

Leaving Parental Home in Poland

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1. Introduction¹

In this study, I analyse the process of leaving parental home in Poland. This process is an important part of the transition to adulthood (see Corijn and Klijzing 2001). I also focus on the relationship between leaving parental home and other connected events in the transition to adulthood (education attainment, first employment, and marriage). This subject is very interesting for study, because there is a lack of research on this field in Poland.

2. Theoretical consideration

Various studies have worked on leaving parental home theoretically in a systematic manner. In this part I will present a few empirical approaches, which concern the process of leaving parental home.

For young people usually the event of leaving parental home is connected with other life course events. The focus on such as approach is on the individual experience of events as depicted by individuals grouped in cohorts. A central issue is the timing of leaving home within a cohort. Usually that is studied by means of survival functions and their synthetic measures such as median ages or values at specific point in time (Billari et al, 2001). But not only age determines the leaving parental home, also other life course events or even an expectation of other events might affect the decision to leave home. E. g. the expectation of marriage may lead individuals to perform a shift in another life domain (leaving home) already some time before this event really happens. On the other hand, one cannot only assume an immediate effect of the event itself, but also that the new status, which is achieved after the event, influences subsequent behaviour. In addition, these effects may depend on the duration time elapsed after that event (Huinink and Konietzka 2000).

¹ This paper contains results based on Polish Family and Fertility Survey 1991. Currently I am working with the newest data (from 2001). The paper is planned to at the end of this year.

2.1 What do we know about Poland?

The empirical literature about the transition to adulthood in Poland is relatively scarce. The main reason in the past could be the lack of proper data sets. The papers, which have been published, are based on the Polish Fertility and Family Survey of 1991. For example, Liebroer and Frątczak (1996) have shown that the first period of social and economic transition (1988 – 1991) exerted hardly any impact on process of family formation. Next was the paper by Kowalska and Wróblewska (2001) who have written about the transition to adulthood in Poland. They have focused on cohorts born in 1947-66. They have found strong relationship between marriage and first birth and between the completion of schooling and the start of a first job and marriage (especially among men). According to them results based on data from FFF 1991 do not allow to confirm the hypotheses on the de-coupling of leaving parental home from first marriage in first phase of transition period.

Billari, Philipov and Baizán (2001) have used Polish FFS data to compare cultural and economics differences in the transition to adulthood various countries in of Europe.

2.2 Leaving parental home in Western Europe and the USA

Haurin at al (1993) have used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1987 and they have found a strong correlation between the individual's earnings potential and the propensity to leave the parental home in the US. Whittington and Peters (1996) have found similar results. They have presented in their article that employment is a key point for residential independence and lack of employment creates a higher residential dependence on parents. They have shown that in terms of residential independence, personal financial resources are more important for young men than for young women. Similar behaviour could be connected with education. The young people who enter the education have access to scholarships, grants and governmental loans, which allow them for an economic independence from their parents. On the contrary continued education

can be seen as an at least partial postponement of adulthood which can lead to return to parental home after finishing education career.

Buck and Scott (1993) have used the American Panel Study of Income Dynamics to analyse the patterns of young people leaving the parental home. They have shown that young people are more likely to leave to marriage than in the past, but although the proportion of marriage is declining among younger cohorts, there is no clear tendency for proportion of moving into independent living to increase. They also have found that the size of family is negatively associated with marriage. Finally, according to the authors, there is a gender gap in the age of leaving – women leave home earlier than men. Moreover, the collage education of father delays the overall age of leaving, but only for daughters not sons.

