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## Consequences of longer stays in shelters – a full population study of shelter residents

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# Background

- Ordered by a group of shelters.
- Explores housing stability, social services and health care after the stay.
- Critics claim that residents stay for too long without progress.
- **How does the duration of stays in shelters affect subsequent housing stability?**



# Caught in a warzone

Government: "Shelters are expensive and too autonomous"

Housing First supporters: "Shelters keep people in homelessness"

Shelters: "The lives of the residents improve during their stay – but the municipalities do not catch them afterwards"



# The data

Statistics Denmark – the full population of people registered in a shelter

## Key variables

- Duration of stay in shelter (date for moving in out, housing before and after the stay)
- Housing situation when moving (own housing, unknown housing, other)
- Changes of address (date for registered change of postal address)

## The population

- People who stayed in a shelter for at least one month in 2012-2015 ~8.000 people
- We look at their changes of address from 2012 to 2017.

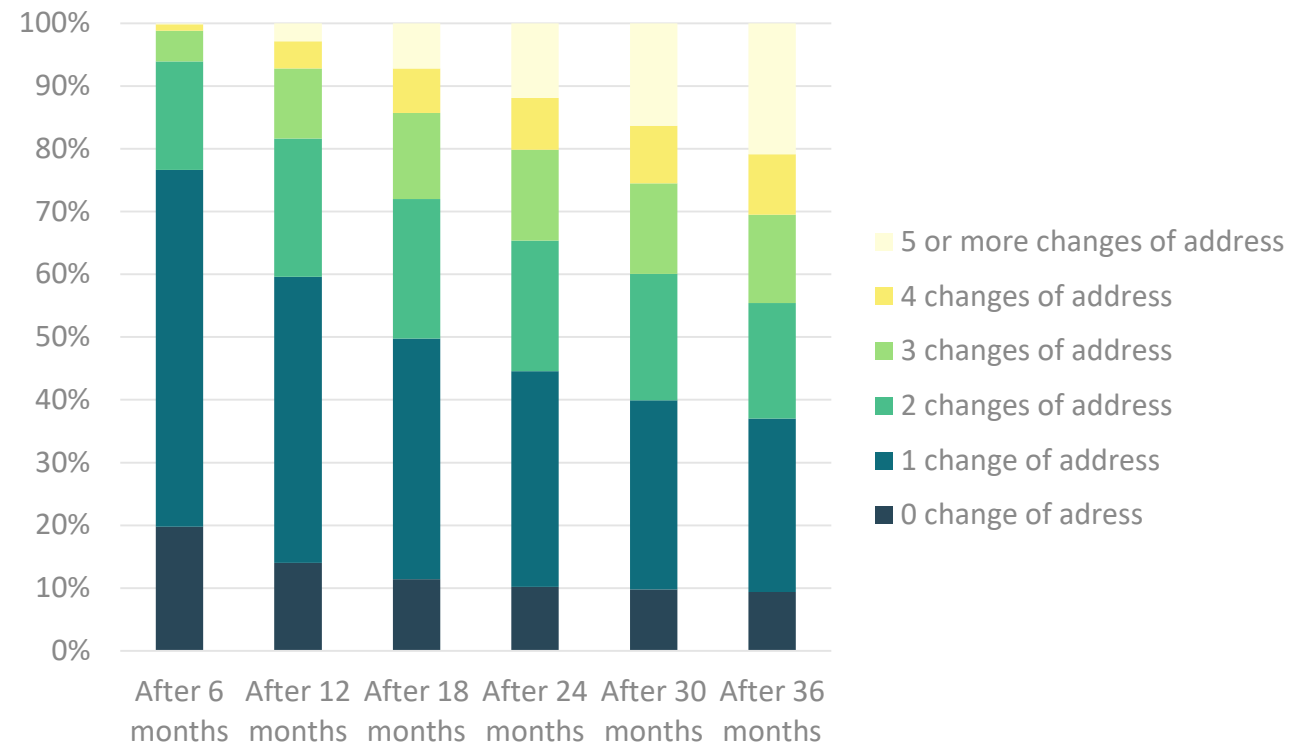
## Former residents in shelters generally change their address quite often

