

Housing Survey Findings

Office of Planning & Analysis
Fall 2017

Background

Housing Master Plan Task Force January 2017 report:

- Demand for campus housing significantly outpaces supply
- UC Berkeley has the lowest percentage of beds for our student body of any campus in the UC system
- High prices of housing impacts student experience
- Identifies nine potential sites for development
- Calls for a survey as one aspect in decision-making process

Methodology

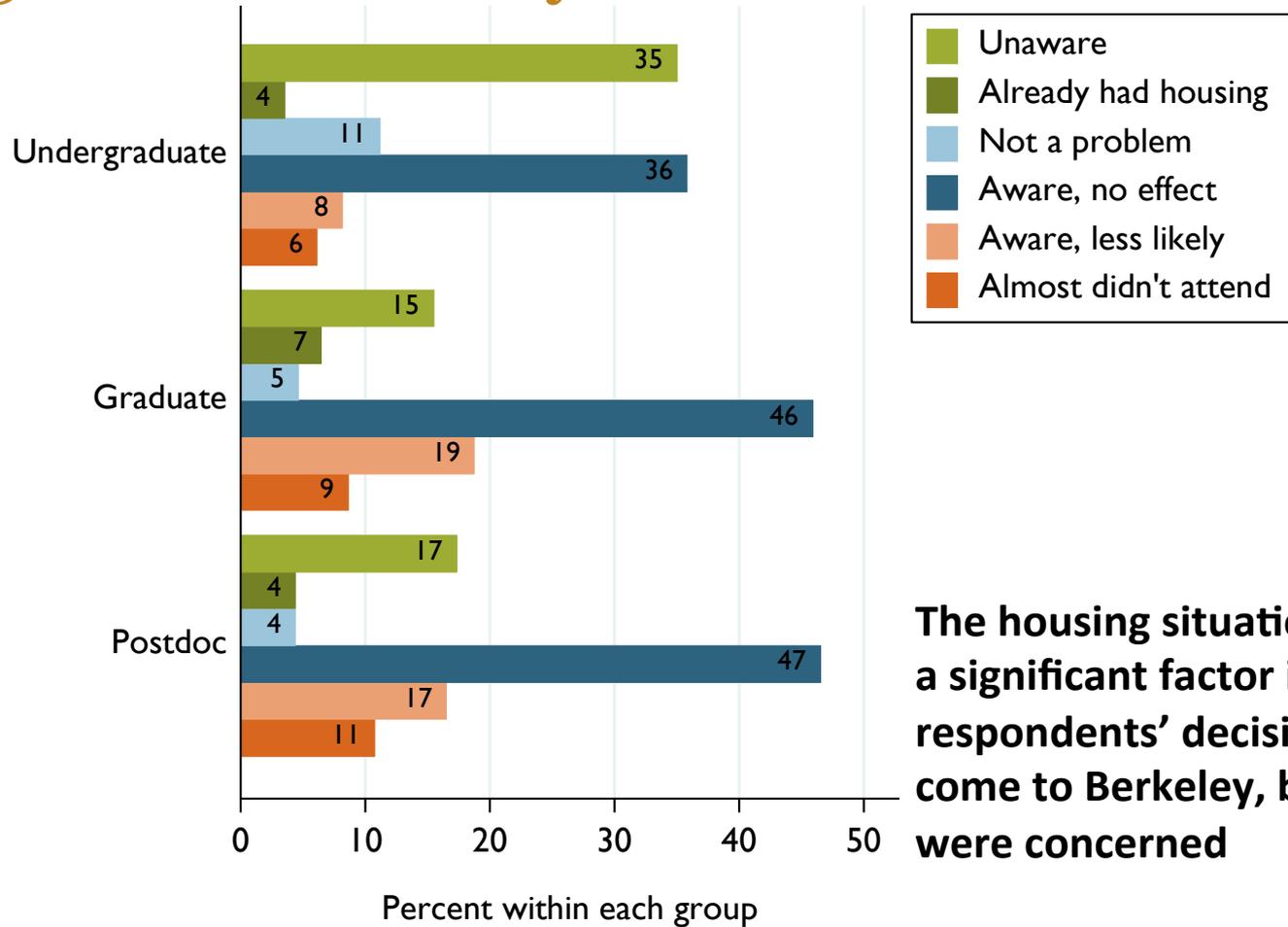
- Working group from the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, Division of Student Affairs, Office of Planning and Analysis, and Graduate Division met to design survey, collect data, and summarize results.
- Web survey went out to 27,292 undergraduates, 10,440 graduate students, and 1,160 postdocs during period of 4/7/17-5/16/17.
- CalNet authentication provided authorized access only and allowed for a generic survey link (CalNet UID mapped to unique survey ID).
- Prize drawing.
- Email notifications (initial invitation and 5 survey reminders) as well as social media and newsletter reminders.
- Survey content covered: Current housing situation, costs and satisfaction, housing security, impact of housing on experience, rankings of potential building locations.

Response

- Overall participation rate (completes + partials) of 24%
- 23% of undergraduates either completed or partially completed the survey
 - No significant difference in response between freshman/transfers
 - Seniors responded at a lower rate (17% v. 25%)
- 26% of graduate students responded
- 32% of postdocs responded

Crisis evaluation

Awareness of housing situation prior to coming to UC Berkeley



The housing situation was not a significant factor in respondents' decisions to come to Berkeley, but many were concerned

New undergraduate students' level of concern about finding affordable housing

Newly entering undergraduates express high levels of concern regarding finding affordable housing while at Berkeley

“Finding affordable housing while I’m a student at UC Berkeley”	Not at all concerned (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Very concerned (6)
Fall 2016 Transfer Entrants	14%	9%	11%	15%	18%	34%
Fall 2016 Freshman Entrants (excludes FPF)	14%	11%	18%	17%	19%	20%
Fall 2016 Fall Program for Freshmen (FPF) students	10%	16%	9%	9%	28%	29%

Source: Fall 2016 Survey of New Students - (Student Life & Development Module)

Respondent comments: finding affordable housing

“I live in West Oakland because a **two month** search for affordable and livable options in Berkeley **proved to be unfruitful.**”

– Undergraduate Student

“**My housemates were strangers to me and my roommate before we moved into the house.** Moving to my current house was an **act of desperation** to find a place to live, and created a heavy burden for my single mother due to the rent and utilities cost being at the peak maximum of my mother's budget. In order to help my mom with these costs, I took on a part-time student job at the library. If my rent wasn't so high, taking on a job would be optional instead of mandatory.”

– Undergraduate Student

“Too expensive for not much space, but was the best I could find in this rental market. **Prolonged searches, and stress and uncertainty,** can put you in a more vulnerable situation depending on supply.”

– Undergraduate Student

Respondent comments: finding affordable housing (cont'd)

“After a **two months long search** I found a cheap room with good roommates. The issue is the constant fear of being asked to leave the apartment (i.e., by our landlady). I cannot afford rent anywhere else.”

- Postdoc

“**I searched for months** for housing, which **stressed me out a lot**. I wound up paying decent rent (\$2800 for 3 people) and have an apartment with livable space, but I am a 25-30 minute walk from my classes, so that's the trade off. I wish I could have lived closer to campus.”

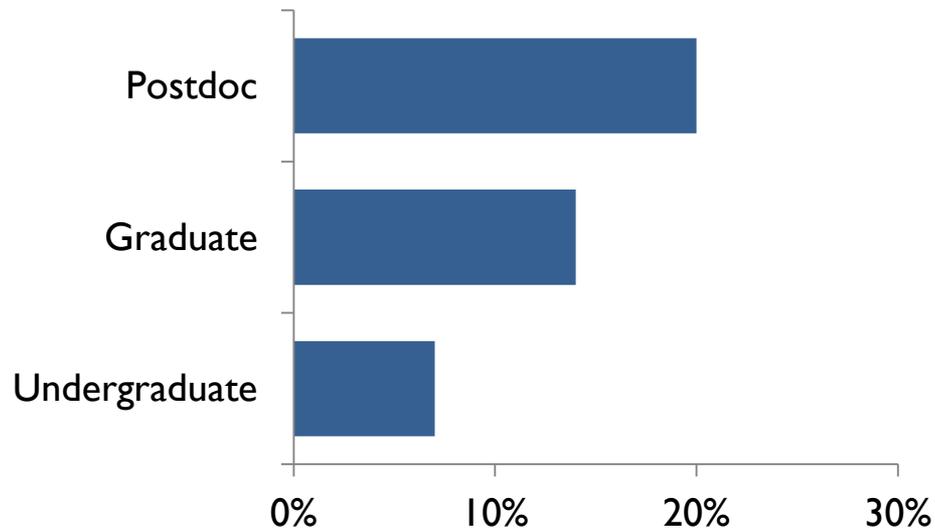
– Undergraduate Student

“If I had known how bad **the cost of living** would be here, **I would have seriously considered completing my PhD elsewhere**, and UC Berkeley has always been my dream.”

– Graduate Student

Percent experiencing homelessness while at UC Berkeley

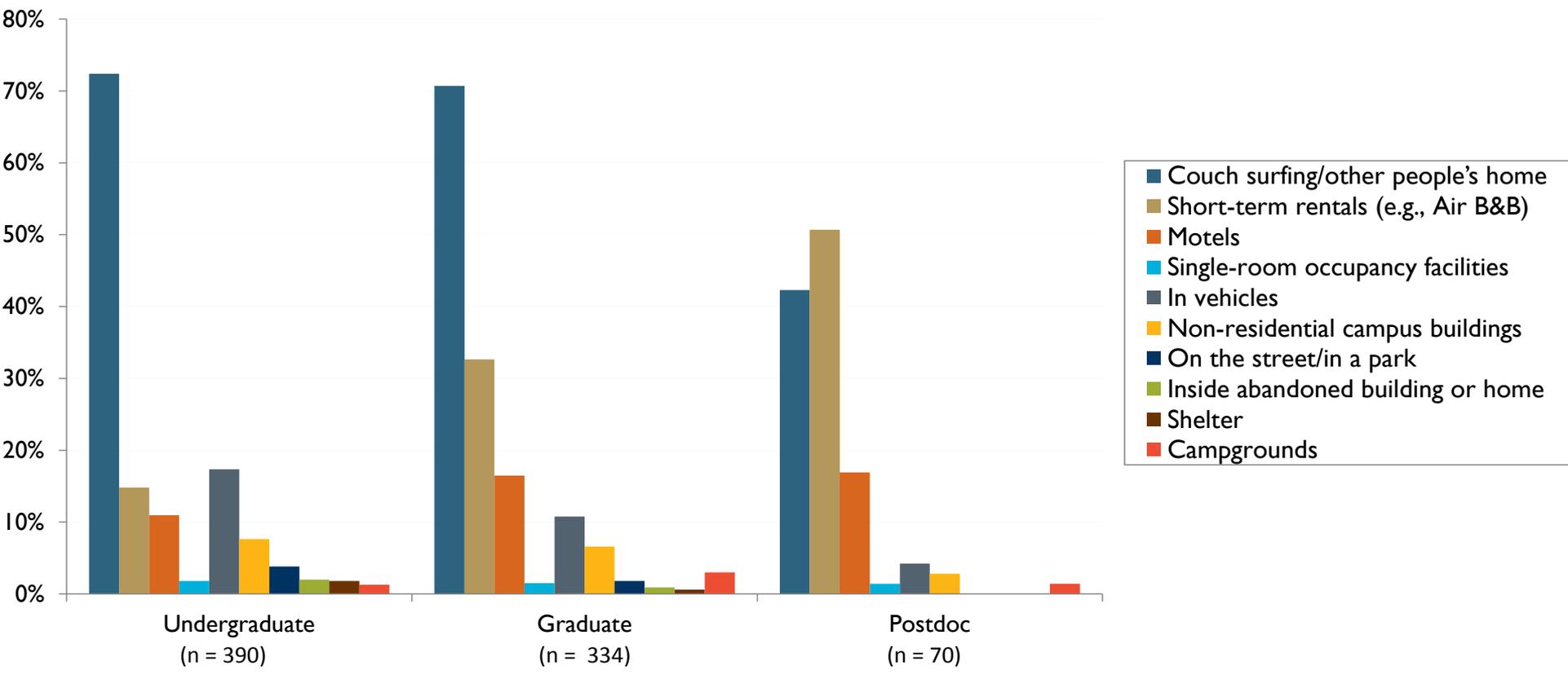
10% of all respondents self identified as having experienced homelessness at some point since arriving at UC Berkeley, the rate was double for postdocs



Survey Question: "Since arriving at UC Berkeley, have you ever been homeless for any length of time? (Homeless means not having stable or reliable housing, (e.g., living on the street, in vehicles, motels, short-term rentals, camp grounds, single-occupancy facilities, or couch surfing in other people's homes for temporary sleeping arrangements)."

