

# **Housing Studies**



ISSN: 0267-3037 (Print) 1466-1810 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/chos20

# Housing Careers of Minority Ethnic Groups: Experiences, Explanations and Prospects

## A. Sule Özüekren & Ronald van Kempen

To cite this article: A. Sule Özüekren & Ronald van Kempen (2002) Housing Careers of Minority Ethnic Groups: Experiences, Explanations and Prospects, Housing Studies, 17:3, 365-379, DOI: 10.1080/02673030220134908

To link to this article: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/02673030220134908">https://doi.org/10.1080/02673030220134908</a>





# Housing Careers of Minority Ethnic Groups: Experiences, Explanations and Prospects

### A. SULE ÖZÜEKREN¹ & RONALD VAN KEMPEN²

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Architecture, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey <sup>2</sup>Urban Research Centre Utrecht, Faculty of Geographical Sciences, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

[Paper first received 14 September 2001; in final form 1 December 2001]

ABSTRACT The housing careers of minority ethnic groups is an under-researched topic. Filling this knowledge gap is important for several reasons. Increased knowledge within this field may help explain the disadvantaged position of minority ethnic groups in housing markets in cities on different continents. Policy strategies can be formulated when it is known whether minority ethnic groups have specific preferences or suffer from specific barriers in the housing market. In this introduction to this special issue on the housing careers of minority ethnic groups, attention is paid to the concept of housing career and the definition of minority ethnic groups in different countries. The focus of the main part of the paper is the identification of factors affecting the course of housing careers in general and those of minority ethnic groups in particular.

KEY WORDS: housing career, minority ethnic groups, explanation, theory

#### Housing Careers: A Knowledge Gap within Housing Research

Housing conditions and housing market options show and reproduce the inequalities between nationals and minority ethnic groups. Immigrants and their descendants born in the host country are often only able to fill a niche in the housing stock, segments left behind by others. Despite some improvements in the past decade or so (see for example Glebe, 1997; Kesteloot *et al.*, 1997), minority ethnic groups in Western cities usually still live in the least desirable segments of the housing market. Such a segment may be within multi-family rented housing, or in dilapidated owner-occupied housing. Whatever the situation, the outcome usually reflects a coincidence between ethnic differentiation and spatial separation, signifying that the options for minority ethnic groups are generally limited to certain city neighbourhoods.

This general picture emerges from many studies in many Western European countries. It is known that in the Netherlands the living conditions of Turks and Moroccans are inferior to those of the native Dutch (van Kempen, 1997) and that Turks in Austria live in lower quality dwellings than Austrians (Giffinger & Reeger, 1997). For the British situation, it has repeatedly been shown that the black minorities can be seen as particularly disadvantaged with

respect to housing conditions (Daley, 1998; Phillips, 1998). Vietnamese households are similarly disadvantaged (Tomlins *et al.*, 2000; Tomlins *et al.*, this issue). In France, the North-Africans and Portuguese have been identified as disadvantaged groups (De Villanova, 1997). These are just a few examples.

The disadvantaged position of minority ethnic groups with regard to spatial segregation has also frequently become clear from research. In contrast with the fairly general agreement that no ghettos exist in Europe, there are many examples of segregation and spatial concentration that can be characterised by consolidating, or even increasing figures (see, for example Kesteloot *et al.*, 1997; Musterd *et al.*, 1998; Peach, 1998; White, 1998). This spatial concentration can also be observed in cities in Eastern Europe (see, for example, Kovács, 1998; Ladányi, 2001; Sykora, 1999). From the same literature it becomes clear that without exception minority ethnic households still live in the most dilapidated urban neighbourhoods.

From the studies to date, it is clear that much knowledge has already been built up on the housing conditions of minority ethnic groups in many different situations. However, some important gaps in our knowledge remain. One important gap concerns the 'housing careers of minority ethnic groups' (see below for the definition of this term). There are at least two important reasons why this gap should be filled.

The first reason is a social one. As mentioned above, minority ethnic groups can often be found in disadvantaged positions on the housing market. These disadvantages may have serious implications for their integration into the broader society (Clark & Drever, 2000). Investigating the constraints they meet and the resources they lack may be helpful in finding explanations for these disadvantaged positions. Adequate explanations are necessary for the formulation of adequate policy with respect to the housing careers of minority ethnic groups in particular and so for the housing market in general. The second reason for undertaking more research in the field of the housing careers of minority ethnic groups is more scientific. Specific factors may contribute significantly to explanations of their housing careers, so that finding these specific factors is important. However, it is also essential to discover to what extent these specific explanatory factors hold in different contexts. The preferences of a minority ethnic group may differ with context and so may the barriers in these contexts. As a result, similar ethnic groups may end up in totally different situations in different cities or countries.

Knowledge of housing careers gives a picture of the societal context in which minority ethnic groups live. If the housing careers of some groups differ fundamentally from those of the majority community or other minority ethnic groups, questions need to be asked about the causes of divergence and convergence over time. In order to evaluate the housing situations of households, we need to know about the stages in their housing careers. A fundamental question is whether the current situation of an immigrant household can be seen as just a first step on the housing ladder or as a situation from which no escape seems possible. This distinction is fundamental in exploring the nature, strength, and permanency of possible barriers to housing for particular groups.

