



Leaving home in the Netherlands: Timing and first housing

CLARA H. MULDER¹ and PIETER HOOIMEIJER²

¹*Department of Geography and Planning, University of Amsterdam, Nieuwe Prinsengracht 130, 1018 VZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands (E-mail: C.Mulder@frw.uva.nl);* ²*Urban Research centre Utrecht, Utrecht University, P.O. Box 80.115, 3508 TC Utrecht, The Netherlands*

Abstract. Successive birth cohorts have left the parental home at an accelerating pace in the early post-war decades in the Netherlands. A second trend, starting later but lasting longer, is that people increasingly leave the parental home to live alone. Both trends have had implications for the housing market as they contributed to the continuation of the housing shortage and generated a shift in the type of accommodation in which young adults start their housing career: an independent rented dwelling, shared accommodation, or home-ownership. In this contribution we set out to unravel both the causes of the changing pattern of home-leaving between successive cohorts and the relation with the housing market entry in successive periods. The main hypothesis is that educational expansion was a major cause of the shift in the mix of motives between cohorts, accounted for the accelerating pace of home-leaving, and also affected the type of housing market entry. The empirical results support this hypothesis but also show that the educational expansion does not provide a full explanation for either phenomenon. Union formation in particular is invariably also determined by the employment status of the male partner. Leaving home to live alone, on the other hand, is less sensitive to the individual income but is clearly stimulated by ample parental resources. In housing choice, the opportunity structure provides an extra explanation. The wider access to independent rental accommodation, for instance, reduces the pent-up demand for shared accommodation that results from the educational expansion.

Key words: educational expansion, housing market entry, leaving the parental home

1. Introduction

Leaving the parental home has important implications for both the parents and the child. The formation of a separate household requires an extra dwelling, a budget for housekeeping, and a reorganisation of daily life. At the aggregate level, therefore, leaving the parental home also has implications for housing demand, consumption patterns, and the demand for social security. This multitude of implications is probably the reason why the process has been attracting the attention of researchers from various disciplines – sociology, economics, geography, and demography. In this paper we focus on the housing aspects.

From the point of view of housing research, two aspects of leaving the parental home are of particular importance: the *timing* of leaving home (the age at which children enter the housing market) and the *household formation* of those leaving home (whether they leave to live alone or as a couple). If successive birth cohorts leave home at an earlier age, the number of new entrants on the housing market increases. But this number will decrease again upon stabilisation of the age of home-leaving. If cohort size were fixed, a mere change in timing would only generate a temporary rise in housing demand, leaving the longer-term level unaffected. The effects of changes in household formation are different. Housing demand rises proportional to the share of one-person households in the total number of households. Therefore, a shift from living in couples to living alone can generate a lasting upward effect on housing demand.

From the point of view of demographic research, two aspects of the housing market are of importance to the timing of and the household formation at leaving the parental home: the availability of housing opportunities (an overall housing shortage will generate a waiting list for those that want to enter the housing market) and the affordability of housing options (a lack of affordable housing will hamper the housing market entry of young people). In short, the way in which people leave the parental home and the type of housing market entry are strongly related because of such common background factors as the motives for leaving, the availability of housing opportunities and the resources enabling or restricting the use of these opportunities.

The Netherlands has witnessed a trend of acceleration in the timing of leaving the parental home after World War II. Of the women born in the period 1935–1939, more than 80% still lived with their parents at age 20. Of the women born in the period 1955–1959, only 50% of those aged 20 still lived with their parents (Hooimeijer and Schutjens, 1991). The average age of women leaving the parental home dropped from 24.5 in 1955 to 22.5 in 1975 (Hooimeijer and Linde, 1988), after which year it stabilised. The second trend, the shift to living alone, did not start until the cohort born in the period 1950–1955. Of the previous cohorts, only 20% left the parental home to live alone. Among those born in the 1950s, this share rose to 30%, to rise further afterwards to a level close to 50% for those born in the late 1960s (Hooimeijer and Mulder, 1998). The effect on the percentage of one-person households among the age group 23–30 has been large, as this rose from less than 10% in the mid-1970s to close to 30% in the mid-1980s (Hooimeijer and Schutjens, 1991).

Due to the low level of housing construction during World War II, the housing shortage peaked in the (early) post-war period. The housing distri-

bution act of 1947 forced existing households in spacious accommodation to share this with new households, even if they were not relatives. High levels of new construction in the period 1950–1975 were instrumental in catching up with this pent-up demand, the overall shortage reaching a level of 2.4% of the existing stock in 1975. This figure would remain stable until the mid-1990s. In the urbanised parts of the country in particular, shortages were and remained higher than the overall rate. The changing ways of leaving the parental home certainly contributed to the continuation of the housing shortage in the Netherlands and led to specific programmes to meet the housing needs of young singles and couples. In the late 1960s, specialised housing associations funded by the department of education started building student accommodation, typically consisting of one room with shared facilities for bathing and cooking. In the 1970s, these programmes were transferred to the department of housing and widened to include non-students.

The 1960s and 1970s were also decades of prolonged economic growth and labour-market shortages. Real incomes were rising accordingly and home-ownership expanded rapidly, in the 1970s in particular. Both the young people themselves and their parents grew more wealthy in this period. This trend was disrupted in the early 1980s and followed by five years of negative economic growth, falling real incomes, and sharply rising levels of (youth) unemployment.

Although the long-term trends in leaving the parental home have been well documented, the causal mechanism of these trends and their relation with the housing market entry have only been partially uncovered. Previous studies for the Netherlands (and also many studies for other countries) are usually restricted. They pertain to: a shorter time period covering only part of the long-term trends; the process of home-leaving without a link to housing opportunities; and/or cross-sectional data in which cohorts are mixed. The dominant finding from these studies (see below) is that the increasing enrolment in higher education is the major driving force behind both the shift in timing and in the household formation at leaving home.

In this paper, we widen the investigation of the timing and the two ways of leaving home in relation to housing market entry in a number of ways. The first question we address is to what extent the educational expansion accounts for the changing ways of leaving home and the first housing choice by successive cohorts during the fifty years following World War II. The second is whether the availability of housing opportunities provides an additional explanation for both the rate at which people leave the parental home to live with a partner or alone and the type of housing market entry. The third question refers to the role of resources: not only the child's own, but also the

parents'. Do people use their wealth to enable their children to leave home at an early stage and to support them in securing housing options?

We use retrospective data gathered in the beginning of the 1990s on people living in the Netherlands. We employ discrete-time event history models to analyse the timing of leaving home and multinomial logistic regression models to analyse the housing outcomes.

2. Theoretical background

The timing of leaving home has been addressed in many previous studies (for example Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1999; Iedema et al., 1997; Mulder and Clark, 2000; Murphy and Wang, 1998; Whittington and Peters, 1996). Several authors have stressed the importance of the different decision processes underlying home-leaving for different motives. This line of thought has led to various studies that extend the timing literature to include separate investigations of leaving home to live with a partner versus leaving to live alone, modelling these decisions as competing risks (Buck and Scott, 1993 and Mulder and Clark, 2000, for the USA; Hooimeijer and Mulder, 1998, for the Netherlands). A smaller literature is devoted to the housing outcomes of nest-leaving (Clark and Mulder, 2000; Hooimeijer and Mulder, 1998; Hooimeijer and Schutjens, 1991; Kruythoff, 1994; Linde et al., 1986; Mulder and Manting, 1994). These studies stress the differences in first housing between those leaving home to live with a partner and those leaving to live without a partner.

2.1 *The timing of leaving home*

Leaving the parental home is a specific case of a residential move. Any type of move can be said to follow from a motive, but the move is only effectuated after its cost is overcome by means of resources, given that the context provides an opportunity (Mulder and Hooimeijer, 1999). The theoretical background of this paper, therefore, is built around three phenomena: motives, resources, and contextual factors.

Motives

Three categories of motives for moving from the parental home can be identified (De Jong Gierveld et al., 1991): the formation of a marital or consensual union; enrolment in higher education or taking up a job elsewhere; and a desire for autonomy, privacy, and independence. The first motive leads to leaving home to live with a partner. The second and third motives will mostly lead to leaving to live alone or with housemates.

Because, in two-sex partnerships, the woman is on average between two and three years younger than the man (Smeenk, 1998), the motive of leaving with a partner will arise earlier in women's life courses. It is no surprise, therefore, that women at younger ages are found to leave home for partnerships at a faster rate than men, with men catching up later in the life course. To a lesser extent, they are also faster in leaving home to live alone (Hooimeijer and Mulder, 1998).

