

Internal mobility over the life course.
Life history data from European countries in a transversal and cohort perspective
Extended Abstract

Corrado Bonifazi and Frank Heins

Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies – National Research Council

Territorial mobility is an event of the life course that is closely interlinked with the other ones at the level of individuals and families. Only few analysis take into consideration territorial mobility over the life course because the lack of data and the general focus on presenting current internal migration patterns instead of historical ones. The reconstruction of the complete housing history of an individual is in itself a complex undertaking and only few data sources allow for an international comparison of territorial mobility. The information provided through the life history interviews of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) and the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) allows filling these two gaps. The surveys offer the opportunity to clarify various aspects - demographic, social and economic - of territorial mobility. These surveys offer the opportunity to clarify various characteristics - demographic, social and economic ones - of territorial mobility in detail and independently of administrative criteria, because the surveys refer to changes in accommodation and take into consideration any transfer of residence. However, it is important to underline that this in-depth analysis opens a historical dimension since data retrospective data.

The contribution examines the potential of these data and the methods to analyse the available information from a period and a cohort perspective at the macro level, and applying life course research techniques at the individual level. The factors associated with geographic mobility are the socio-demographic situation of the individuals and the families, including the role of homeownership, and the major events over the life course like the formation and dissolution of the couple, the birth of a child, and education and employment events. Cohabitation or marriage is the event associated most closely with a change of residence, followed by the birth of a child.

The data

The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (Share) intends to analyse the demographic aging process and its economic, social and health aspects in European countries. The data collected are identical for all countries and allow their joint analysis. The third wave of the Share survey (ShareLife) conducted in 2008/09 provides life histories with a complete housing or accommodation history for the participants from Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Wave 7 conducted in 2017 includes life history data for the following countries not covered earlier: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. The life history data include information regarding childhood, health, economic and working situation and family events, such as the formation of a couple and the birth of children. As far as housing or accommodation is concerned the history starts with the accommodation where the participant lived when born and continues with the information regarding all the subsequent homes where the person lived. A home or accommodation is only considered when the individual has lived there for at least 6 months. The time scale refers only to years. Information is available regarding

the type of house and its location, such as the country (in the present borders), the region, the type of settlement and other characteristics.

For England comparable data are available through the life history interviews of wave 3 of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (Elsa). And for the purpose of comparison information from the USA from the life history interviews of the Health and Retirement Study (Hrs) in 2015 (Life History Mail Survey) and in 2017 (Spring Life History Mail Survey) is included.

Research strategy

The contribution examines the potential of these data and the methods to analyse the available information from a period and a cohort perspective at the macro level, and applying life course research techniques at the individual level. The descriptive results using demographic techniques in a period and cohort perspective are supplemented by event history analysis at the individual level. These more complex models serve to disentangle the importance of the characteristics with a strong impact on territorial mobility at the level of the individual, the family, the home or accommodation, the geographical context and the specific years or periods. The analysis of the factors of territorial mobility includes the socio-demographic and biographical information of individuals and of families, including the role of homeownership. Of particular interest are the relationships between territorial mobility and other life course events, such as cohabitation or marriage, the birth of a child or events related to education and employment.

Obviously the data do not allow the direct identification of the reasons or causes of a change of residence. Also the changes in housing caused by the termination of a rental agreement cannot be identified, not to mention the forced housing changes and forced expulsions during and after WWII or during other conflicts. The available data allow analyzing the details of housing and accommodation changes over the life course and highlighting the difference between non-movers and movers. In this way a more accurate picture of territorial mobility in an international perspective is obtained

A first descriptive analysis

In a first step gender, age and years are taken into consideration for a straightforward comparison of territorial mobility trends in the European countries from a period and cohort perspective underlining similarities and differences between the countries. The Scandinavian countries Denmark and Sweden have higher levels of territorial mobility, followed by the Netherlands, France and Switzerland. Belgium, Germany and Italy have lower levels, while the lowest territorial mobility is observed in Greece. For certain countries a relative high level of territorial mobility can be observed at the end of WWII (displaced persons and refugees).

As expected, the available data confirm the well-known age patterns of territorial mobility with its concentration between the ages of 18 and 35 years and its close link to the life course of individuals and families. A general absence of a higher territorial mobility when leaving the labour market can be noted. A result that might be determined by the choice of the municipalities included in the surveys, given that retirement migrants should be found in specific areas attractive to this specific group. Differences in the territorial mobility at older might be linked to the predominant welfare regime.