Where respondents lived when homeless

Respondents lived in a range of locations when experiencing homelessness



Respondent comments: homelessness while at UC Berkeley

“As an older transfer student, my only UC housing offer was a shared triple unit bedroom and about a 25 minute walk from Campus. Deciding to live on my own instead, **I started the school year technically homeless, couch surfing and renting a room on a weekly basis.**”

– Undergraduate Student

“Housing prices are unmanageable, and I was **homeless and living in a car for three months** last semester with a friend!”

– Undergraduate Student

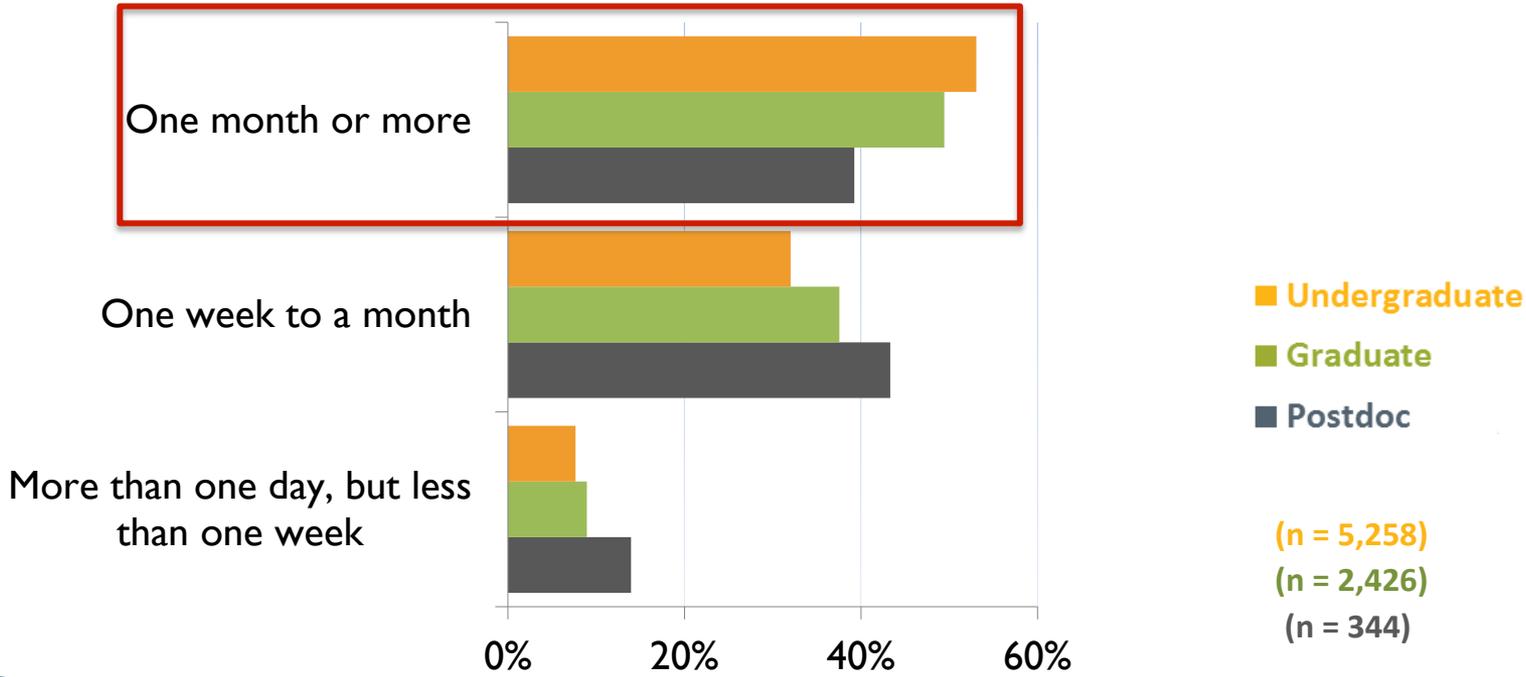
Duration of homelessness while at UC Berkeley

Most respondents experienced homelessness for one week to one month

Duration of Homelessness	Undergraduate	Graduate	Postdoc
One day	3%	<1%	0%
More than a day, but less than 1 week	19%	17%	29%
1 week to a month	44%	54%	46%
1-2 months	20%	18%	20%
3-4 months	8%	5%	4%
5-6 months	3%	1%	0%
More than 6 months	3%	4%	1%
Total Respondent Count	388	334	70

Length of time it took to find current housing

Half of respondents indicated that it took more than one month to find their current housing



Current housing situation

Percentage of respondents living with partners or children

Some undergraduate and graduate students and postdocs are making housing decisions for themselves and as well as partners and/or children.

	Undergrads	Grad students	Postdocs
No live-in partners or children	5,945 (97%)	1,906 (72%)	168 (46%)
Respondents with partners ¹	106 (2%)	544 (20%)	109 (30%)
Respondents with children ²	83 (1%)	214 (8%)	88 (24%)
TOTAL	6,134 (100%)	2,664 (100%)	365 (100%)

¹Excludes respondents living with children

²Includes respondents living with or without partners

Average monthly housing, food, and utility costs

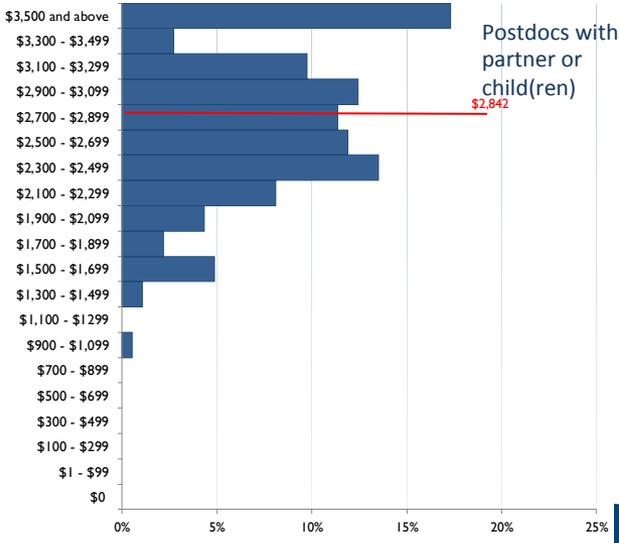
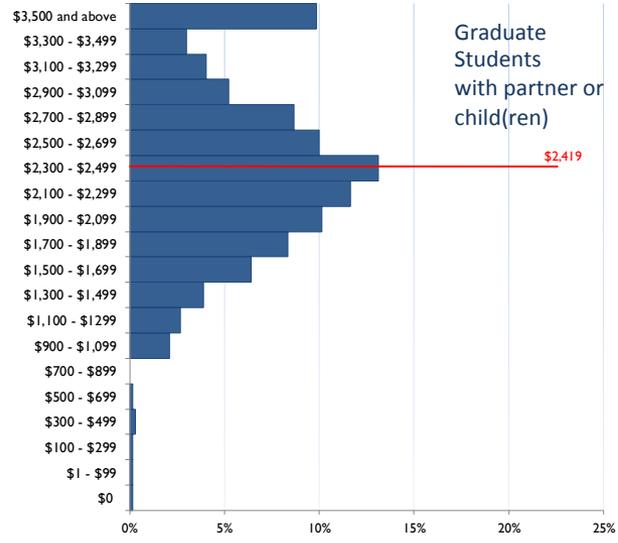
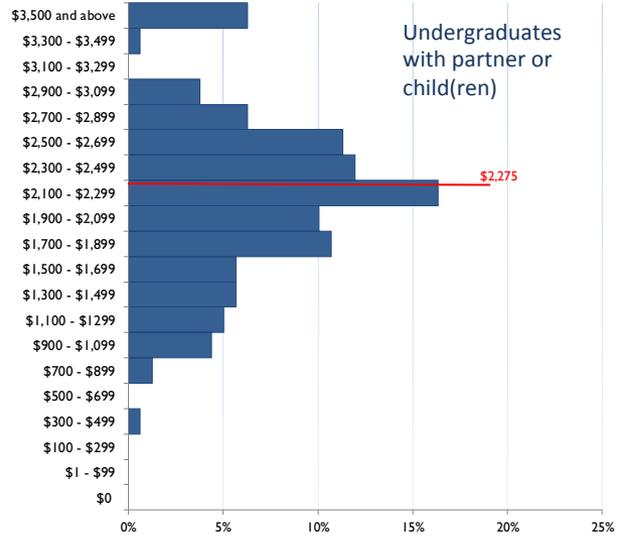
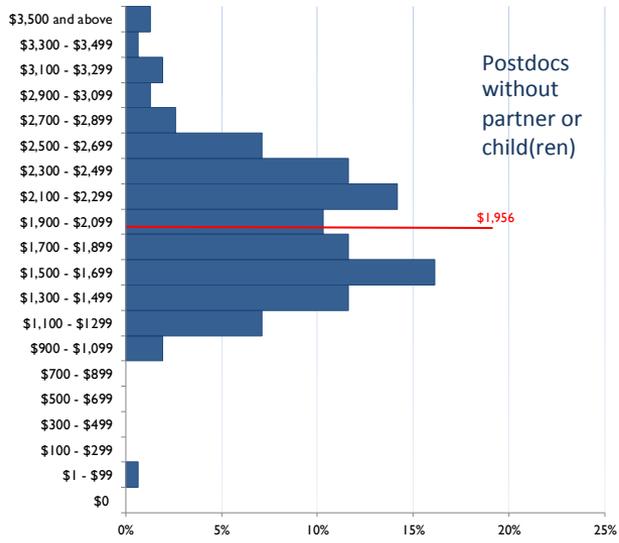
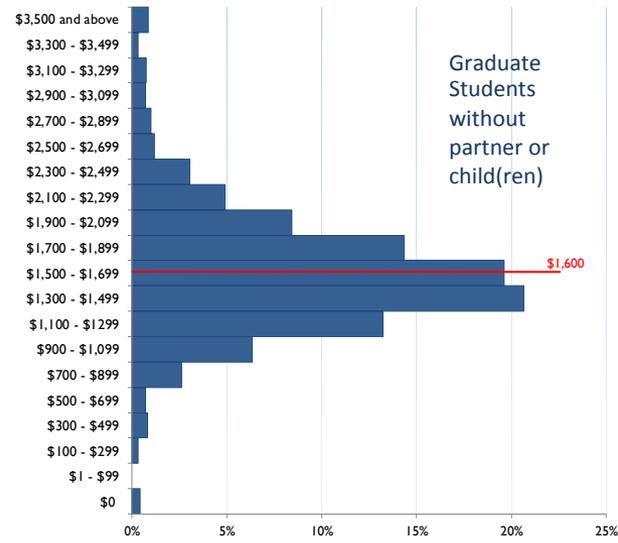
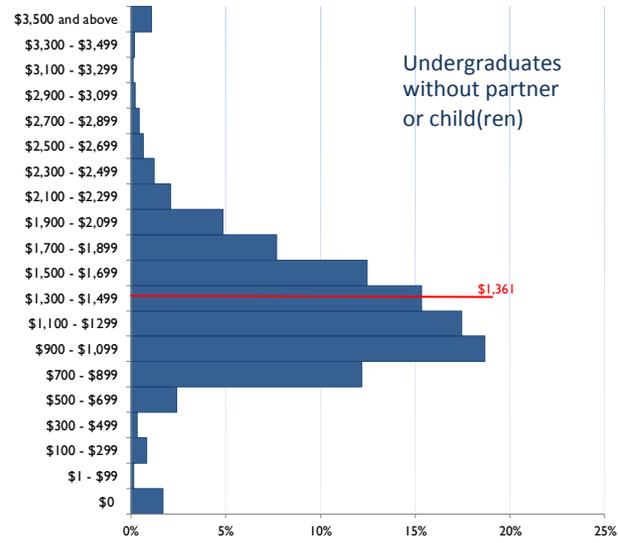
Undergraduates living in university owned housing reported higher monthly expenses than their respective counterparts living in non-university owned housing. For graduate students, this trend was reversed.

