Housing Insecurity & Consequences of Displacement
Santa Clara County, California

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Research Question

What are the impacts of displacement for individuals and families in Santa Clara County?
Study Design
Study Design

- Partnerships with Bay Legal and the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley in San Jose
- Potential participants screened by legal aid before participants agree to release their information to the UC Berkeley study team
- Participants were provided a $40 gift card for participation
- Two Groups:
  - **Not Displaced**: people who either did not move in the last 2 years or moved by own choice
  - **Displaced**: clients who were forced to leave their home because they were displaced:
    - Executed or threatened eviction (prompted by missed rent payment, owner move-in, etc., or no reason)
    - Told by landlord to leave
    - Property sold
    - Untenable rent increase
    - Felt that the area was too dangerous to stay
    - Landlord wouldn’t make repairs to home
    - Property in foreclosure or condemned
    - Landlord harassment
    - Locked out by landlord
Data Collection & Analysis

**Total Participants Surveyed (n=124)**

42% response rate

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Displaced (Cases)</strong></td>
<td>44 respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Displaced (Controls)</strong></td>
<td>80 respondents</td>
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Quantitative data from the surveys was analyzed with STATA statistical software, using a combination of descriptive statistics as well as chi-square and t-test analyses to assess differences between the two groups and between previous and current housing. Statistically significant differences are noted throughout.
Demographics
Study Sample: Educational Attainment and Income

- Less than a HS Diploma: 14% Displaced, 13% Not Displaced
- HS Graduate: 21% Displaced, 25% Not Displaced
- Some College, No Degree: 16% Displaced, 36% Not Displaced
- Associate's, Bachelor's, Graduate, or Professional Degree: 49% Displaced, 26% Not Displaced

Median Monthly Household Income
- Displaced: $2,064
- Not Displaced: $3,119
In our study sample, participants who were not displaced were statistically more likely to have a disability or have someone in their household with a disability (p<0.05). These differences in disability were significant, despite groups having a similar average age of 51 years.
In our study sample, participants who were displaced were more likely to be Black than participants who had not been displaced (p<0.05)*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Displaced (n=44)</th>
<th>Not Displaced (n=80)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>32%*</td>
<td>14%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other or Multiracial</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall Housing Instability in Santa Clara County

includes all respondents who were housed and still living in Santa Clara County at the time of the survey
Half of respondents were not comfortable talking to their landlord about repairs or housing concerns.

How comfortable do you feel talking to your landlord about repairs or other housing concerns that you might have?

- Very comfortable: 48%
- Somewhat comfortable: 14%
- Not comfortable: 38%

All Respondents Still Living in SC County (n=92)
1 in 3 respondents fear landlord retaliation for requesting repairs or raising other housing concerns.

Do you fear that your landlord will retaliate for requesting repairs or raising other housing issues?

- Yes: 36%
- Maybe: 3%

Retaliation refers to a landlord taking action against a tenant in response to these requests — such as evicting or threatening to evict them, harassing them, or raising the rent.
80 percent of respondents reported at least one significant housing issue, such as mold or pests.

Housing issues included defective heating or cooling systems, mold, pests (i.e., rats, roaches), defective appliances or electrical wiring, leaks, falling plaster or holes, inadequate locks, inadequate trash collection, inadequate or no hot water, leaking or clogged plumbing, missing or broken smoke detectors, broken windows, old carpet, sanitation issues, no refrigerator, and unsafe stairs or railing.
Almost half of respondents said they thought they would have to leave their home in the next year.

45%

What is the likelihood that you will have to leave this place within the next year?

All Respondents Still Living in SC County (n=89)
Displacement

includes all respondents who were displaced in the last two years
Reason participant was displaced (select all that apply).

- Evicted: 52%
  - Landlord verbally told resident(s) to leave: 41%
  - Unlawful detainer or eviction lawsuit or notice: 32%
  - Landlord harassment or violence: 27%
  - Neighborhood was dangerous: 20%
  - Rent raised: 16%
  - Landlord wouldn't make repairs: 14%
  - Property was sold: 9%
  - Property condemned or deemed illegal to inhabit: 9%
  - Missed payment and thought if didn't leave, would be evicted: 9%
  - Landlord or relative of landlord to move in: 7%
  - Landlord changed locks and locked resident out: 5%
  - Landlord went into foreclosure: 2%

Respondents self-reported how and why they were displaced.
About half of households (20) who were displaced received a formal eviction notice, but the reasons for the notice varied.

Did you receive a formal written eviction notice or unlawful detainer from your landlord?

- **Yes, 20**
- **No, 21**
- **Don't Know, 2**

Reason for Eviction Notice or Unlawful Detainer (n=20)

- **8** Nonpayment of rent
- **6** Nuisance, damage, or illegal use complaint
- **3** No reason given or did not know
- **1** Home was being sold
- **1** Landlord going to make renovations
- **1** Owner or family move-in

About half of households (20) who were displaced received a formal eviction notice, but the reasons for the notice varied.

