempt to obviate the need to move, for instance by bargaining within the household. When investigating actual moves it is necessary to control for a wide range of individual and household characteristics known to be strongly associated with mobility, to explore whether these variables have effects on the probability of a move over and above their possible effects on moving desires and expectations (see Lu 1999).

This leads to our third hypothesis:
3) The likelihood of actually making a residential move is affected by the combination of moving desires and expectations expressed in the previous year.

DATA AND METHODS

Dataset and selection

This study made use of the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). The BHPS is a panel survey comprising a sample of 10,300 individuals (from 5,500 households), selected from across the UK in 1991 and re-interviewed each subsequent year (Berthoud 2000; Taylor et al. 2009). The sample is representative of the UK population and was boosted in 1999 and 2001 with additional households from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Each year, respondents were asked to answer wide ranging questions across a host of topics. A crucial advantage of the BHPS is its low attrition rate, although moving individuals are known to be more likely to drop out than non-movers (as with most panel surveys). Buck (2000) showed that the BHPS is ideal for studying mobility behaviour, as the reason why households drop out of the panel is often known (for example because they moved). This study made use of a panel of 8 waves of BHPS data covering the period 1998-2006, with wave 11 (2001) excluded. Analysis was restricted to these waves as information on key variables was not collected during other survey sweeps. Pre-1998 waves of the survey were excluded because information on moving expectations was not gathered in these years. Wave 11 was excluded as we lack information on housing satisfaction for this year. The dataset was transformed into person-year format prior to analysis.

Person-years in which the respondent was a dependent child or lived in an institution were removed, as these individuals do not have independent housing careers. Cases with missing values on key dependent or control variables (such as moving desires, expectations, ethnicity or housing tenure) were also removed, as were observations where the respondent's moving status between waves *t* and *t+1* was unknown. One member of each household was then randomly selected for analysis, to remove the possibility of household scale correlation between the moving preferences and behaviours of its members. Exceptions were made for person-years in which the respondent lived with multiple unrelated adults, with all such person-years included (as these individuals are likely to have largely independent housing careers). Only respondents defined as 'decision-makers' were eligible for random selection, as the views of these individuals are likely to be the most important determinants of actual household mobility behaviours. Household decision-makers were identified as the owners or renters of the dwelling and their partners, with household heads and their partners coded as decision-makers if ownership or rental information was missing. After a decision-maker was randomly selected at the household's wave of entry, this respondent was followed for as long as they remained a decision-maker. In the event of a household losing its selected individual (due to attrition, non-response or household composition changes), a new decision-maker was randomly selected and tracked. Following these procedures, the final sample contained 63,265 person-years provided by 14,536 respondents.

Methods

The first set of analyses explored the existence of moving desire-expectation combinations using a multinomial logistic regression model, with standard errors

adjusted for the clustering of observations within respondents (Wooldridge 2002). This necessitated the creation of a four-way categorical dependent variable indicating the combination of dichotomous moving desires and expectations the respondent expressed at each wave. Moving desires were measured by the answer to the following survey question: '*If you could choose, would you stay here in your present home or would you prefer to move somewhere else?*'. Moving expectations were measured by the response given to the question: '*Do you expect you will move in the coming year?*'. Those person-years in which the respondent answered that they 'did not know' whether they desired or expected a move were classified as having no moving desire or moving expectation respectively. This is because not desiring or expecting to move can be thought of as the default response, with those respondents not clearly expressing a moving preference or expectation most likely to have not given moving much thought. Further analyses (not shown here) reveal that removing these person-years has little effect on the modelling results. Various independent variables identified as being strongly linked to moving behaviours by previous research were also included in the model (see Table 1 for descriptives). The hypothesised effects of these variables on moving desire-expectation combinations are presented in Table 2.

Table 1 about here
Table 2 about here

The second set of analyses modelled the likelihood of an actual move occurring between waves *t* and *t+1*, with the respondent's wave *t* moving desire-expectation combination included as an independent variable. A host of lagged control variables were also included (see Table 1 for details and Table 2 for hypothesised effects). A one-year interval between the expression of the moving desire-expectation combination and the observation of actual moving behaviour was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, the moving expectation survey question explicitly elicits the respondent's expectation of moving within a *one year* period. Secondly, linking moving desire-expectation combinations to actual moves over greater time gaps would necessitate ignoring the respondent's preferences and expectations at the intervening waves. To model actual moves, panel logistic regression models were used (Hsiao 2003). These models take into account that person-years are nested within individuals and that there may be individual specific variance in moving behaviours.