Goldscheider and Goldscheider (1998) have shown that a stable family structure is positively correlated with the age of leaving parental home in the US. E. g. having parents with more resources postpones the leave. On the contrary, disruption of parental marriage during adolescence leads to an earlier leave. Nilsson and Strandh (1999) have used for their studies Swedish database, TOPSWING (Total Population of Sweden, Individual and Geographical) and they have shown that educational and labour market careers are of importance for young people's home-leaving pattern. Their results confirm earlier research showing that people who are employed are more likely to start to live independently than others are. Moreover they have presented that those who are employed have the lower risk of returning and simultaneously those who are in university education have a higher risk. Finally they have found that the educational and labour market career has greater importance for structuring the home-leaving behaviour of women than men. Those results are opposite to Whittington and Peters (1996), but it could be an effect of different culture.

Huinink and Konietzka (2000) have investigated the process of leaving parental home in East and West Germany before the German Unification in 1990. They have found that for West Germany leaving parental home became less linked to marriage presumably due to a closer relatedness to new living arrangements (like cohabitation, single and other alternative living arrangements). They have also shown that starting training is negatively correlated with the age of leaving home.

In an analysis of the Italian case, Aassve et al (2001a) have found important gender differences concerning economic circumstances. For men, work and employment are important factors for leaving parental home. The stability of income seems to be a crucial factor for the household formation among men. For women, employment does not play as an important role, for them the partnership formation is more crucial.

Aassve et al (2001b) have compared several countries in respect of the importance of the welfare state in young people's decision to leave the parental home. They have shown that there are differences between welfare-state regimes. In the conservative Southern Europe welfare regime model (e. g. Italy) employment and earnings are particularly important, in continental Europe countries earnings are not as important as employment. For the social democratic regime model (e. g. Sweden) and especially liberal market regime model (e. g. United Kingdom) employment and one's own income play an insignificant role.

Another cross-country comparison concerning leaving the parental home has been carried out by Billari et al (2001). They have analysed 16 countries in Europe based on data from Fertility and Family Survey. They have shown that young Europeans of the cohorts born around 1960 have experienced leaving home in a heterogeneous way. The highest homogeneity has achieved by those countries which are in very advanced stage of the Second Demographic Transition (e. g. Sweden). In such countries leaving home is a prerequisite for being able to make individualised choices rather than an individual choice itself.

3. Data and methods

I use data from the series of Fertility and Family Survey (FFS) that was carried out in 1991 in Poland. In the future I am going to use FFS 2001 to examine whether there are any differences between period before and after transition in Poland, but that data set is not available yet.

In this mini-project I decided to choose to analyse people born between 1945 and 1974 and I divided them into 3 cohorts: 1945-54, 1955-64, 1965-74.

I use the retrospective event histories given by respondent, in particular questions on the time they left parental home and the dates of finishing different levels of education. In Polish FFS data set there are only a few missing values about the date of leaving parental home, so I decided to remove these cases from sample. If a month is not provided in the answer I assign a June for the end of education.

I use a piecewise constant model and when I study the sequencing of events, I use months as the basic time unit. Models are estimated in RocaNova.

In my analysis I estimate separate models for males and females, because I want to control if there are any differences in their behaviour. That segmentation has been used in previous research (i.e. Billari et al, 2001).

In case of many individuals (about 1500 men and 1800 women) two events – leave parental home and marriage took place in the same month. For those people I assumed that the marriage was a main reason of leaving parental home and to keep this assumption I introduced a half month difference between these two events and I assumed that marriage preceded leaving.

4. Empirical analysis

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of data:

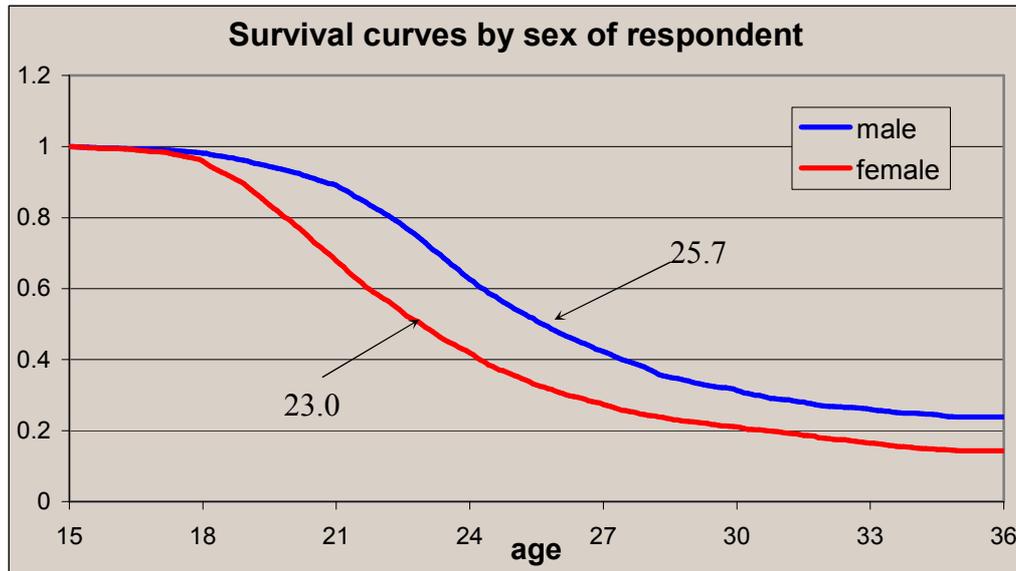
Characteristics of respondents of FFS used in study			
		Females (3797)	Males (3721)
Leave			
	no	29.42%	40.77%
	yes	70.58%	59.23%
Cohort			
	1945-1954	36.11%	34.69%
	1955-1964	35.13%	36.84%
	1965-1974	28.76%	28.46%
Siblings			
	0	6.85%	7.69%
	1	27.63%	27.09%
	2	25.28%	25.32%
	3 and more	40.23%	39.71%
Socio-occupational status of father			
	blue-collar worker and others	55.88%	56.14%
	white-collar worker	14.32%	13.53%
	farmers	29.80%	30.31%
Region of residence up to 15			
	Urban	50.75%	48.83%
	Rural	49.25%	51.17%
Composition of household up to 15			
	With both parents	92.44%	92.66%
	Other	7.56%	7.34%

Source: Author calculation based on FFS 1991 data

4.2 Timing of leaving parental home

To analyse the timing of leaving parental home I use synthetic measures derived from Kaplan-Meier estimates of the survival functions to illustrate the differences between males and females in timing of leaving parental home.