Other motives for leaving also vary with age. The motive of leaving home for education is largely confined to the ages at which people start higher education – between 18 and 21. Employment elsewhere is usually also found at younger ages (Simpson, 1992), but less concentration at particular ages should be expected.

The mix of motives for leaving changes through time. Undoubtedly, the educational expansion has enhanced the importance of the motive of education elsewhere, leading to more people who leave to live alone. As De Jong Gierveld et al. (1991) suggest, the wish to live with a partner has lost importance in the course of the past few decades, whereas the wish to be independent may have become more prominent. Both changes, they argue, have to do with a tendency toward a greater emphasis on freedom and self-fulfilment (compare Lesthaeghe, 1983).

Resources

Resources of the child – income and level of education – can be expected to have a positive effect on the likelihood of leaving the parental home. A difference in the influence of resources between leaving to live with and without a partner can be expected. According to social norms, people – and especially males – should have left school and have sufficient income before they form a partnership (Oppenheimer, 1988; Blossfeld and Huinink, 1991). For singles, this norm is less strict. Particularly during university education, it is often necessary – and considered normal – to live away from the parents. This often happens even though the child has only a small labour income or none at all; additional income is obtained from state grants (which are standard for students in the Netherlands) and help from the parents. We therefore expect the child's socio-economic status to be more influential on leaving for a partnership than on leaving for independence. Furthermore, we expect enrolment in education to negatively influence leaving for a partnership.

The relationship between the parents' resources and the child's likelihood of leaving home is not so obvious. On the one hand, the parents might use their resources to help their children gain independence. In particular, they might help in meeting the costs of housing for their children. On the other hand, the wealthy parents will live in more spacious accommodation them-

selves and their children might be less eager to leave this spacious home where they have enough privacy.

Contextual factors

The most important contextual factors are the availability of affordable housing, job opportunities, and educational opportunities. As indicated in the introduction, the availability of affordable housing has grown over time, because post-war housing shortages diminished through new construction. This might provide an explanation for the decreasing age at which people left the parental home in the period 1950–1975. However, housing shortages remained high in the highly urbanised parts of the country for a long time, and it is therefore plausible to expect that people living in those areas found it less easy to leave to live with a partner.

Job opportunities vary with degree of urbanisation (Van Ham et al., 2001) and so do educational opportunities. Young people in less urbanised areas will therefore have to move more often to enrol in higher education or to accept a job offer. One might expect, therefore, that leaving the parental home to live alone is more common in the less urbanised areas.

Conclusion

To conclude, we expect educational level and enrolment in higher education to be crucial variables in explaining the timing and the various pathways in leaving the parental home: as a motive for leaving (both to enrol and to take up a qualified job elsewhere); as a restriction to early labour market entry (absence of an earned income will restrict partnership formation); and in defining the relevant choice set due to the concentrated nature of both educational and high-skilled job opportunities. The main hypothesis we will put to a test is that the educational expansion accounts for the shift in behaviour between successive cohorts. We expect that people with a higher educational level will show a consistent tendency to leave home to live alone (both as a result of enrolment and as a sign of individual autonomy) and we expect that people in education will have lower chances if leaving home to form a partnership due to a lack of resources. On top of that, we will test whether parental resources help to make an early start and whether people in less urbanised areas show higher rates of nest-leaving, both as a result of more ample housing opportunities (for couples) and as a result of a lack of job and educational opportunities (for singles), which forces them into an early exit from the parental home.

2.2 *The first housing of home-leavers*

The basic principle underlying the choice of housing among those who leave home is different from that underlying the decision to leave itself. We make the simplifying assumption that young people first decide to leave the parental home (either with or without a partner), only then to decide which available housing option they will take. As we argued elsewhere (Clark and Mulder, 2000), this assumption is not necessarily always justified. But we think it is justified in the majority of cases, and using the assumption helps simplify both our modelling procedures and our interpretation. The pathway of leaving (with versus without a partner), then, turns into a background factor, influencing both the preference for a certain type of housing and the resources available for obtaining the housing. This leaves us again with three building blocks for a theoretical framework: preferences, resources, and contextual factors.

Preferences

On average, owner-occupied housing has a higher quality than rented housing, and independent rented housing has a higher quality than shared accommodation. At first glance, one might think any nest-leaver would prefer the tenure with the highest level of quality they can afford. This need not be the case, however. Home-ownership requires a long-term financial commitment (Mulder and Wagner, 1998). Renting, therefore, might be a better choice for those nest-leavers who want to remain flexible; particularly those who do not form a partnership (compare Mulder and Manting, 1994) or prefer to save before becoming owners. Sharing with housemates might be a positive choice for those leaving to live without a partner and seeking companionship or preferring to share housekeeping responsibilities in the first period after leaving (Clark and Mulder, 2000). We therefore expect that, even after controlling for resources, those having left to live without a partner are less likely to become home-owners, and more likely to start in shared accommodation, than those having left for a partnership.

Resources

The more resources the young adult has, the higher the expected likelihood of owning a home and the lower the likelihood of sharing. We expect the likelihood of owning to be enhanced not only by labour force participation and socio-economic status, but also by age. Wage differentials are modest in the Netherlands at the start of a labour career, but the wage levels increase sharply with age because of the steep rise in the statutory minimum wage level in the age bracket 15–27. This makes age more decisive than socio-economic status as an indicator of income resources (Klaus, 2000). Age is

also an indicator of the length of the period the nest-leaver has been able to save for a down-payment on a dwelling. The likelihood of sharing is expected to be greater for those still in education, the younger nest-leavers, and those with lower socio-economic status. We furthermore expect the resources of the parents to have an additional positive influence on owning and a negative influence on sharing.

Contextual factors

The cost and availability of housing, and particularly the distribution of the types of housing in the local housing stock, are of crucial importance to housing choice. Degree of urbanisation is a major factor differentiating between markets with shared accommodation, rental markets and markets dominated by owner-occupancy. Whereas in small villages supply consists primarily of owner-occupied dwellings, the majority of dwellings in large cities are rented (Clark and Dieleman, 1996). Furthermore, the more urbanised the area, the higher the likelihood that nest-leavers resort to shared accommodation (Kruythoff, 1994).

Housing market circumstances have also changed through time. As described in the introduction, the early post-war years were characterised by a peaking housing shortage. Shared accommodation in these years often took the form of households living in with others owing to the lack of vacancies in the market. After 1970, shared accommodation also encompasses special-needs housing for students and other young singles. Another relevant change is that, apart from a downturn in the market around 1980, the share of owner-occupied housing, and the opportunities for becoming a home-owner, have increased in the Netherlands in the past few decades (Mulder and Wagner, 1998). In combination with a decreasing overall housing shortage, this means that access for young people to the rental sector has increased, as many existing households moved into owner-occupied housing, leaving behind a rental vacancy.

Conclusion

It seems plausible that housing demand will differ substantially between those leaving to live with a partner and those leaving to live alone or with house-mates. For couples, sharing accommodation will be a last resort if affordable independent housing cannot be obtained. For singles, shared housing might also be a positive choice. More importantly, couples share resources that enable them to spend more on housing. On the whole, the role of resources will be decisive. Having an earned income is important in securing a mortgage and even to qualify for more expensive rental accommodation.

Our main interest is again to try to explain how choices have changed over the decades after the war. Other things being equal, we would expect a

consistent decrease in the 'choice' for shared accommodation and an increase in owner-occupation as the housing shortage decreased, wealth accumulated, and the stock of owner-occupied housing grew. However, other things have not remained equal. As people leave home at an earlier age, and increasingly to live alone, home-leavers in the later part of the period will have fewer resources to afford independent housing, let alone for purchasing a home. We will test this hypothesis by analysing the change in choice between successive periods with and without the effects of the educational expansion and the shifts in the pattern of leaving the parental home.

3. Data, methods, and variables

3.1 Data

The data were taken from two retrospective life history studies: the SSCW survey (ESR/STP, 1992) and the Netherlands Family Survey 1993 (NFS; Ultee and Ganzeboom, 1993). Both samples are representative of the Netherlands population aged 18 and over (SSCW) or 21 to 64 (NFS) in the beginning of the 1990s. The data from these two samples were pooled.