RESULTS

Forming moving desires and expectations

The first two hypotheses posited that moving desires and expectations are empirically distinct concepts which are held in combination. These hypotheses are provisionally supported by the evidence presented in Table 3, which shows the bivariate relationships between housing and neighbourhood satisfaction, housing tenure and moving desire-expectation combinations. The column totals suggest that moving desires and expectations are distinct concepts, as individuals desire a move in far more person-years than they expect a move. Considering combinations of desires and expectations

also appears important. Desiring but not expecting a move (21.49% of person years) is much more common than desiring and expecting a move (7.71% of person years), while expecting an undesired move (3.49% of person years) is the least common combination. The associations between housing and neighbourhood satisfaction and desire-expectation combinations also support the hypotheses. In cases where the respondent reported satisfaction with their home or neighbourhood, respondents also typically reported no desire or expectation of moving. Dissatisfaction (particularly with the neighbourhood) appears closely associated with desiring a move. In contrast, dissatisfaction appears to have conditional effects on moving expectations, as the dissatisfied are only likely to expect a move if the anticipated move is also desired. These associations confirm that desires and expectations are distinct concepts that operate in combination, with dissatisfaction primarily linked to an increased propensity to desire a move.

*** Table 3 about here ***

Housing tenure is also associated with moving desire-expectation combinations. Considering Table 3, it is clear that homeowners and social renters have very similar moving desires and expectations, with the majority reporting no desire or expectation of moving. Most homeowners and social renters desiring a move have no expectation to actually do so. This contrasts strongly with private renters who are highly likely to expect a move, with most private renters desiring a move also expecting to move soon. This suggests that either the selection of mobile individuals (such as young adults or the recently divorced or separated) into private rental housing or the flexible nature of the tenure facilitates expecting to be able to realise a moving desire. In addition, private renters are also far more likely to expect unwanted moves than those in other tenures.

Table 4 presents the results of a multinomial regression model analysing the factors associated with expressing different moving desire-expectation combinations. The reference category is having no desire or expectation of moving. The modelling results support the hypotheses. The dissatisfaction parameters support the bivariate evidence that moving desires and expectations are distinct concepts which must be considered in combination. Housing dissatisfaction, and especially dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood strongly increases the propensity to desire but not expect a move, and the propensity to desire and expect a move. Dissatisfaction has a much smaller effect on expecting an undesired move. So dissatisfaction is closely associated with moving desires, but not with moving expectations, except when expectations are simultaneously stated with a desire. This is presumably because moves that are expected and desired are mainly driven by housing consumption concerns, whereas undesired expected moves are anticipated either for non-housing reasons (such as job demands) or for reasons against the wishes of the respondent (for example eviction or repossession). Interestingly, experiencing any housing problems (such as noise, damp or a lack of space) still has significant positive effects on the expression of all moving desire-expectation combinations, even after controlling for satisfaction with the dwelling.

*** Table 4 about here***

Hypotheses 1 and 2 are also supported by the effects of several other independent variables on moving desire-expectation combinations. With increasing age the likelihood of expressing a moving desire without having an expectation of moving increases, but the likelihood of expecting a move decreases (the very small but significant age squared coefficients indicate that these effects are non-linear). This suggests that the declining mobility rates often observed with increasing age are not simply due to lower levels of moving desires among older people, as it appears that expectations rather than desires decline with age. Household type is significantly associated with moving desire-expectation combinations, with the presence of children within a household decreasing the likelihood of a respondent reporting any combination of a moving desire and expectation. Interestingly, those in 'other' household types (for instance living with multiple unrelated adults) are less likely to desire but not expect a move but more likely to expect an unwanted move. Considering the employment status variables also demonstrates the distinctiveness of desires and expectations. The unemployed appear more likely to expect or to desire and expect a move, suggesting that unemployment is not associated with moving desires unless an expectation is also present. The income coefficients also support the hypotheses, with income reducing the propensity to desire but not expect to move and increasing the propensity to desire and expect a move. This suggests that those with higher incomes feel able to act upon their housing preferences with greater ease.