	Undergraduate (n = 5,099)		Graduate (n = 2,408)		Postdoc (n = 340)	
	Non-University Owned	University Owned	Non-University Owned	University Owned	Non- University Owned	University Owned
without partners or children	\$1,252 (n = 3,290)	\$1,577 (n = 1,650)	\$1,601 (n = 1,650)	\$1,579 (n = 88)	\$1,960 (n = 154)	n < 5
with partners or children	\$2,108 (n = 79)	\$2,439 (n = 80)	\$2,478 (n = 471)	\$2,280 (n = 199)	\$2,839 (n = 166)	\$2,867 (n = 19)

*Amounts shown represent an average of the monthly housing cost (e.g., rent), food, as well as select utilities.
Utilities include: Water, Garbage, Gas, Electricity, and Internet*

Monthly reported housing, food, & utility costs

Respondents with families reported monthly housing, food, and utility costs of ~\$900 more on average than those without families



Values shown in red are the mean dollar amounts paid per month for housing, food, and utilities, by each respective respondent group.

Utilities include: Water, Garbage, Gas, Electricity, and Internet

Respondent comments: satisfaction with housing

“I commute two hours every day to get to campus, riding my bike and BART for a total of > \$100/month, on top of my outrageous rent. I just **couldn't afford an apartment closer to campus**. And I still have to live with a stranger in a tiny, loud apartment. **Even as a postdoc, I have no money saved at the end of every month.**”

- Postdoc

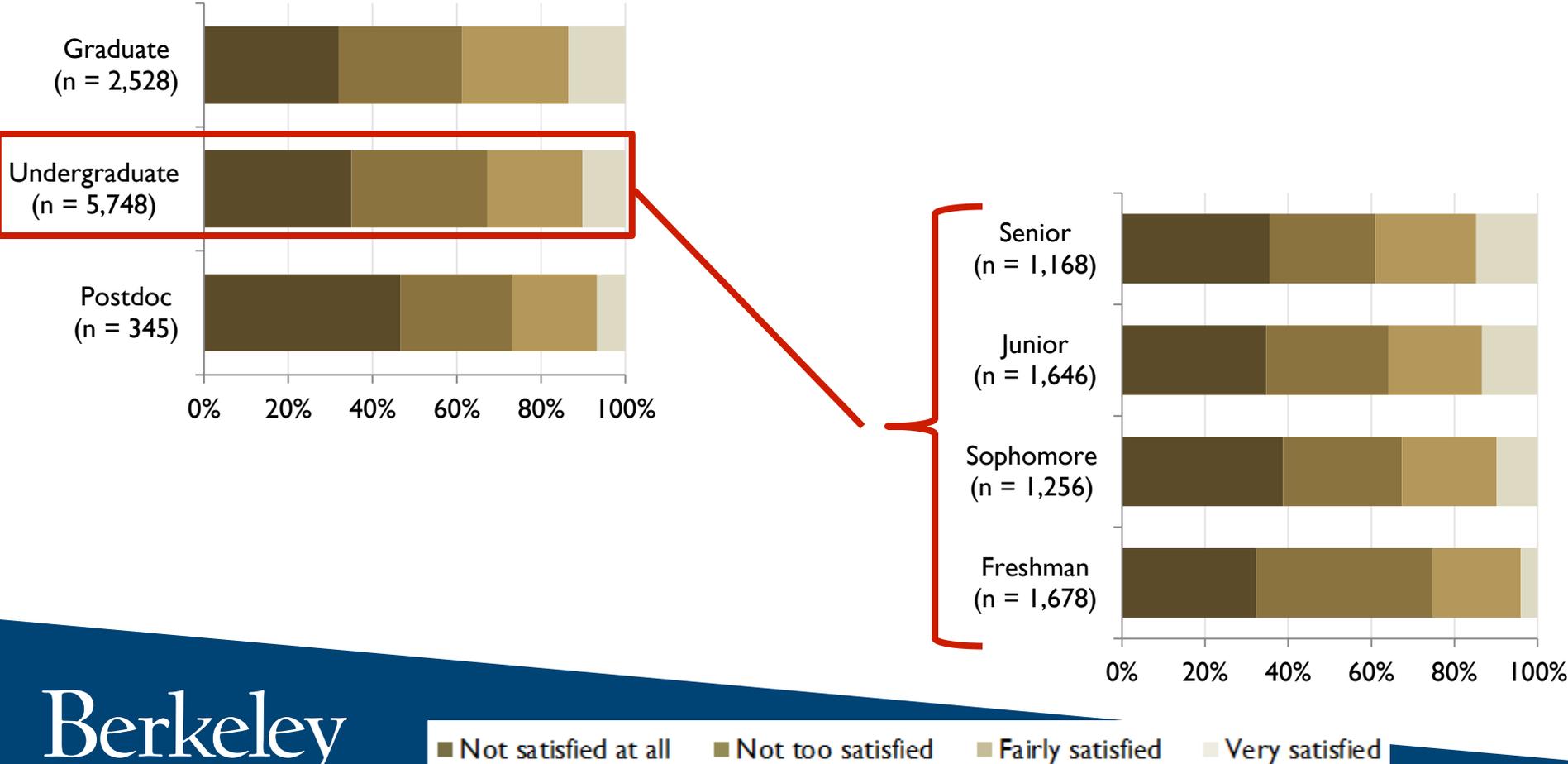
“I am so frustrated with our housing situation, considering UCLA students live in luxury compared to our housing. I **pay the same amount for a broken-down apartment** with insect problems in the basement with homeless people living outside my window **as my best friend does for an apartment** with laundry, a pool, a gym, and a dishwasher **in sparkling Westwood.**”

– Undergraduate Student

“The Berkeley Student Cooperative has given me **the absolute best living situation** I could ask for... It is extremely affordable and provides nutritious food, a welcoming and academically focused community and an abundance of amenities.” – Undergraduate Student

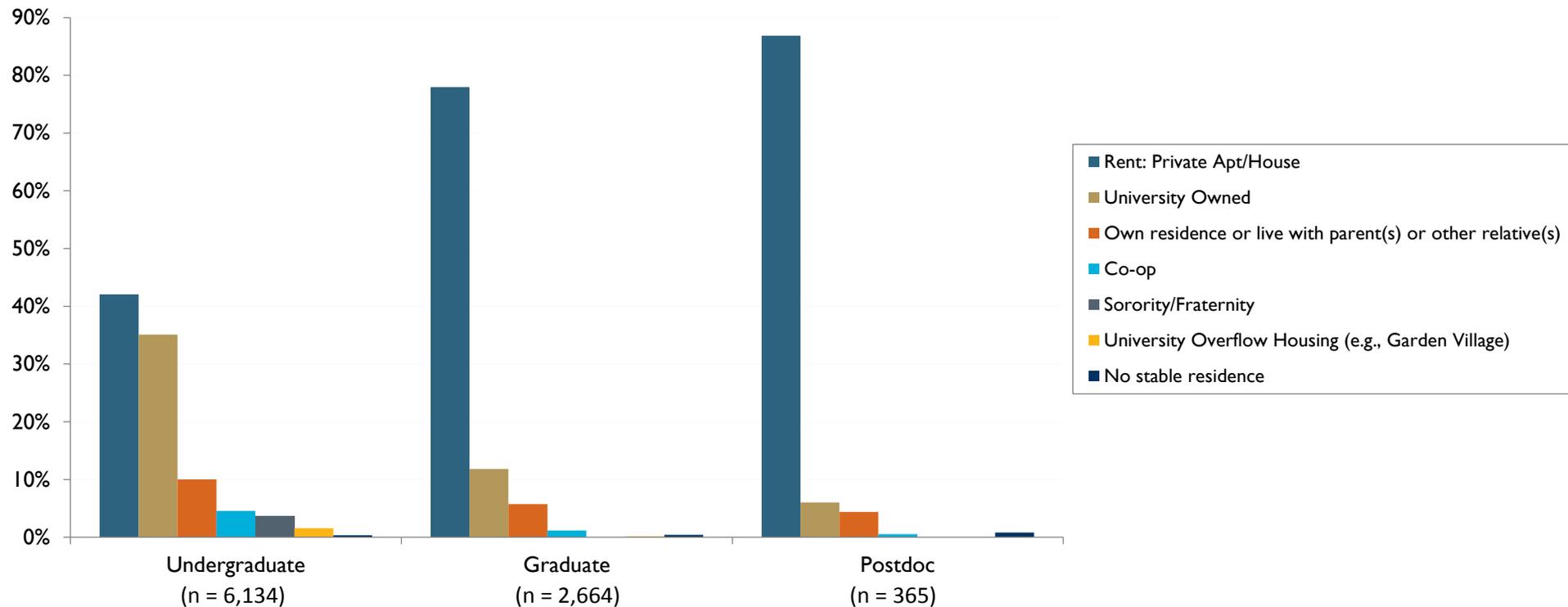
Level of satisfaction with current housing cost

Postdocs are least satisfied with their current housing cost, followed by undergraduates – particularly those with freshman class standing



The type of housing respondents were living in when surveyed

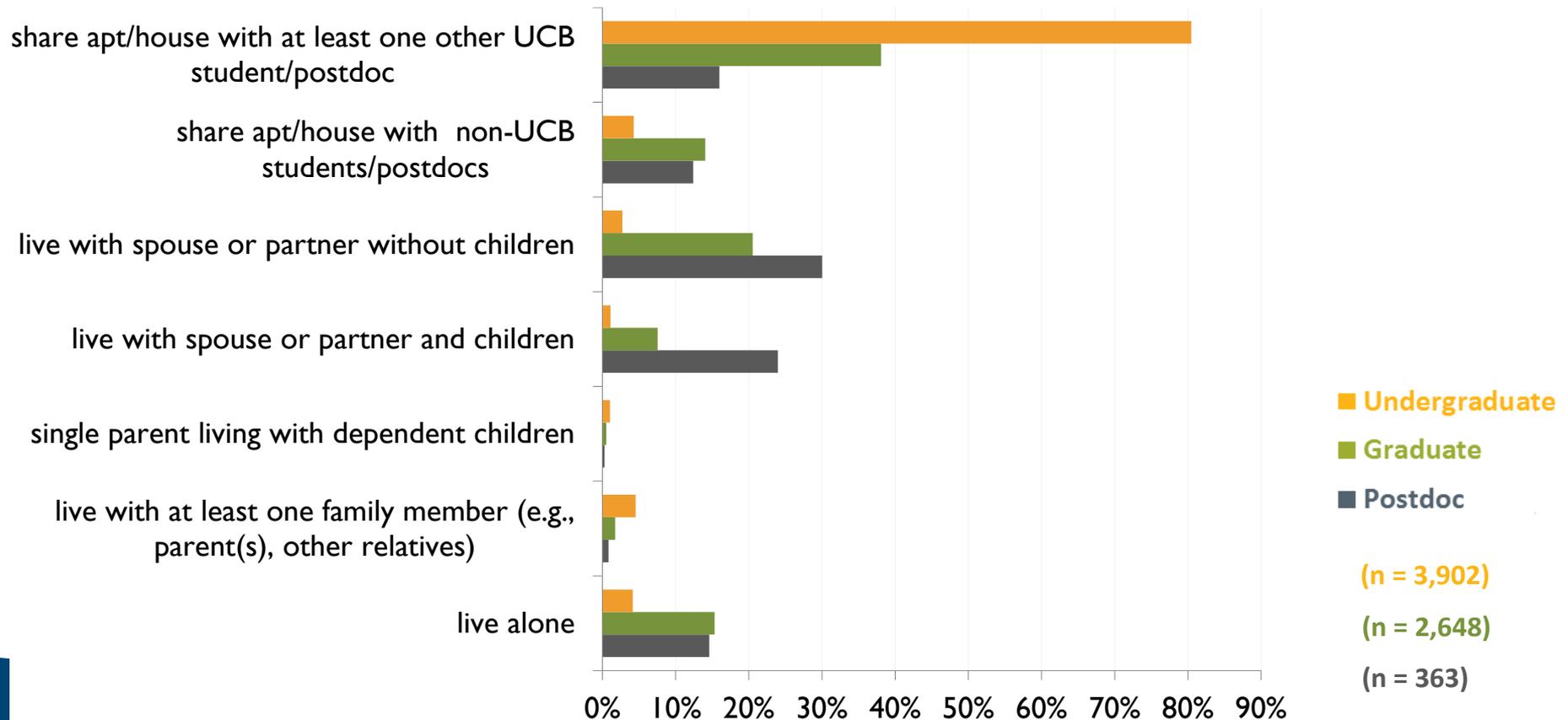
A greater proportion of undergraduates (35%) live in university owned housing as compared to graduate students (12%) and postdocs (6%)



