ABSTRACT

Home relocation has far-reaching effects on both urban structure and individuals’ quality of life. While a large volume of studies have examined the determinants of home relocation, only limited attention has been paid to the outcomes of home relocation. Even less scholarly effort has been devoted to the impacts of home relocation on the movers in terms of change in their domain and life satisfaction. This study aims to explore this issue by focusing on the two following research questions: (1) has home relocation led to improvement in residential, travel and life satisfaction? (2) what contributes to the change in residential, travel and life satisfaction after move?

Using a two-wave survey of residents who moved their homes in Beijing, this dissertation investigates the patterns of change in the movers’ residential, travel and life satisfaction and explores the determinants of change in satisfaction based on a series of multilevel SEM models. The specific variables applied to explain change in satisfaction after move are derived from the existing literature on residential, travel and life satisfaction.

The results show a positive and significant increase in the average level of residential, travel and life satisfaction after move, suggesting that home relocation has significant and positive effects on the mover’s quality of life. The change in satisfaction after move is mainly determined by change in residential environment, change in travel conditions, motivations to move and some personal and household socioeconomics. Specifically, residential satisfaction change is mainly explained by housing tenure shift and change in the perceived neighborhood environment including physical design, safety, social composition, etc.. Travel satisfaction change is mainly predicted by change in daily travel patterns and perceived neighborhood environment. The objective indicators of change in neighborhood accessibility and walkability only exert marginal effects on travel satisfaction change. Life satisfaction change is mainly determined by change in perceived neighborhood environment and daily activity patterns, which influence life satisfaction change
both directly and indirectly through changes in residential and travel satisfaction.

This dissertation not only enriches the literature of residential mobility and the wellbeing studies, but also has important implications for policy-makers to enhance residents’ quality of life. To fully interpret how home relocation influences the movers, more sophisticated surveys covering more life domains and longer time series are still needed in future studies.

**KEYWORDS:** Residential satisfaction, Travel satisfaction, Life satisfaction, Subjective wellbeing, Home relocation, Beijing
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1  INTRODUCTION  
1.1 Research background  
1.2 Research objectives  
1.3 Significance and contribution  
1.4 Structure of the thesis  

Chapter 2  LITERATURE REVIEW  
2.1 A general overview of research on home relocation  
2.2 Studies on determinants of home relocation  
  2.2.1 Environmental determinants of home relocation  
  2.2.2 Individual determinants of home relocation  
2.3 Studies on change in residential environment after home relocation  
2.4 Studies on the impacts of home relocation on the movers  
  2.4.1 Change in movers’ social ties and health conditions  
  2.4.2 Change in movers’ residential satisfaction  
  2.4.3 Change in movers’ life satisfaction  
2.5 Studies of home relocation in urban China  
2.6 Summary of research gaps in previous studies  
2.7 Conclusion  

Chapter 3  CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK  
3.1 Research perspectives  
3.2 Key concepts  
3.3 Theoretical considerations  
  3.3.1 Directions of change in satisfaction after home relocation  
  3.3.2 Factors influencing change in satisfaction  
  3.3.3 A conceptual model of change in satisfaction  
3.4 Conclusions
6.1.1 Direction of change in travel satisfaction
6.1.2 Determinants of travel satisfaction
6.1.3 A conceptual model of change in travel satisfaction
6.2 Measures and variables
6.2.1 Measure of change in travel satisfaction
6.2.2 Definitions of independent variables
6.3 Descriptive analysis
6.3.1 Change in trip-specific attributes and travel mobility
6.3.2 Patterns of travel satisfaction change
6.3.3 Bivariate results of change in travel satisfaction
6.4 Modeling results
6.4.1 Effects of change in neighborhood environment
6.4.2 Effects of trip-specific attributes
6.4.3 Effects of motivations to move and personal/household characteristics
6.5 Summary

Chapter 7  CHANGE IN LIFE SATISFACTION
7.1 Theoretical consideration
7.1.1 Direction of change in life satisfaction
7.1.2 Determinants of life satisfaction
7.1.3 A conceptual model of change in life satisfaction
7.2 Measures and variables
7.3 Descriptive analysis
7.3.1 Patterns of life satisfaction change after move
7.3.2 Inter-group difference in patterns of life satisfaction change
7.3.3 Change in life satisfaction by residential environment change
7.3.4 Change in life satisfaction by change in travel mobility
7.3.5 Change in life satisfaction by motivations to move
7.4 Modeling results
7.4.1 Effects of change in residential and travel satisfaction
7.4.2 Effects of change in residential environment 132
7.4.3 Effects of change in trip-specific attributes and travel mobility 135
7.4.4 Effects of motivations to move and personal/household socioeconomics 136
7.5 Summary 138
Chapter 8  CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION 141
8.1 Major findings 141
8.2 Policy implications 146
8.3 Limitations and future directions 146
APPENDIX 149
BIBLIOGRAPHY 151
CURRICULUM VITAE 173