The SSCW survey was conducted in 1993 among a sample of some 3,000 members of about 1,600 households. It was a single-round retrospective survey among the respondents of a longer-lasting panel answering questions weekly about a wide variety of topics. Response varied between the distinct topics, because the data were collected in several rounds and several tens of respondents left or entered the sample in the interim. The Netherlands Family Survey was conducted in the period 1992–1993 among a sample of 1000 primary respondents (information was also gathered from the respondents' current partners; this information was not used for this paper). Both sets contain data about the respondents' residential, educational, household, and labour market histories as well as some data on their families of origin. The wage level at various ages was not recorded, as this would be too demanding for the respondents in a retrospective survey. From the two data sets, we selected those respondents born in the period 1930–1969 for the analysis of the timing of leaving the parental home (2463 respondents) and those leaving home in the period 1946–1993 for the analysis of the first housing situation (2967 respondents).

3.2 Methods

For the analysis of the timing of leaving the parental home, we use logistic regression of person-years as a method for discrete-time event history

analysis (Yamaguchi, 1991). We separately model two competing risks: the risk of leaving home to live with a partner, and the risk of leaving home to live without a partner. In each of the models, the occurrence of the other event is treated as a censoring mechanism. The dependent variable is the log-odds of home-leaving with or without a partner in a given year, given that the respondent has not left home before.

For the analysis of the first housing destination of nest-leavers, we use a multinomial logit model. The dependent variable has three categories: owning, renting independently, and sharing. Sharing includes all rented accommodation in which the facilities are shared with anyone else than a partner.

3.3 *Independent variables*

Summary measures of the dependent and independent variables are given in the appendix.

Level of education was measured in five categories: primary school, lower secondary education or lower vocational training (lbo/mavo), higher secondary school or middle vocational training (havo/vwo/mbo), higher vocational training, and university level. This variable changes through time. As long as the respondent is in school, the variable measures the level of education in which the respondent is enrolled. As soon as the respondent has left school, the highest level of completed education is taken. This operationalisation has one peculiar feature: after getting a diploma, the level of education remains the same, but after dropping out of school, the level of education goes down to the level completed before the last school was attended. We think that this operationalisation represents the respondent's situation in the best possible way. As long as the respondent is attending university, for example, he or she will act as a university student and might decide to leave home for reasons of education. After dropping out, the university level is, for most, no longer relevant, and we expect the respondent to act in accordance with the completed level of education.

'Daily activity' indicates whether the respondent is doing paid work (reference), in education, or otherwise not working. Socio-economic status was measured according to the International Socio-Economic Index (ISEI) of Ganzeboom et al. (1992). Where possible, the socio-economic status of the job held in the year of observation was used. If the person did not work then, the status of the previous job was used or, if there was no previous job, that of the next job. Those persons for whom no socio-economic status measurement was available were allocated the average status. A separate dummy ('status unknown') indicates whether missing substitution took place.

Age was measured with a seven-category variable: 17–19, 20–21, 22–23, 24–25, 26–27, 28–30, and 31–35. In the analysis of the first housing situation, an extra dummy indicates whether the respondent has left home to live with a partner; the reference category is formed by those who left home to live without a partner.

Just two levels of the father's education were used: primary school, lower vocational, or lower secondary (0) versus higher secondary, middle or higher vocational training, or university (1). The share of highly educated parents was too low to distinguish more than two categories. A third category indicates that the father's education is unknown. The father's socio-economic status (ISEI) was measured for age 15 of the respondent. If information about the father's job was unavailable for that age, his last or first job was taken. Missing substitution was done in the same way as for the respondent; a dummy indicates whether the father's status was unknown.

The circumstances on the housing market as they vary through space were operationalised by means of a variable indicating degree of urbanisation. This variable has four categories: hardly urbanised, weakly urbanised, moderately urbanised, and strongly urbanised. In the analysis of timing, we use the degree of urbanisation in either the year of observation (if the respondent did not leave home) or the year before leaving (if the respondent left home). This was done to ensure we used a measurement for the place of residence where the decision whether to leave or not was made – the place from which the respondent left or had a chance to leave. In the analysis of the first housing situation, we used a different measurement: urbanization in the year in which the respondents reported they had left the parental home. This choice ensures that the respondents are observed at the time and place where they are actually confronted with housing market circumstances – more so than if we had chosen to measure the degree of urbanisation before the respondent left home.

Changes through time were measured using birth cohorts for the analysis of leaving the parental home and using periods for the analysis of the first housing. Our sample size did not permit using measures for cohort and period at the same time in the way Courgeau (2000) did. For the timing of home-leaving, cohort is a more 'natural' way of looking at time because cohort is a personal characteristic and period is not. For housing, it is more obvious to choose periods: it does not matter so much which generations enter the housing market, but what does count is in which period they do so. The cohort variable has the four categories 1930–1939, 1940–1949, 1950–1959, and 1960–1969. The period variable has six categories: 1946–1954, 1955–1964, 1965–1974, 1975–1979, 1980–1984, and 1985–1993. The period variable also stands for possible changes through time in the motives for leaving.

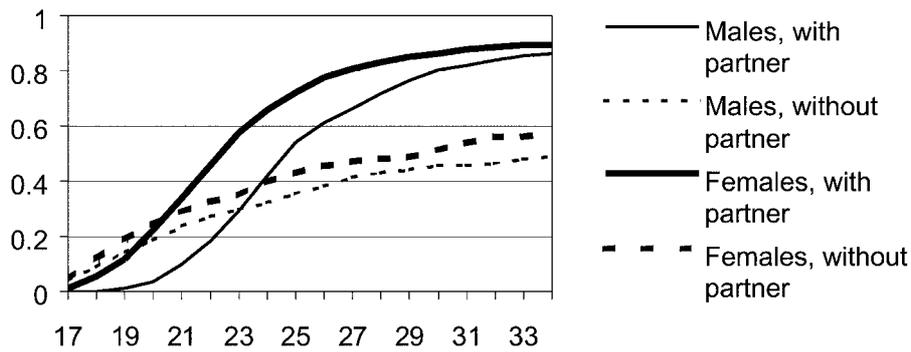


Figure 1. Cumulative distribution of leaving home by age.

4. Results

4.1 *The timing of leaving the parental home*

Before proceeding to the multivariate analyses, we first give the results of some descriptive analyses. The results of survival analyses of leaving home to live with and without a partner are given in Figure 1, in the form of cumulative distribution functions. These can be interpreted as the estimated hypothetical share of children who would have left home with a partner or without a partner, respectively, if the other pathway of leaving did not exist.

As can be seen from Figure 1, the age profiles of leaving the parental home with and without a partner are different. The process of leaving to live with a partner starts off at a slower rate than leaving to live without a partner. Through the ages, leaving to live with a partner shows an acceleration in the young adults' early twenties (for females about two years earlier than for males) to slow down again in the late twenties. The rate of leaving to live without a partner is highest up to age 21, but it remains at a more or less constant pace over the ages from age 21 onwards (the cumulative distribution follows an almost straight line). There are also marked differences between men and women. Women are faster in leaving home along both routes, but particularly in leaving home to live with a partner; men catch up in their late twenties, however.

In Figures 2 and 3, two indicators of the educational expansion, the child's education and daily activity, are depicted against the pathway of nest-leaving. Among those with a level of education in the lowest two categories, a large majority (80%) leave home to live without a partner. This percentage decreases with increasing education, to reach 14% among males, and 21% among females, for those with university education. The daily activity also makes a crucial difference as to which pathway is taken. Among those doing

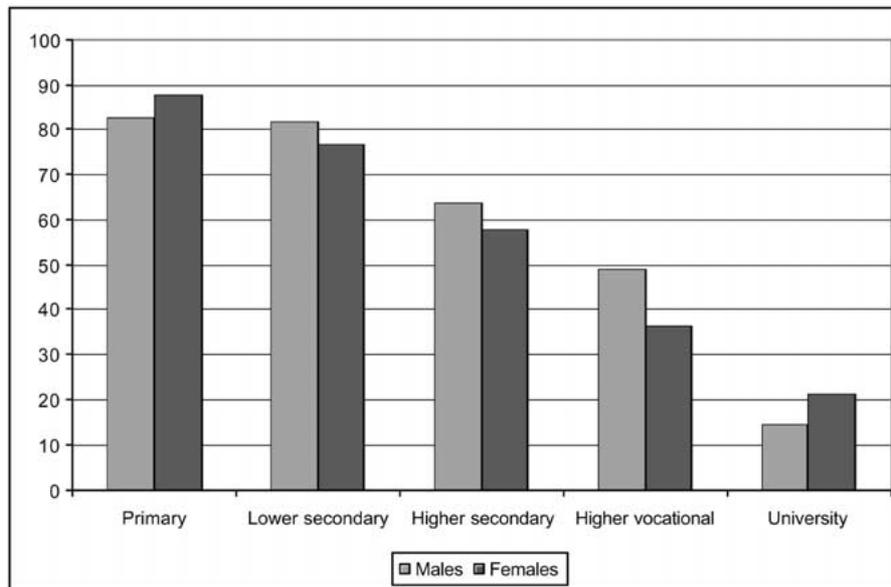


Figure 2. Percentage leaving home to live with a partner by sex and level of education.

paid work, around 80% leave for a partnership. Among those in full-time education, almost three-quarters leave to live without a partner. Among those otherwise not working, there is a marked difference between men and women: whereas almost two-thirds of non-working men move for a partnership, 80% of non-working women do so. This finding might indicate a difference in importance attached to the man's and the woman's economic situation at the moment of partnership formation.