Figure 1. Survival curves by sex of respondent

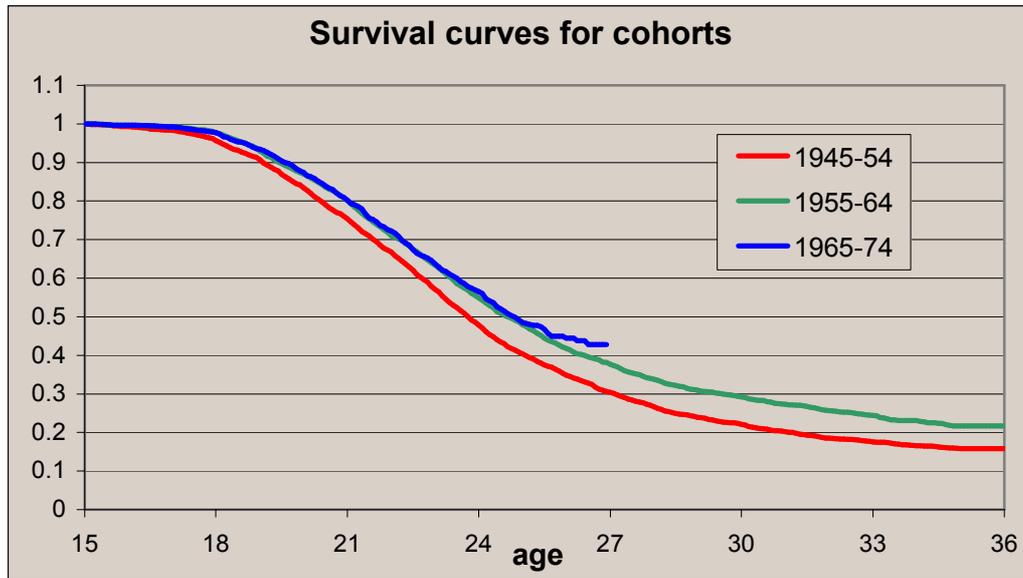


Source: Author calculations based on Polish FFS 1991 data

The graph above shows the survival functions of leaving parental home in Poland for both sexes. The spread between men and women is very substantial. The median age of leaving home is 23.0 years for women and 25.7 years for men. Furthermore, more than 14% of females and almost 24% of males never leave home. Those values are very similar to results from Spain and Italy (see Billari et al, 2001). That fact illustrates that Poland follows a Southern European pattern of late-home leaving.

Additionally Figure 2 presents survival functions for the selected cohorts and shows how the trajectory is changing among them:

Figure 2. Survival curves for cohorts.



Source: Author calculations based on Polish FFS 1991 data

There has been a trend to delay the leaving parental home in Poland and towards a higher fraction who never leave home. The median age of leaving home for the oldest cohort in my data set was 23.8 years and for 1955-64 cohort 24.7 years.

4.3. Model and results.

To estimate the relative risks I have run a piecewise constant intensity regression model. As explanatory variables in model are: cohort, number of siblings, socio-occupational status of father, region of residence up to 15, composition of household up to 15 (all time constant covariates) and education, education enrolment and marriage (time varying covariates).

The final results of the analysis of leaving parental home are presented in Table 2. The other estimated models you can find in the appendix.

Table 2. Relative risks of leaving parental home in Poland 1969-1991, by cohort, number of siblings, socio-occupational status of father, region of residence up to 15, composition of household up to 15 and education.

Factor			Model 7a		Model 7b
	Level	Females (n=3797)		Males (n=3721)	
Cohort		Months of exposures	**	Months of exposures	***
	1945-1954	163594	1	192659	1
	1955-1964	150336	0.92	193167	0.69***
	1965-1974	79660	0.75***	85223	0.71***
Siblings			***		***
	0	28994	0.78*	36844	0.71**
	1	112211	0.83**	125005	0.83*
	2	101284	1	118822	1
	3 and more	150672	1.37***	189025	1.28***
Socio-occupational status of father					
	white-collar worker and others	59907	1.23**	61059	1.11
	blue-collar worker	218161	1	247339	1
	Farmers	112069	1.01	158604	0.86
Region of residence up to 15					**
	Urban	207397	1	217713	1
	Rural	186193	1	253336	0.81
Composition of household up to 15			**		**
	With both parents	365287	1	438095	1
	Other	28303	1.29	32954	1.35
Education			***		***
	No degree	8202	0.32***	10304	0.2***
	Primary degree	191650	0.5***	200818	0.36***
	Vocational degree	78027	0.57***	178112	0.55***
	Secondary degree	107785	1	74395	1
	University degree	7926	1.62***	7420	1.84***
Education enrollment			***		***
	No	239894	1	325233	1
	Yes	153696	0.39	145816	0.41
Marriage (before leaving home)			***		***
	No	322055	1	414158	1
	Yes	71535	6.47	56891	7.19
Age^					
	15-19	212486	3.042	215437	3.862
	20-24	106855	2.365	145965	2.754
	25-29	41255	1.452	63128	1.935
	30-34	32994	0.783	46519	0.82

Note: * p≤0.1; ** p≤0.05; *** p≤0.01; ^ absolute risk per 1000

There are strong effects of cohort on leaving parental home. The youngest cohort has the lowest risk. It means that people born around 1970 leaving their parental home later than their older colleagues. The results seem to show that men had experienced a change in leaving home about 10 years earlier than women (a drop in relative risk among men is between cohorts: 45-54 and 55-64 and among women: 55-64 and 65-74). Generally, these results bring Poland near to the Southern European countries, in which young people are becoming widely known as “late leavers” as well as “postpones” of home leaving (see Billari et al 2000).