This paper provides a background to this special issue on the housing careers of minority ethnic groups in some Western European countries and in Canada. The next section gives a definition of the concept of 'housing career' and describes some related concepts. The central part of the paper then provides a

condensed review of theories of residential mobility in general, with specific attention to the mobility of minority ethnic groups. The end of the paper briefly considers the various terms and classifications used to distinguish minority ethnic groups. The goal of this section is to illustrate the limitations posed by various classifications and to point out the limits of comparative work in this field.

#### The Concept of Housing Career

A housing career can be defined simply as "the sequence of dwellings that a household occupies during its history" (Pickles & Davies, 1991, p. 466). This definition implies that a housing career is not automatically tied to a certain hierarchical development (from rental to ownership, or from multi-family to single-family or from small to large), but to the series of dwellings a household occupies during the life course (Bolt, 2001).

The concept of 'housing career' was introduced by researchers into residential mobility. The concept is derived from behavioural models and includes the preferences, perceptions, and decision making of households. In this context, studying housing careers by linking life-course events and mobility processes between housing units provides a dynamic basis for understanding housing choices and the factors enabling or constraining households on the housing market. The notion of 'life-course' emphasises a combination of sequences (or trajectories) of different types of event (Clark & Dieleman, 1996; Mulder, 1993). Events include changes in household composition, education and job careers, decisions to marry, have children or retire (at an early age). The notion of life course gives place to such divergent experiences as divorce, remarriage and migration (Kendig, 1984; Mulder, 1993). The life-course approach examines the impact of each event on the housing behaviour of households in a longitudinal perspective. The preferred housing career can be the result of developments in parallel careers, such as the labour career or the household career. Moreover, choices made earlier in life (such as getting married, having children, becoming an owner occupier) can influence later decisions (Bolt, 2001).

The major events in the life course of households often require residential relocation. Mobility is usually greater at the earliest stages of households' lives, when people are at the beginning of their job and household careers. Changes in household size and type often provide reasons for residential mobility. Households generally start their housing careers by moving into dwellings at the bottom of the market and subsequently moving to more desirable units in more desirable locations. Of course, not everyone starts at the bottom; neither can everyone reach the top.

The ideal methodology for investigating housing careers is a longitudinal research study which follows households throughout their lives. This approach is only possible on a large scale in a few countries (such as Sweden; see also the papers by Abramsson *et al.* and Magnusson & Özüekren in this issue). In other longitudinal studies specific fieldwork would have to be set up and this usually means that only a relatively small number of respondents could be used, since such research is expensive. Cross-sectional methods can also be used. With this method, housing careers are detected by asking respondents about their previous housing conditions or even their preferred housing situation.

#### **Explaining Housing Careers**

#### Preferences

Decisions to move are usually made on the basis of preferences (although it should not be forgotten that decisions to move can sometimes have a forced character, such as in the case of fire, urban renewal or divorce). Preferences can be defined as actual transformations of the general goals people have in certain periods of their lives (Mulder, 1993). Different groups, even different households, have divergent ideas of what constitutes a desirable housing situation. Each household has its own subjective hierarchy, which is not static. Research in the behavioural tradition focuses on these preferences. The earlier work within the behavioural approach has been particularly criticised for its emphasis on choice and the concomitant lack of attention to constraints (see, for example, Hamnett & Randolph, 1988). Neither the supply of dwellings nor their accessibility (allocation procedures) received much attention. In later years, however, constraint factors were gradually included in models analysing the behaviour of households on the housing market (see, for example, Dieleman & Everaers, 1994).

Decisions to move are only taken when a certain level of dissatisfaction with the present housing situation is reached. Wolpert (1965) asserted that a certain threshold level of residential stress has to be arrived at before a household will contemplate making a move (see also Brown & Moore, 1970). This idea acknowledges the fact that people do not constantly consider whether to move or not: a trigger is needed to set off an intention to move (Mulder, 1993). In the absence of such a trigger, mechanisms keeping people where they are prevail (Mulder, 1996). Sources of triggers can be found in the state of the current dwelling or the character of the neighbourhood or in certain events, such as divorce, changing jobs or, specifically for immigrants, the arrival of family members from the home country (Mulder, 1996).

In the behavioural approach, household choices are directly linked to positions and events in the family life cycle (see, for example, Clark & Dieleman, 1996; Clark *et al.*, 1997). Household characteristics are major determinants of housing (and locational) preferences (Adams & Gilder, 1976; Clark *et al.*, 1986). Age intersects with the household formation cycle: establishing a durable relationship, starting a family (children are born), contraction of the family (children leave home), and the death of a partner. These situations all influence a household's size and preferred type of dwelling (Rossi, 1955; Speare *et al.*, 1975; Stapleton, 1980).

The ethnic-cultural approach can be seen as a special form of the behavioural approach. The general argument within the ethnic-cultural approach runs as follows: housing conditions and residential patterns differ between groups and these differences can be attributed to cultural differences between these groups. There is a clear element of choice in this approach. In the British literature, this ethnic-cultural factor plays a particularly important part: minority ethnic groups want to live in areas where many other people belonging to their group live, because these neighbourhoods offer a place where they feel at home, where they have their social contacts and their ethnic-specific amenities such as shops, churches and restaurants (see, for example, Bowes *et al.*, 1997; Dahya, 1974; Peach & Smith, 1981; Robinson, 1981). Some assert that these preferences might be stronger for women, because outside a concentration area they would run a greater risk of feeling isolated (Phillips, 1998).