The results of the multivariate analyses are reported in three steps in Tables 1 and 2. The upper part of Table 1 shows the bivariate logistic regressions for leaving to live with and without a partner for males and females by cohort. The coding of the cohort parameters has been structured in such a way that each parameter uses the previous one as a reference category. A positive and significant parameter therefore means that the annual odds of leaving home for a particular cohort are significantly higher than the odds for the previous cohort. The table shows that this is the case for the odds of the cohort 1940–1949 compared with the cohort born in 1930–1939, with and without a partner and for males and females.

Among the third cohort, the rates for leaving to live with a partner are not different compared with the 1940–1949 cohort (the females still show a positive sign but the parameter is not significant), but the odds of leaving to live without a partner still go up. For the 1960–1969 cohort, the odds of

Table 1. Logistic regression of leaving the parental home in a year, models with cohort, education and daily activity only

	With partner				Without partner			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)
Cohort								
Cohort 1940–1949 (compared with 1930–1939)	0.23	0.11**	0.29	0.11***	0.37	0.17**	0.70	0.17***
Cohort 1950–1959 (compared with 1940–1949)	-0.03	0.09	0.16	0.10	0.40	0.13***	0.29	0.13**
Cohort 1960–1969 (compared with 1950–1959)	-0.20	0.11*	-0.10	0.10	0.34	0.11***	0.26	0.12**
Constant	-2.53	0.04***	-2.15	0.04***	-3.07	0.05***	-2.80	0.05***
Model -2 Log Likelihood	5511		5225		3798		3342	
Improvement ^a , df, p	8, 3, 0.049		20, 3, 0.00		65, 3, 0.00		71, 3, 0.00	
Cohort								
Cohort 1940–1949 (compared with 1930–1939)	0.26	0.11***	0.38	0.11***	0.32	0.17*	0.49	0.18***
Cohort 1950–1959 (compared with 1940–1949)	0.05	0.10	0.32	0.10***	0.32	0.13***	0.17	0.13
Cohort 1960–1969 (compared with 1950–1959)	-0.01	0.11	0.13	0.11	0.17	0.12	0.08	0.12
Education (primary = 0)								
Lower secondary/lower vocational	-0.09	0.11	-0.09	0.10	0.00	0.25	0.41	0.22*
Higher secondary/middle vocational	0.11	0.13	0.07	0.13	0.66	0.25***	0.93	0.24***
Higher vocational	0.23	0.15	0.02	0.16	1.20	0.25***	1.47	0.24***
University	0.01	0.24	-0.17	0.27	2.16	0.26***	1.84	0.26***
Daily activity (working = 0)								
In education	-1.60	0.12***	-1.61	0.13***	-0.13	0.13	0.01	0.13
Other not working	-0.74	0.16***	-0.12	0.10	-0.03	0.22	-0.23	0.20
Constant	-2.08	0.10***	-1.73	0.09***	-3.83	0.22	-3.61	0.20***
N person years, N events	11125, 777		8384, 822		11125, 481		8384, 454	
Model -2 Log Likelihood	5235		4960		3551		3209	
Improvement ^b , df, p	284, 9, 0.00		284, 9, 0.00		313, 9, 0.00		204, 9, 0.00	

^aCompared with null model^bCompared with previous model* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

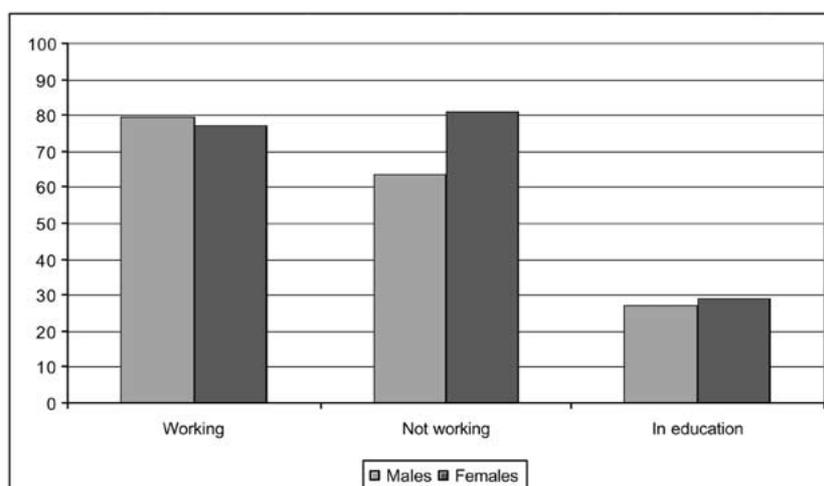


Figure 3. Percentage leaving home to live with a partner by sex and daily activity.

leaving to live with a partner go down (females show the same sign, but not a significant effect), while the odds of leaving to live without a partner invariably grow. These results fit the description of the shifts in home-leaving given in the introduction: a decreasing age at which people leave the parental home in the period 1950–1975 and a shift towards leaving without a partner that continues well into the 1990s.

In the second step, we included the variables that measure the educational level and activity status, testing the hypothesis that cohort differentials are the result of the educational expansion. The level of education has a great positive impact on the likelihood of leaving the parental home to live alone. We expected an opposite effect on the likelihood of leaving to live with a partner, but the parameters are not significantly different from zero, nor do they show the expected sign. However, a higher educational level might also indicate more personal and parental resources, an issue we will return to in step three of the analyses.

That resources matter can be inferred from the daily activity variable. Being enrolled in education is negatively associated with leaving home for a partnership. This indicates the role incompatibility between being a student and forming a family (Blossfeld and Huinink, 1991). On the basis of the bi-variate findings in Figure 3, one might have expected a positive effect of being enrolled in education on the likelihood of leaving to live without a partner, but such an effect is not found. Apparently, it is the combination of university level and enrolment in education that counts. Further bi-variate analyses (not shown) revealed that this is indeed the case. Among those

Table 2. Logistic regression of leaving the parental home in a year, full model

	With partner				Without partner			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)
Cohort								
1940–1949 (compared with 1930–1939)	0.47	0.12***	0.56	0.12***	0.38	0.18**	0.55	0.18***
1950–1959 (compared with 1940–1949)	0.09	0.10	0.38	0.10***	0.31	0.13**	0.17	0.14
1960–1969 (compared with 1950–1959)	0.05	0.12	0.11	0.11	0.14	0.12	0.01	0.13
Education (primary = 0)								
Lower secondary/lower vocational	-0.22	0.12*	-0.21	0.11**	-0.04	0.25	0.40	0.22*
Higher secondary/middle vocational	-0.22	0.14	-0.23	0.14	0.45	0.25*	0.88	0.24***
Higher vocational	-0.29	0.17*	-0.34	0.18*	0.74	0.26***	1.34	0.26***
University	-0.72	0.27***	-0.49	0.28*	1.57	0.28***	1.71	0.28***
Daily activity (working = 0)								
In education	-0.29	0.14**	-0.80	0.14***	0.01	0.15	0.12	0.14
Other not working	-0.48	0.18***	-0.04	0.12	-0.05	0.23	-0.25	0.21
Socio-economic status (ISEI)	0.07	0.03**	-0.07	0.03**	0.15	0.04***	-0.05	0.04
Status unknown	-0.13	0.25	0.26	0.20	0.23	0.21	0.19	0.24
Age group (17–19 = 0)								
20–21	2.26	0.32***	1.35	0.12***	0.33	0.13***	0.41	0.13***
22–23	3.60	0.30***	1.86	0.13***	0.63	0.14***	0.36	0.17**
24–25	4.26	0.30***	2.10	0.14***	0.32	0.19	0.61	0.21***
26–27	4.39	0.31***	1.91	0.18***	0.89	0.21***	-0.04	0.36
28–30	4.02	0.32***	1.35	0.22***	0.39	0.30	0.10	0.36
31–35	3.71	0.34***	0.45	0.31	-0.01	0.40	0.10	0.38