### About the variable 'changes of address'

- '0 change of address' means that people have an address before they move from the shelter
- '1 change of address' is the first new address after the shelter (minimum for those who did not have an address meanwhile)

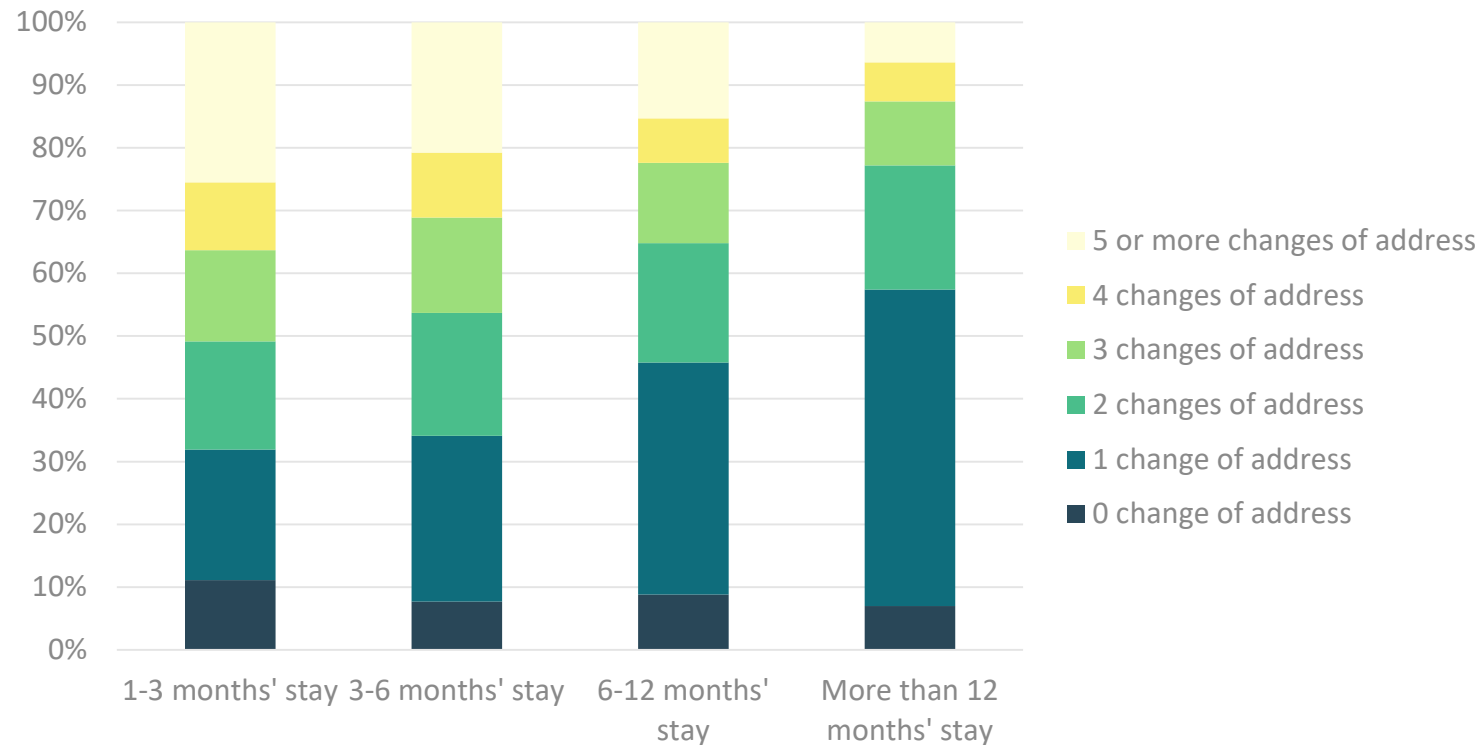
Note: Change of address is most likely an underestimation of how much people move

**Figure 1: Changes of address after 6-36 months from moving out from shelter**



## Those with longer stays in a shelter have fewer address changes than others

**Figure 2: Changes of address after three years by duration of stay**



# The hypothesis



But why?

