

# The Housing Situation in New York

As part of a comparative housing research project, the Spatial Development and Urban Policy (SPUR) research group collected data on the housing situation in six metropolises (Berlin, Chicago, London, Los Angeles, New York, and Paris). This data brief provides an overview of the housing situation in New York. It provides a general summary of the data and highlights some of the most interesting findings.

The survey data shows that on average, homeowners and people living in social renting households tend to stay in their apartments longer than people renting from the private sector. For one third of the sample housing is a source of income, as they rent out parts of their residence. We also found that concerns for involuntary housing relocations are mainly related to family reasons and financial bottlenecks. These concerns have been amplified due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All data and the codebook are free to use and available on the website of the ETH research collection: <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000513683>

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## Introduction

Cities worldwide face a worsening housing crisis – supply shortages, speculations, and rising rents lead to housing insecurities for an increasing share of urban dwellers in many metropolises. The spread of COVID-19 has further worsened the situation for many urban residents and amplified their precarity.

In order to gain a better understanding of housing insecurities and the housing situation in global cities, we have launched a survey in early 2021 in six metropolises (Berlin, Chicago, London, Los Angeles, New York, and Paris). Here, we focus on the data from New York. This data brief thus reflects the answers of the 2,120 survey respondents in New York. Similar data briefs have been produced for other metropolises (for an overview, see <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000514013>). All data is free to use and can be found on the website of the ETH research collection (Dataset: <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000513683>).

## Housing Situation

Considering the type of tenure, the data indicates a high share of homeowners in New York (55.0%). The rest of the sample either classify themselves as renters (35.1%) or living in other housing arrangements (9.9%), such as social housing and housing cooperatives. Across the sample, participants display relatively high satisfaction with their current housing situation. The results show that 68.3% are either satisfied or highly



The median housing expenses of the respondents in New York are between \$1,300-1,599 per month.

Figure 1: Housing expenses

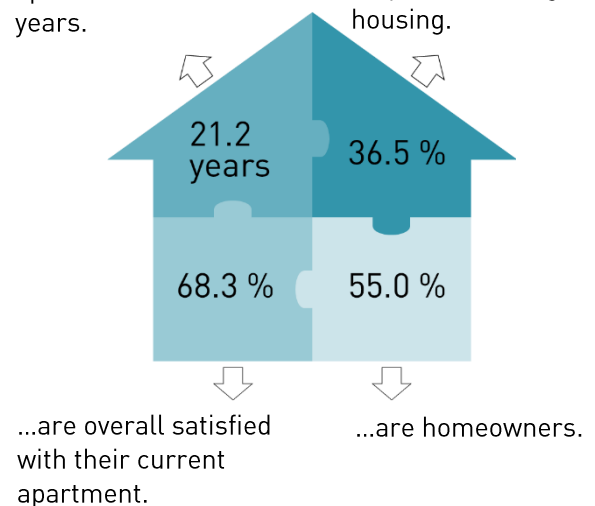


The average household size is 3.5 people per household.

Figure 2: Household size

On average respondents have stayed in their current apartment for 21.2 years.

...indicate having experienced discrimination when they were looking for housing.



...are overall satisfied with their current apartment.

...are homeowners.

Figure 3: Housing situation

satisfied with their apartment. The level of satisfaction with the location of their residency being at 72.9%, and with their neighborhood even higher at 73.1%. The lowest level of satisfaction is related to housing costs. Here, only 60.8% said that they were satisfied or very satisfied. Despite these high satisfaction levels, more than one third (36.5%) of the survey respondents report having experienced some form of discrimination when looking for new housing.

### Length of stay

On average, respondents indicated that they have lived in New York for 33.9 years. Fluctuation within the city seems to be relatively low, as people have lived in their apartments and their residential boroughs for many years. 66.9% of the survey respondents said they have lived in their apartments for more than ten years.

Length of stay in their residential borough seems to be even longer with 75.8% of our sample indicating they have lived in their residential borough for more than ten years. Even though respondents tend to stay in their residential boroughs for a long time, there is spatial variance in our data: on average, respondents living in Manhattan stay there for shorter periods of time than

people living in Brooklyn, Staten Island, or the Bronx (Figure 4). For example, respondents living in the neighborhoods Greenwich Village - SoHo situated in Manhattan have on average lived in the borough for 15.7 years. In contrast, residents living in East New York - Cypress Hill situated in Brooklyn, have been living in the borough for 43.1 years on average.