Researchers in the ethnic-cultural tradition sometimes allow for the inclusion of constraints in the explanation. The choice of owner-occupied dwellings can be seen as a cultural preference, but also as a defensive reaction to the racist practices of landlords (see, for example, Bowes *et al.*, 1997; Cater & Jones, 1987). The ethnic-cultural approach opens our eyes to the fact that Asians, Turks, Moroccans and West Indians, to mention just a few groups of immigrants in West European countries, are not single groups with unitary values. All kinds of subgroups might attach different meanings to many aspects of life, including the kind of housing and neighbourhood in which they would like to live (see, for example, Ballard, 1990).

#### Constraints and Resources

Decisions to move can never be made on the basis of preferences alone. Decisions are made in a context of constraints and perceived opportunities. Constraints can be seen as pressures or obstacles. Constraints prohibit people from regarding parts of the housing market as opportunities, as possibilities to move to (Mulder, 1993). Constraints can arise from such factors as absolute shortages in the housing market, or the competition of many households for the same type of housing (inexpensive social rented dwellings, for example). Choices can be constrained by the number of affordable dwellings available and by allocation rules.

Constraint-oriented explanations take their roots in Rex and Moore's classic study *Race, Community and Conflict* (1967), generally considered the beginning of the neo-Weberian, or institutional approach to housing research. This approach is grounded in the idea that housing, especially desirable housing, is a scarce resource and different groups are differentially placed with regard to access.

Individual resources are the tools households use to overcome constraints. People can be distinguished from each other by their strength in the housing market (Rex, 1968). This strength is determined by the resources available to a household. Four kinds of individual resources can be discerned: material, cognitive, political and social (see also van Kempen & Özüekren, 1998).

'Material resources' refer to having an income-generating job, personal savings, and opportunities to raise capital through money lending institutions (Özüekren, 1992; Siksio & Borgegård, 1990). Even the present housing can be seen as a resource. Indeed, many children of home owners have bought a dwelling with a down-payment consisting of a part of the equity built up by their parents (Forrest & Williams, 1984).

'Cognitive resources' include education, skills and knowledge of the housing market. Education is critical with respect to the position an individual may attain on the labour market. However, a high level of education is not automatically related to a high income. Conversely, people with little education may have learned a craft or may have skills which enable them to earn a lot of money legally or otherwise in the informal sector. Another cognitive resource is knowledge of the housing market, as this could facilitate the attainment of a desired situation (Smith, 1977).

'Political resources' relate to attaining and defending formal rights in society. The lack of formal right of access to certain positions in the labour market and the housing market can strongly affect opportunities on the labour market,

income position and the housing conditions of minority ethnic households and consequently their position in society (van Kempen & Özüekren, 1998)

'Social resources', in other words the contacts people have, may help them find suitable housing and places in which to live. The concept of social resources, or social capital, refers to the direct or indirect accessibility of 'important' persons or groups and the membership of social networks (Wippler, 1990). These social networks can have important functions in social integration, in society as a whole or within subgroups (see, for example, Friedrichs, 1998). Social networks can also help people find solutions in significant areas of life, achieve important aims and attain positions in the labour and housing markets. The role of information is crucial in this respect. Dahya's research in Bradford demonstrated that the concentration of Pakistanis in certain neighbourhoods could largely be explained by reference to networks of fellow countrymen (Dahya, 1974).

Social networks can be localised, in a neighbourhood for example. Local ties can be a resource, but they can also act as factors binding a person to a specific place. A person or a household may be prevented from moving from an area because of the local contacts with neighbours, family, friends, cultural facilities, employment, schools and so forth (Mulder, 1996).

All these resources are highly influential in accounting for a household's housing market position. Minority ethnic groups are not usually well positioned on the housing market with respect to these resources. Immigrants and even their descendants born in the host countries often occupy the less favourable sectors of the economy, that is if they are lucky enough to be employed at all. Otherwise, they are either unemployed and dependent on welfare or the entrepreneur of a small-scale business. In most cases, their income levels are low. Lack of financial resources generally goes far in explaining the present housing market position of minority ethnic households, as can be seen in most of the papers in this special issue.

Insufficient resources do not form the only barrier to be overcome. 'Gatekeepers' can also influence the opportunities of minority ethnic households. The crucial role of these managers is described by Pahl (1975, 1977) and Lipsky (1980). These authors examined the role of the housing officer in the allocation of resources. Pahl suggested that social gatekeepers (such as housing officers) can allocate resources according to their own implicit goals, values, assumptions and ideologies. As a result, stereotyping and racism may influence their decisions (Tomlins, 1997). Discriminatory practices may be encountered among private landlords as well as among the intermediaries between landlords and prospective buyers or tenants. A landlord might, for example, offer a vacant dwelling to a friend or acquaintance rather than to a minority ethnic household. The exclusionary policies of local authorities and private landlords may force ethnic minorities into owner occupation (Phillips & Karn, 1992). Consequently, minority ethnic households may be obliged to rent or buy a substandard dwelling and to live in neighbourhoods not of their own choice.

