

Residential Trajectories of Migrant Nest-Leavers: Distance from Parents and Ethnic Residential Segregation

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1. Background

For young adults, leaving the parental home constitutes the start of their independent residential trajectory. The small body of research on nest-leaving among descendants of first generation migrants has mainly focused on differences in the timing of leaving the parental home and subsequent living arrangements, distinguishing spells of living single, a co-residential union or shared housing (Haan, Cheng, & Yu, 2023; McAvay & Pailhé, 2021; Zorlu & Mulder, 2011). Less attention has been paid to the differential residential trajectories of nest-leavers in terms of (de)segregation and distance to parents. Addressing these dimensions, however, is crucial, as many descendants of first generation migrants begin their housing careers in segregated and disadvantaged neighborhoods that may constrain their residential opportunities (McAvay, 2018; McAvay & Safi, 2018). Consequently, leaving the parental home serves as a critical stage in which their residential trajectories can either reinforce or disrupt patterns of ethnic residential segregation (Zorlu & Mulder, 2010). Previous research indicates that nest-leavers rarely move over long distances (Leopold, Geissler, & Pink, 2012), which can have implications for the residential choices of young adult nest-leavers. For descendants of first generation migrants, this proximity to parents may imply remaining within segregated neighborhoods. Understanding how proximity to parents is associated with the early residential trajectories of nest-leavers and the implications with respect to (de)segregation may therefore provide information in the perpetuating character of spatial inequalities in the urban landscape, at least in young adulthood.

By focusing on the residential mobility of native, G1,5 and G2 migrant nest-leavers living in segregated neighborhoods, we examine their move out of the parental home towards different destination neighborhoods with regard to parental proximity and ethnic residential segregation. This allows us to determine which profiles are most likely to remain in close proximity to their parents when leaving the parental home and how these patterns relate to the perpetuation of ethnic residential segregation of young adults at the start of their independent residential trajectory. Using Belgian census and register data for the period 2000-2015, this paper addresses three research questions. First, to what extent do nest-leavers move to different destination neighborhoods with respect to parental proximity and ethnic residential segregation? Second, to which extent do the residential trajectories of nest-leavers vary across natives and G1,5 and G2 North-West European, Eastern European, Southern European, Maghrebi, Turkish, and other non-European migrants? Third, which individual, parental and neighborhood characteristics explain the differential spatial mobility between natives and the descendants of first generation migrants? From an European perspective, Belgium has one of the highest levels of ethnic residential segregation (Andersson et al., 2018; Musterd & Van Kempen, 2009), making it a particularly relevant context to examine the residential trajectories of migrant nest-leavers.

2. Data & Methods

Longitudinal microdata

The analyses on leaving the parental home among natives, G1,5 and G2 migrant populations use longitudinal microdata from the 2011 Belgian Census which are linked to the population and tax return registers both retrospectively for the period 2000-2010 and prospectively for the period 2011-2015. These data contain demographic, geographic and socio-economic information on all individuals legally residing in Belgium, as well as information on descent which allows to reconstruct kin networks. The observation period ranges from the 1st of January, 2011 until the 31st of December, 2014, based on two considerations. Firstly, housing characteristics can be an important determinant in leaving the parental home. However, this information is only available in the 2011

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Census. Secondly, to minimize heterogeneity, the analyses are restricted to individuals who consistently resided in the parental home from the 1st of January, 2000 until the 31st of December, 2010. This ensures that the analyses pertain to first time nest-leavers. Therefore, individuals are included in the risk set from the year they turn 18 until they turn 35. Individuals aged over 35 are truncated. Without this upper age boundary, it is possible that older individuals who leave the parental home have already done so before. Since the large majority of migrant populations reside in urban areas, the analyses were additionally confined to individuals living in a concentration neighborhood in the agglomerations of Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, Charleroi and Liege on the 1st of January, 2011 as Luyten and Van Hecke (2007) demarcated them using the 2001 socio-economic survey.