Table 2. Continued

	With partner				Without partner			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)
Father's education (up to lower secondary = 0)								
Middle or higher	-0.02	0.14	-0.06	0.14	0.16	0.13	0.42	0.14***
Unknown	0.12	0.09	0.01	0.09	-0.10	0.12	0.12	0.12
Father's socio-economic status	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.13	0.04***	0.07	0.04*
Father's status unknown	-0.40	0.12***	-0.40	0.12***	0.00	0.15	0.18	0.14
Degree of urbanisation (hardly urbanised = 0)								
Weakly urbanised	0.12	0.11	0.17	0.11	0.19	0.15	0.06	0.14
Moderately urbanised	0.19	0.13	0.14	0.12	0.19	0.16	-0.22	0.17
Strongly urbanised	0.05	0.13	0.14	0.12	0.03	0.16	-0.01	0.16
Constant	-5.85	0.37***	-2.73	0.22***	-5.32	0.34***	-4.04	0.33***
N person years, N events	11125, 777		8384, 822		11125, 481		8384, 454	
Model -2 Log Likelihood	4488		4595		3471		3167	
Improvement ^a , df, <i>p</i>	746, 15, 0.00		365, 15, 0.00		79, 15, 0.00		42, 15, 0.00	

^aCompared with previous model

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

enrolled, those in higher vocational training and particularly those in university education leave without a partner more frequently. Those enrolled in lower-level education hardly leave home at all, neither with nor without a partner. Capturing this effect by means of an interaction effect in the multivariate analyses turned out to be impossible because of the high association between level and enrolment. For males, but not for females, other types of non-employment also lead to a lower likelihood of partnership formation. This corresponds with the traditional norm that males should have a sufficient income before they form a partnership.

The effect of entering the educational variables on the parameters for the cohort variable provides support for the hypothesis that the educational expansion is a major underlying mechanism for the changing ways of leaving the parental home. This is certainly true for the rise in the odds of leaving to live without a partner. The difference between cohorts diminishes considerably after controlling for the educational expansion, and only cohort 1940–1949 differs significantly from its predecessor. The parameters for leaving to live with a partner show a slightly different pattern. As expected, the negative sign for the later cohorts disappears, indicating that this negative trend is due to increased enrolment in higher education. The parameter for the 1940–1949 cohort, however, becomes slightly more positive. This is logical, because it indicates that the early rise in leaving home to live with a partner took place *despite* the educational expansion. On the whole, the conclusion is therefore that educational expansion is indeed an important underlying mechanism for the trends in leaving home, but that it does not capture the change in behaviour of the cohort born in the 1940s as opposed to those born in the 1930s. Probably the decrease in housing shortage in the 1960s has resulted in more opportunities for leaving the parental home at an earlier moment than were available in the 1950s.

In the third step, we also included the indicators of the personal and parental resources (Table 2). The effects are only to some extent as expected. Males are more likely to start living with a partner when they have a higher socio-economic status. Such an effect is not found for females; on the contrary, a (marginally significant) negative effect of socio-economic status is found for females. For males, but not for females, socio-economic status also positively influences leaving to live without a partner. The effect of age group reflects the age profiles shown in the survival analysis.

Compared with the respondent's own characteristics, those of the father only have a moderate influence on the likelihood of leaving the parental home. No effect of the father's education or socio-economic status is found for leaving to live with a partner. There is, however, a negative effect of an unknown status. When the father's status is unknown, this might mean

different things: the father never had a job, the child doesn't know about the father's job, or the father had died, was absent, or unknown when the child was young. Parental resources do matter to the likelihood of leaving to live without a partner. For males, the father's socio-economic status has a strong positive impact; for females, the estimated impact of the father's socio-economic status is smaller but his education is important. It looks like resourceful parents take a different attitude towards supporting their children to live on their own from supporting their children to form a partnership. Young adults leaving to live without a partner will also be more in need of parental support.

There is no clear pattern of association between the degree of urbanisation of the place of residence of the parental family and the likelihood of leaving home. This is in contrast with the hypothesis that the larger housing shortage in the urbanised areas would cause people that grow up there to live with their parents longer.

The most striking effect of including resources in the analyses is that the educational level variable now shows the expected effect. After resources are accounted for, the higher the educational level, the lower the odds of leaving to live with a partner and the higher the odds of leaving to live alone. The daily activity variables loses some explanatory power, but the negative effects of enrolment and the absence of an earned income remain significant. The cohort effect shows that the unique position of the 1040–1949 cohort now becomes even more outspoken.

Conclusion

We find that the educational expansion in the Netherlands has caused two contrasting changes in leaving the parental home: decreasing odds of leaving to live with a partner (both as a result of rising educational levels and of increased enrolment) and increasing odds of leaving to live alone or with housemates. Meanwhile, traditional patterns have survived to some extent in the sense that private resources still affect partnership formation for males and not for females. It is clear, however, that the accelerating pace of leaving the parental home by the 1940–1949 cohort cannot be explained by either the educational expansion or the increase in personal (or parental) resources over time. The most plausible explanation for the shifts in the pattern of leaving home in the post-war decades is the following. In the decades following the war, the decrease in the housing shortage led to overall higher annual odds of leaving the parental home, both to form a couple and to live alone. Starting from the 1950–1959 cohort, the educational expansion generated the shift towards increasing odds of leaving to live without a partner and decreasing odds of leaving to form a couple.

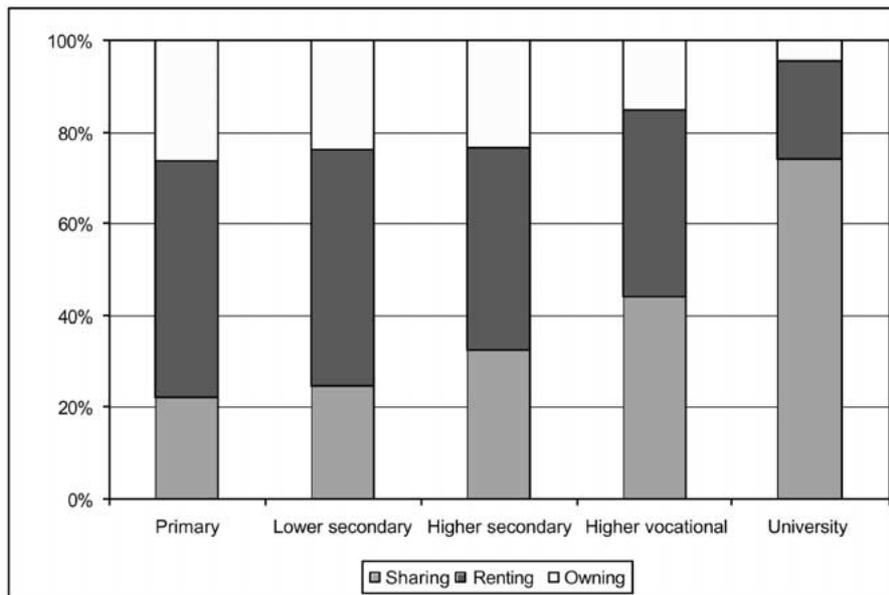


Figure 4. First housing situation after leaving the parental home by daily activity, percentages (males).

4.2 The first housing after leaving the parental home

The first housing after leaving the parental home is strongly differentiated by education (Figure 4). Sharing is not very common among those with low education, but for those with university education it is the most prominent way of starting the independent housing career. Rental accommodation is the most common first housing among those with up to higher secondary education or middle vocational training. Owning is the least frequently chosen option (some 20%), but only among the university educated is it exceptional (4.5% of males and 2.9% of females).

There is also a marked difference between those working, those in education, and those otherwise not working (Figure 5). As expected, those who are employed are the most likely to own and the least likely to share; for those in education this is the other way around. Even among those enrolled in education, more than five per cent start in owner-occupied housing. These young adults probably either live in a home bought for them by their parents or have a working partner.