The next explanatory variable in the model is the number of siblings. The pattern for men and women are similar. When we control for marriage before leave home the difference between the last and the rest of levels becomes bigger (for modelling without marriage see Tables 4 and 5).

The general pattern shows that the lower number of siblings delays the leaving parental home. The reason for such behaviour could be an access to more resources, because there are fewer siblings to share them with. The interpretation of this variable seems to be connected with that of the composition of household. It is highly probable that having two parents and stable family structure can secure more resources, and I find lower risk of home leaving among such families.

The socio-occupational status of father has statistically insignificant influence on decision about leaving home. Additionally for women, the region of residence for them is not important either. While for males coming from rural areas hampers the leaving. The traditional model of farmers’ family in Poland ordered for young men staying in the parental home and in the future they usually take over the responsibilities of head of family.

To look closer into potential influence of those two factors I run model with interaction between them. The results are presented in Table 3. In both models the interaction was not significant. Moreover, in case of men there is only a “pure” multiplicative effect. More complex effect we can observe for women, the interaction shows that the effect of elevated risk of leaving home for daughters of white-collar workers only pertains to urban areas.

Table 3. Relative risk of leaving home with the residence of origin and the socio-occupational status of father in interaction

a) females ($p_{\text{int}} = 0.494$)		Region of residence	
		Urban	Rural
socio-occupational status of father	white-collar	1.29 (1.23)	1.02 (1.23)
	blue-collar	1	1.01 (1.00)
	farmer	0.84 (1.01)	1.03 (1.01)

Note: Model 8a contains the same factors as Model 1a but also has the interaction terms of this table. The estimated effects of other factors are much the same as those of model 7a.

In brackets are the “pure” multiplicative effects from each of the factors

b) males ($p_{\text{int}} = 0.774$)		Region of residence	
		Urban	Rural
socio-occupational status of father	white-collar	1.08 (1.11)	0.95 (0.9)
	blue-collar	1	0.79 (0.81)
	farmer	0.85 (0.86)	0.69 (0.70)

Note: Model 8b contains the same factors as Model 1a but also has the interaction terms of this table. The estimated effects of other factors are much the same as those of model 7b.

In brackets are the “pure” multiplicative effects from each of the factors

Let me exam the education. According to previous research (see Billari at al 2000) Poland with Hungary, Spain, the Czech Republic and Italy are the countries where young people leave home less frequently before the end of education. This fact is illustrated in the Table 2. The relative risk of leaving parental home is higher for people with higher education – it suggests that young people prefer to stay in parental home until they finish their education. The trend for both sexes is significant.

Very strong results I got in case of getting married. Due to the assumption, which I described previously, I obtained rather high values of relative risk.² As you can observe in appendix, when we introduce this variable into the model we obtain a better likelihood and also it strengthens the effect of higher education.

² The possible reasons for that could be wrong answering of respondents – if they didn't remember the exact date of leaving parental home they could assume that they left parental home in the same time as they got married.

5. Concluding remarks

The aim of this analysis is to investigate the process of leaving parental home in Poland, because there is lack of similar studies about Poland and other East European countries.

Results based on Polish FFS 1991 have shown that at least up to the year 1991, Polish patterns of the leaving parental home could be identified as traditional. The main reason for this event was marriage formation.

One can notice some similarities to Southern European countries, especially in case of age of leaving parental home, but it can be very difficult to interpret the outcome. The problem is connected with a lack of appropriate theories, which takes into consideration the specific social and economic conditions in East European countries during communism. In early 90-ties, Poles experienced the transition to market economy and it was expected that this change influence their behaviour, but the empirical theories known from the West Europe usually need some changes before they could be applied to Polish and Eastern European case.