#### Opportunities

Opportunities are the options that are open to individuals or households. Opportunities can also be seen as the 'choice set' of available alternatives (Mulder, 1993). Potential movers may accept or reject an available opportunity

(Gordon & Vickerman, 1982). Opportunities emerge from an intricate interplay between individual preferences and resources on the one hand and external constraints on the other. Macro-level factors and developments can also be influential. Individuals and households do not act in a vacuum; they operate within the economic, demographic, socio-cultural and political context of their countries, regions, cities and neighbourhoods. There is, in other words, a close relationship between individual preferences and resources, constraints, and opportunities and the wider social structure (Phillips & Karn, 1992).

Macro-level factors and developments are thus partially responsible for the character of the choice set (or opportunity structure) from which individuals and households can choose. For example, the depopulation of an area may create opportunities for those who live elsewhere. Spatial arrangements on a lower spatial scale may bring about opportunities. A growing spatial concentration of immigrants from a certain country can provide the opportunity for other people from that country to have more and closer contacts with their fellow-countrymen. Spatial concentration might induce people to move to a particular area.

The basic idea is straightforward: in order to explain individual or household behaviour attention must be paid to the options individuals have. These options are determined partly by macro-developments and partly by the spatial characteristics of the area where people live. Different elaborations of this idea have been put forward previously by Friedrichs (1998); Musterd *et al.* (1999a); Özüekren & van Kempen (1997); Sarre *et al.* (1989); van Kempen & Özüekren (1998) and van Kempen (2001). Papers in this issue show that this 'contextual approach' in which attention is paid to general economic, demographic and political developments is necessary for research into housing careers.

In recent years, many authors have produced lists of important macro-level factors and developments (see Marcuse & van Kempen (2000a); van Kempen (2001); van Kempen & Özüekren (1998) for an overview). Some of the most significant factors for housing career research is outlined below.

#### Globalisation and Other Economic Developments

The declining importance of manufacturing and the increasing significance of services can be considered one of the main economic changes in Western societies. Cities may lose much of their economic base when industrial companies close down or move to other parts of the country or even other parts of the world. The global restructuring of the economy and the consequent transfer of manufacturing to newly industrialised nations have added to the loss of manual jobs in West European countries in the last three decades or so (see, for example, Musterd et al., 1999b). The immediate consequences of these developments are that people, especially those working in the industrial sectors of Western economies, become redundant and dependent on state benefits. Lower incomes may force them to look for cheaper alternatives on the housing market. (Much more can be said about globalisation and its possible effects on households and individuals as well as on such processes as social polarisation, spatial segregation and urban fragmentation; see, for example, Musterd et al., 1999a; Marcuse & van Kempen, 2000b.) The combination of poor education, limited work experience, language problems and the declining demand for unskilled workers works to the disadvantage of many ethnic groups.

Moreover, in Europe a hardening of attitudes towards 'foreigners' has been observed in public debate and public opinion in recent years (ECRI, 2000). This trend may also influence the attitude of potential employers, who might prefer a native employee to a member of an ethnic minority group. Support for extreme right-wing parties differs between countries and cities, but can sometimes be extremely high (as in Antwerp, Belgium since the early 1990s). Incidences of racial violence take place everywhere. These signs of intolerance point to (perceived) inequalities between the native-born and foreign-born population groups and may interrupt a peaceful, secure and stable life for all population groups.

#### Demographic Developments

The number of households looking for a home is an important variable and one which must be taken into account when studying the opportunities of making a housing career. Massive growth in the number of households within a relatively brief period may cause shortages if all those households are looking for the same kind of dwelling in the same area. Waves of immigration may have a radical impact on the housing market. A country like Germany is a case in point. In the 1990s Germany received 1.9 million ethnic Germans and 1.7 million asylum seekers, in addition to unknown numbers of highly skilled workers and illegal immigrants (Clark & Drever, 2000). All these people have to be housed. Demographic developments may increase the competition between households.

Newcomers are often among the weakest parties in the competition for housing; typically, they have low incomes and lack skills and knowledge. Migrant labourers tend to settle in cheap residential areas in the poorer sections of the city, close to their place of work (Sarre *et al.*, 1989, p. 7). This tendency is especially true when they arrive without their families. According to Peach (1968, quoted in Sarre *et al.*, 1989), it is not that newcomers create a space for themselves; they fill a vacuum. The choices of others are therefore very important. The migration of others creates vacancies in the existing stock and in particular neighbourhoods.

#### Socio-cultural Developments

Socio-cultural developments refer to the changing values and norms of a population, or part of a population. In Western societies, the importance of traditional values and norms, including obedience, docility, dependence on the church, parents and husbands, has declined since the end of the 1960s. Emancipation and individualism can be seen as the driving forces behind this process. Individuals increasingly follow their own preferences instead of those prescribed by others (van Kempen, 2001). The simplest effect of this change in norms and values has probably been the increasing heterogeneity of household forms and lifestyles (Marcuse & van Kempen, 2000a). The existence of different lifestyles may exacerbate the difficulties of living together in a neighbourhood and may be a motive for some to move elsewhere, to a better dwelling or not as the case may be.