To examine the profiles linked to different residential trajectories of nest-leavers, we constructed a typology of destination neighborhoods defined by non-European concentration neighborhoods and parental proximity. A neighborhood is considered a *concentration neighborhood* when the proportion of non-European migrants in a neighborhood exceeds 32%, which is 10 percentage points more than the average proportion of non-European inhabitants across neighborhoods on the 1st of January, 2011 in the aforementioned urban areas². This conceptualization of concentration neighborhoods is used to identify individuals still residing in the parental home on the 1st of January, 2011, and also to assess whether nest-leavers move to a concentration (proportion larger than 32%) or non-concentration neighborhood (proportion smaller than 32%). The indicator for *parental proximity* considers Euclidian distances to the parents in the destination neighborhood. The Euclidian distance is straightforward when both parents are still co-resident in the same dwelling. When parents do not longer reside in the same dwelling – either because they have separated/divorced or the death of one parent – the Euclidian distance is used of the parent who resides in the parental home with the individuals considered. Using the aforementioned criteria, the median distance to parents for nest-leavers is equal to around 2 km. Therefore, nest-leavers settle near parents when they move within 2 kilometers, and do not settle near parents when their move exceeds 2 kilometers³. This resulted in 4 categories for the type of destination neighborhood nest-leavers move to: 1) a concentration neighborhood near to their parent(s), 2) a concentration neighborhood further away from their parent(s), 3) a non-concentration neighborhood near to their parent(s), and 4) a non-concentration neighborhood further away from their parent(s).

Because we want to examine to what extent nest-leavers move to these various destination neighborhoods (RQ1) and how these patterns vary across migrant groups (RQ2), we control for various characteristics of nest-leavers to assess which profiles are most likely to make a certain transition (RQ3). The origin neighborhood characteristics include 1) the share of non-European migrants, 2) the share of individuals with a high income, 3) the share of highly educated individuals, and 4) the share of renters. Additionally, an indicator is included indicating in which urban area individuals reside, distinguishing between Antwerp, Ghent, Brussels, Charleroi, and Liege. With respect to demographic characteristics, individuals are included in the risk set from the year they turn 18 until they turn 35. As the second question explores whether and how residential trajectories differ by migration background, this variable is included in the analyses. To account for potential differences across generations, we use a typology combining origin groups and generational status, resulting in 13 categories: 1) natives, 2) G1,5 North-West European, 3) G2 North-West European, 4) G1,5 Eastern European, 5) G2 Eastern European, 6) G1,5 Southern European, 7) G2 Southern European, 8) G1,5 Maghreb, 9) G2 Maghreb, 10) G1,5 Turkish, 11) G2 Turkish (G2 TU), 12) G1,5 other non-European and 13) G2 other non-European. Sex includes both men and women. The socio-economic position of individuals is measured by their income and educational level. Income is included in deciles as a continuous variable. The indicator for highest achieved educational level distinguishes between low (ISCED 0-2), medium (ISCED 3-4) and high (ISCED 5-6) individuals. Because parental recourses might also be associated with whether individuals leave the parental home, parents' socio-economic situation and housing characteristics are included. The income and highest achieved educational level for both parents is

² In further analyses, multiple thresholds will be tested as sensitivity checks. Furthermore, different conceptualizations of what constitutes a concentration neighborhood will be assessed.

³ In analogy with the indicator for concentration neighborhoods, different thresholds will be tested.

operationalized the same as for the individual socio-economic position. The analyses additionally control for housing characteristics: tenure status (owner or renter), and number of rooms per inhabitant (less than 1 room, 1 to 1,5 rooms, 1,5+ rooms).

Hazard models

Considering the age-heterogenous composition of the risk set in 2011, a late entry design was adopted to ensure that the exposure-to-risk and leaving the parental home were appropriately incorporated into the estimation of the age-specific hazard functions. Simultaneous cause-specific hazard models were estimated in discrete-time using a cloglog link function to examine the residential trajectories toward different destination neighborhoods in terms of ethnic residential segregation and parental proximity. The different sets of variables are incrementally introduced into the model. Model 1a controls for age (baseline), migration background, and the urban area individuals live in. Since residential trajectories are likely to differ between urban areas, the urban area indicator is already included in the first model. Model 1b additionally includes an interaction between migration background and the type of transition to assess whether different origin groups are more/less likely to make a certain type of transition. Model 2 additionally controls for the characteristics of the origin neighborhood. Model 3 additionally introduces the socio-economic position of nest-leavers. Finally, Model 4 additionally includes parental characteristics to examine whether it is the socio-economic position of the individual or the parents that is associated with the type of neighborhood nest-leavers move to. The full model is expressed as follows:

$$-\ln[1 - q(t, t + \Delta t)_{ij}] = \int_t^{t+\Delta t} h_{ij}(u) du = e^{\alpha} \cdot e^{\sum \beta \cdot TM_{ij} \cdot A_{ij}} \cdot e^{\sum \beta \cdot TM_{ij} \cdot MB_i} \cdot e^{\sum \beta \cdot TM_{ij} \cdot UA_{ij}} \cdot e^{\sum \beta \cdot TM_{ij} \cdot NC_{ij}} \cdot e^{\sum \beta \cdot TM_{ij} \cdot SESI_{ij}} \cdot e^{\sum \beta \cdot TM_{ij} \cdot SESE_{ij}} \cdot e^{\sum \beta \cdot TM_{ij} \cdot HC_i}$$

where $-\ln[1 - q(t, t + \Delta t)_{ij}]$ represents the cumulative hazard of home leaving in a one-year interval, A reflects the age of the individual, TM reflects the type of move the individual makes when leaving the parental home, UA reflects the urban area where the individual initially lives, MB reflect the typology of migrant background that considers origin group and migrant generation, NC represents the vector of neighborhood characteristics, SESI reflects the socio-economic status of the individual, SESE reflects the socio-economic status of the parents and HC reflects the vector of housing characteristics of the parents. All models were estimated separately for men and women, as research consistently shows timing differences in leaving the parental home by gender.

3. Preliminary results

The hazard ratios by type of move for the different models are shown in Graph 1 in Appendix. To assess whether the type of transition differs significantly between origin groups, a model including an interaction between the type of transition and origin group (Model 1b) is compared to the baseline model excluding this interaction (Model 1a) (results not shown). For both men (Δ -2LL: 1039.43; Δ df: 36; p-value: 0.0000) and women (Δ -2LL: 606.75; Δ df: 36; p-value: 0.0000), the type of transition seems to vary significantly by migration background. In model 2, neighborhood characteristics are included. Adding these indicators significantly improved model fit for both men (Δ -2LL: 384.20; Δ df: 16; p-value: 0.0000) and women (Δ -2LL: 371.99; Δ df: 16; p-value: 0.0000), but variation in neighborhood characteristics cannot account for the differentiation by origin group and migrant generation in the type of transition young adults make when leaving the parental home. Model 3 additionally controls for the socio-economic individual of nest-leavers. The differentials in the type of transition by migration background further decreased significantly for both men (Δ -2LL: 2125.30; Δ df: 16; p-value: 0.0000) and women (Δ -2LL: 1923.35; Δ df: 16; p-value: 0.0000). Income seems to be more strongly associated with the type of transition than is the case for the highest achieved educational level. Finally, including parental and housing characteristics further improved model fit significantly for both men (Δ -2LL: 745.10; Δ df: 62; p-value: 0.0000) and women (Δ -2LL: 475.07; Δ df: 62; p-value: 0.0000). The results of the different hazard models controlling for both SES of young adults and their parents indicate that significant differences between migrant groups persist in the type of transition that is made when leaving the parental home. In contrast to spatial assimilation theory, which suggests that the socio-economic mobility of migrant will gradually lead to spatial mobility into the mainstream

society (Massey & Denton, 1985), the socio-economic position of the nest-leavers and of their parents can only partially explain the observed differences. The preference of young adults to live among co-ethnics (de Valk & Willaert, 2012; Meeus & De Decker, 2015), and/or the structural constraints they face on the housing market (Verhaeghe et al., 2015), may be associated with their constrained residential mobility. The most stark differences for both men and women persist for Turkish and Moroccan descendants, which seems to suggest that they are most spatially constrained. When these groups leave the parental home, they are more likely to move to a concentrated neighborhood close to their parents. Few nest-leavers in these origin groups move to non-concentrated neighborhoods, especially when their parents do not live close to them. This seems to indicate a strong local anchoring effect. Evidently, parents are but one of the local ties that can anchor nest-leavers to certain neighborhoods. It may be that individuals remain close to their parents because they wish to live in a similar type of neighborhood they grew up in or maintain proximity to familiar local and ethnic communities (Gillespie & Mulder, 2020; Meeus & De Decker, 2015). Additionally, their spatial mobility may be constrained to specific parts of the city, often the same areas where their parents reside.