The pathway of leaving home – with a partner, or without – is strongly associated with the first housing situation. As expected, the long-term commitment of home-ownership is only made in significant numbers (around

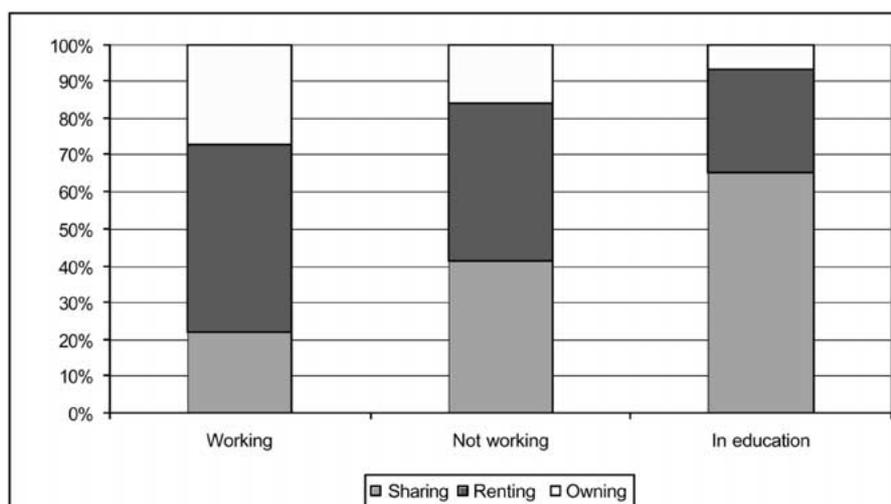


Figure 5. First housing situation after leaving the parental home by education, percentages (males).

one-quarter) by those who leave home to live with a partner. Sharing, in contrast, is not very common among those leaving to live with a partner, but it is the first housing choice of the majority of those leaving to live without a partner.

As a result of a diminishing housing shortage, increasing wealth, and a growing stock of owner-occupied homes, we expect a general decrease in shared accommodation and a rise in owner-occupation. This trend should taper off in the 1970s and 1980s as a result of the growing number of people who leave home to live without a partner, many of whom as students with limited resources. To test this hypothesis, multinomial logit analyses have been performed stepwise.

The first step shows the bi-variate multinomial logit model of the housing choice of males and females leaving the parental home (Table 3). The parameters support our expectations. The people who left the parental home in 1955–1964 moved into owner-occupied housing substantially more frequently than those who started their housing career in the immediate post-war years. Sharing is less common among those who started in 1965–1974, as opposed to the period before. After 1975 the chances of sharing, owning, and renting remained at the same level. However, after 1985 the likelihood of sharing dropped, without a rise in owner-occupation, implying that rental accommodation became more common.

The second step gives the period effects in the model in which the educational variables have been included (Table 3). Positive effects of university

Table 3. Multinomial logit models of first housing situation of nest leavers (models with period and education)

	Males sharing		Owning		Females sharing		Owning	
	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)
Period 1955–1964 (compared with 1946–1954)	-0.34	0.28	1.47	0.57***	0.10	0.27	1.99	0.75***
Period 1965–1974 (compared with 1955–1964)	-0.58	0.20***	-0.25	0.25	-0.65	0.18***	-0.34	0.24
Period 1975–1979 (compared with 1965–1974)	-0.15	0.20	0.10	0.22	-0.16	0.19	0.41	0.23*
Period 1980–1984 (compared with 1975–1979)	0.06	0.22	-0.12	0.25	0.28	0.22	-0.22	0.27
Period 1985–1993 (compared with 1980–1984)	-0.59	0.22***	-0.20	0.24	-0.62	0.23***	-0.03	0.27
Constant	-0.06	0.07	-0.92	0.11***	-0.11	0.07*	-1.18	0.14***
Model -2 Log Likelihood	2812							
Improvement ^a , df, p	72, 10, 0.00							
Period 1955–1964 (compared with 1946–1954)	-0.28	0.30	1.48	0.57***	-0.04	0.29	2.02	0.76***
Period 1965–1974 (compared with 1955–1964)	-0.85	0.22***	-0.23	0.25	-0.88	0.19***	-0.31	0.24
Period 1975–1979 (compared with 1965–1974)	-0.16	0.22	0.11	0.23	-0.61	0.22***	0.51	0.23**
Period 1980–1984 (compared with 1975–1979)	-0.06	0.24	-0.10	0.25	0.24	0.25	-0.24	0.27
Period 1985–1993 (compared with 1980–1984)	-0.59	0.24***	-0.25	0.25	-0.73	0.26***	0.06	0.28
Education (primary = 0)								
Lower secondary/lower vocational	0.08	0.25	-0.03	0.23	0.34	0.20*	0.07	0.21
Higher secondary/middle vocational	0.27	0.27	0.23	0.25	0.70	0.24***	-0.25	0.27
Higher vocational	0.30	0.28	-0.03	0.29	0.65	0.26***	-0.75	0.35**
University	1.29	0.33***	-0.22	0.46	1.87	0.36***	-0.86	0.68
Daily activity (working = 0)								
In education	1.39	0.18***	-0.77	0.26***	1.40	0.18***	-0.24	0.26
Other not working	1.03	0.27***	-0.29	0.34	0.01	0.20	-0.05	0.22
Constant	-1.00	0.23***	-0.82	0.22***	-1.10	0.19***	-1.05	0.22***
Model -2 Log Likelihood	2440							
Improvement ^b , df, p	300, 12, 0.00							

^aCompared with null model^bCompared with previous model* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

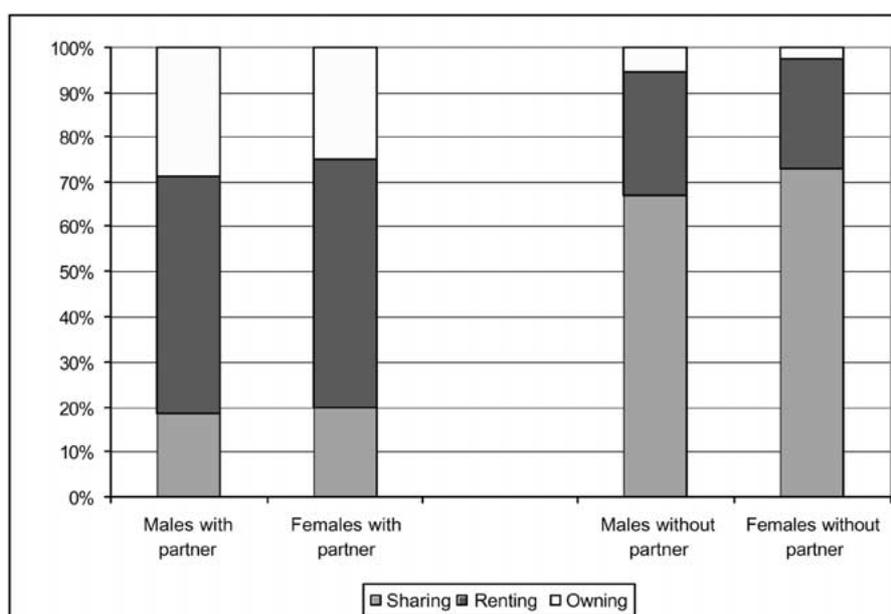


Figure 6. First housing situation after leaving the parental home by sex and pathway of leaving, percentages.

education and enrolment in education on the likelihood of sharing are found. Some striking differences between men and women show up. For men, the effect is restricted to university-level education; among the women, also the ones in middle and higher vocational training share more. A possible explanation is the popularity among women of in-service training programmes in health and community care that offer shared accommodation to their students on the premises. The expected negative effects of these factors on home-ownership are not found among men, but the pattern is there even though the parameter for the university level has a large standard error. As expected, not being employed increases the chances of sharing and decreases the chances of starting as a home-owner among men, but not among women.

Because students are more likely to share, we expected the period effect on sharing to become more consistently negative after inclusion of the educational variables. For men, this is hardly the case (with the exception of the period 1965–1974); for women, the pattern is more clear. The period effects with respect to owning do not change at all after inclusion of these variables. The conclusion is therefore that we find only limited evidence that the educational expansion has tempered the decrease in popularity of shared accommodation and no evidence that it has contributed to the low level of owner-occupation at the start of the housing career.