After controlling for other factors, the bivariate associations between tenure and moving desire-expectation combinations found in Table 3 lose much of their significance. Private renters however do remain more likely than homeowners to expect a move, regardless of whether the expected move is also desired. Having excess space in the dwelling is negatively associated with having moving desires. Those with longer durations of stay are more likely to desire a move, but less likely to anticipate an unwanted move. The above results suggest that the types of individuals expressing different combinations of moving desires and expectations differ greatly. Individuals with dynamic life courses (such as the young, those living in non-family household types or private renters) or those vulnerable to housing shocks (such as the unemployed) are much more likely to expect an undesired move. In contrast, desiring but not expecting a move is associated with dissatisfaction and low levels of education and income. Those desiring and expecting a move differ from both these groups, with these respondents more likely to be mobile individuals (such as the young or highly educated) with access to greater levels of financial resources.

Moving desire-expectation combinations and subsequent mobility

The third hypothesis stated that the likelihood of actually making a residential move is affected by the combination of moving desires and expectations expressed in the previous year. This hypothesis is confirmed by the results presented in Tables 5 and 6. Considering Table 5, it is clear that moving is a fairly rare event, occurring in only 10.67% of person-years. This figure is similar to that found in prior research using earlier BHPS waves (Buck 2000). Moving rates vary greatly between prior moving desire-expectation combinations. Respondents reporting no desire or expectation of

moving are unlikely to subsequently actually move, with those desiring but not expecting a move only slightly more likely to do so. Expectations appear to predict moves much more closely, particularly if accompanied by a desire. Importantly, even where moves are desired and expected an actual move is subsequently only made in 55.09% of cases. This may be due to preference changes or because executing the move proved harder than expected (see Duncan and Newman 1976). Desires and expectations clearly have different meanings, with desires much more weakly linked to actual moves than expectations. Considering combinations is also vital, as desires are only likely to be realised if accompanied by a moving expectation. In addition, ignoring desires would erroneously conflate the unwanted expected movers with the desired expected movers. This conflation hinders our understanding of the consequences of mobility, as the welfare consequences of expected moves are likely to vary greatly depending upon whether the move was also desired.

*** Table 5 about here ***

Table 6 presents the results of two panel logistic regression models analysing the likelihood of an actual move occurring in the year following the expression of moving desires-expectation combinations. Model 1 presents a basic model of actual moves, including a number of control variables known to be strongly associated with mobility. In general, these control variables have the anticipated effects: with increasing age, individuals are less likely to move; households with children are less likely to move than other households; higher levels of education and income are both associated with an increased propensity to move; private renters are more mobile than homeowners; having excess space reduces the probability to move; longer durations at the same address and housing and neighbourhood satisfaction lead to a lower likelihood of subsequently moving.

*** Table 6 about here ***

Model 2 presents an identical model but with prior moving desire-expectations added. Including these improves the model fit greatly and confirms the third hypothesis. Those desiring a move without an expectation are somewhat more likely to subsequently move than those with no desire or expectation of moving. Expecting to move appears to be much more strongly linked to actual moves, as individuals expecting to move are highly likely to do so, particularly if this expected move is also desired. The coefficients of the other variables change little when the desire and expectation combinations are added to the model, although all of the socio-economic variables and the neighbourhood satisfaction and housing problems variables become insignificant. This suggests that these factors are linked to the formation of pre-move thoughts which in turn influence actual moves. Desires and expectations appear to mediate the direct effects of these background variables, in a similar fashion to satisfaction in the Speare model (Speare et al. 1975). This may be because individuals express their pre-move thoughts only after considering how realistic these are. Interestingly, the private rental coefficient remains strongly positive and significant in Model 2. This suggests that there is much unwanted

and unexpected mobility in the private rental sector, perhaps due to a lack of security of tenure.

CONCLUSIONS

The objectives of this paper were twofold. Firstly, the study aimed to develop our understanding of how individuals form moving desires and expectations. This aim was derived from concerns that much of the mobility literature has been haphazard when empirically analysing pre-move thoughts. The results presented here demonstrate that desires and expectations are not only different and distinct, but that they also must be considered in combination. While desiring a move appears to be strongly associated with dwelling or especially neighbourhood dissatisfaction, other factors appear to influence whether the individual also expects to be able to realise this desire. Low levels of education and low incomes are linked to an increased propensity to desire a move while not expecting to be able to act upon this moving desire, whereas high levels of education and income appear to facilitate desiring and expecting a move. Access to resources conditions whether an individual perceives that their desires can quickly be realised. The factors associated with moving expectations also differ with the coexistence of moving desires. Expecting an undesired move is more likely for the young, private renters and the unemployed, with housing and neighbourhood dissatisfaction of far less importance. This suggests that expecting an unwanted move is a feature of particular life course stages (such as young adulthood), when moves are made for productive rather than consumptive reasons. The results show that the factors associated with expecting a move differ greatly depending upon whether the move is also desired.