Who respondents were living With

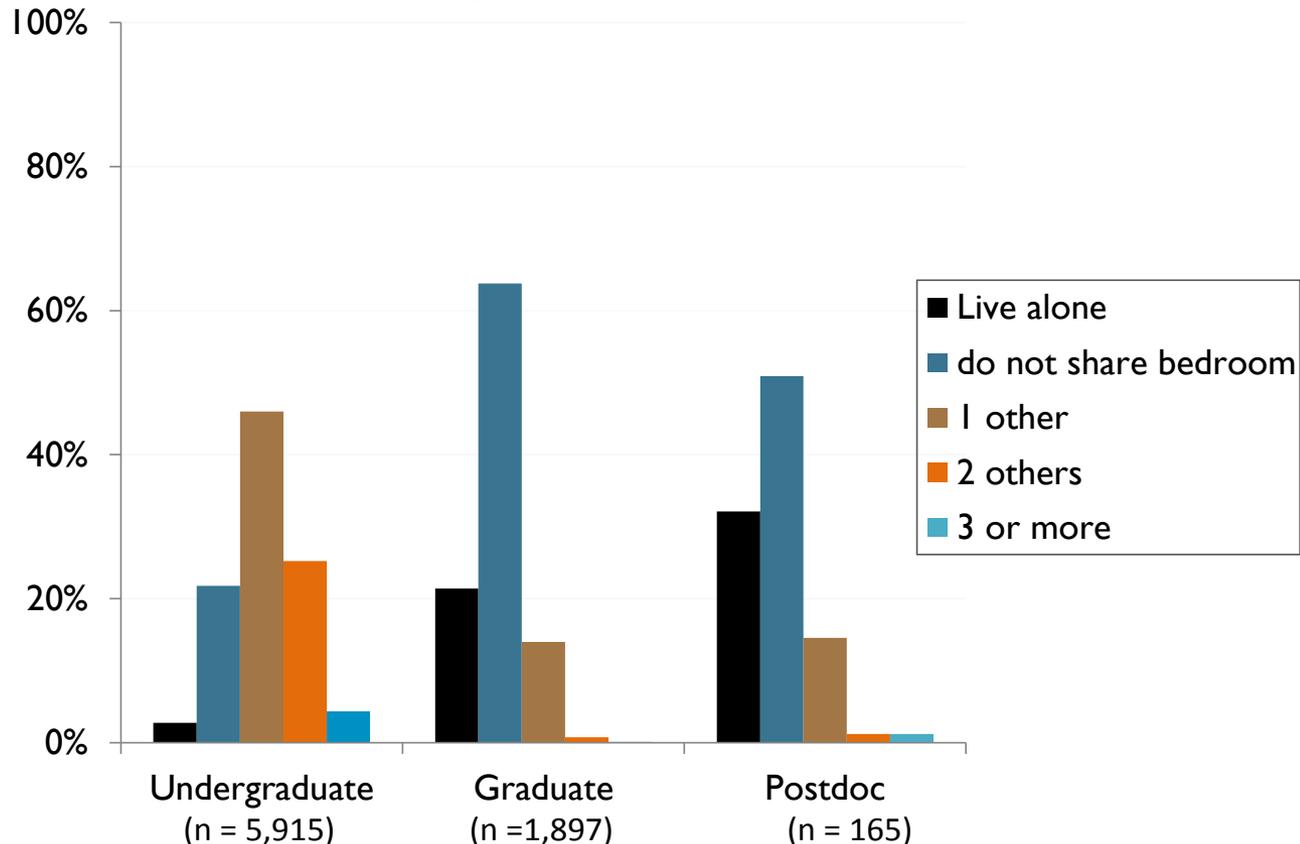
(Excludes those living in most types of undergrad university owned housing)

Most respondents reported living with some type of housemate; only 4% of undergrads and 15% of grad students and postdocs lived alone



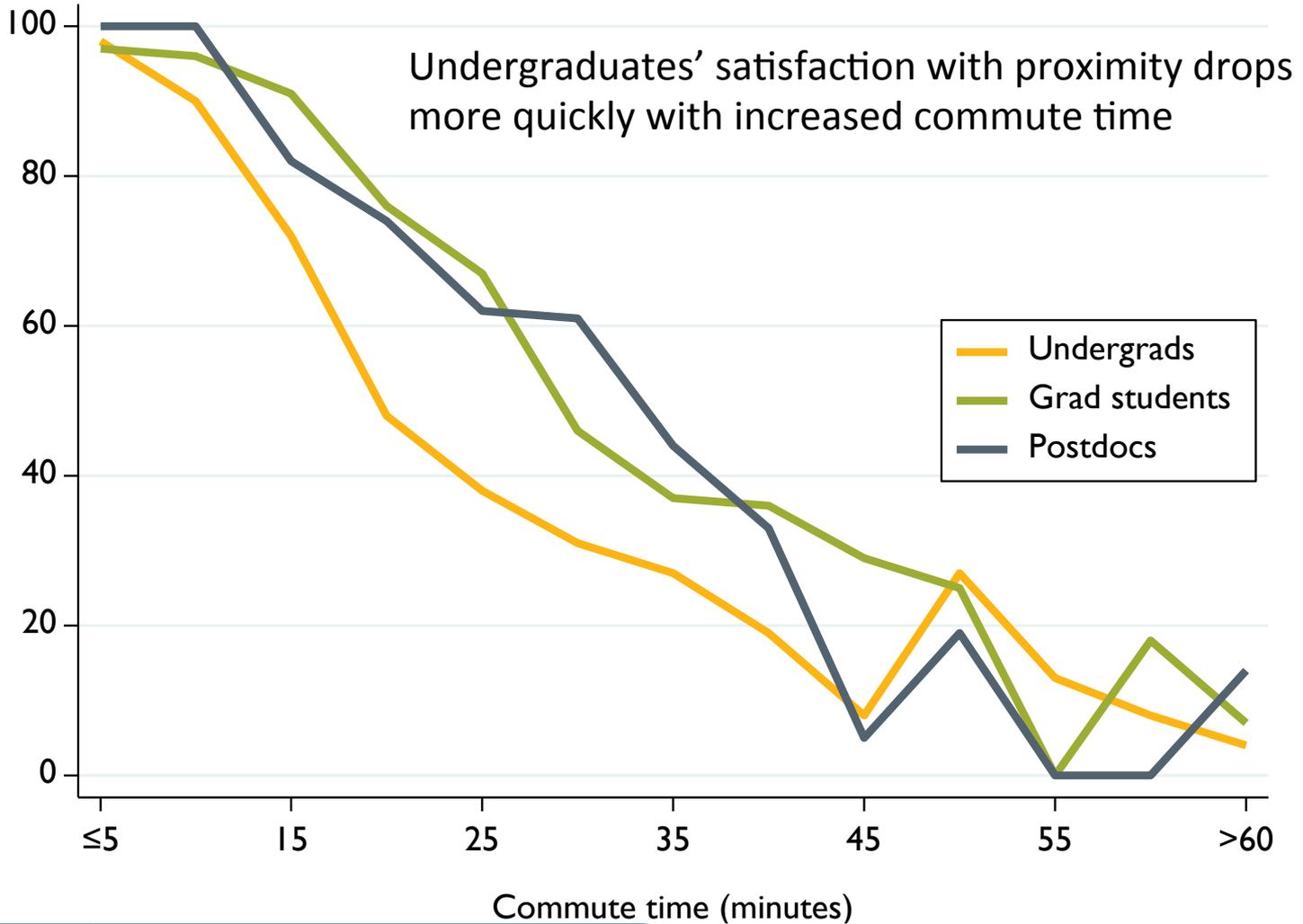
The proportion of respondents not living with a partner, who shared a bedroom

Undergrads are more likely to share a bedroom than are graduate students and postdocs

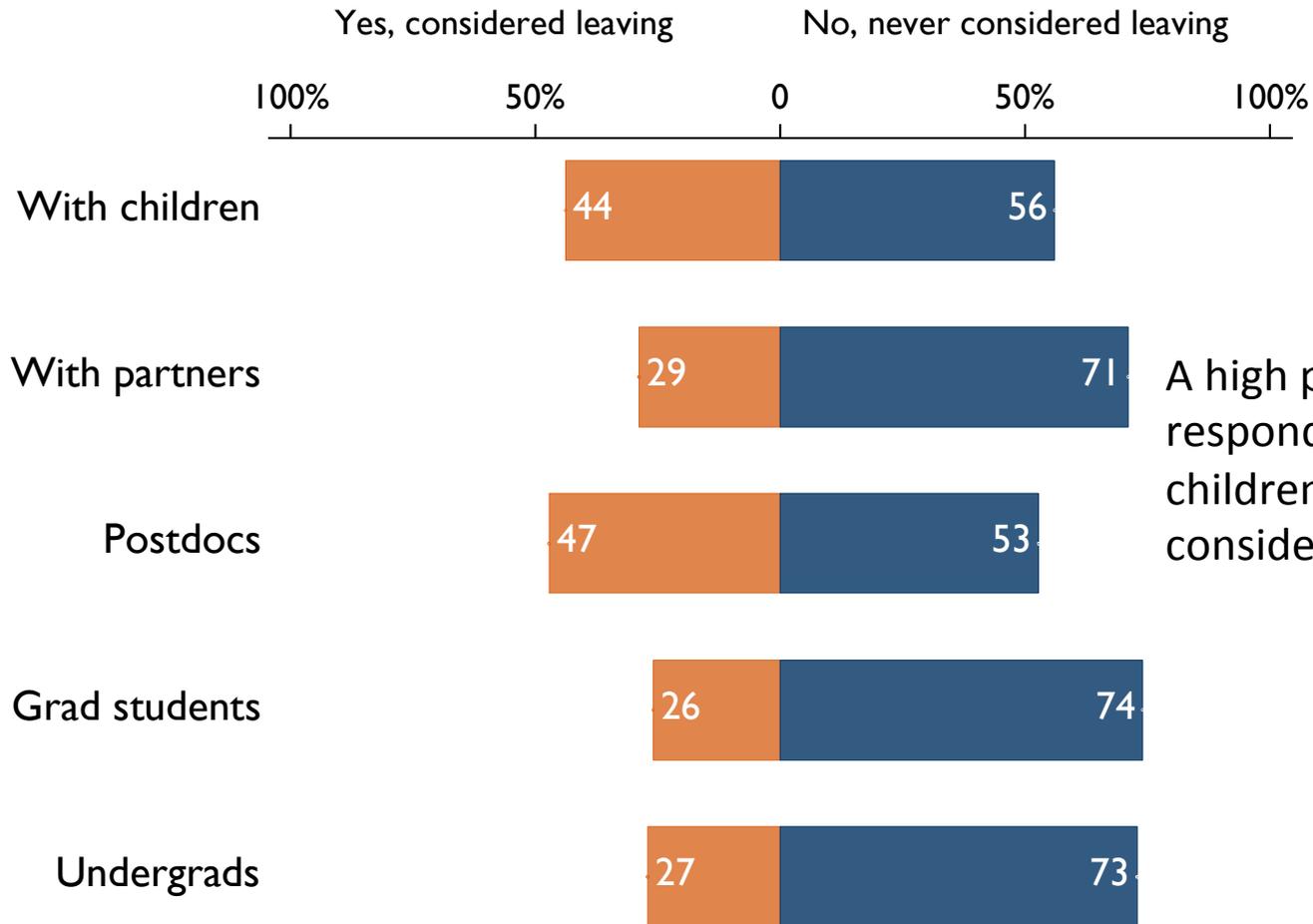


*Percentages exclude those who reported living with a partner/spouse, but include those who reported living alone
Represents responses to two different survey questions, which are shown on the previous two slides. Thus, the difference in percentages shown in the number of respondents*

Satisfaction with current proximity to campus by commute time



Have you ever considered leaving UC Berkeley because of the housing situation?