Table 4. Multinomial logit model of first housing situation of nest leavers (reference: renting)

	Males sharing		Owning		Females sharing		Owning	
	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)
Period 1955–1964 (compared with 1946–1954)	-0.06	0.34	1.26	0.59**	-0.15	0.32	1.83	0.77**
Period 1965–1974 (compared with 1955–1964)	-1.30	0.25***	0.00	0.26	-1.21	0.22***	-0.17	0.26
Period 1975–1979 (compared with 1965–1974)	-0.43	0.24*	0.22	0.24	-0.66	0.25***	0.54	0.25**
Period 1980–1984 (compared with 1975–1979)	-0.09	0.27	-0.22	0.27	0.36	0.29	-0.28	0.29
Period 1985–1993 (compared with 1980–1993)	-0.38	0.27	-0.28	0.26	-0.87	0.30***	0.19	0.29
Education (primary = 0)								
Lower secondary/lower vocational	0.20	0.28	-0.09	0.25	0.19	0.23	-0.06	0.23
Higher secondary/middle vocational	0.24	0.30	0.24	0.27	0.40	0.28	-0.35	0.30
Higher vocational	0.25	0.33	0.03	0.32	0.28	0.32	-0.80	0.40**
University	0.92	0.39**	0.11	0.51	1.45	0.43***	-0.42	0.73
Daily activity (working = 0)								
In education	0.55	0.22***	-0.21	0.28	0.47	0.22**	0.11	0.29
Other not working	0.95	0.32***	-0.67	0.40*	-0.02	0.23	-0.26	0.26
Socio-economic status (ISEI)								
Status unknown	-0.05	0.06	-0.08	0.07	-0.09	0.06	0.07	0.07
Status unknown	-0.54	0.39	-0.37	0.24	0.75	0.36**	1.08	0.41***
Age group (17–20 = 0)								
20–21	-0.38	0.28	0.09	0.64	-0.59	0.21***	-0.03	0.29
22–23	-0.83	0.28***	0.57	0.59	-1.17	0.24***	0.21	0.29
24–25	-1.14	0.30***	0.95	0.59	-0.61	0.27**	0.67	0.32**
26–27	-1.58	0.34***	1.40	0.60**	-1.46	0.39***	0.82	0.38**
28–30	-1.53	0.38***	1.07	0.62*	-2.04	0.48***	0.35	0.43
31–35	-1.86	0.52***	1.55	0.64**	-1.18	0.52**	0.97	0.55*

Table 4. Continued

	Males sharing		Owning		Females sharing		Owning	
	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)	b	s.e. (sig.)
Left with partner	-1.36	0.19***	0.61	0.26**	-1.93	0.18***	1.23	0.34***
Father's education (up to lower secondary = 0)								
Middle or higher	0.12	0.22	-0.16	0.28	-0.08	0.23	-0.57	0.32*
Unknown	-0.24	0.18	-0.01	0.18	-0.28	0.18	-0.30	0.18
Father's socio-economic status	-0.02	0.06	-0.03	0.07	-0.04	0.06	-0.04	0.07
Father's status unknown	-0.26	0.22	-0.37	0.24	0.25	0.21	-0.22	0.26
Degree of urbanisation (hardly urbanised = 0)								
Weakly urbanised	0.19	0.25	-0.36	0.20*	0.21	0.24	-0.18	0.21
Moderately urbanised	0.23	0.26	-1.12	0.26***	0.27	0.26	-0.94	0.27***
Strongly urbanised	0.28	0.25	-1.28	0.27***	0.34	0.25	-1.36	0.30***
Constant	1.24	0.52***	-1.28	0.73*	1.68	0.47***	-1.85	0.59***
N renting, sharing, owning	574, 496, 267				596, 521, 232			
Model -2 Log Likelihood	2121				2065			
Improvement ^a , df, <i>p</i>	319, 32, 0.00				391, 32, 0.00			

^aCompared with previous model

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

In step three, measures of personal and parental resources are included in the model just as the variable indicating whether people left the parental home to live with a partner (Table 4). The effects of educational level and enrolment are taken over to a large extent by a substantial age effect and the effect of household formation at the start of the housing career. One should bear in mind that, although technically there is no multicollinearity, there is a strong association between age, level of education, and enrolment in education. The age effect also expresses the number of years the child has been able to save before leaving home. Furthermore, the age effect might indicate postponement of nest-leaving in order to obtain better housing.

In previous research, we found a strong and significant positive effect of socio-economic status on the likelihood of making a transition to first-time home-ownership (Mulder and Wagner, 1998). Remarkably, no evidence for such an effect is found for the housing choice of nest-leavers. Possibly, the socio-economic status of the job held at a particular moment is not the best indicator of the resources of nest-leavers. As explained before, age is a better indicator of the earning capacity of young people in the Netherlands than socio-economic status. Also in contrast with previous research on the transition to home-ownership (Mulder and Smits, 1999), no indications in the expected direction are found of an influence of parental resources.

Although no systematic effect of degree of urbanization on the timing of nest-leaving is found, there is a strong effect on the likelihood of owning versus renting one's first home: the more strongly urbanised the place of residence where the nest-leaver starts his or her housing career, the lower the likelihood of ownership. This is clearly an effect of the opportunity structures in local housing markets.

With respect to the period effects, we find that there is indeed evidence that the combination of educational expansion, leaving home at an earlier age, and more home-leaving to live without a partner has contributed to more housing-market entries in shared accommodation among men, but in particular among women. Without these trends, fewer people would have chosen for this type of accommodation. The period 1980–1984 stands out as a time in which the decreasing popularity of shared accommodation halted. This was the period in which the owner-occupied market collapsed as a result of postponement by those in rental accommodation to move into owner-occupied housing.

5. Conclusions

In this paper we study two aspects of leaving the parental home with particular relevance for housing research: its timing, and the first housing of the nest-leavers. Using data from the Netherlands, we model two pathways of

home-leaving – leaving to live with a partner, and leaving to live without a partner – as competing risks, because the decision processes underlying these two events are different. And with good reason: we find that the two events are influenced by the various background factors in quite different ways. Next, we model the first housing choice of the nest-leavers: renting independently, sharing accommodation, or owning. Compared with previous studies, we study the home-leaving process in greater detail. Moreover, we explicitly examine the extent to which educational expansion explains the changes in leaving home that took place in the past few decades.

The educational expansion is the major driving force of the shift in the process of leaving the parental home in the post-war decades of the twentieth century in the Netherlands. Yet it does not fully account for the acceleration of the pace at which young adults left the parental home in the early post-war years. With the economic downturn of the early eighties, the rates for leaving with a partner stabilised, although it looks like the rates to leave without a partner continue to rise. In the end, leaving the parental home in the Netherlands is no longer strongly associated with family formation. Rather, it is an event (or process) that marks the young adults' independence from the parents. If a partner has been found before independence is acquired, leaving home may coincide with partnership formation. In this respect, the Netherlands is a typical example of the 'northern European' pattern of leaving the parental home (Holdsworth, 2000). Only among the less well educated do we find home-leaving patterns that still point to a strong association with partnership formation.

The most crucial factor in the process of leaving home appears to be level of education. It is hardly exaggerated to say that, with regard to this process, those with low education and those with university education live worlds apart. The higher the level of education, the lower the likelihood of leaving to live with a partner in a given year, but the higher the likelihood of leaving to live without a partner. These results provide further evidence for the role incompatibility of enrolment in education and living with a partner, particularly among females. In accordance with previous research, socio-economic status and having a job appear to be more important to partnership formation of males than of females. Another marked difference between males and females is the age differentiation in the nest-leaving process. Like in previous research, the difference in age profiles is greater for partnership formation than for leaving for independence. The role of parental resources is only moderate, yet unequivocal. The father's socio-economic status only influences leaving to live without a partner. This finding is in line with the observation that norms might be more permissive to parental help of singles than of couples; singles will also be more in need of help. In contrast with

findings for the USA (Mulder and Clark, 2000), degree of urbanisation is not found to substantially influence the timing of leaving home. This finding is in line with the fact that housing and job opportunities are geographically less dispersed in the Netherlands – a small and densely populated country – than in the USA.

A finding that stands out is the close association between the pathway of nest-leaving and the first housing situation. Sharing is predominantly found among those living without a partner, whereas owning is almost exclusively found among couple nest-leavers. Undoubtedly, this is not only caused by differences in resources – couples can pool resources, are generally older, and are more often employed than those without a partner – but also by a difference in social norms. Couples will cherish their privacy, while young singles might prefer the social network provided by student and other shared accommodation.

The educational expansion is not only important to the timing of home-leaving, but also to housing choice immediately after nest-leaving. Apart from the shift in household composition, the prolonged educational career and its concomitant effect of later entry into the labour market adds to the odds of starting in shared accommodation. These trends account for the continuation of pent-up demand for shared accommodation in the Netherlands. However, after controlling for these factors, the most conspicuous change is the decrease in the likelihood of starting in shared accommodation. In light of the overall increase in home-ownership, one might have expected an increase in home-ownership among nest-leavers as well. No indication of such an increase is found, however. This indicates that the preference for and/or the access to the owner-occupied sector has decreased for young adults. Two trends may account for the decreased access to this sector. The first is the increase in the price of owner-occupied housing. The second might be an increasing reluctance of young adults to exchange the flexibility of rented accommodation for the financial commitments of home-ownership (compare Mulder and Manting, 1994).