We also see differences in the length of stay between different tenure types. While 73.4% of the homeowners indicate having lived in their apartments for more than ten years, only 54.3% of the tenants reported the same length of stay. 30.1% of the respondents who rent their accommodation through the private rental market indicate that they have lived in their apartments between one and five years. In comparison, 76.1% of the people living in social renting households and cooperatives indicated that they have lived in their apartments for more than ten years. People living in social renting households thus appear to have lower mobility than homeowners, and people renting their accommodation through the private rental market indicated that they have stayed for a considerably shorter time in their current apartment compared to the other types of tenure.

Figure 4: Average length of stay in residential borough in years

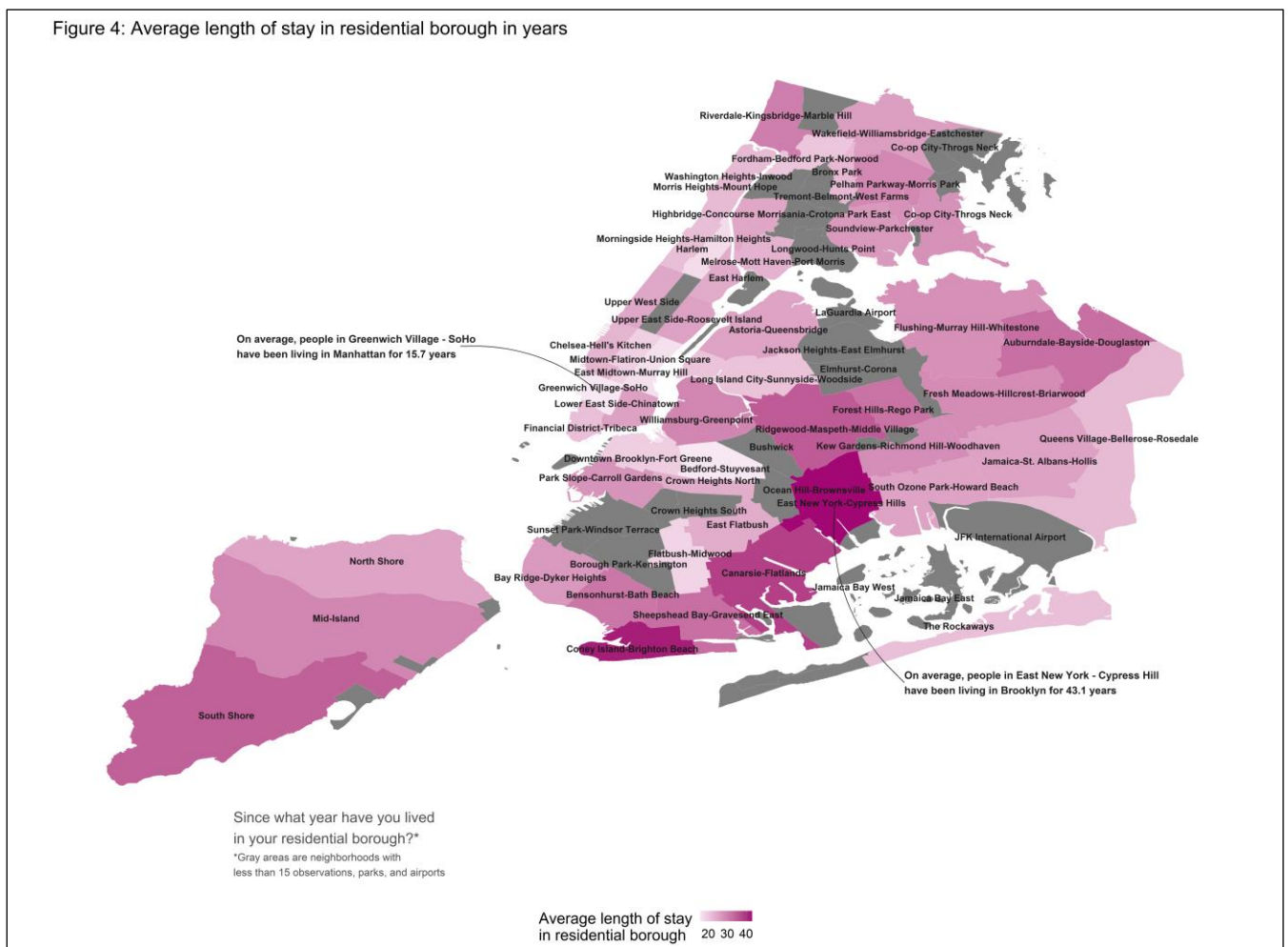
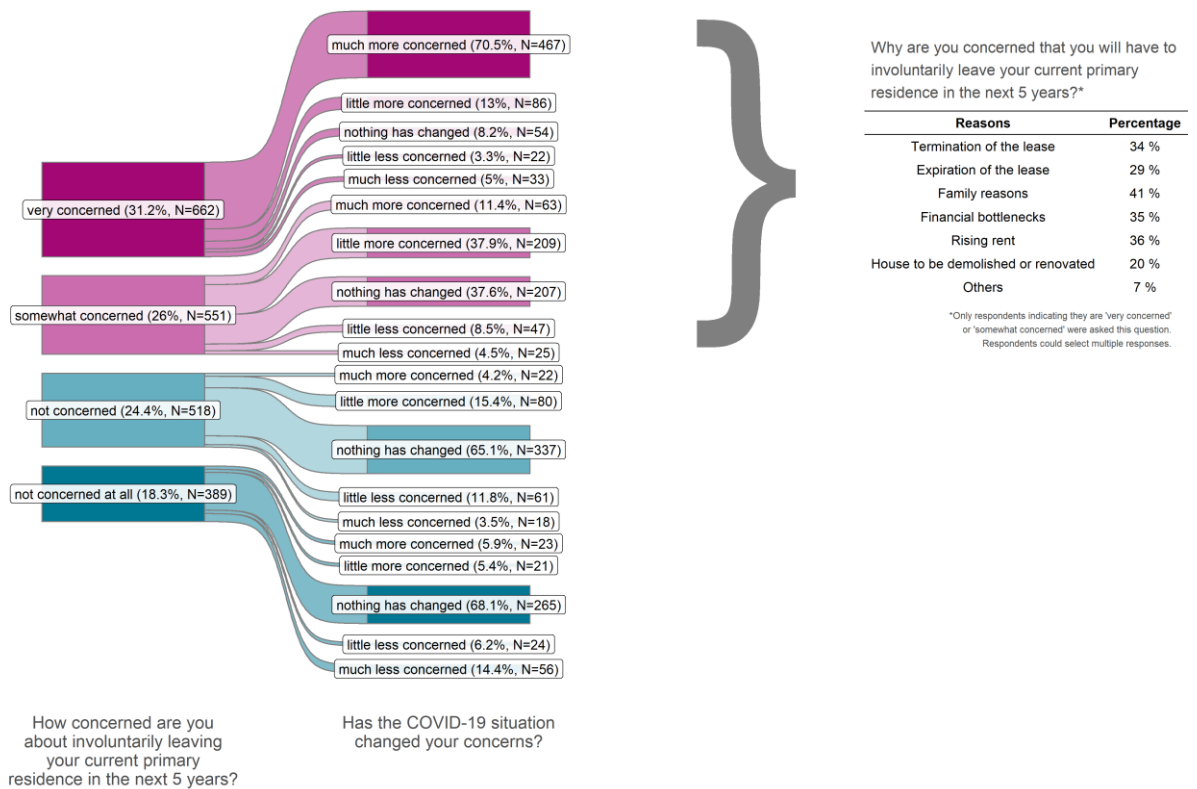