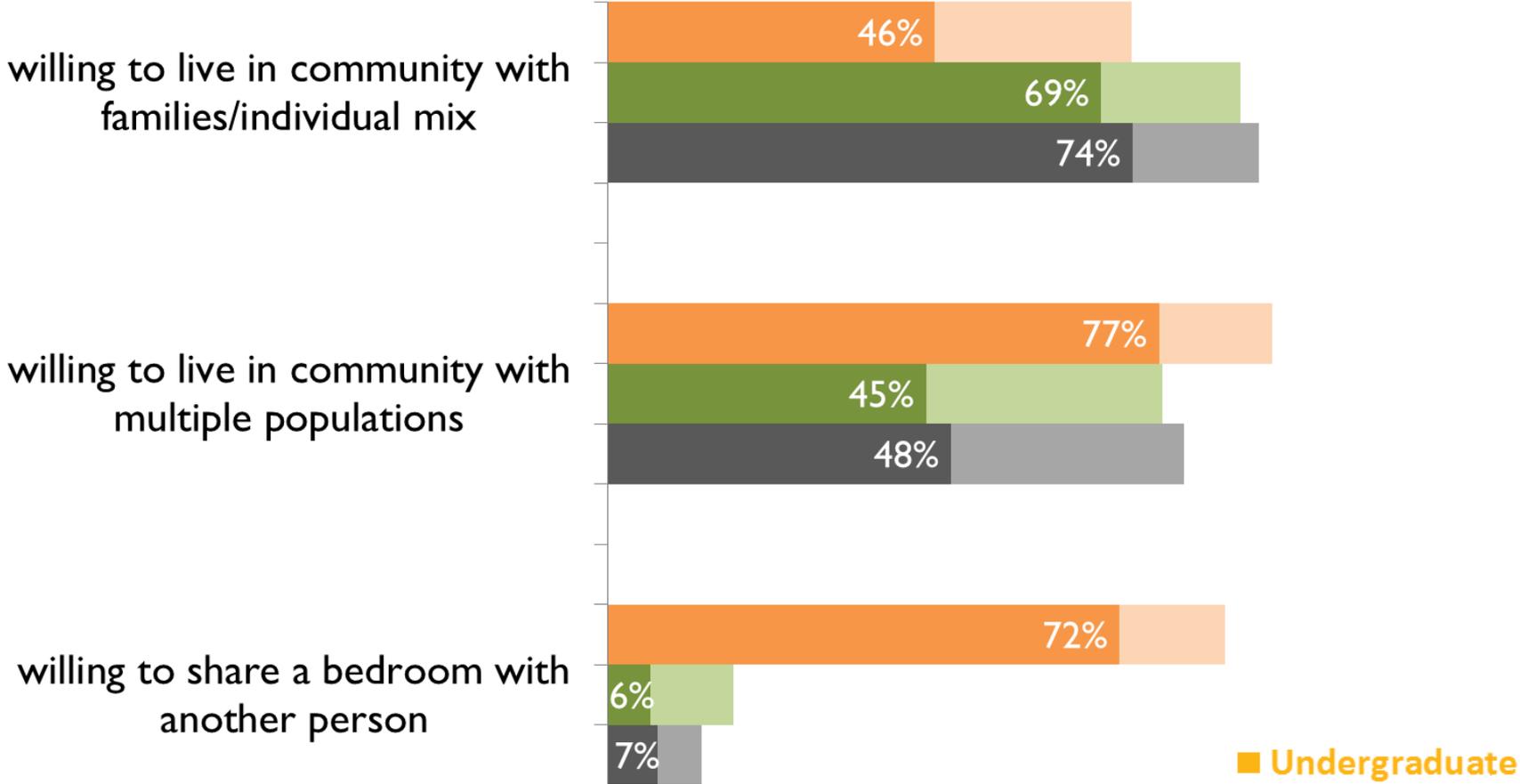
A high proportion of respondents with children have considered leaving

“Undergrads,” “Grad students,” and “Postdocs” exclude respondents living with partners and/or children
“With partners” includes respondents living with partners (without children)
“With children” includes respondents living with children (with or without partners)

“Unfortunately, postdocs are limited in the duration at the UC Village [student family housing]. I would have to leave in a few months which would increase all my cost by an additional 1500-200\$. **I am seriously thinking if we could afford staying in UC or terminating my position.**” - Postdoc

Potential housing

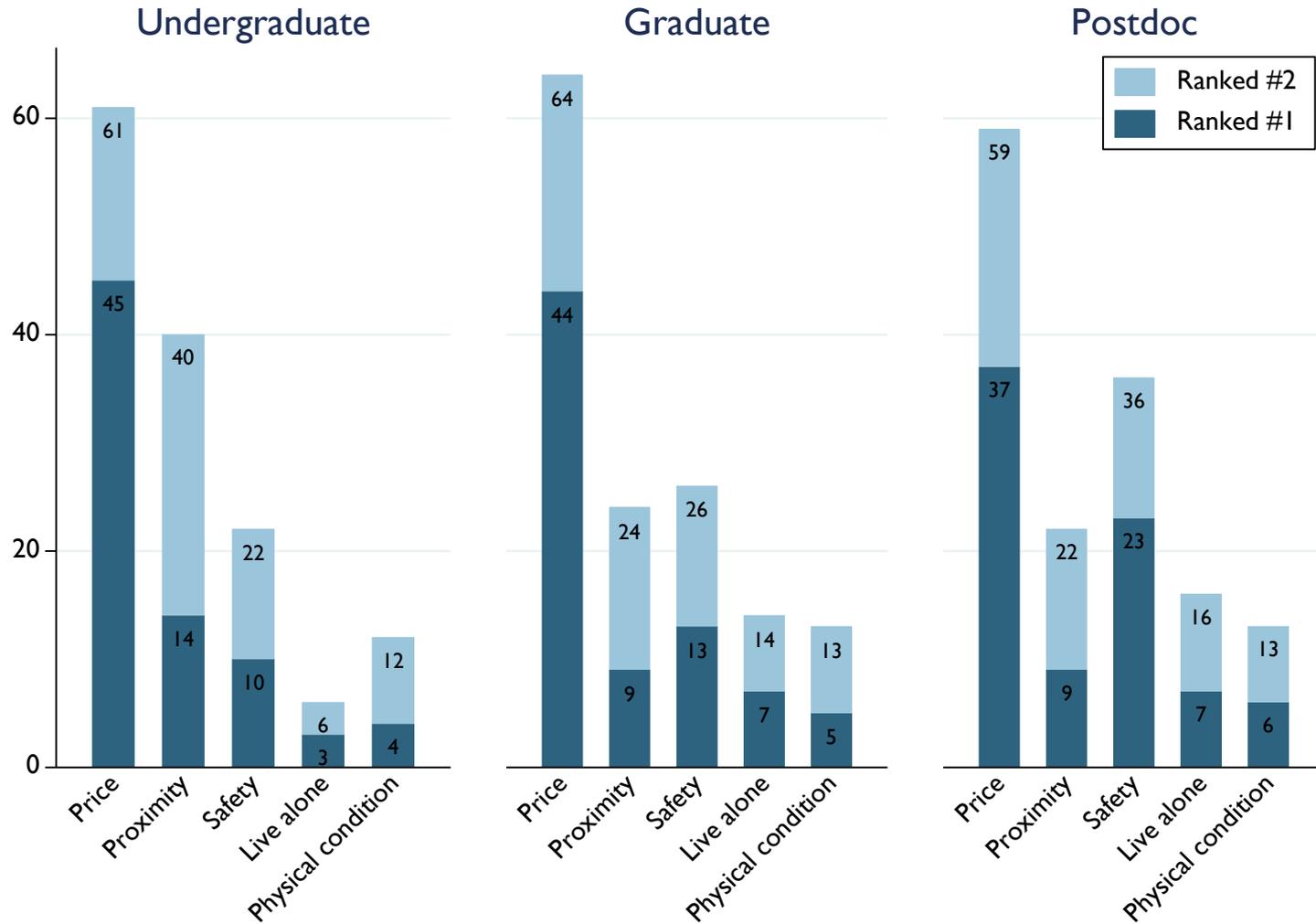
Postdocs & graduate students are most willing to live with a mix of families & individuals; Undergrads are most willing to live amongst multiple student populations



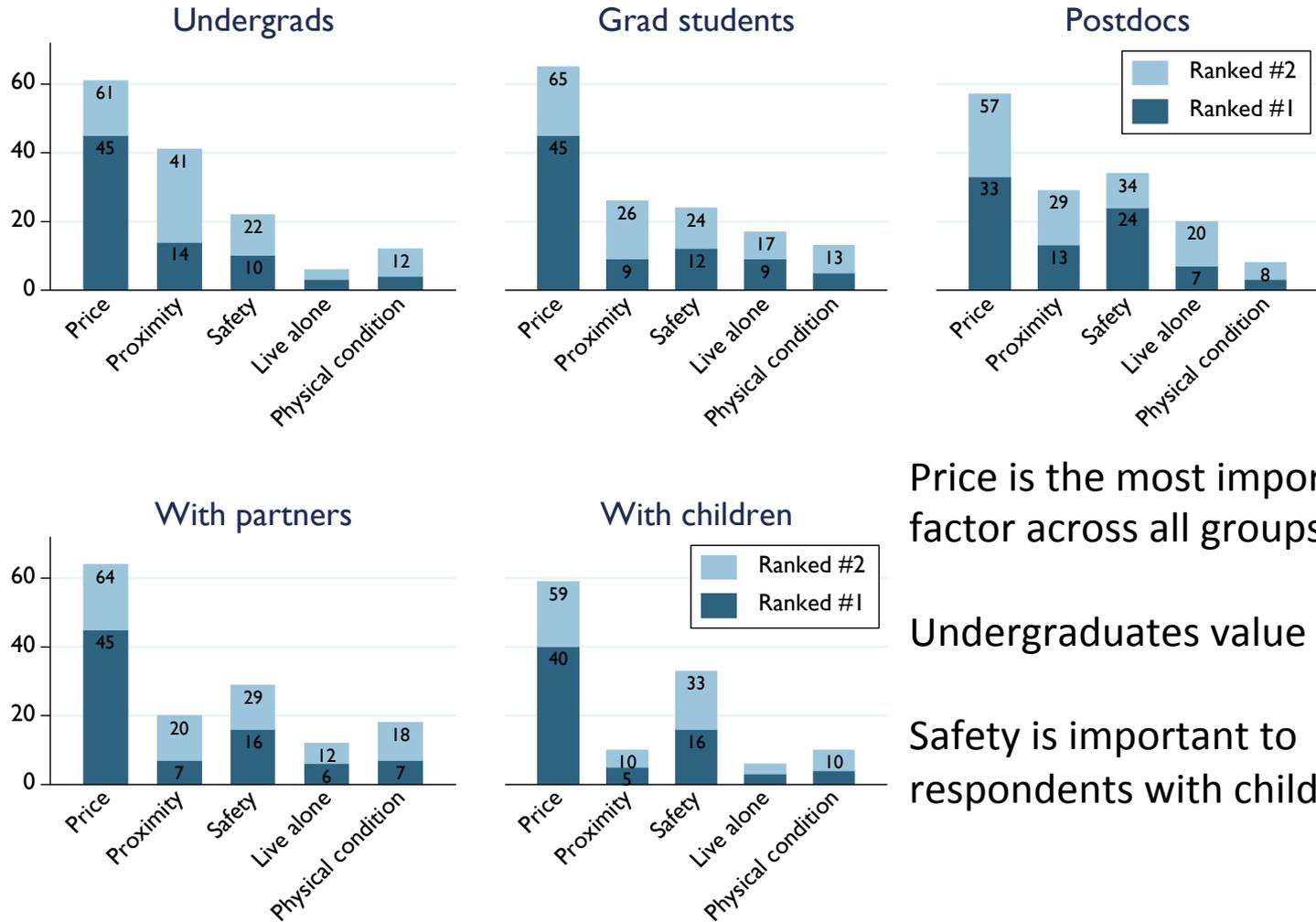
Darker colors correspond to a response of “yes” and lighter colors to a response of “maybe”