Contextual factors are far more important in the explanation of housing choice than in the decision to leave the parental home. The level of urbanisation of the place where people start their housing career is decisive in the level of owner-occupation. The composition of the housing stock is the explanatory factor, indicating that, given a choice, young couples in urban areas might prefer moving into owner-occupation at an earlier moment in life.

Appendix 1. Descriptive statistics of variables used

	Percentage	Means	Standard deviation
<i>Dependent variables</i>			
Leaving home in a year: did not leave ^c	87.1		
Left to live with a partner	8.1		
Left to live without a partner	4.7		
First housing situation: sharing ^b	37.8		
Renting	43.8		
Owning	18.4		
<i>Stratification variable</i>			
Female ^a	49.2		
<i>Independent variables: child characteristics</i>			
Education: primary ^c	14.0		
Lower secondary/lower vocational	39.5		
Higher secondary/middle vocational	23.2		
Higher vocational	15.8		
University	7.6		
Daily activity: working ^c	52.1		
In education	36.4		
Other not working	11.5		
Socio-economic status (ISEI) ^c		4.46	1.48
Status unknown ^c	5.1		
Age group: 17–19 ^c			
20–21	20.9		
22–23	15.3		
24–25	9.7		
26–27	5.7		
28–30	4.9		
31–35	4.3		
Left with partner ^b	63.2		
<i>Independent variables: parents' characteristics</i>			
Father's education: up to lower secondary ^a	35.7		
Middle or higher	18.0		
Unknown	46.3		
Father's socio-economic status ^a		4.44	1.64
Father's status unknown ^a	14.2		

Appendix I. Continued

	Percentage	Means	Standard deviation
<i>Independent variables: context factors</i>			
Degree of urbanisation: hardly urbanised ^c	19.8		
Weakly urbanised	34.2		
Moderately urbanised	20.6		
Strongly urbanised	25.3		
Period: 1946–1954 ^c	12.6		
1955–1964	21.5		
1965–1974	27.2		
1975–1979	14.1		
1980–1984	12.9		
1985–1993	11.8		
Cohort: 1930–1939 ^d	18.4		
1940–1949	25.3		
1950–1959	32.7		
1960–1969	23.6		

^aMeasured over 2967 children at risk of leaving the parental home

^bMeasured over 2763 children in the year they left the parental home

^cMeasured over 21494 person-year observations of children at risk of leaving the parental home

^dMeasured over 2463 respondents included in the analyses of leaving the parental home in a year

Acknowledgements

Clara Mulder's research was made possible by a fellowship from the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. Part of her work for this paper was done while she was employed at the Urban Research centre Utrecht of Utrecht University.

References

- Blossfeld, H.-P. and Huinink, J. (1991) Human Capital Investments or Norms of Role Transition? How Women's Schooling and Career Affect the Process of Family Formation, *American Journal of Sociology*, 97, 143–168.
- Buck, N. and Scott, J. (1993) She's Leaving Home: But Why? An Analysis of Young People Leaving the Parental Home, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 55, 863–874.
- Clark, W.A.V. and Dieleman, F.M. (1996) *Households and Housing: Choice and Outcomes in the Housing Market*, Center for Urban Policy Research, New Brunswick, NJ.

- Clark, W.A.V. and Mulder, C.H. (2000) Leaving Home and Entering the Housing Market, *Environment and Planning A*, 32, 1657–1671.
- Courgeau, D. (2000) Le départ de chez les parents: Une analyse démographique sur le long terme, *Économie et Statistique*, 7/8, 37–60.
- De Jong Gierveld, J., Liefbroer, A.C. and Beekink, E. (1991) The Effect of Parental Resources on Patterns of Leaving Home Among Young Adults in the Netherlands, *European Sociological Review*, 7, 55–71.
- ESR/STP (1992) SSCW Data File. Owner: Stichting Economische, Sociaal-culturele en Ruimtelijke Wetenschappen (ESR) of the Netherlands Organisation for the Advancement of Scientific Research (NWO), The Hague. Data Collection: Stichting Telepanel, Amsterdam. Data management: Niwi/Steinmetz Archives, Amsterdam.
- Ganzeboom, H.B.G., De Graaf, P. and Treiman, D.J. (1992) A Standard International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status, *Social Science Research*, 21, 1–56.
- Goldscheider, F. and Goldscheider, C. (1999) *The Changing Transition to Adulthood. Leaving and Returning Home*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Holdsworth, C. (2000) Leaving Home in Britain and Spain. *European Sociological Review*, 16, 201–222.
- Hooimeijer, P. and Linde, M. (1988) Vergrijzing, individualisering en woningmarkt: het WODYN-simulatiemodel, Thesis Utrecht University, Utrecht.
- Hooimeijer, P. and Mulder, C.H. (1998) Changing Ways of Leaving the Parental Home: With a Partner or Alone, In: *The Joy of Demography . . . and other Disciplines* (Eds, Kuijsten, A., De Gans, H. and De Feijter, H.), Thela Thesis, Amsterdam, pp. 137–151.
- Hooimeijer, P. and Schutjens, V. (1991) Changing Lifestyles and Housing Consumption: A Longitudinal Approach, *Netherlands Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*.
- Iedema, J., Becker, H.A. and Sanders, K. (1997) Transitions into Independence: A Comparison of Cohorts Born Since 1930 in the Netherlands, *European Sociological Review*, 13, 117–137.
- Klaus, J.N.M. (2000) *Huishoudensontwikkeling en inkomensverandering*, KNAG (NGS no. 277), Utrecht.
- Kruythoff, H. (1994). Starters in the Housing Market in an Urban Region: The Case of the Randstad Holland, a Diversified Housing-Shortage Area, *Housing Studies*, 9, 219–244.
- Lesthaeghe, R. (1983) A Century of Demographic and Cultural Change in Western Europe: An Exploration of Underlying Dimensions, *Population and Development Review*, 9, 411–435.
- Linde, M.A.J., Dieleman, F.M. and Clark, W.A.V. (1986) Starters in the Dutch Housing Market, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 77, 243–250.
- Ministerie VROM (1999) *Volkshuisvesting in cijfers 99*, Ministerie VROM, The Hague.
- Mulder, C.H. and Clark, W.A.V. (2000) Leaving Home and Leaving the State: Evidence from the United States. *International Journal of Population Geography*, 6, 423–437.
- Mulder, C.H. and Hooimeijer, P. (1999) Residential Relocations in the Life Course. In: *Population Issues: An Interdisciplinary Focus* (Eds, Van Wissen, L.J.G. and Dykstra, P.A.), Plenum, New York, pp. 159–186.
- Mulder, C.H. and Manting, D. (1994) Strategies of Nest-Leavers: ‘Settling Down’ versus Flexibility, *European Sociological Review*, 10, 155–172.
- Mulder, C.H. and Wagner, M. (1998) First-Time Home-Ownership in the Family Life Course: a West German–Dutch Comparison, *Urban Studies*, 35, 687–713.
- Mulder, C.H. and Smits, J. (1999) First-Time Home-Ownership of Couples: The Effect of Inter-Generational Transmission, *European Sociological Review*, 15, 323–337.
- Murphy, M. and Wang, D. (1998) Family and Sociodemographic Influences on Patterns of Leaving Home in Postwar Britain, *Demography*, 35, 293–305.

- Oppenheimer, V.K. (1988) A Theory of Marriage Timing, *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 563–591.
- Simpson, W. (1992) *Urban Structure and the Labour Market: Worker Mobility, Commuting and Underemployment in Cities*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Smeenk, W. (1998) *Opportunity and Marriage. The Impact of Individual Resources and Marriage Market Structure on First Marriage Timing and Partner Choice in the Netherlands*, Thela Thesis, Nijmegen.
- Ultee, W.C. and Ganzeboom, H.B.G. (1993) *Netherlands Family Survey 1992–1993 [Machine Readable Data Set]*. Codebook prepared by Harry B.G. Ganzeboom, Susanne Rijken, September 1993 edition. Changes and additions made by Harry B.G. Ganzeboom and Roland Weygold, January 1995 edition, Netherlands: Department of Sociology, Nijmegen University, Nijmegen.
- Van Ham, M., Hooimeijer, P. and Mulder, C.H. (2001) Urban Form and Job Access: Disparate Realities in the Randstad, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 92, 231–246.
- Whittington, L. and Peters, H.E. (1996) Economic Incentives for Financial and Residential Independence, *Demography*, 33, 82–97.
- Yamaguchi, K. (1991) *Event History Analysis*, Sage (Applied Social Research Methods Series 28), Newbury Park.