

Gender Aspects of the Patterns of Leaving Home in Post-War Sweden. A Micro-level Analysis of Leaving the Parental Home in Three Birth Cohorts.

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Abstract

Leaving home is an important aspect of the transition to adulthood and independence. The timing of leaving home as well as the routes out of the parental home are likely to differ between women and men. This paper analyzes gendered aspects of leaving home and whether they are determined by individual, family-related or structural factors. The dataset is derived from the *Swedish Family Survey*. A sample of 3 582 males and females in three birth cohorts are analyzed, using survival analysis. We find that the first departure from home differ between males and females and respond to place of origin and family context. Within family context, social as well as economic factors are important and have gender-specific effects. We also find cohort differences that highlight the importance of gender and socioeconomic change and the different opportunities that different cohorts of young men and women have faced in post-war Sweden.

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Introduction

For most people leaving the parental home is an exciting and important event and becomes a line of demarcation between adolescence and adulthood and independence. The determinants as well as the timing of home-leaving are likely to have consequences in the determination of later life, both materially and ideologically. If these aspects differ systematically between women and men, the process generates gender differences. The process of children leaving home is also of importance since it has great economic and social impact. For example, the increasing importance of alternative transitions to adulthood and the prevalence of independent living of young adults before marriage, are likely to have changed aggregate consumer demand and demand for housing in ways that have had implications for economic development. They may also have changed gender roles, individual educational attainment, aggregate marriage patterns and the functioning of families and households.

Many studies of leaving home in post-war time have dealt with the case of the United States (e.g. Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1999). However, there is an expanding literature on leaving home in European countries (e.g. De Jong Gierveld, Liefbroer and Beekink 1991; Ermisch and Di Salvo 1997; Galland 1997; Heath 1999; Holdsworth 2000; Iedema, Becker and Sanders 1997; Juang, Silbereisen and Weisner 1999; Kerckhoff and Macrae 1992; Murphy and Wang 1998). In the case of Sweden, the process of leaving home is less investigated although some studies include the Swedish experience (e. g. Zhen Yi et al. 1994). A few studies analyze when children left home and to what type of residence (Lundberg and Modig 1984; Löfgren 1990; Mörk et al. 1986). Nilsson and Strandh (1999) use micro-data and conduct a multivariate analysis of the determinants of the leaving home experience of the 1973 birth cohort. They fill a gap in the understanding of leaving home in modern Sweden, but as the analysis is based on the experience of one single birth cohort that faced special circumstances at the prime time of leaving home, due to the economic crisis of the early 1990s, it is hard to generalize from its results. Dribe and Stanfors (2001) have a similar approach, but cover a longer time span.

When it comes to the issue of *how* men and women are different, most studies apply theoretical models that include the two sexes, and most empirical work addresses similarities as well as differences between the sexes. However, when it comes to gender and the issue of *why* men and women are different and why they behave differently not all studies consider the concept of gender and separate between biological differences on the one hand, and cultural or social differences on the other hand. To differentiate between sex and gender characteristics is one way of understanding gender aspects of leaving home. A person has, of course, many characteristics. In economics, there is no particularly strong opinion about terminology in this field, but it is nonetheless useful to make a distinction between sex and gender, because it indicates an awareness of the fact that they sometimes can be different from each other. In a statistical sense, the distinction between sex and gender is not necessary. The assertion “women leave home earlier than men” implies a fact that is derived from the empirical study of a number of people with few misclassifications. The interpretation of the origins and implications of differences in the timing of leaving the parental home depend, however, on whether one believes that these differences are biologically determined or socially constructed.

This article aims at enhancing our understanding of gender aspects of the leaving home process in Sweden by analyzing the leaving home experience of three different birth cohorts of men and women. Economic analysis contributes to the understanding of the causes of differences in leaving home between men and women and here a gender dimension is added by incorporating gender-relevant issues. The analysis focuses on determinants of leaving home at individual as well as family level, but also discusses social and structural determinants and processes. The focus is on the timing of leaving the parental home for the first time and different pathways out of the parental home (i.e. leaving home for independent living or marriage/cohabitation).

Previous research and theoretical considerations

It is noted when and in what way men and women leave home, but it is not really known why they behave the way they do and why men and women behave differently. On the basis of previous research, explanatory variables are discussed, and various examples of interpretation

and explanation that help us understand the gendered aspects of leaving home in post-war Sweden are given.

Previous research has emphasized the timing of leaving home and the need to distinguish different pathways out of the parental home when studying the determinants of leaving home (Goldscheider and DaVanzo 1989; Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1993b; Young 1975). Some explanatory variables seem to have different effects depending on whether the person is leaving home in order to live on his/her own or to get married (Avery, Goldscheider and Speare 1992; Buck and Scott 1993). In modern Sweden, marriage/cohabitation is on the same standing and together with independent living, one of the ways out of the parental home. The literature that focuses on leaving home as a way to acquire independence from parents, distinguishes various forms of institutional semi-autonomous living, e.g. college dormitories, and military service. In the case of Sweden, it can be assumed that, thanks to free tuition and a public transfer system with rather generous student grants and loans, leaving home to attend university is more of a step towards independence than might be the case in the United States. Semi-autonomous living is of less relevance in Sweden. It can also be assumed that, thanks to different kinds of public subsidies, leaving the parental home is more of an equal opportunity for all, irrespective of sex or social background, than in other countries where the economic situation of the individual parental household is more likely to affect different groups of people differently. For similar reasons leaving home is, in modern Sweden, more equal than in the past (cf. Dribe 2000).