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Postdoc

#1 and #2 most important factors in potential housing



#1 and #2 most important factors in potential housing



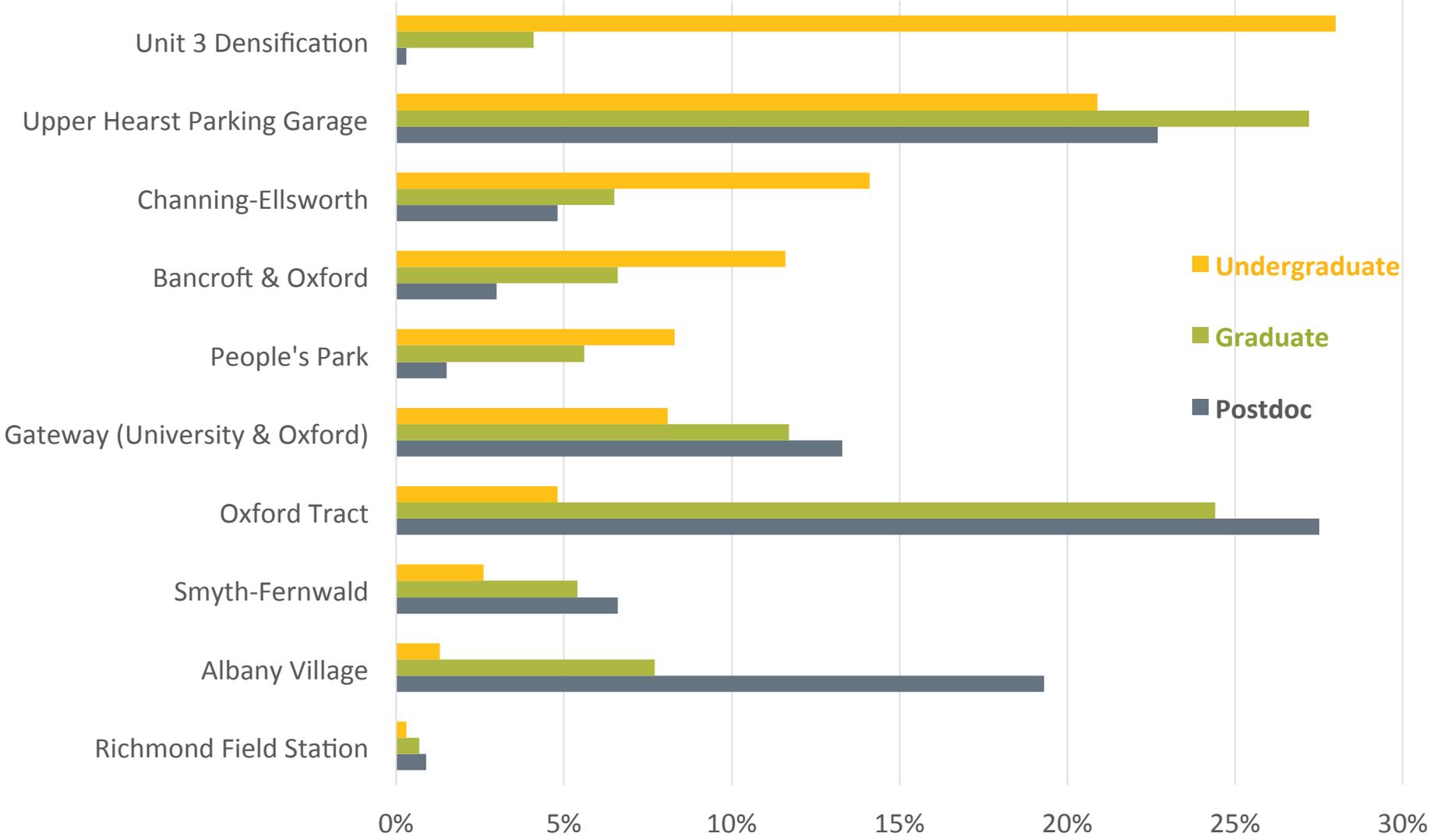
Price is the most important factor across all groups

Undergraduates value proximity

Safety is important to respondents with children

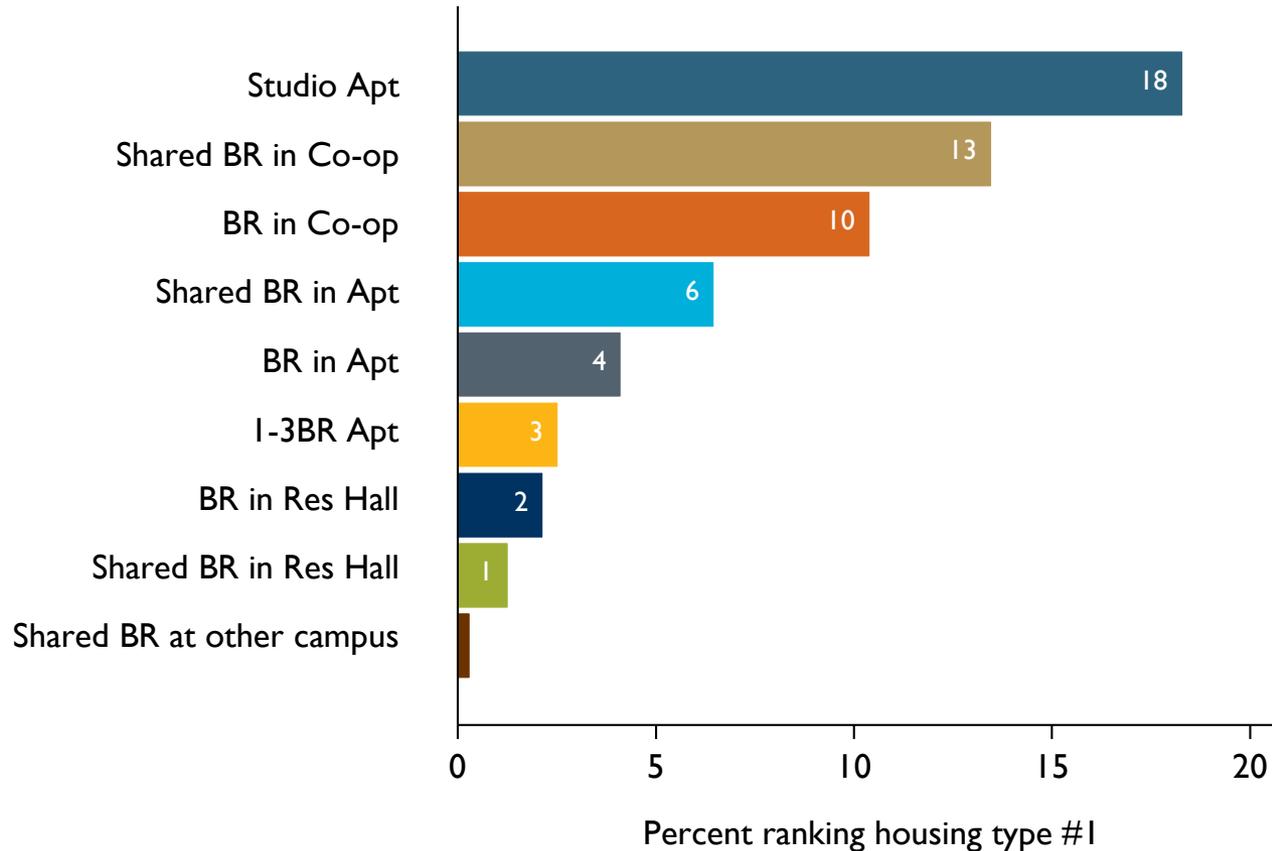
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Percent ranking the site #1



Percent rating the site #1

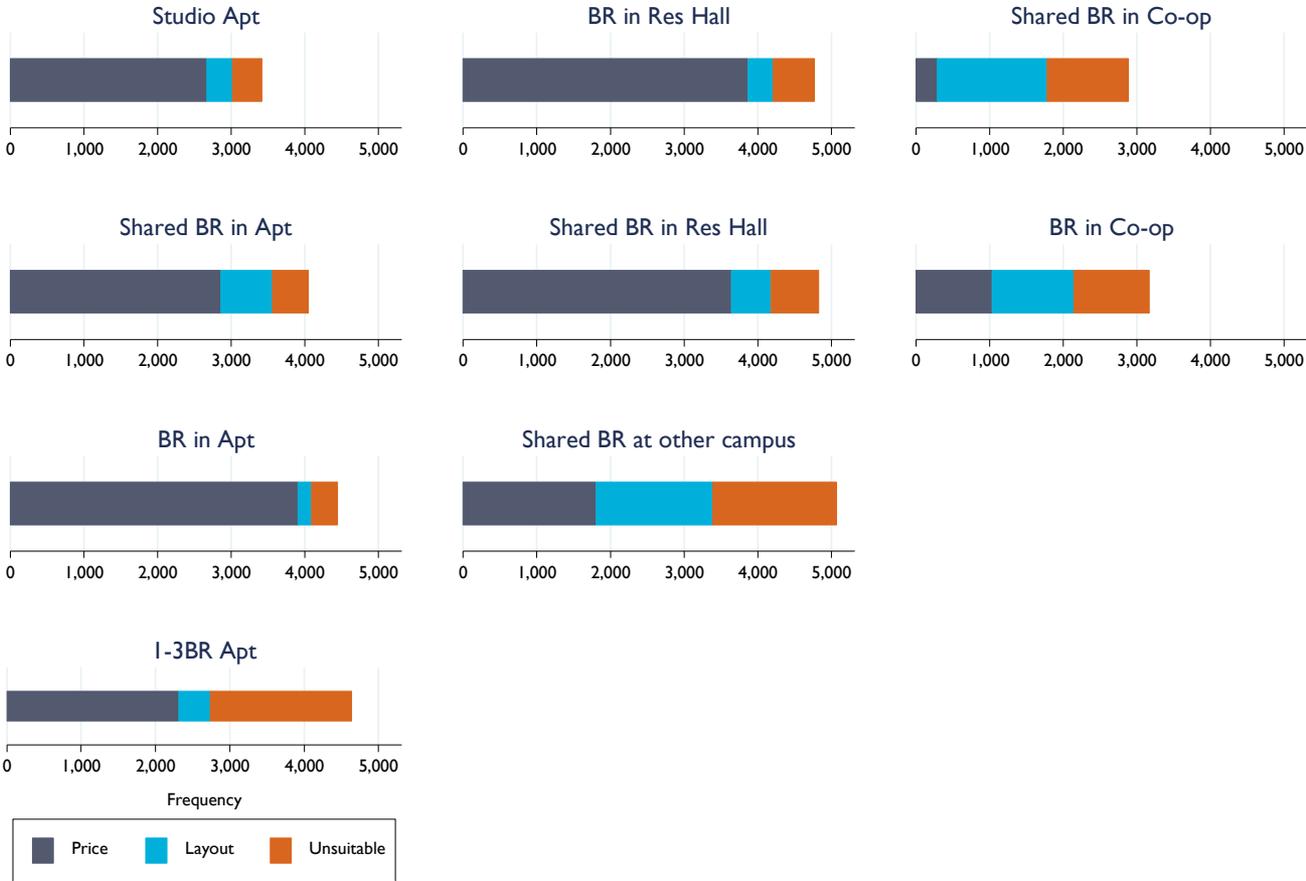
Undergraduates' preferred housing type



Percent of #1 rankings out of total valid responses for each housing type, range of valid responses (n = 5,276 - 5,404)
Excludes undergraduates who live with partners or children

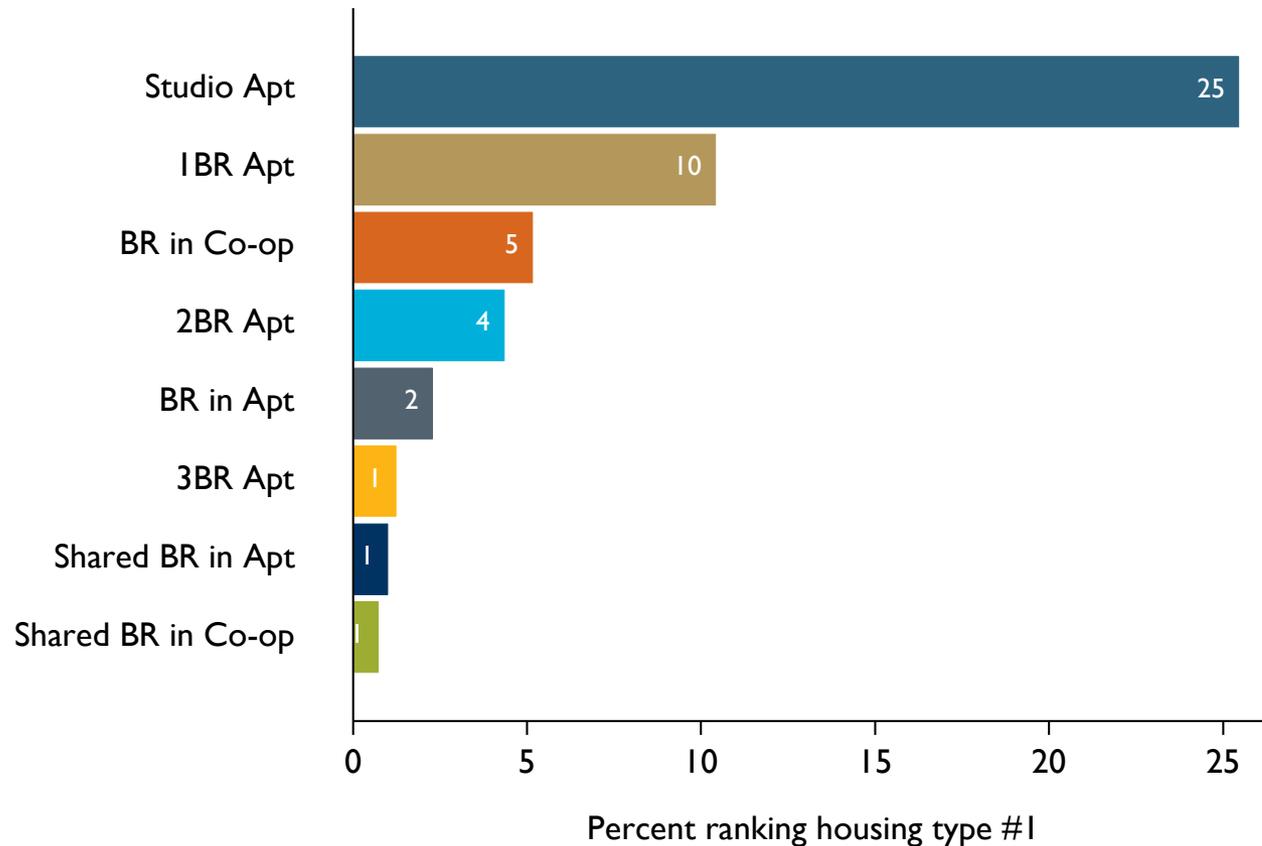
Undergraduates' reasons for **not** considering housing types