As a result of immigration during the second half of the last century, substantial and diverse populations of different national and ethnical origins from those of the host populations have come to Western Europe. Among them,

the ex-colonials who have arrived since the 1950s and the guest workers, the first of them arriving during the 1960s, were two significant groups in terms of numbers. Other immigrants came as political refugees or as undocumented immigrants. It should not be forgotten that in the course of time many immigrants have returned to their home countries. (Martin (1991) has, for example, estimated that before 1990 between 500 000 and 900 000 Turks who had once worked abroad eventually returned to Turkey.) Nevertheless, many others followed the tracks made by their predecessors and came to Western Europe in continuous flows, often as a consequence of family reunion and family formation. Consequently, ethnic and cultural diversity has become a characteristic feature of the major cities of the Western World.

Examples of clashes between different cultures and lifestyles within a neighbourhood are manifold. People may be disturbed by noise and dirt caused by others, they may feel discriminated, or just not 'at home' anymore, because many neighbours have moved and been replaced by others with whom they have little contact. In a recent research in Rotterdam it has been shown that all these factors play a part and that the native inhabitants of an area often blame the new minority ethnic population for the negative changes (Botman & van Kempen, 2001).

#### The Role of the Welfare State

A defining characteristic of the welfare state is its redistributive nature. All members of a society contribute to a common stock of resources by paying taxes and these resources are then redistributed according to agreed rules (Musterd *et al.*, 1999a). Income transfers can be made from rich to poor, from employed to unemployed, from the healthy to the sick, from the socially included to the socially excluded; this is precisely what a welfare state does. Moreover, not only is financial support given directly to the weak, the welfare state is also characterised by an elaborate system of subsidies in all kinds of fields such as housing, culture and social work (van Kempen, 2001). Welfare state arrangements have been able to reduce social inequality, spatial segregation and social exclusion (Musterd & Ostendorf, 1998). In other words, some of the harsh consequences of economic restructuring have been softened by welfare state provisions (Musterd *et al.*, 1999b; van Kempen, 2001). This mitigation is more evident in some countries than others. The Dutch and Swedish welfare states are generous compared with countries such as the UK and the USA.

In most Western European countries, the welfare activities of states have been declining. This process was prompted by the presumed need for cut-backs, coupled with a new liberal philosophy with the declining role of the central state as the central tenet. The general idea of a retreating welfare state can be observed in the accompanying processes of decentralisation, the de-concentration of powers, and privatisation. A changing role for the welfare state generally means that those with lower incomes end up with fewer opportunities: their social benefits may be cut or housing subsidies reduced. Minority ethnic households dependent on welfare or other kinds of low income may suffer disproportionately.

Some researchers assert that the role of the welfare state has been resurging. In 1999 Dutch cities, for example, had to make plans for urban restructuring and the improvement of their declining neighbourhoods. Covenants were

made between the cities and the relevant Ministries. The cities only received funds when the plans were considered good enough. If the targets in the covenants are not be reached, the responsible ministers have the powers to withhold funds (van Kempen & Priemus, forthcoming).

#### Rights and Legislation

Rights and legislation can be seen as crucial elements of the welfare state. They may refer to gaining entry to a country (immigration laws) or they may concern rights of residence and work, social rights and political rights in the place of destination. Conflicts concerning these topics may arise when immigrants are seen as competitors for housing, jobs and social benefits. They may also be seen as a threat to the alleged cultural homogeneity of the indigenous population (Faist & Häußermann, 1996).

In some countries (such as Sweden and the Netherlands), immigrants and their descendants have long had the right to vote in local elections. In other countries (such as Belgium) their participation in the political system is much more restricted. Such differences might affect their integration into the host country and their positions in the housing and labour markets. Laws and regulations may even limit their opportunities directly (for example, the right to buy a dwelling, or the right to occupy a unit in the social rented sector).

The legal status of immigrants may affect their housing preferences. Knowing they will have to return to their country of origin within a few years, they will not be interested in obtaining a permanent residence. If immigrants are only allowed to stay in a country for a limited time, they will be unlikely to invest in their residential situation:

It seems self-evident that only if immigrants have the assurance of being able to stay permanently in the country of residence will they be prepared to put down roots, to integrate fully into their new society, and to identify with it. (Murray, 1995, p. 3)

#### Minority Ethnic Groups in the Western World: Definitions

Some attention to definitions is necessary here. The terms used to designate those who originally came from another country and their descendants are numerous: minorities, ethnic minorities, minority ethnic groups, blacks, immigrants, foreigners and so forth. Moreover, different countries apply different rules when considering whether a person belongs to a particular category. An example is reported by the Council of Europe (1991, p. 8):

People living in France and originating from the French Antilles are not considered to be immigrants by the French authorities, whereas people living in the Netherlands and originating from the Netherlands Antilles—only a few kilometres away—are seen as immigrants by the Dutch authorities.

Definitions based on nationality seem to be outdated, at least for countries in which naturalisation is fairly easy. Definitions based on the birthplace of the individual can cause difficulties when increasing numbers belong to the second or even third generation of immigrants. Some countries, such as the UK, use

self-definitions. Other countries, like the Netherlands, have turned to definitions that include a wide range of people. In the Netherlands individuals belong to an immigrant group if they were born in a country outside the Netherlands, or if one of the parents was born outside the Netherlands.