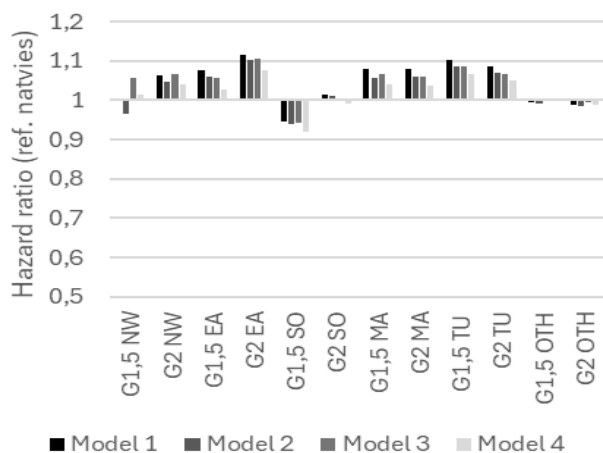
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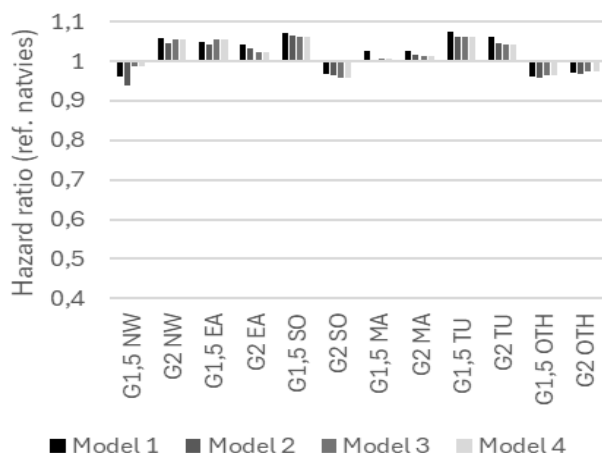
Appendix

Graph 1: Hazard ratios for first-time nest-leavers by type of move, migration background, and sex.

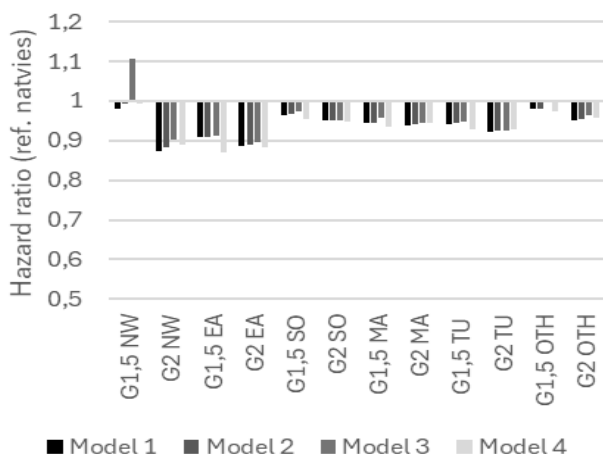
Graph 1A: Moving to a concentration neighborhood close to parents relative to no move, men



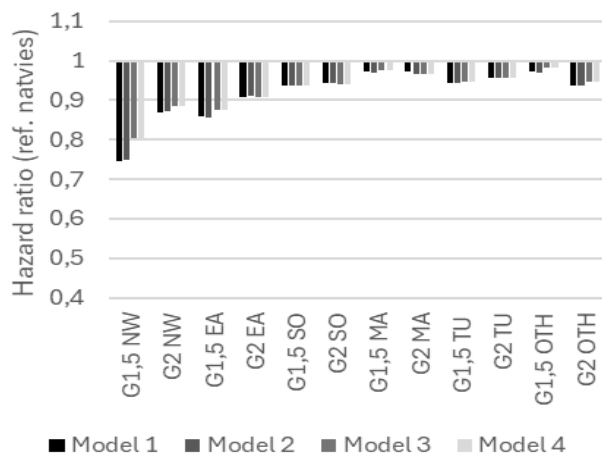
Graph 1B: Moving to a concentration neighborhood close to parents relative to no move, women