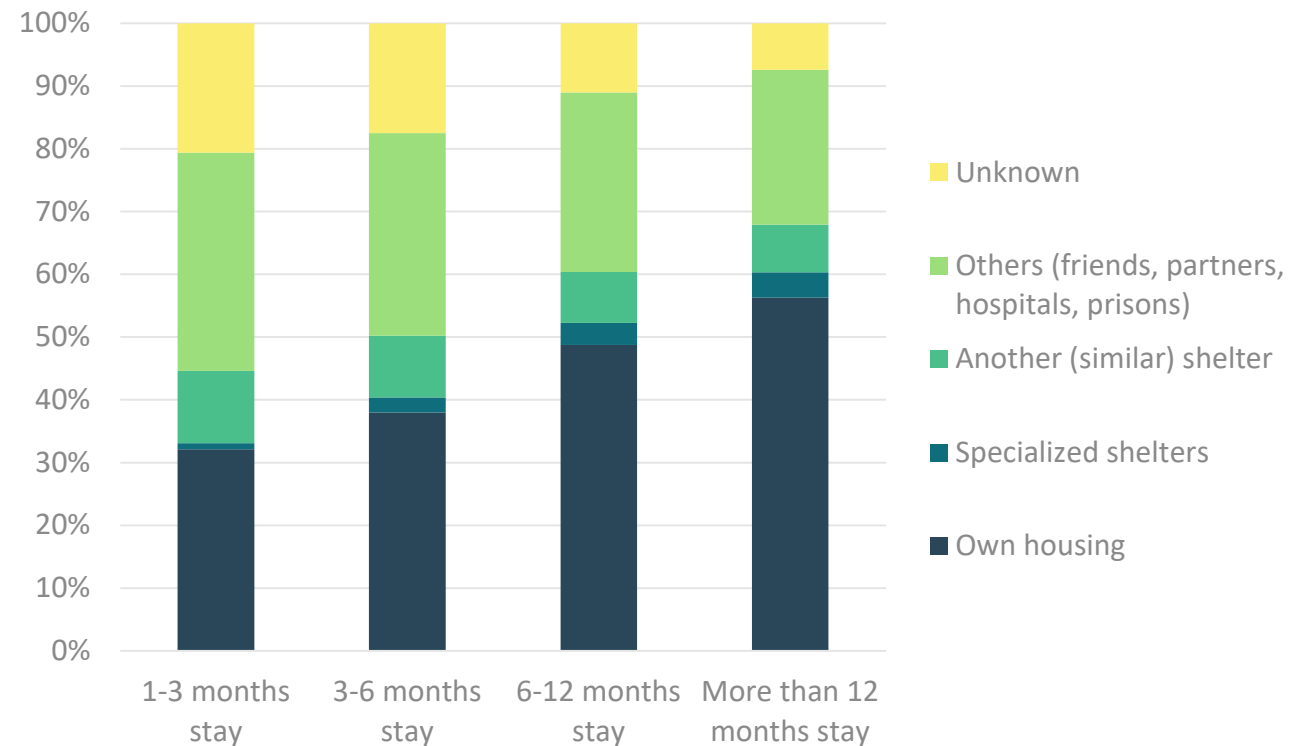
Perhaps it takes time to find proper housing, which means that housing stability is a matter of housing availability – not the duration of the stay?