Because during last 15 years, Poland has experienced dramatic demographic change it would be very interesting to investigate present behaviour of young Poles.

Appendix

Table 4. Models of leaving home for females

Factors		Model 1a	Model 2a	Model 3a	Model 4a	Model 5a	Model 6a	Model 7a
cohort		***	***	***	***	***	**	**
	45-54	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	55-64	0.94	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.92
	65-74	0.66***	0.7***	0.7***	0.7***	0.7***	0.76***	0.75***
siblings			***	***	***	***	***	***
	0		0.78*	0.75*	0.76*	0.74**	0.73**	0.78*
	1		0.83**	0.83**	0.83**	0.82**	0.82**	0.83**
	2		1	1	1	1	1	1
	3+		1.15*	1.16*	1.16*	1.16*	1.17*	1.37***
SES_of_father								
	white-collar			1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.23**
	blue-collar			1	1	1	1	1
	farmers			1	0.99	0.99	1.01	1.01
residence								
	urban				1	1	1	1
	rural				1.02	1.03	1.04	1
household						**	**	**
	both parents					1	1	1
	other					1.28**	1.31**	1.29**
education							***	***
	no education						0.36***	0.32***
	primary						0.56***	0.5***
	vocational						0.71***	0.57***
	secondary						1	1
	higher						1.44**	1.62***
education enrolment							**	***
	no						1	1
	yes						0.31**	0.39***
marriage								***
	no							1
	yes							6.47***
age^								
	15-19	1.444	1.417	1.403	1.397	1.365	3.574	3.042
	20-24	4.191	4.161	4.116	4.097	4.016	5.324	2.365
	25-29	5.006	5.029	4.979	4.955	4.856	5.628	1.452
	30-34	3.041	3.074	3.048	3.033	2.967	3.549	0.783
Log-likelihood		-6701.4	-6691.2	-6690.7	-6690.6	-6688.6	-6578.8	-6299.9

Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01; ^ absolute risk per 1000

Table 5. Models of leaving home for males

Factors	Model 1b	Model 2b	Model 3b	Model 4b	Model 5b	Model 6b	Model 7b
cohort	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
45-54	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
55-64	0.66***	0.67***	0.65***	0.66***	0.66***	0.67***	0.69***
65-74	0.62***	0.63***	0.61***	0.62***	0.62***	0.68***	0.71***
siblings			**	***	***	***	***
0		0.89	0.81	0.79	0.76*	0.75*	0.71**
1		0.91	0.85	0.84	0.83*	0.84	0.83*
2		1	1	1	1	1	1
3+		1.08	1.16	1.18*	1.16	1.22**	1.28***
SES_of_father			***	**			
white-collar			1.32**	1.26**	1.25**	1.08	1.11
blue-collar			1	1	1	1	1
farmers			0.73***	0.85	0.85	0.88	0.86
residence				***	***	**	**
urban				1	1	1	1
rural				0.76***	0.77***	0.83**	0.81**
household					**	***	**
both parents					1	1	1
other					1.33**	1.48***	1.35**
education						***	***
no education						0.18***	0.2***
primary						0.35***	0.36***
vocational						0.54***	0.55***
secondary						1	1
higher						1.62***	1.84***
education enrolment						***	***
no						1	1
yes						0.38***	0.41***
marriage							***
no							1
yes							7.19***
age							
15-19	1.144	1.136	1.203	1.311	1.29	4.152	3.862
20-24	2.33	2.315	2.462	2.687	2.648	4.119	2.754
25-29	3.746	3.732	4.013	4.404	4.331	6.006	1.935
30-34	2.002	1.997	2.217	2.457	2.41	3.616	0.82
Log-likelihood	-5366.6	-5364.6	-5351.7	-5347.2	-5345	-5248.8	-5045.6

Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01; ^ absolute risk per 1000

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