Towards models of territorial mobility

Territorial mobility depends on factors linked to the characteristics of individuals, families, homes and the geographical context. At the individual level there are both structural characteristics and key life course

events, such as the formation or dissolution of the couple, the birth of a child and events related to education and the professional life.

The formation of a couple and the birth of a child significantly increase territorial mobility. Other events are by definition linked to the change of accommodation, as, for example, the beginning of cohabitation or marrying coincides in most cases with the change of the accommodation of at least one partner. Even the birth of a child is in many cases linked to territorial mobility, especially if the parents are younger. Obviously the relationship with the birth of a child is not so close and immediate, because the family has more time to adapt the living space to the needs of the family. Obviously, separation and divorce are also events linked to territorial mobility. However, even if there are indications for simultaneity of events, they are not so frequently observed in the surveys as to allow for the indication of a closer tie.

Results indicate the importance of the end of the period of professional training or education for territorial mobility. The beginning, as well as the conclusion, of a professional training and a higher education leads in many cases to a change of residence. In addition, the duration of the training and education is an indicator for the human capital acquired and/or for the wealth and well-being of the individual and the family. A link that seems to be important before the completion of the training and education, because territorial mobility is in these cases higher even in the younger ages, and it seems to remain higher also afterwards. Especially university education seems to be linked to higher territorial mobility.

The economic situation and work status are other important aspects. For example, the most qualified professional categories seem to be territorially more mobile and the less qualified professional categories, such as 'Artisans, skilled workers and farmers' and 'Unqualified professions' appear to be territorially less mobile with a lower number of housing or accommodation changes over the life course. 'Starting a new job' is another life course event linked to territorial mobility. Between the ages of 20 and 29, about a third of people who start a new job in the year also change their homes. The territorial mobility of women is slightly higher in this context compared to that of men. There are probably national and regional differences with more or less large and more or less flexible labour markets that determine the frequency of job changes.

In the ShareLife survey of 2008/09 72% of individuals are owners of their home at the time of the survey. It seems that home owners have changed their home less frequently compared to renters. Discussing the links between life course events and territorial mobility, it is important to keep in mind that the homeownership status is a proxy for economic wealth and that tenants can always be evicted and forced to change residence. Thus not all dwelling changes can be considered as an expression of a free choice.

Also the territorial context and the category of residence - from city to rural area or village - are factors that influence territorial mobility. In Europe individuals residing in 2008/09 in large cities and in rural areas were less territorially mobile during their lifetime. Suburban areas and other types of cities gather individuals with the highest number of changes of residence over their lifetime.

Some References

- Baccaini B., Courgeau D., 1996, The spatial mobility of two generations of young adults in Norway, *International Journal of Population Geography*, 2, 333-359.
- Bell M., 1996, How often do Australians move? Alternative measures of population mobility, *Journal of the Australian Population Association*, 13, 101-124.
- Bell M., Blake M., Boyle P., Duke-Williams O., Rees P., Stillwell J., Hugo G., 2002, Cross-national comparison of internal migration: issues and measures, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)*, 165, 435-464.
- Bernard A., 2017, Cohort Measures of Internal Migration: Understanding Long-Term Trends, *Demography*, 54, 6, 2201-2221.

Bernard A., 2017, Levels and patterns of internal migration in Europe: A cohort perspective, *Population Studies*, 71, 3, 293-311.

Falkingham J., Sage J., Stone J., Vlachantoni A., 2016, Residential mobility across the life course: continuity and change across three cohorts in Britain, *Advances in Life Course Research*, 30, 111-123.

Kolk M., 2016, Period and cohort measures of migration, *Stockholm Research Reports in Demography*. Stockholm, Stockholm University, Department of Sociology, Demography Unit, 1-15.

Kolk M., 2019, Period and Cohort Measures of Internal Migration, *Population*, 74, 3, 333-349.

Information regarding the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) www.share-project.org. The life history interviews were conducted in waves 3 and 7.

Information regarding the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA): <https://www.elsa-project.ac.uk/>. The life history interviews were conducted in wave 3.

Information regarding the Health and Retirement Study (HRS): <https://hrs.isr.umich.edu/>. The life history interviews were conducted in 2017.