**Did you receive a formal written eviction notice or unlawful detainer from your landlord?**
Of the 20 households who received a formal eviction notice or unlawful detainer, 13 went to court. Only 5 of those households were accompanied by an attorney.
Of the households that were displaced, several signed move-out agreements and two-thirds sought support.
Over half of displaced households reported that their landlord’s actions were a form of retaliation.

By retaliation, I mean your landlord taking action against you—such as evicting you, threatening to evict you, harassing you, or raising your rent—in response to you requesting repairs, making a complaint to a government agency, or otherwise exercising your rights as a tenant.”
Housing & Neighborhood Characteristics
Participants who were displaced were statistically more likely to be currently marginally housed (p<0.01).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Displaced (n=44)</th>
<th>Not Displaced (n=80)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housed</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginally Housed</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Homeless**: self-reported living in shelter, on the streets, in a vehicle, or “homeless.”

**Marginally Housed**: self-reported living in a motel/hotel, garage, or with family or friends in which respondent is “doubling up,” such as sleeping on the couch.
Participants who were displaced were significantly more likely to live in more crowded conditions (p<0.05).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People per Room</th>
<th>Displaced (n=41)</th>
<th>Not Displaced (n=72)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does not include households who are currently homeless.
Displaced households were statistically more likely to be severely rent burdened, meaning they spend 50 percent or more of their income on rent (p<0.05).*

Rent Burden: Percent of Income Spent on Rent

- **Severely Rent Burdened (50%+)**: 40% for Displaced (n=30), 21% for Not Displaced (n=61)
- **Rent Burdened (30 - 49.9%)**: 30% for Displaced (n=30), 49% for Not Displaced (n=61)
- **Not Rent Burdened (<30%)**: 30% for Displaced (n=30), 30% for Not Displaced (n=61)

*Includes only respondents who reported both rent and income information.*
On average, participants reported fewer housing issues (e.g., mold, broken windows, etc.) in their current residence, compared to the home from which they were displaced (p<0.001).***
45% of displaced respondents live in the same city as where they were living when they were displaced; 9% within a mile of their previous home. Another 34% live in a new city, but still in Santa Clara County.
Community

excludes participants currently experiencing homelessness
Participants who were displaced rated their social support and likelihood of community advocacy significantly lower (p<0.05).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Displaced (n=42)</th>
<th>Not Displaced (n=76)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel I belong in my neighborhood.</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I lend or exchange things or favors with my neighbors.*</td>
<td>32%*</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be willing to work together with others in my neighborhood to take action on a political issue I care about.*</td>
<td>69%*</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in this neighborhood gives me a sense of community</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, I am happy living in my neighborhood.</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants who were displaced felt significantly safer in their new neighborhood (p<0.05).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before Displaced</th>
<th>After Displaced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt Very Safe or Quite Safe in their Neighborhood (n=41)*</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This difference is largely the result of the nine respondents whose displacement was the result of a safety concern in their former neighborhood. If these individuals are excluded from the analysis, there is no statistical difference in perceptions of safety, on average. See details in the next slide.
Neighborhood Safety Before and After Being Displaced

Respondents whose displacement was the result of a safety concern in their former neighborhood.

- Unsafe to Unsafe: 2 respondents
- Unsafe to Safe: 14 respondents
- Safe to Unsafe: 5 respondents
- Safe to Safe: 20 respondents

(n=41)
School
Over a third of children in displaced households changed schools due to the move.

School-Aged Children in Displaced Households (n=30)

- 4 changed schools mid-year
- 9 changed schools at start of year
- 4 advanced to new school (e.g., started HS)
- 13 did not change schools
Study Challenges

• The study population includes individuals who have experienced and continue to experience profound housing and economic instability.
• The study team often found it challenging to schedule survey phone appointments with potential respondents due to work and childcare schedules, disconnected phone lines, and respondent difficulty finding quiet, private spaces to complete the survey.
• This was especially true for respondents who were currently experiencing homeless or marginally housed.
• The study team also found that respondents were hesitant to participate and/or share certain pieces of information due to privacy concerns. These concerns may have been heightened due to the current policies and practices regarding people who are undocumented.
• These challenges suggest that it is more likely that we under-sampled people who are currently experiencing homelessness or were marginally housed, as well as immigrant communities.
Acknowledgements

• This project has been made possible by a grant from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.
• This study would not have been possible without the study design and recruitment support from the staff and interns at Bay Legal and the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley.
• Thank you to the other members of the UC Berkeley research team: Juliet Peña Pariona, Noemi Paez, Jenny Feng, Karina Paredes, and Ellen Lee.
• Finally, our gratitude to the survey respondents who shared their time and stories with us.