## The longer the stay, the more likely to move into own housing

### About the variable

- Own housing is mostly public rental apartments
- Another (similar) shelter speaks for itself
- Others are friends or partners home, but also hospitals and prisons
- Specialized shelters are more care intensive and usually for a longer period of time
- Unknown are those who leave without a (known) home to move into

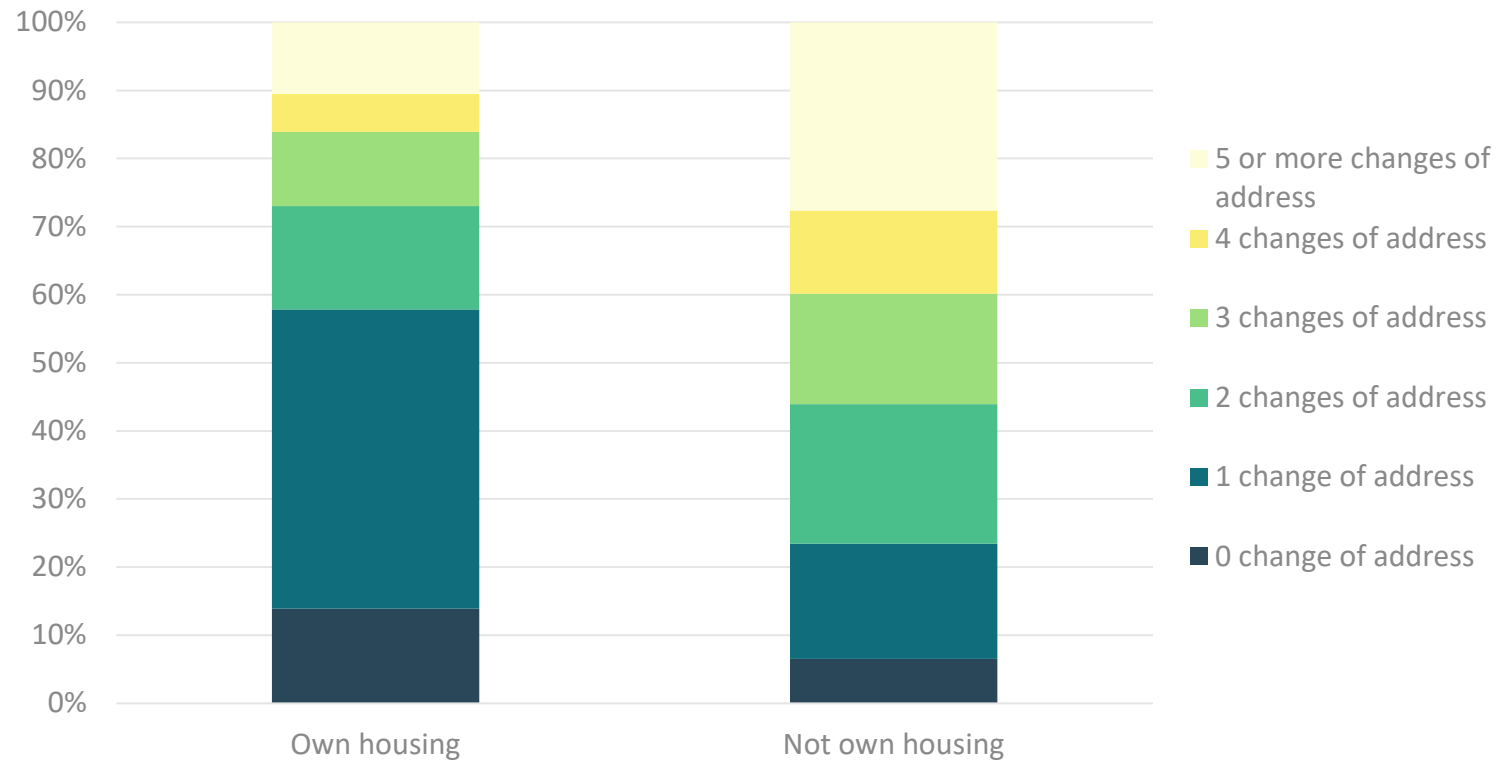
**Figure 3: Housing situation when moving form shelter compared by duration of stay**