Figure 5: Housing concern and change due to COVID-19, N= 2120



### Concern for involuntary relocation

57.2% of the respondents are concerned about being forced to involuntarily leave their current homes within the next five years (26.0% of the respondents indicate somewhat concerned, and 31.2% are very concerned). Reasons for being concerned are mainly due to housing affordability. Of those who indicated being concerned, 41.0% stated family reasons as causing their concern. 36.0% mentioned rising rent and 35.0% indicated financial bottlenecks. 34.0% of the concerned respondents also referred to termination of the lease as reason for their concern. Other reasons are linked to the expiration of leases or renovations and demolitions.

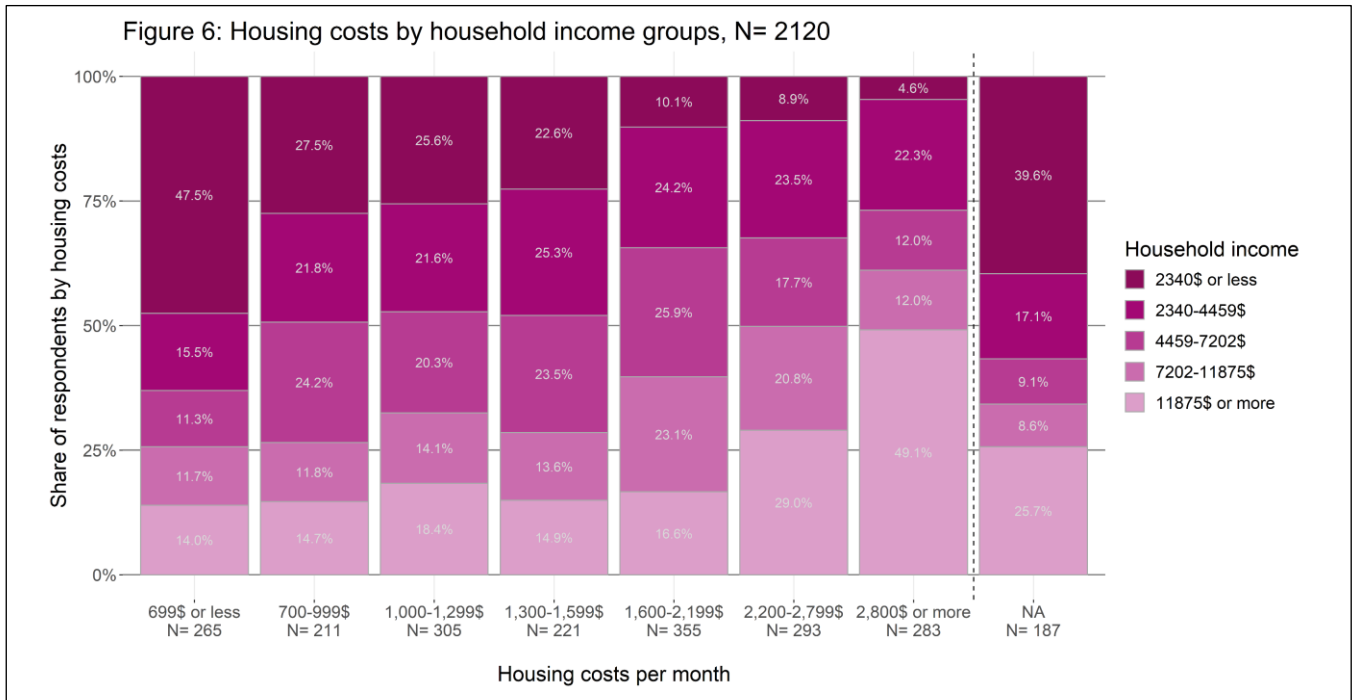
Our data also indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has further amplified precarity for some respondents and has rendered them even more vulnerable. Those who indicated being concerned about involuntary relocation have a higher likelihood to state that the COVID-19 situation has increased their concerns. At the same time, those who do not feel concerned have a higher likelihood to not feel differently because of COVID-19.

### Housing finances

Housing expenditures vary across different tenure

types, rendering some residents particularly vulnerable to increasing costs. We can see that homeowners predominantly belong to the three highest household income quintiles, whereas lower-income respondents have a higher probability of being non-homeowners. Lower-income groups thus have a lower probability of homeownership. At the same time, non-homeownership leads to higher housing costs, as homeowners pay significantly less for housing than any other tenure type.

Housing is, however, not only an expense but for some households also a source of income. More than one third (33.7%) of our sample indicated income from renting out (a) part(s) of their primary residence. Whereas 22.9% of the sample is renting out on short-term leases (less than a month at a time), 10.8% is receiving income through long term sublets (more than a month at a time). Sublets of both types are mainly done through personal contacts (54.9%), real estate agencies (28.1%), and online portals (15.4%). Also, 28.8% of the respondents said that they have at least one other official residence. Of those, 83.8% said that at least one of these additional residences are located within New York.



### Data information

The data of this housing situation brief on New York is derived from a survey conducted by the Spatial Development and Urban Policy research group in spring 2021.

Research project: [spur.ethz.ch/research/housing-situation](https://spur.ethz.ch/research/housing-situation)

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### References

1. Kauer Fiona, Hofer Katrin, Wicki Michael, Kaufmann David (2021). *Survey Data of the Housing Situation in Six Global Metropolises*, Data Brief, Zurich: Spatial Development and Urban Policy (SPUR), <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000514013>.

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