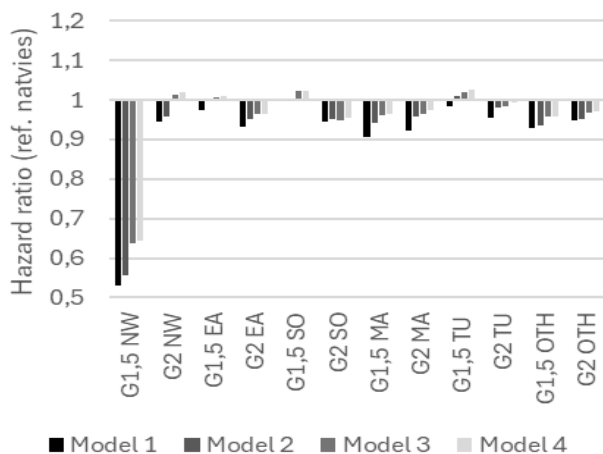
Graph 1C: Moving to a concentration neighborhood further from parents relative to no move, men



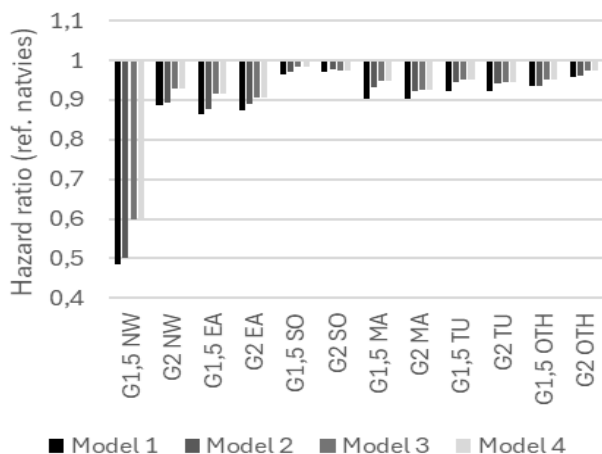
Graph 1D: Moving to a concentration neighborhood further from parents relative to no move, women



Graph 1E: Moving to a non-concentration neighborhood close to parents relative to no move, men



Graph 1F: Moving to a non-concentration neighborhood close to parents relative to no move, women

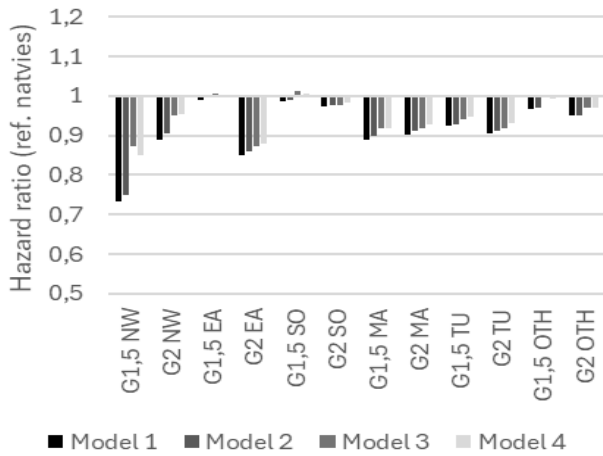


Note: NW: North-West European, EA: Eastern European, SO: Southern European, Ma: Maghreb, TU: Turkish, OTH: other non-European.

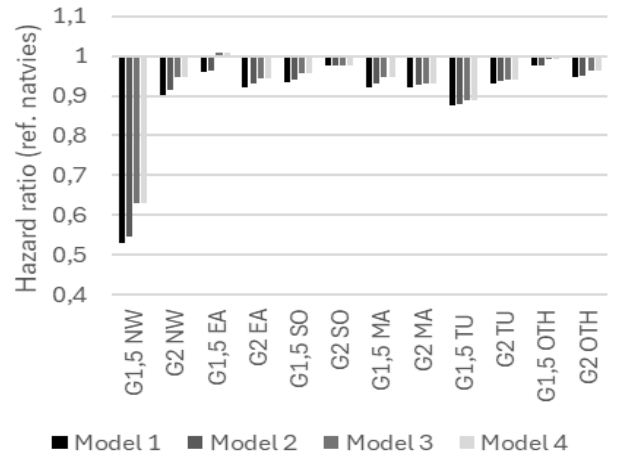
Source: Census and Belgian Register Data, 2011-2015, Authors' own calculation.

Table 1: Hazard ratios for first-time nest-leavers by type of move, migration background, and sex.

Graph 1G: Moving to a non-concentration neighborhood further from parents relative to no move, men



Graph 1H: Moving to a non-concentration neighborhood further from parents relative to no move, women



Note: NW: North-West European, EA: Eastern European, SO: Southern European, Ma: Maghreb, TU: Turkish, OTH: other non-European.

Source: Census and Belgian Register Data, 2011-2015, Authors' own calculation.