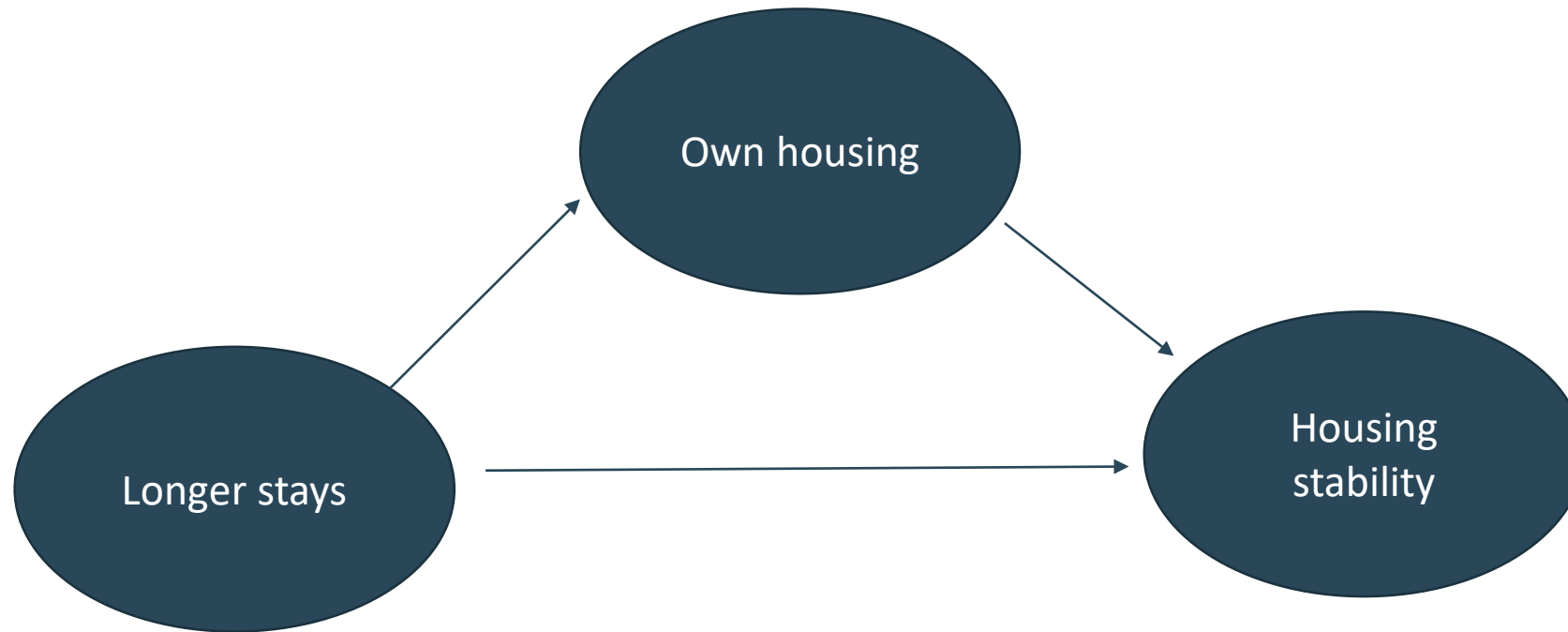


## And, those who move into own housing have fewer address changes

**Figure 4: Changes of address three years after moving from shelter, by housing