Undergraduates not living with partners or children



“Unsuitable” indicates it would not be an option for the respondent’s housing situation for any reason other than price or layout

Graduate students' preferred housing type



Percent of #1 rankings out of total valid responses for each housing type, range of valid responses (n = 1,780-1,815)
Excludes respondents who live with partners or children

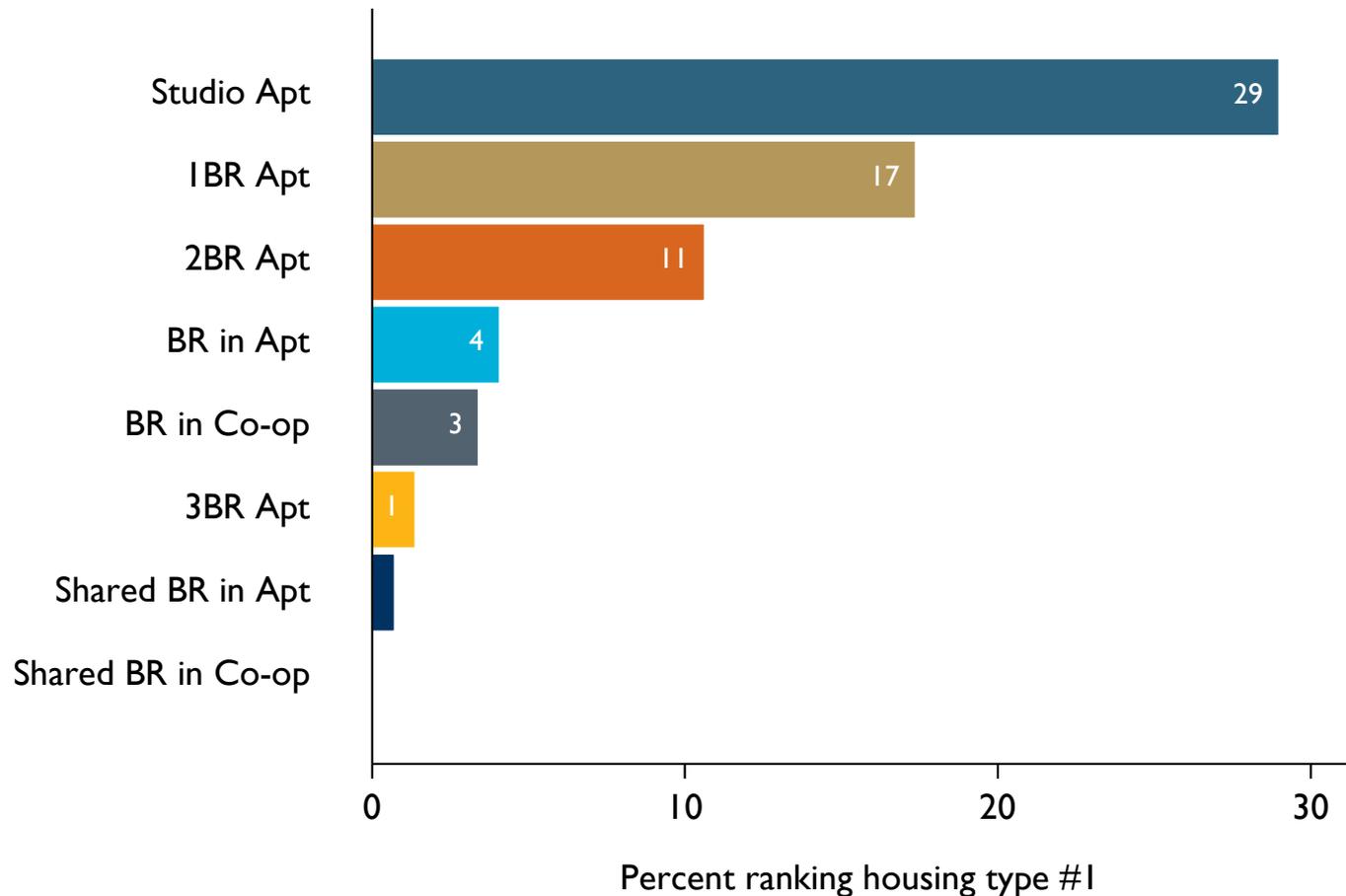
Graduate students' reasons for not considering housing types

Graduate students not living with partners or children



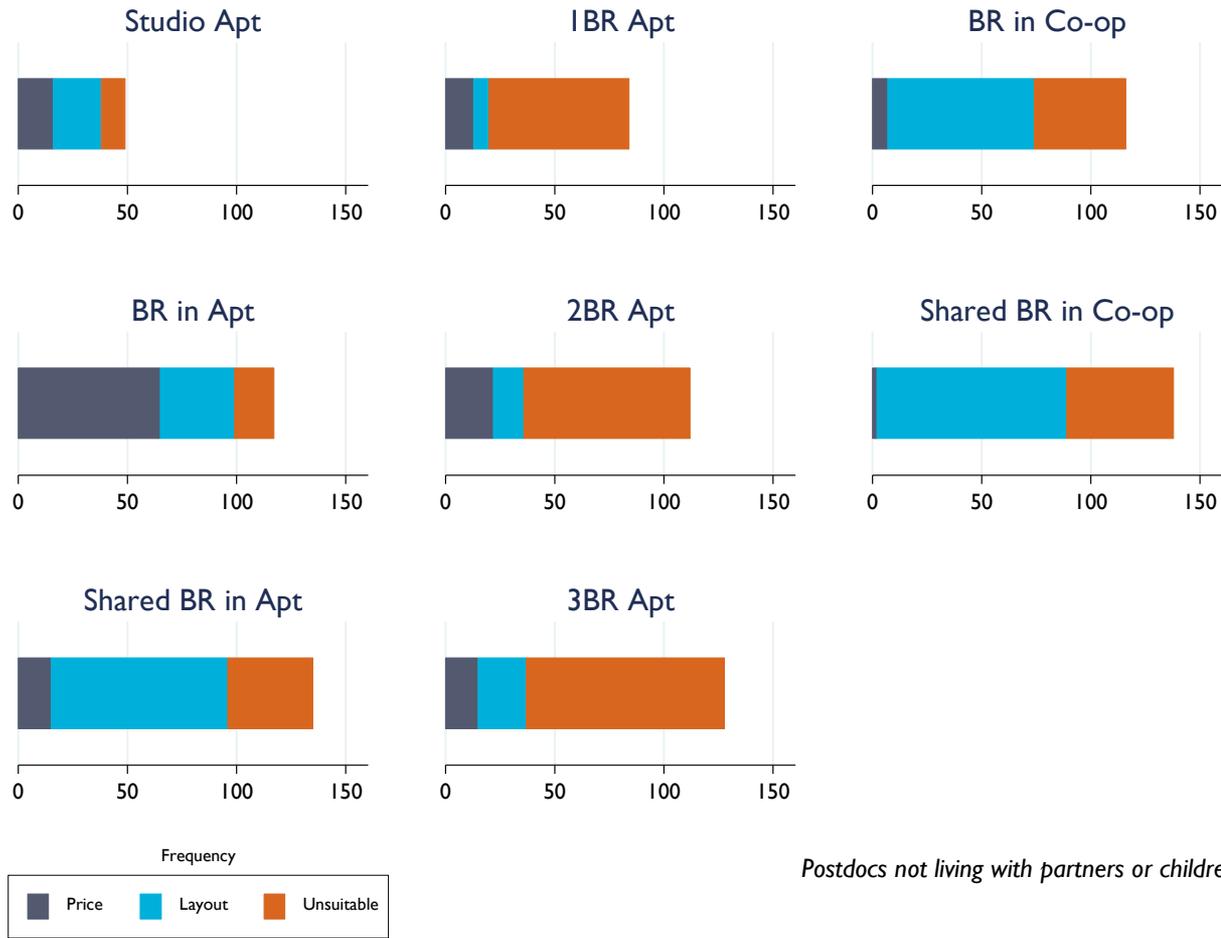
“Unsuitable” indicates it would not be an option for the respondent’s housing situation for any reason other than price or layout

Postdocs' preferred housing type



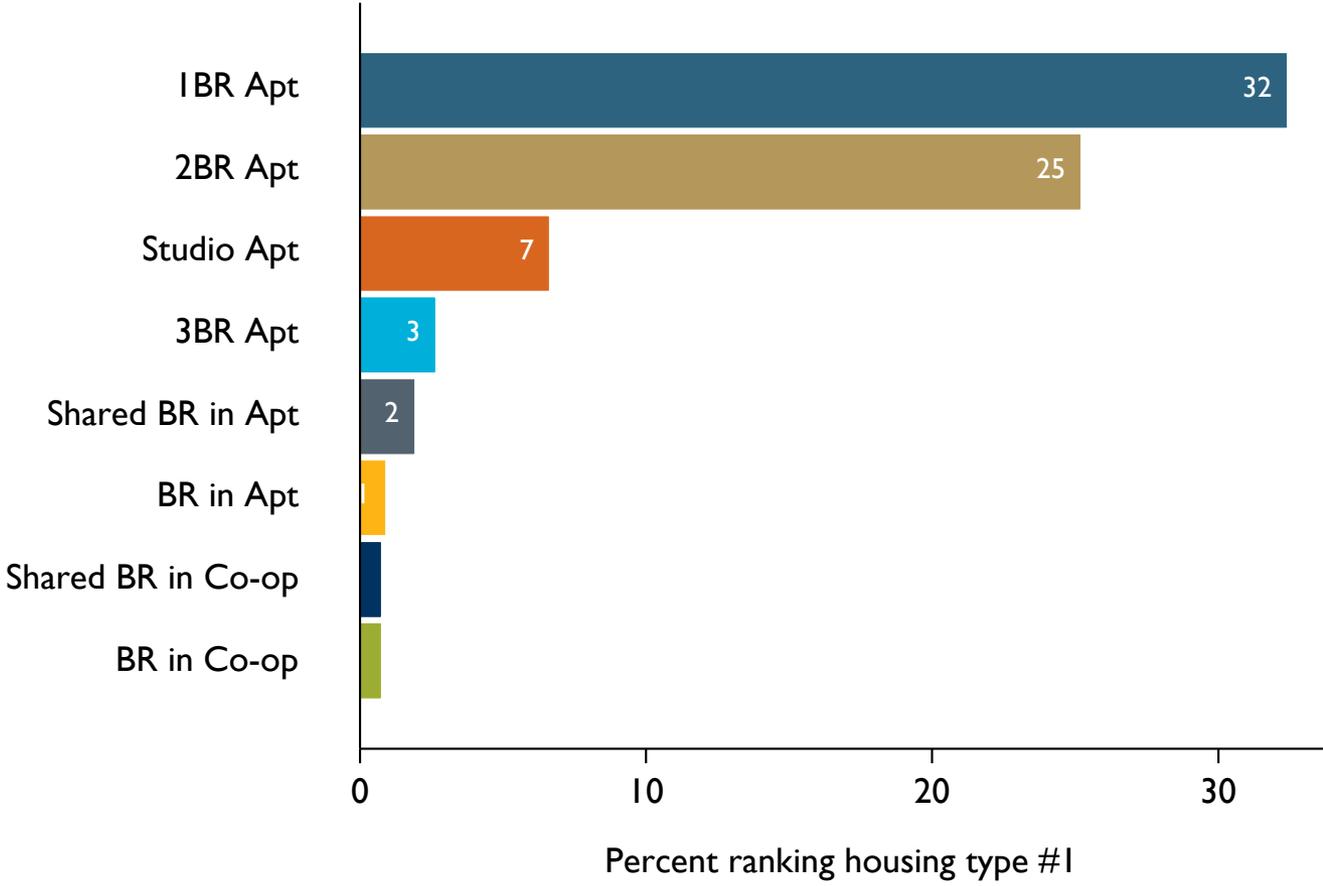
Percent of #1 rankings out of total valid responses for each housing type, range of valid responses (n = 144 - 152)
Excludes postdocs who live with partners or children

