

# Examining the Interplay of Housing and Childbearing Trajectories of Young Adults in Sweden

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## Introduction and Background

Housing has been a key factor for young adults' independence and for family formation for centuries in neo-local societies, and has been connected by authors and researchers to fertility patterns for decades. The modern housing market allows for individuals to adjust their housing situation in accordance with their family plans, but housing can still act as a constraint on new family formation (Mulder 2006). This study brings together research by human geographers and demographers by mapping the joint housing and childbearing trajectories of young adults. Four Swedish cohorts are observed over a twenty year period until the ages of 35–38, as they make multiple housing and family transitions after they leave their parental home. The study provides key insights to how young individuals time their family and housing transitions, and builds on previous research showing continuity between housing of origin and housing of destination.

The concept of a “housing career” is something which has been popular in housing studies, similar to the life course approach which has emerged as a dominant perspective in demography. Combining the housing and childbearing careers allows for a longitudinal look at the way individuals combine their housing moves with their family behavior. A longitudinal view on the housing “career” can also be more informative than a cross-sectional look at the timing of individual moves. Little is known about the process of how young adults move from the parental home to the housing situation at the end of their childbearing. This paper thus offers a major contribution to the understanding of the way these two processes interact, using a new, rich extract (25%) of the Swedish population registers. I study the type of housing that young people live in (owned single-family home, rented apartment or owned apartment) when they transition to first, second, and third parity, and take into account the type of housing they lived in at age 15–17 and the duration of their housing episodes. I find that most couples move after the conception but before the birth, although the transition to owned, single-family homes typically happens after the birth of the second child. Furthermore, the descriptive analysis of the housing of origin and the housing trajectories reveals continuity in housing type from childhood through the stages of family formation.

## Data and Method

The register data used in this study are made available by Statistics Sweden (SCB) and are drawn from a 25% sample of the total Swedish population born 1950–1985. The data cover a twenty year time period spanning from 1986 to 2006. This register data extract includes information on internal migration events as well as sociodemographic variables. The register includes each migration event, including information on the exact day of the move, the housing type and the housing tenure

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of the new and old residence. This information made it possible to isolate each housing spell and to accurately calculate the duration of each spell, as well as the duration of each housing-type spell. The type of housing differentiated between a house, a house on land, or a multi-dwelling building. The ownership variable indicated whether the housing was rented or owned. The data on housing were collapsed into three housing types: single-family home, owned apartment, or rented apartment. Data on international migration was used to censor individuals upon their first move abroad. Data on individual childbearing histories were joined with the housing data.

The first part of the analysis is descriptive. The aim of this analysis is to break the cohort into segments according to their housing type and their parity. The first, second, and third parity transitions are shown. Cohorts are followed from their first observed move after the age eighteen over the twenty year period. In the second step of the analysis I use multivariate event history analysis and fit piece-wise exponential hazard models for the hazard of first, second and third birth in relation to the housing type and the duration since the last move. Period variables, age categories and years since previous birth are used as covariates.

Table 1: Characteristics of the study population.

	N	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	144324	
Male	73513	51%
Female	70811	49%
<b>Children</b>		
Childless by 2006	51471	36%
One Child	23446	16%
Two Children	48168	33%
At least three children	21239	15%
<b>Housing of Origin</b>		
Public Apartment	12356	13%
Private Apartment	12777	13%
Single-family House	71775	74%
<b>Number of Moves Observed</b>		
1-3 moves	27730	19.21
4-10 moves	100027	57.5
11-55 moves	16567	11.48

## Brief Results and Discussion

Figures 1 and 2 show descriptive information for housing and parity status for women born in 1971. These women were 15-17 at the beginning of the study in

1986, and are followed until ages 35–38 in 2006. The figures show the percentage of women in the cohort by age, housing type and parity. Results for men look similar (transitions from the parental home and into childbearing are later by 2–3 years) and are not shown here. The first figure shows all women in the cohort, while the following figures show the progression through housing and parity situations just for women starting out in rented apartments (the other two figures are omitted for brevity). These figures show the role of the second birth as the time of transition to home-ownership. Figure 2 also shows clearly the continuity in housing type. Previous housing research has emphasized the importance of parents for young people, and the effects of inter-generational transmission of home ownership. These results confirm those findings, as it is clear that rental apartments are more common throughout the life course for those who start in this type of housing.

The descriptive results show that for the birth cohort of 1971, women who reached higher parities by 2006 were likely to be living in a house rather than in an owned or rented apartment. Table 2 presents the event history analysis of transitions to first, second and third birth for women over the whole study period. The results of the event history analysis are similar to the descriptive results presented. Living in a rented or an owned apartment corresponds to a lower risk for transitions to any birth. The results are particularly strong in the case of second births, where the odds ratio for women living in apartments is almost half that of women living in houses, while the difference is less dramatic for the first and third birth. The results also show the importance of timing since the last move. For first births, risk declines continuously after the first year of the move. For second births, the risk of childbirth declines somewhat after the first two years after a move, but the smaller risk is not statistically significant. Finally, for third births the odds are higher for the first five years after moving in, and then decline, though the decline is not unequivocal.