situation when moving**

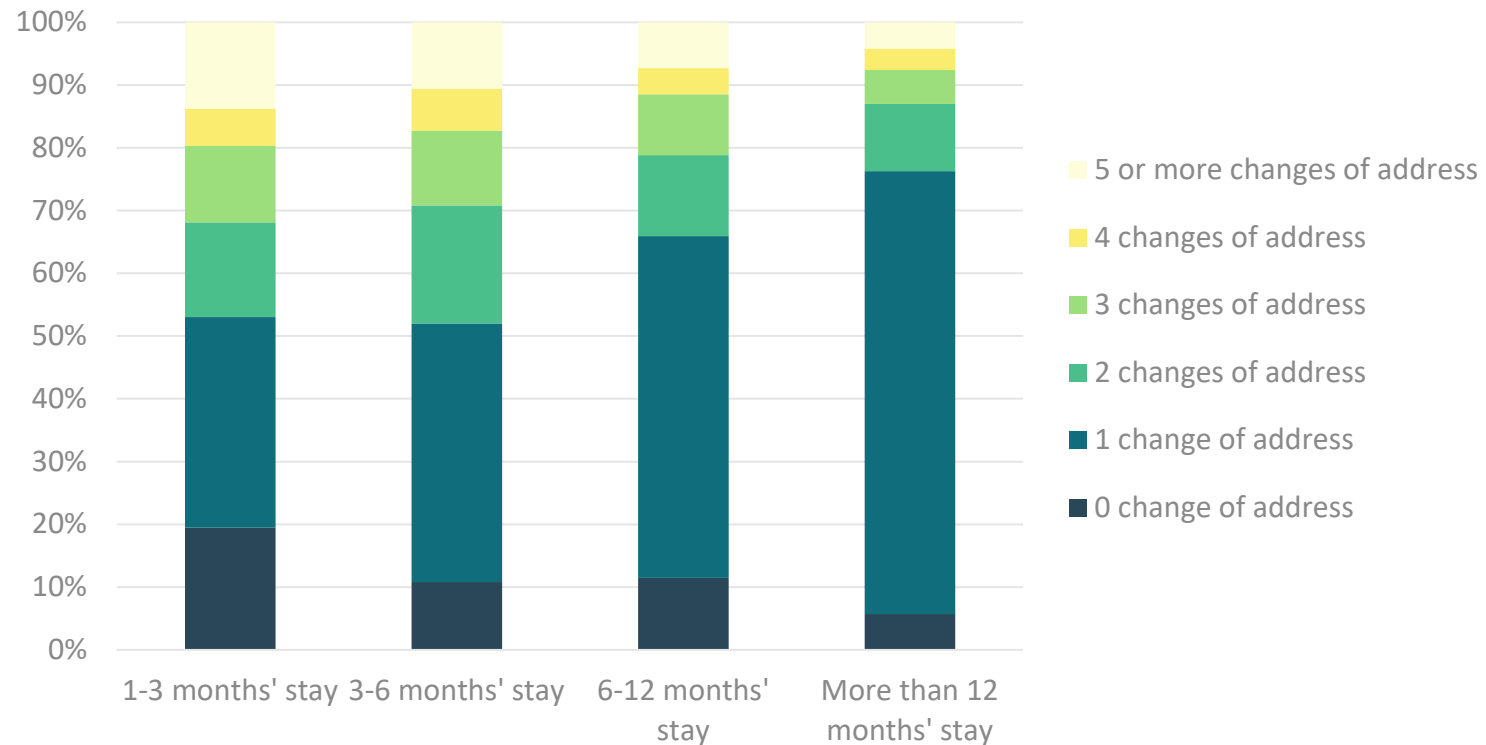


Summing up - the relationship looks like this



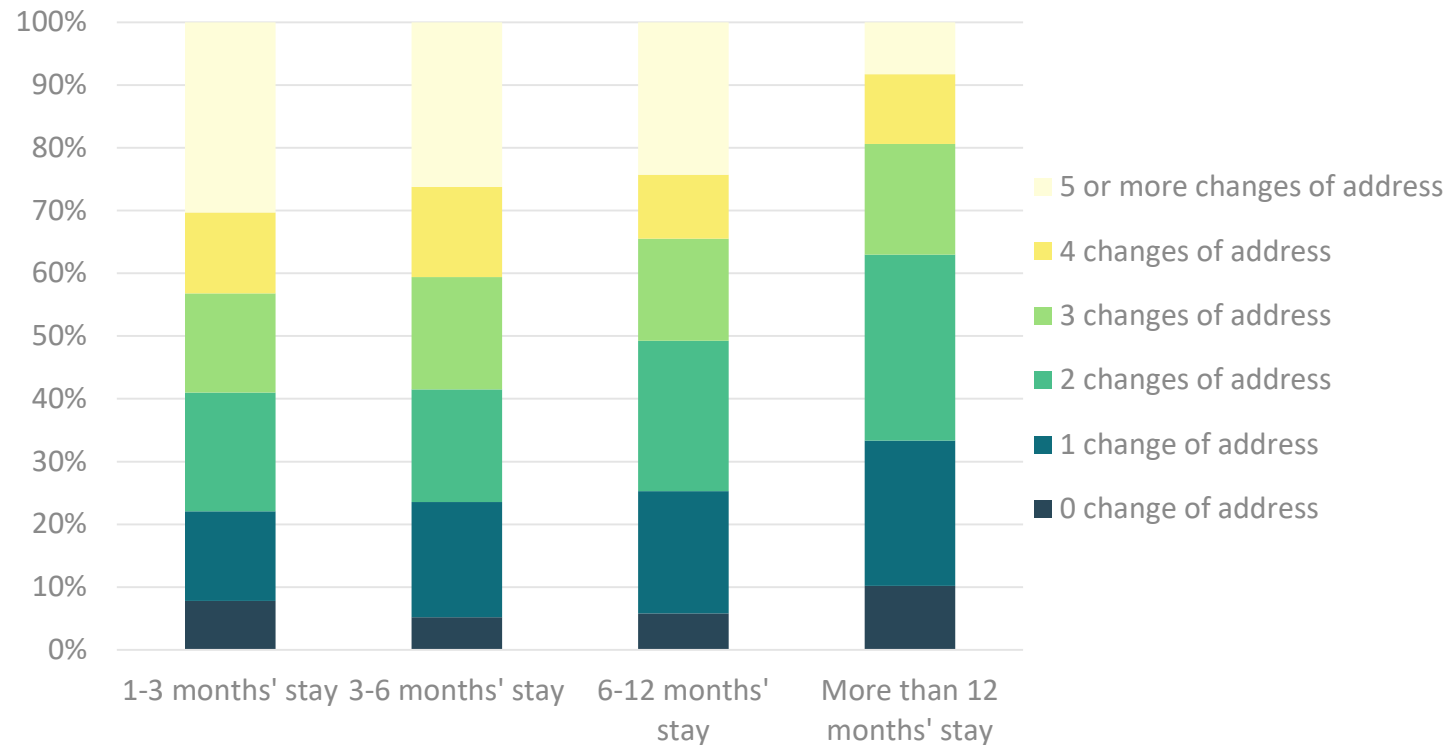
## Among those who move into own housing: The ones with longer stays more rarely change their address

**Figure 5: Changes of address after three years by duration of stay for those who moved into own housing after the residency**