Postdocs' reasons for **not** considering housing types



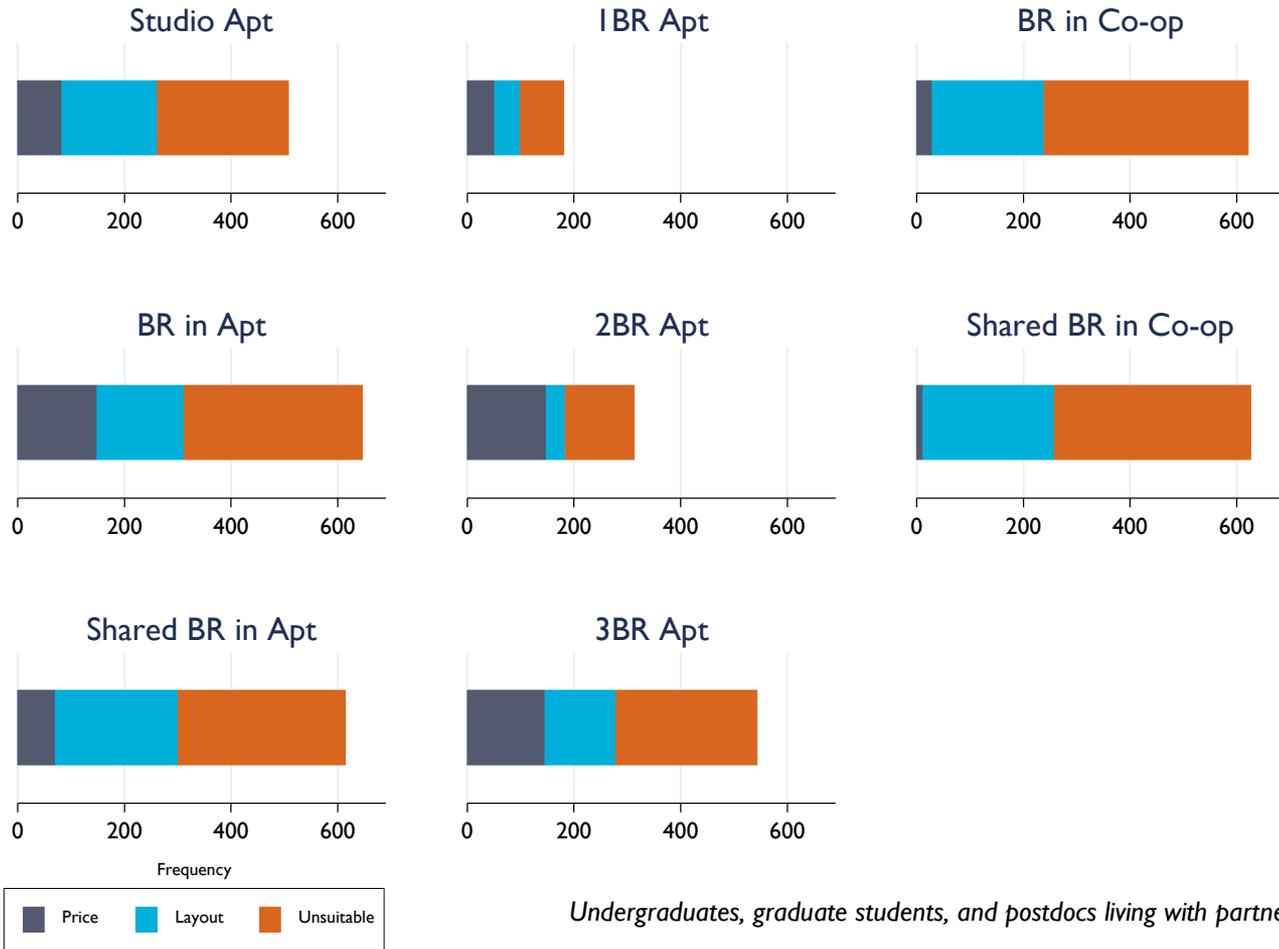
“Unsuitable” indicates it would not be an option for the respondent’s housing situation for any reason other than price or layout

Preferred housing type for respondents with partners



Percent of #1 rankings out of total valid responses for each housing type, range of valid responses (n = 683-704)
Includes undergraduates, graduate students and postdocs who live with partners

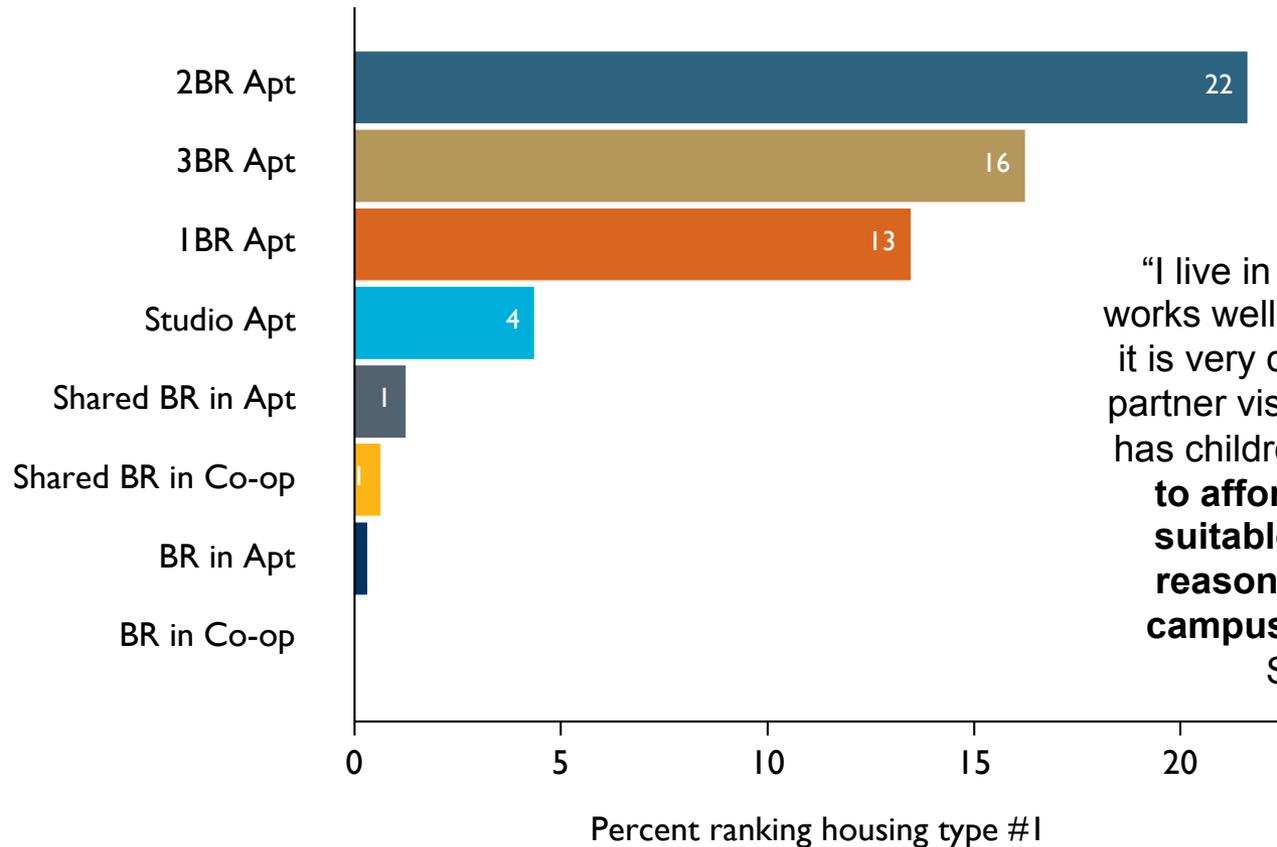
Respondents living with partners: reasons for not considering housing types



Undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs living with partners

“Unsuitable” indicates it would not be an option for the respondent’s housing situation for any reason other than price or layout

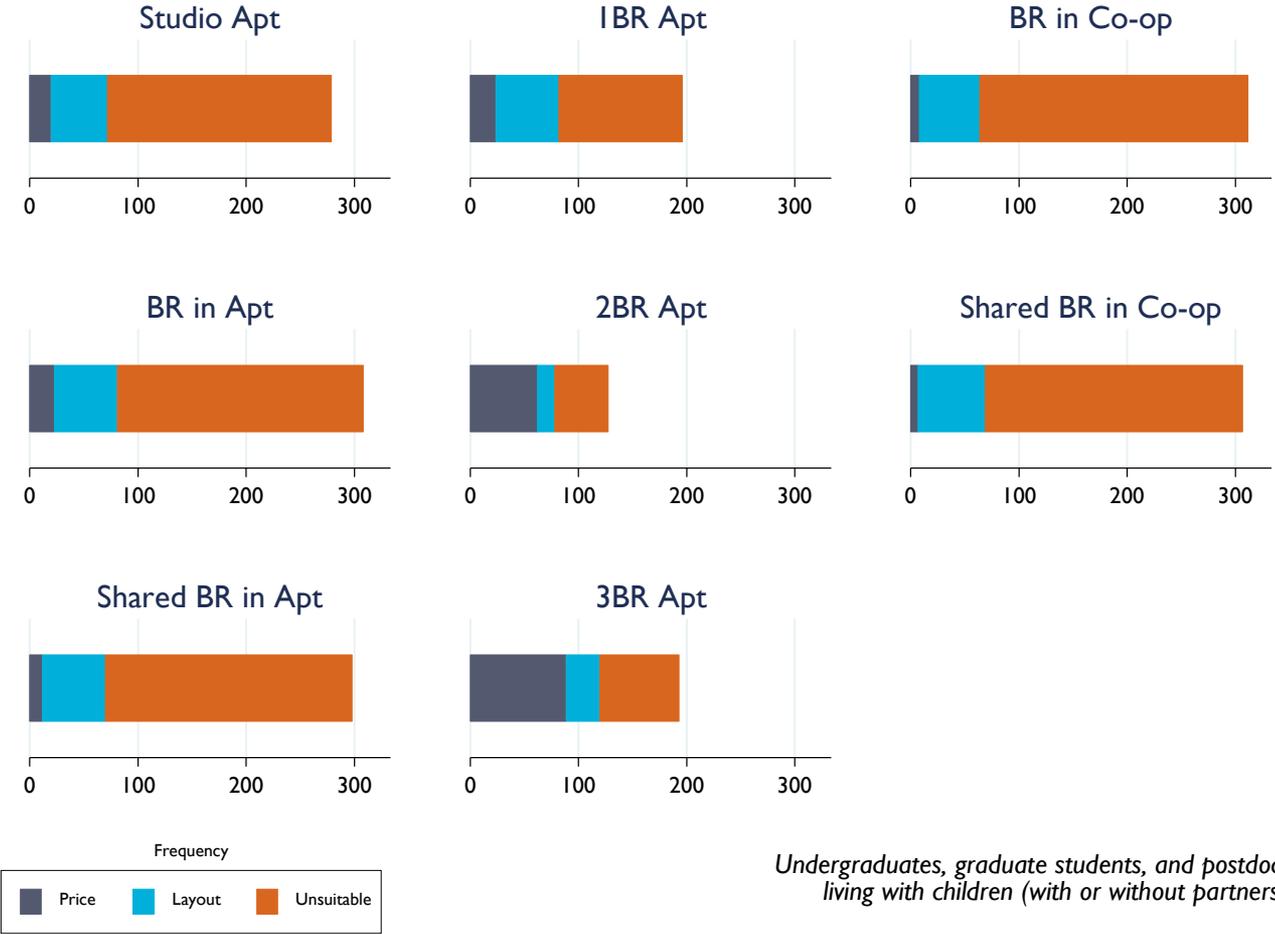
Preferred housing type for respondents with children



“I live in a studio which works well for me, although it is very difficult when my partner visits, because she has children. **It is difficult to afford something suitable for families reasonably close to campus.**” – Graduate Student

Percent of #1 rankings out of total valid responses for each housing type, range of valid responses (n = 322-347)
Includes undergraduates, graduate students and postdocs who live with children

Respondents living with children: reasons for not considering housing types



Undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs living with children (with or without partners)

“Unsuitable” indicates it would not be an option for the respondent’s housing situation for any reason other than price or layout

Learn more
housing.berkeley.edu/housing-task-force