This study studies how young adults progress through their housing careers, and how their childbearing histories are interwoven with this process. In this study I will also consider the significance of housing moves versus tenure changes. Further research from this project can contribute further to our understanding by including employment histories, and explore the differences in these trajectories within different types of housing markets.

Figure 1: Housing and parity for all Swedish women born 1968–1971.

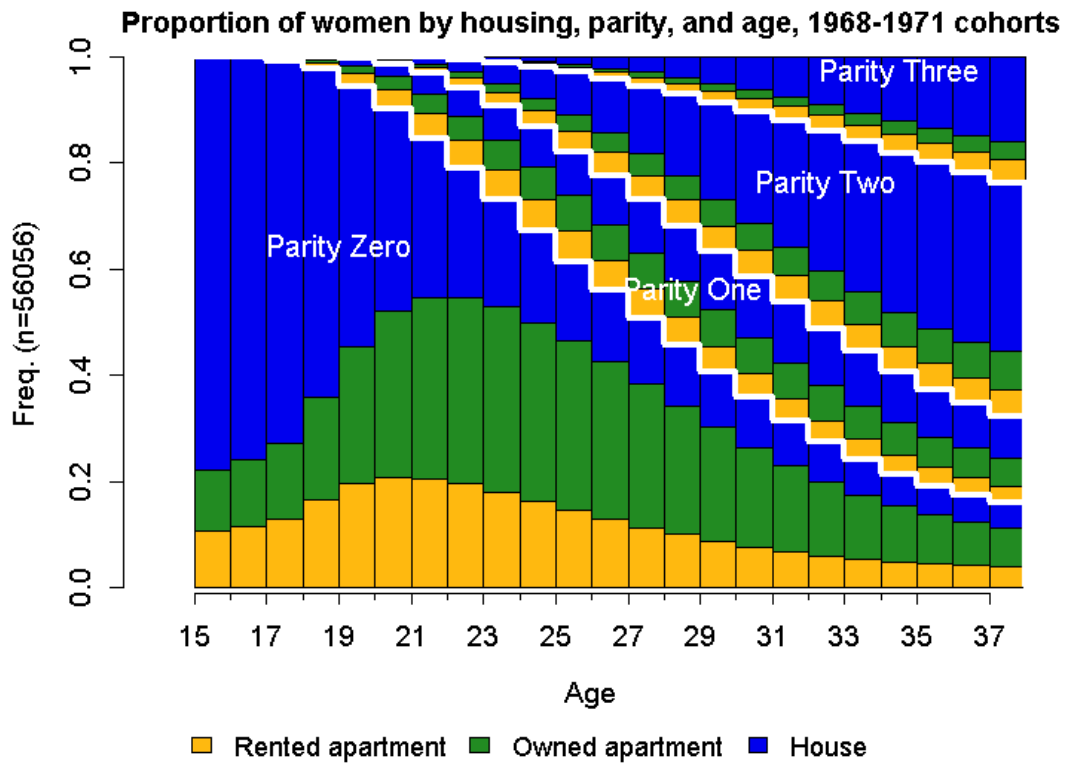
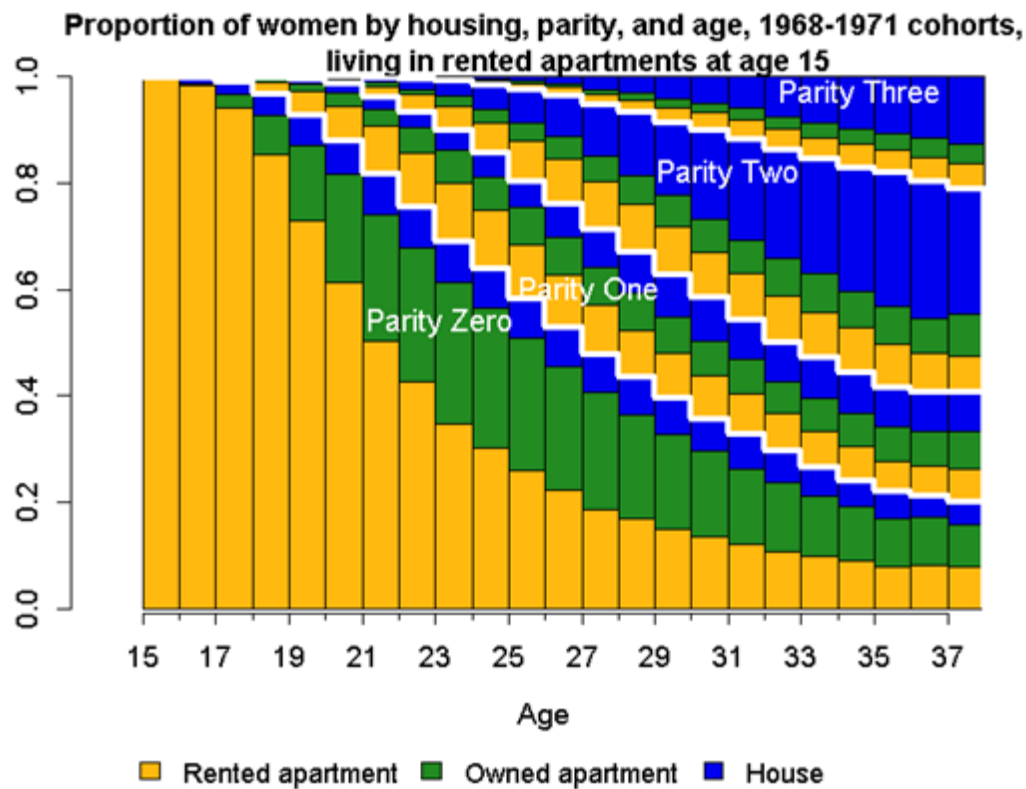