The second objective of the study was to explore how moving desire-expectation combinations affect subsequent moving behaviours. In the BHPS, information on moving desires, expectations and actual moving behaviour is only available at one year intervals. Given this spacing of observation intervals, it is possible that some of those with a desire to move subsequently stopped desiring the move before their next interview. This may partially explain why the likelihood of actually moving when the move is only desired is relatively low. It is however possible that this abandonment of a desire may be a form of cognitive dissonance reduction, with respondents abandoning unattainable desires to safeguard their mental wellbeing. In addition, others may have quickly formed and acted upon a moving desire within the year, thereby appearing to make an unwanted move. Despite these shortcomings of the data, the results demonstrate that moving desires and expectations are strongly linked to the likelihood of actually moving. Recognising the coexistence of moving desires and expectations is again crucial here. Although simply desiring a move is associated with a somewhat higher propensity to actually move, if the move is also expected the likelihood of actually moving is much greater. The close links of moving expectations to actual moves are also confirmed, as expecting an undesired move is also closely associated with subsequent mobility. Importantly, only 55.09% of those desiring and expecting a move actually do so within the year. This suggests that either preferences and expectations

are easily formed and abandoned or that people are not able to accurately assess the feasibility of actually moving (see Duncan and Newman 1976; Lu 1999 for similar findings).

This study contributes to the mobility literature both empirically and conceptually. Empirically, this study has identified hitherto ignored groups of individuals based upon their combination of expressed moving desires and expectations. The study has then explored how moving desires and expectations combine to affect subsequent actual mobility. The results show that large numbers of individuals desire a move as they are not content with their current housing and neighbourhood. This appears to be a particular problem for the poorest, as those with lower incomes are more likely to desire but not expect a move (with desires only weakly associated with actual moves if no expectation is present). Not all the undesired, expected mobility may have negative consequences (for instance unwanted moves made for job reasons may not have detrimental welfare effects), but the effect of unemployment on undesired expected mobility suggests that vulnerable groups are more likely to move against their will.

Our results also have implications for the development of mobility theories. As desires and expectations are formed in different ways and have different implications for mobility, future studies need to be precise in their use of terms and take care to link these accurately to the empirical material being discussed. In addition, it appears that mobility often does not follow a linear process where desires and expectations are formed sequentially prior to moving. Rather, desires and expectations are formed together and in combinations, with various moving desire-expectation combinations having different effects on the likelihood of actual mobility.

Disclaimer

The data used in this study were made available through the ESRC Data Archive. The data were originally collected by the ESRC Research Centre on Micro-Social Change at the University of Essex (now incorporated within the Institute for Social and Economic Research). Neither the original collectors of the data nor the Archive bear any responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

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Table 1. Variable Summary Statistics (Total N=63,265)

Categorical variables	N	%
Moving desire-expectation combinations (ref=no desire or expectation)		
Desire but no expectation	13,594	21.49
No desire but expectation	2,208	3.49
Desire and expectation	4,879	7.71
Mover (ref=no move)	6,752	10.67
Dissatisfied with dwelling (ref=satisfied)	14,270	22.56
Dissatisfied with neighbourhood (ref=satisfied)	4,450	7.03
Housing problems dummy (ref=no problems)	32,756	51.78
Female (ref=male)	37,877	59.87
Ethnic (ref=white)	1,501	2.37
Household type (ref=single)		
Couple	17,841	28.20
Couple with children	20,745	32.79
Lone parent	6,109	9.66
Other household	3,013	4.76
Education level (ref=no formal education)		
Low education (basic secondary school level)	15,049	23.79
Medium education (higher school/vocational equivalent)	23,046	36.43
High education (degree and above)	8,516	13.46
Unknown	1,234	1.95
Employment status (ref=employed)		
Unemployed	1,796	2.84
Other not in labour force	26,084	41.23
Housing tenure (ref=homeowner)		
Social renter	12,412	19.62
Private renter	6,765	10.69
Duration of stay (ref=0-1 years)		
2-5 years	10,654	16.84
6-20 years	12,554	19.84
21-40 years	5,575	8.81
>40 years	1,536	2.43
Unknown	22,639	35.78
Continuous variables	**Mean**	**Standard deviation**
Age	49.09	17.52
Age^2	2,717.13	1,838.74
Household income (£ 10,000, inflation adjusted)	2.72	2.33
Rooms per person	2.20	1.22