The terms 'ethnic minority' or 'minority ethnic group', are often used. These terms are convenient for indicating those people that are not only of foreign descent, but can also be found in disadvantaged positions in, for example, the labour market or the housing market. In this way, Turks and Moroccans are separated from Americans, Belgians and Germans. Of course, that is not to say that all the individuals belonging to a specific category are found in disadvantaged positions, behave similarly or have the same preferences with respect to housing and places to live. Differences within groups are always present; some individuals and households perform better on the labour market and the housing market than others. Deeper analyses are necessary to explain the differences between as well as within categories.

#### Final Remarks

The papers in this issue show that the housing conditions of minority ethnic households can change. In other words, it will become clear that many of them are not trapped in their dwelling or their neighbourhood. Some of the papers detect moves from inner cities to suburbs, while others show that moves from older, low-quality areas to newer areas with better housing have become a visible trend (see also Daley, 1998). Owner occupation has become more common among some of the minority ethnic groups in Western European countries (see also Kesteloot *et al.*, 1997). Moves from lower-quality to higher-quality housing and from rentals to owner-occupied dwellings usually also imply moves from one neighbourhood to another, although a decline in rates of segregation does not always ensue, as illustrated by Magnusson & Özüekren (this issue). The constant in and outflow of people renders neighbourhoods dynamic with respect to their minority ethnic populations (see Musterd & Deurloo, this issue).

The housing careers of minority ethnic groups, on average, show a progressive pattern. However, it is not always optimistic. Moves do not always imply huge positive changes in housing conditions (Bolt, 2001; see also Bolt & van Kempen in this issue). First, most of the moves, for example in the Netherlands and Sweden (see also Abramsson *et al.*, this issue) still take place within the public rented sector. Moves from the social rented sector to owner-occupied dwellings do take place, but they are not very numerous and only for households with reasonable incomes. A move to a larger dwelling usually also requires an increase in household income, as does a move from a multi-family to a single-family dwelling.

Household income thus seems to be a very influential factor in housing careers. That is not to say that other factors are of no importance at all. Moves are sometimes made between dwellings and areas with more or less the same characteristics. Both Bowes and colleagues (this issue) and Tomlins and colleagues (this issue) show that discrimination and stereotyping may be the basis for these sideways moves. The discriminatory behaviour of neighbours may be as damaging as institutional discrimination, not only for the nature of the housing career, but also for the personal well-being of the individuals involved.

It is important to recognise that the position of ethnic minorities on the housing market and their ability to pursue a housing career may differ greatly from one group to the next (for example, Murdie & Borgegård, 1998, Murdie, in this issue). Maybe even more important, and less often recognised, is the fact that positions may change through time and may differ within groups. Only too often, investigations are undertaken to show that *the* Turks are worse off than others, that *the* Afro-Caribbeans only have poor opportunities on the housing market and so forth. We should be wary of these generalisations. They might even be potentially harmful through feeding the emergence or continuance of stereotypes. Good research has an eye for differences within groups, for changes over time and for differences between locations.

#### Correspondence

A. Sule Özüekren, Faculty of Architecture, Istanbul Technical University, Taskisla 80191, Istanbul, Turkey. Email: Ozuekren@itu.edu.tr.

#### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Clara H. Mulder and Bill Clark for their comments on an earlier version of this paper. We also thank Roger Andersson, Gideon Bolt, Lars-Erik Borgegard, Frans Dieleman, Lena Magnusson, Bob Murdie, Richard Tomlins and Duncan Sim for refereeing other papers in this special issue.

#### References

- Adams, J.S. & Gilder, K.S. (1976) Household location and intra-urban migration, in: D.T. Herbert & R.J. Johnston (Eds) *Social Areas in Cities, Volume 1: Spatial Processes and Form,* pp. 159–192 (London, Wiley).
- Ballard, R. (1990) Migration and kinship: the differential effect of marriage rules on the processes of Punjabi migration to Britain, in: C. Clarke, C. Peach & S. Vertovec (Eds) *South Asians Overseas; Migration and Ethnicity*, pp. 219–249 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Bolt, G. (2001) Wooncarrières van Turken en Marokkanen in ruimtelijk perspectief [Housing careers of Turks and Moroccans in a spatial perspective] (Utrecht, Faculty of Geographical Sciences, Utrecht University).
- Botman, S. & Van Kempen, R. (2001) *The Spatial Dimensions of Urban Social Exclusion and Integration: The Case of Rotterdam, the Netherlands* (Amsterdam, Amsterdam Study Centre for the Metropolitan Environment).
- Bowes, A., Dar, N. & Sim, D. (1997) Tenure preference and housing strategy: an exploration of Pakistani experiences, *Housing Studies*, 12, pp. 63–84.
- Brown, L.A. & Moore E.G. (1970) The intra-urban migration process: a perspective, *Geografiska Annaler*, 52B, pp. 1–13.
- Cater, J. & Jones, T. (1987) Asian ethnicity and home-ownership, in: P. Jackson (Ed.) *Race and Racism—Essays in Social Geography*, pp. 189–211 (London, Allen and Unwin).
- Clark, W.A.V. & Dieleman, F.M. (1996) Households and Housing; Choice and Outcomes in the Housing Market (New Brunswick NJ, Center for Urban Policy Research).
- Clark, W.A.V. & Drever, A.I. (2000) Residential mobility in a constrained housing market: implications for ethnic populations in Germany, *Environment and Planning A*, 32, pp. 833–846.
- Clark, W.A.V., Deurloo, M.C. & Dieleman, F.M. (1986) Residential mobility in Dutch housing markets, *Environment and Planning A*, 18, pp. 763–788.
- Clark, W.A.V., Deurloo, M.C. & Dieleman, F.M. (1997) Entry to home-ownership in Germany: some comparisons with the United States, *Urban Studies*, 34, pp. 7–19.
- Council of Europe (1991) Community and Ethnic Relations in Europe (Strasbourg, Council of Europe).