Figure 2: Housing and parity for women living in rental apartments at ages 15–17, 1968–1971 birth cohorts.



	Birth 1 for women		Birth 2 for women		Birth 3 for women	
	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE
<i>Housing Type</i>						
House	1 (ref.)		1 (ref.)		1 (ref.)	
Rental						
Apartment	0.67	0.00	0.50	0.01	0.83	0.01
Owned						
Apartment	0.54	0.00	0.53	0.01	0.71	0.01
<i>Time since last move</i>						
0-1 years	1 (ref.)		1 (ref.)		1 (ref.)	
1-2 years	0.801	0.010	1.109	0.012	1.136	0.024
2-3 years	0.651	0.009	0.97 <sup>†</sup>	0.013	1.118	0.028
3-4 years	0.393	0.006	0.939	0.017	1.207	0.034
4-5 years	0.426	0.006	0.944 <sup>†</sup>	0.022	1.159	0.037
5-9 years	0.363	0.004	0.745	0.017	1.089	0.032
10-14 years	0.432	0.006	0.819	0.056	1.057 <sup>◇</sup>	0.087
15+ years	0.597	0.009	0.908 <sup>◇</sup>	0.190	0.700 <sup>◇</sup>	0.281
<i>Age category</i>						
15-17	0.009	0.000	0.471	0.122	0.00 <sup>◇</sup>	0.004
18-20	0.167	0.002	0.726	0.025	1.982	0.283
21-23	0.465	0.004	0.870	0.014	1.784	0.075
24-26	0.761	0.007	0.969	0.012	1.448	0.036
27-29	1.030	0.009	1.023 <sup>†</sup>	0.012	1.235	0.025
30-32	1 (ref.)		1 (ref.)		1 (ref.)	
33-35	0.780	0.008	0.831	0.012	0.753	0.015
36-38	0.461	0.007	0.564	0.011	0.446	0.011
39-40	0.273	0.009	0.348	0.015	0.302	0.014
<i>Period</i>						
1986-1988	1 (ref.)		1 (ref.)		1 (ref.)	
1989-1991	1.605	0.016	1.094 <sup>†</sup>	0.051	1.093 <sup>◇</sup>	0.090
1992-1994	1.628	0.018	1.014 <sup>◇</sup>	0.047	0.943 <sup>◇</sup>	0.077
1995-1997	1.274	0.015	0.876	0.040	0.697	0.057
1998-2000	1.108	0.013	0.848	0.039	0.650	0.053
2001-2003	1.137	0.013	0.913 <sup>†</sup>	0.042	0.730	0.060
2004-2006	1.156	0.014	0.978 <sup>◇</sup>	0.045	0.792	0.065
<i>Years since previous birth</i>						
0-1 years			0.030	0.002	0.064	0.007
1-2 years			0.582	0.007	0.862	0.022
2-3 years			1 (ref.)		1 (ref.)	
3-4 years			0.878	0.011	0.864	0.021
4-5 years			0.688	0.011	0.889	0.024
5-9 years			0.431	0.008	0.751	0.020
10-14 years			0.220	0.010	0.511	0.025
15-19 years			0.152	0.018	0.474	0.064

All coefficients are significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level, with the exception of those marked † for  $p < 0.05$  but  $> 0.01$ , and those marked ◇ for  $p > .05$ ,

Table 2: Results from Event History Analysis