Source: BHPS (own calculations)

Table 2. Hypothesised Variable Effects on Moving Desire-Expectation Combinations and Actual Moves

Variables	Moving desire-expectation combination			Actual mobility
	Desire, no expectation	Expectation, no desire	Desire and expectation	
Dissatisfaction	+	0	+	+
Housing problems	+	0	+	+
Age	-	-	-	-
Female	+	0	0	0
Ethnic minority	+	+	-	0
Having children	-	-	-	-
Education	-	0	+	+
Unemployed	+	+	0	+
Income	-	-	+	+
Social renter	+	0	0	0
Private renter	-	+	+	+
Rooms per person	-	0	-	-
Duration of stay	-	-	-	-
Desire no expectation				+
Expectation no desire				++
Desire and expectation				+++

+ positive effect hypothesised - negative effect hypothesised 0 no effect hypothesised

Table 3. Bivariate Analysis of the Factors Associated With Expressing Different Moving Desire-Expectation Combinations

	Respondent's desire-expectation combination at wave *t*				
	No desire or expectation	Desire, no expectation	No desire, expectation	Desire and expectation	Total (100% and N)
Housing satisfaction (%)					
Satisfied	76.03	16.28	3.34	4.36	48,995
Dissatisfied	37.38	39.38	4.02	19.22	14,270
Neighbourhood satisfaction (%)					
Satisfied	71.89	18.43	3.71	5.96	58,815
Dissatisfied	6.74	61.91	0.54	30.81	4,450
Housing tenure (%)					
Homeowner	71.88	20.53	2.19	5.39	44,088
Social renter	63.04	27.46	2.14	7.36	12,412
Private renter	45.35	16.75	14.44	23.46	6,765
Total (% and N)	67.31% 42,584	21.49% 13,594	3.49% 2,208	7.71% 4,879	100.00% 63,265

Source: BHPS (own calculations)

Table 4. Multinomial Logit Model of Moving Desire-Expectation Combinations (ref=no desire or expectation)

Variable	Desire but no expectation		No desire but expectation		Desire and expectation	
	Coef.	Std. Err.	Coef.	Std. Err.	Coef.	Std. Err.
Dissatisfied with dwelling	1.093	0.032***	0.535	0.058***	1.563	0.042***
Dissatisfied with neighbourhood	3.241	0.074***	0.491	0.218**	3.779	0.083***
Housing problems	0.801	0.030***	0.160	0.051**	0.548	0.042***
Age	0.018	0.007**	-0.084	0.010***	-0.050	0.009***
Age^2	-0.000	0.000***	0.000	0.000***	0.000	0.000
Female	-0.079	0.038**	-0.190	0.053***	-0.075	0.047
Ethnic minority	0.197	0.106	0.238	0.145	-0.114	0.145
Household type (ref=single)						
Couple	0.072	0.061	-0.274	0.090**	-0.122	0.076
Couple with children	-0.231	0.073**	-0.576	0.108***	-0.589	0.089***
Lone parent	-0.228	0.075**	-0.198	0.119	-0.469	0.096***
Other household	-0.227	0.095**	0.420	0.106***	-0.088	0.096
Education level (ref=no education)						
Low	0.119	0.054**	-0.117	0.095	0.222	0.079**
Medium	0.142	0.053**	0.078	0.090	0.399	0.076***
High	0.035	0.070	0.290	0.103**	0.690	0.088***
Unknown	0.199	0.127	0.148	0.189	0.527	0.162**
Employment status (ref=employed)						
Unemployed	-0.062	0.080	0.336	0.127**	0.223	0.097**
Other	-0.229	0.042***	0.200	0.066**	-0.007	0.055
Household income (£ ten thousand)	-0.035	0.010***	-0.003	0.014	0.016	0.008**
Housing tenure (ref=homeowner)						
Social renter	-0.017	0.050	-0.104	0.087	-0.187	0.065**
Private renter	0.003	0.061	1.267	0.069***	0.945	0.062***
Rooms per person	-0.118	0.022***	0.006	0.032	-0.058	0.028**
Duration of stay (ref=0-1 years)						
2-5 years	0.459	0.045***	-0.104	0.075	0.148	0.058**
6-20 years	0.654	0.057***	-0.040	0.093	0.170	0.076**
21-40 years	0.721	0.079***	-0.293	0.148**	-0.309	0.133**
>40 years	0.633	0.154***	-0.615	0.290**	-0.087	0.260
Unknown	0.423	0.050***	-0.152	0.073**	-0.067	0.065
Constant	-1.919	0.178***	-0.498	0.246**	-1.355	0.229***