- Dahya, B. (1974) The nature of Pakistani ethnicity in industrial cities in Britain, in: A. Cohen (Ed.) *Urban Ethnicity*, pp. 77–118 (London, Tavistock).
- Daley, P.O. (1998) Black Africans in Great Britain: spatial concentration and segregation, *Urban Studies*, 35, pp. 1703–1724.
- De Villanova, R. (1997) Turkish housing conditions in France: from tenant to owner, in: A.S. Özüekren & R. van Kempen (Eds) *Turks in European Cities: Housing and Urban Segregation*, pp. 98–121 (Utrecht, European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations).
- Dieleman, F.M. & Everaers, P.C.J. (1994) From renting to owning: life course and housing market circumstances, *Housing Studies*, 9, pp. 11–25.
- ECRI (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance) (2000) http://www.ecri.coe.int.
- Faist, T. & Häußermann, H. (1996) Immigration, social citizenship and housing in Germany, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 20, pp. 83–98.
- Forrest, R. & Williams, P. (1984) Commodification and housing: emerging issues and contradictions, *Environment and Planning A*, 16, pp. 1163–1180.
- Friedrichs, J. (1998) Social inequality, segregation and urban conflict: the case of Hamburg, in: S. Musterd & W. Ostendorf (Eds) *Urban Segregation and the Welfare State; Inequality and Exclusion in Western Cities*, pp. 168–190 (London, Routledge).
- Giffinger, R. & Reeger, U. (1997) Turks in Austria: backgrounds, geographical distribution and housing conditions, in: A.S. Özüekren & R. van Kempen (Eds) *Turks in European Cities: Housing and Urban Segregation*, pp. 41–66 (Utrecht, European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations).
- Glebe, G. (1997) Housing and segregation of Turks in Germany, in: A.S. Özüekren & R. van Kempen (Eds) *Turks in European Cities: Housing and Urban Segregation*, pp. 122–157 (Utrecht, European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations).
- Gordon, I. & Vickerman, R. (1982) Opportunity, preference and constraint: an approach to the analysis of metropolitan migration, *Urban Studies*, 19(3), pp. 247–261.
- Hamnett, C. & Randolph, B. (1988) Cities, Housing and Profits: Flat Break-Ups and the Decline of Private Renting (London, Hutchinson).
- Kendig, H.L. (1984) Housing careers, life cycle and residential mobility: implications for the housing market, *Urban Studies*, 21, pp. 271–283.
- Kesteloot, C., De Decker, P. & Manço, A. (1997) Turks and their housing conditions in Belgium, with special reference to Brussels, Ghent and Visé, in: A.S. Özüekren & R. van Kempen (Eds) *Turks in European Cities: Housing and Urban Segregation*, pp. 67–97 (Utrecht, European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations).
- Kovács, Z (1998) Ghettoization or gentrification? Post-socialist scenarios for Budapest, *Netherlands Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 13(1), pp. 63–81.
- Ladányi, J. (2001) Residential segregation among social and ethnic groups in Budapest during the post-communist transition, in: P. Marcuse & R. van Kempen (Eds) *Of States and Cities: The Partitioning of Urban Space*, pp. 170–182 (Oxford, Oxford University Press)
- Lipsky, M. (1980) Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services (New York, Russell Sage).
- Marcuse, P. & Van Kempen, R. (2000a) Introduction, in P. Marcuse & R. van Kempen (Eds), *Globalizing Cities: A New Spatial Order?* pp. 1–21 (Oxford, Blackwell).
- Marcuse, P. & Van Kempen, R. (Eds) (2000b) Globalizing Cities: A New Spatial Order? (Oxford, Blackwell).
- Martin, P.L. (1991) The Unfinished Story: Turkish Labour Migration to Western Europe (Geneva, International Labour Office).
- Mulder, C.H. (1993) Migration Dynamics: A Life Course Approach (Amsterdam, Thesis Publishers).
- Mulder, C.H. (1996) Housing choice: assumptions and approaches, *Netherlands Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 11(3), pp. 209–232.
- Murdie, R.A. & Borgegård, L.-E. (1998) Immigration, spatial segregation and housing segmentation of immigrants in metropolitan Stockholm, 1960–95, *Urban Studies*, 35(10), pp. 1869–1888.
- Murray, J. (1995) Keynote address. Paper for the Seminario Europeo Vivienda e Integración Social de los Inmigrantes, 23–25 October, Barcelona.
- Musterd, S. & Ostendorf, W. (1998) *Urban Segregation and the Welfare State: Inequality and Exclusion in Western Cities* (London, Routledge).
- Musterd, S., Ostendorf, W. & Breebaart, M. (1998) Multi-Ethnic Metropolis: Patterns and Policies (Dordrecht, Kluwer).
- Musterd, S., Kesteloot, C., Murie, A. & Ostendorf, W. (1999a) Urban Social Exclusion and Modes of