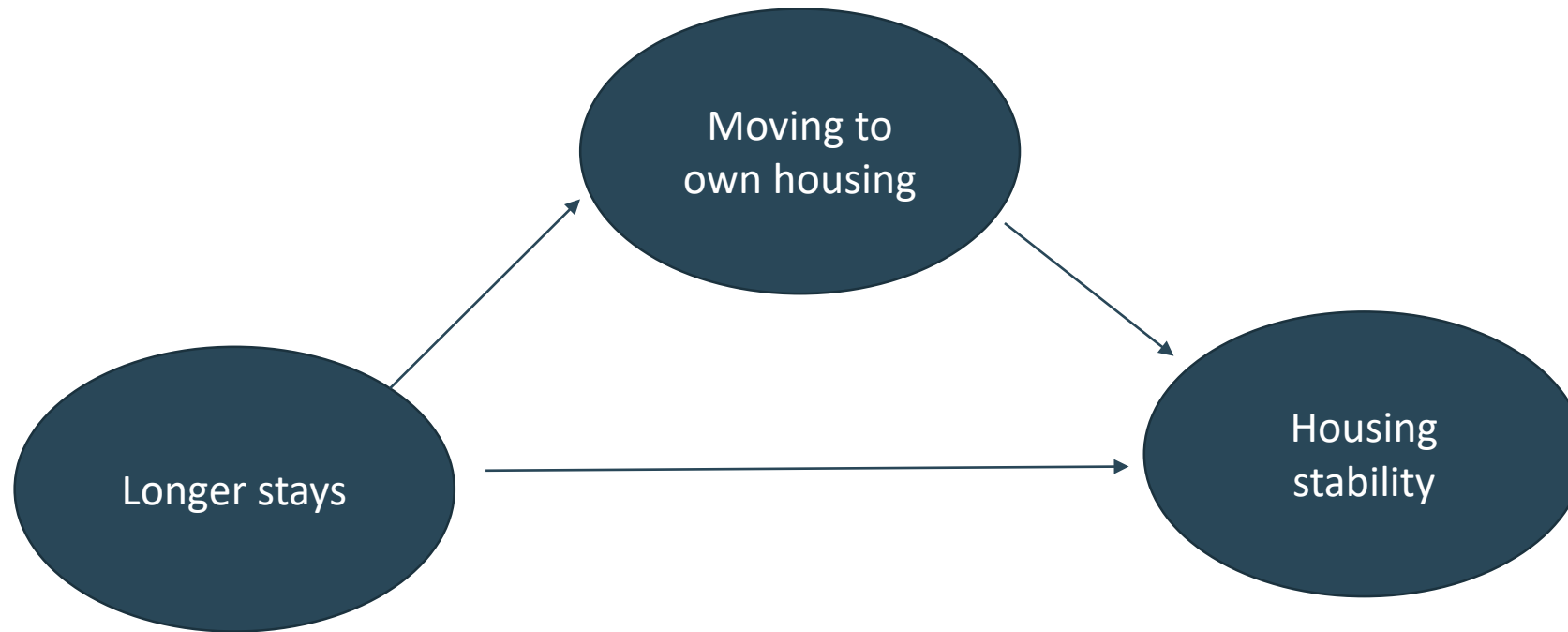


## Among those who move into friends' or partners' house: The same tendency

**Figure 6: Changes of address after three years by duration of stay for those who moved into other housing after the residency**



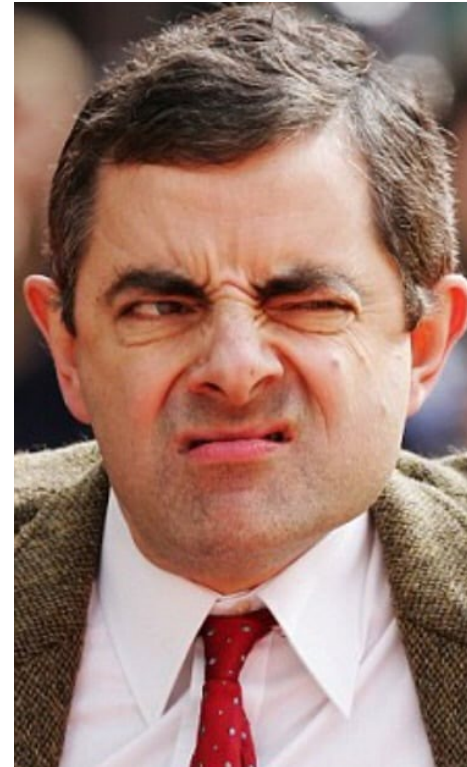
Summing up - the relationship looks like this



# So why is this?

Some hypotheses for further investigation:

- The longer duration of the stays allow the residents to start treatments, practice 'living indoor', establish relationship with the municipality etc.
- The people who stay longer in shelters have different problems than those, who leave away more quickly
- The shelters where residents stay longer is placed in areas with easier access to cheap and proper accommodation
- Finding *proper* housing takes a long time



Thank you!