Model log pseudo likelihood= 46,192.919 (improvement over null= 11,477.949) Wald chi2(d.f.)=10,420.57(78) Pseudo r2=0.199
Standard errors adjusted for 14,356 clusters within person identification number ***=p<0.001 **=p<0.05 N=63,265

Source: BHPS (own calculations)

Table 5. Moving Desire-Expectation Combinations and Actual Moving Behaviour Over the Next Year

Respondent's desire-expectation category at wave *t* (%)	Respondent's actual moving behaviour between *t* and *t+1*		Total (100% and N)
	Stayer	Mover	
No desire or expectation	95.56	4.44	42,584
Desire but no expectation	92.01	7.99	13,594
No desire but expectation	50.72	49.28	2,208
Desire and expectation	44.91	55.09	4,879
Total (% and N)	89.33% 56,513	10.67% 6,752	100.00% 63,265

Source: BHPS (own calculations)

Table 6. Panel Logistic Regression Models of the Annual Likelihood of Moving (ref=no move)

	Model 1		Model 2	
Variable	Coef.	Std. Err.	Coef.	Std. Err.
Age	-0.113	0.006***	-0.099	-0.007***
Age^2	0.001	0.000***	0.001	0.000***
Female	-0.131	0.034***	-0.107	0.037**
Ethnic minority	-0.088	0.098	-0.055	0.106
Household type (ref=single)				
Couple	-0.267	0.055***	-0.188	0.059**
Couple with children	-0.601	0.065***	-0.419	0.070***
Lone parent	-0.509	0.071***	-0.357	0.077***
Other	0.195	0.071**	0.190	0.079**
Education level (ref=no education)				
Low	0.029	0.056	-0.015	0.059
Medium	0.117	0.054**	-0.008	0.058
High	0.305	0.064***	0.061	0.070
Unknown	0.091	0.117	-0.093	0.128
Employment status (ref=employed)				
Unemployed	0.028	0.081	-0.095	0.089
Other	0.105	0.042**	0.075	0.045
Household income (£ ten thousand)	0.019	0.007**	0.013	0.008
Housing tenure (ref=homeowner)				
Social renter	-0.003	0.050	0.032	0.053
Private renter	1.265	0.046***	0.934	0.051***
Rooms per person	-0.055	0.020**	-0.038	0.022
Duration of stay (ref=0-1 years)				
2-5 years	-0.143	0.047**	-0.206	0.051***
6-20 years	-0.357	0.062***	-0.482	0.064***
21-40 years	-0.773	0.101***	-0.807	0.104***
>40 years	-0.664	0.173***	-0.728	0.177***
Unknown	-0.533	0.049***	-0.612	-0.053***
Dissatisfied with dwelling	0.646	0.036***	0.220	0.040***
Dissatisfied with neighbourhood	0.731	0.051***	0.049	0.058
Housing problems	0.113	0.034**	-0.016	0.037
Moving desire-expectation category (ref=no desire or expectation)				
Desire but no expectation			0.541	0.046***
Expectation but no desire			2.308	0.062***
Desire and expectation			2.883	0.052***
Intercept	0.979	0.159***	0.084	0.171
Rho	0.097	0.012	0.099	0.013
Log likelihood (improvement over null)	-16,776.895(3,639.93)		-14,463.893(5,952.932)	
Wald chi2 (d.f.)	5,894.91(26)		6,938.66(29)	
N	63,265		63,265	
Source: BHPS (own calculations)	***=p<0.001		**=p<0.05	