- Integration: Literature Review (Amsterdam, Amsterdam Study Centre for the Metropolitan Environment).
- Musterd, S., Priemus, H. & van Kempen, R. (1999b) Towards undivided cities: the potential of economic revitalisation and housing redifferentiation, *Housing Studies* 14(5), pp. 573–584.
- Özüekren, A.S. (1992) Turkish Immigrant Housing in Sweden. An Evaluation of Housing Conditions in a Stockholm Suburb (Gävle, The National Swedish Institute for Building Research).
- Özüekren, A.S. & van Kempen, R. (1997) Explaining housing conditions and housing market positions, in: A.S. Özüekren & R. van Kempen (Eds), *Turks in European Cities: Housing and Urban Segregation*, pp. 12–29 (Utrecht, European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations).
- Pahl, R. (1975) Whose City? (Harmondsworth, Penguin).
- Pahl, R. (1977) Managers, technical experts and the state, in: M. Harloe (Ed.) *Captive Cities*, pp. 49–60 (London, John Wiley).
- Peach, C. (1968) West Indian Migration to Britain: A Social Geography (London, Oxford University Press).
- Peach, C. (1998) South Asian and Carribean ethnic minority housing choice in Britain, *Urban Studies*, 35 (10), pp. 1657–1680.
- Peach, C. & Smith, S. (1981) Introduction, in: C. Peach, V. Robinson & S. Smith (Eds) *Ethnic Segregation in Cities*, pp. 9–22 (London, Croom Helm).
- Phillips, D. (1998) Black minority ethnic concentration, segregation and dispersal in Britain, *Urban Studies*, 35(10), pp. 1681–1702.
- Phillips, D. & Karn, V. (1992) Race and housing in a property owning democracy, *New Community*, 18, pp. 355–369.
- Pickles, A.R. & Davies, R.B. (1991), The empirical analysis of housing careers: a review and a general statistical framework, *Environment and Planning A*, 23, pp. 465–484.
- Rex, J. (1968) The sociology of a zone of transition, in: R.E. Pahl (Ed.) *Readings in Urban Sociology*, pp. 211–231 (London, Pergamon).
- Rex, J. & Moore, R. (1967) Race, Community and Conflict (London, Oxford University Press).
- Robinson, V. (1981) The development of South Asian settlement in Britain and the myth of return, in: C. Peach, V. Robinson & S. Smith (Eds) *Ethnic Segregation in Cities*, pp. 149–169 (London, Croom Helm).
- Rossi, P.H. (1955) Why Families Move: A Study in the Social Psychology of Urban Residential Mobility (Glencoe, Free Press).
- Sarre, P., Phillips, D. & Skellington, R. (1989) Ethnic Minority Housing: Explanations and Policies (Aldershot, Avebury).
- Siksiö, O. & Borgegård, L.-E. (1990) Markets in distress; on access to housing in local housing markets. Paper for the 7th Meeting of the CIB Working Commission W69 Housing Sociology, Gävle, The National Swedish Institute for Building Research.
- Smith, D.J. (1977) Racial Disadvantage in Britain (Harmondsworth, Penguin).
- Speare, A., Goldstein, S. & Frey, W.H. (1975) Residential Mobility, Migration and Metropolitan Change (Cambridge, MA, Ballinger).
- Stapleton, C.M. (1980) Reformulation of the family life-cycle concept: implications for residential mobility, *Environment and Planning A*, 12, pp. 1103–1118.
- Sykora, L. (1999) Processes of socio-spatial differentiation in post-communist Prague, *Housing Studies*, 14(5), pp. 679–701.
- Tomlins, R. (1997) Officer discretion and minority ethnic housing provision, *Netherlands Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 12, pp. 179–197.
- Tomlins, R., Johnson, M.R.D., Line, B., Brown, T., Owen, D. & Ratcliffe, P. (2000) Needs of the Communities of Vietnamese Origin in London: A Report for the An Viet Housing Association (London, An Viet Housing Association).
- van Kempen, R. (1997) Turks in the Netherlands: housing conditions and segregation in a developed welfare state, in: A.S. Özüekren & R. van Kempen (Eds) *Turks in European Cities: Housing and Urban Segregation*, pp. 158–190 (Utrecht, European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations).
- van Kempen, R. (2001) Social exclusion: the importance of context, in: H.T. Andersen & R. van Kempen (Eds) *Governing European Cities: Social Fragmentation, Social Exclusion and Urban Governance*, pp. 33–56 (Aldershot, Ashgate).
- van Kempen, R. & A.S. Özüekren (1998), Ethnic segregation in cities: new forms and explanations in a dynamic world, *Urban Studies*, 35(10), pp. 1631–1656.

- van Kempen, R. & Priemus, H. (forthcoming) Revolution in social housing in the Netherlands: possible effects of new housing policies, *Urban Studies*.
- White, P. (1998) The settlement patterns of developed world migrants in London, *Urban Studies*, 35(10), pp. 1725–1744.
- Wippler, R. (1990) Cultural resources and participation in high culture, in: M. Hechter, K.D. Opp & R. Wippler (Eds) *Social Institutions; Their Emergence, Maintenance and Effects*, pp. 187–204 (Berlin, De Gruyter).
- Wolpert, J. (1965) Behavorial aspects of the decision to migrate, *Papers and Readings of the Regional Science Association*, 15, pp. 159–169.