Turning to the determinants of the decision to leave home, sex and gender can be assumed to be important since men and women differ when it comes to education, labor market opportunities, age at marriage, military service, roles in the household, et cetera. Previous studies on a number of countries have found differences between men and women that have gendered roots. Differences apply both to the timing of leaving home and to what factors that are important for the decision to leave home. Women seem to leave home earlier than men both in the United States, Sweden and other European countries (e. g. Goldscheider and DaVanzo 1989; Heath 1999; Juang, Silbereisen and Weisner 1999; Nilsson and Strandh 1999; Wall 1989; Zhen Yi et al. 1994). The fact that women leave the parental home earlier than men can in some cases be attributed to an earlier age at marriage for women (Avery,

Goldscheider and Speare 1992; Buck and Scott 1993; Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1993a; Kerckhoff and Macrae 1992; Murphy and Wang 1998), although some studies have indicated that women are also more likely than men to leave to premarital residential independence (Goldscheider, Thornton and Young-DeMarco 1993). This gives a good reason to believe that a wish for independence is a major driving force behind the decision to leave home. The wish for independence can also be affected by the fact that parents treat sons and daughters differently and set different norms and standards when it comes to behavior, for instance when it comes to entertaining friends, staying out and participating in the upkeep of the household. The fact that parents supervise sons less than daughters and expect daughters to help out more with household chores indicate that independence has different meaning for young men and women.

Previous research shows that young people in rural areas leave home earlier than young people in urban areas in both Britain and the United States (Goldscheider and DaVanzo 1989; Heath 1999). One could believe that young adults in rural areas were more likely to co-reside with their parents until marriage due to more traditional values in rural areas. On the other hand, the opportunity to get employment or to go to school without leaving the parental home has been, and still is, greater in urban areas, which might imply that young people in rural areas are more likely to move in order to get a job or get into college. It seems as if urban youths are less likely to leave home to marry (Buck and Scott 1993) and semi-autonomous living (Goldscheider and DaVanzo 1989). This is probably explained by the fact that it is more often possible for urban youth to stay at home while attending college, than for those living in rural areas. In urban areas single independent living is more important which makes people less likely to remain at home until marriage. There is a lower incidence of leaving home in order to marry among urban youth. Overall, more traditional attitudes and family values are expected in rural areas than in cities and more effects of the gender revolution are expected in urban areas than in the countryside. Such attitudes and values can manifest themselves in many ways, from the unequal opportunities of boys and girls to the way parents treat sons and daughters and what service those who stay at home can expect.

Perhaps the family situation in the parental home is one of the most important determinants of leaving home. A divorce or another kind of parental separation is likely to increase the

likelihood of leaving home early, due to emotional stress and conflicts in the parental home, or through the introduction of step-parents. It could be that bad family experiences make a young person more independent and perhaps less family oriented. Several studies have found such effects on leaving home of living in non-traditional family forms. Avery, Goldscheider and Speare (1992), studied the consequences of taking different pathways out of the parental home, and showed that children in one-parent families were more prone to leave home to independent living, but less prone to leave for marriage. Stepchildren tend to leave home earlier than children that grow up with both their biological parents (Heath 1999).

The composition of the parental household is another aspect of the family situation. Changes, during the last decades, towards a less authoritarian family ideology and more equal gender roles have made it possible for young men and women to have a sense of freedom and independence in the parental home (Galland 1997). It is, however, not hard to imagine that a crowded home would make a person more inclined to leave home early. There is empirical evidence that persons with many siblings leave home earlier and that they are less likely to stay at home until marriage (Avery, Goldscheider and Speare 1992; Buck and Scott 1993; Heath 1999; Holdsworth 2000; Juang 1999). The gender-specific pattern is, however, less clear. In some cases the number of siblings seems to affect women more than men whereas in some other cases men seem to be more affected than women.

The financial situation in the parental home is important. In theory, higher parental income can, for one, be used to subsidize independence for young adults, thereby buying the parents some privacy, or it can, for two, facilitate the opportunity to get married and start a household by a transfer of resources. The former negative relationship would work to decrease the likelihood of leaving home whereas the latter positive relationship would work to increase the likelihood of leaving home. It is also possible that higher parental income mean better conditions in the parental home, that is benevolent parents and parental resources are “feathering the nest”, making children complacent and reluctant to leave home (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1999). It is likely that parents invest in the higher education of their children, by contributing to fees and tuition or housing costs and rent. Therefore, the direction of the effects of parental resources is not straightforward, and depends to a high degree on the way higher education is financed, and to what extent young people contribute to the household

economy, together with marriage customs, housing availability and housing costs, et cetera. Previous research shows evidence of all these mechanisms.

Depending on gender roles and preferences within the household, the effects of parental income may differ when it comes to gender. Some studies find that children, particularly boys, are more likely to leave homes with higher parental income (Buck and Scott 1993; Goldscheider and DaVanzo; Nilsson and Strandh 1999. Cf. Parish and Willis 1995) while the effect seems to be the opposite in other cases (Whittington and Peters 1996). It may very well be that parents devote different amounts of resources to their children depending on gender but also depending on the age of the child and its position in the family.

One could expect that educated and employed mothers play an important role when it comes to the decision to leave the parental home, for sons as well as for daughters. Educated parents, and mothers especially, can be expected to have less traditional values and attitudes, and this might increase the likelihood of children leaving home to independent living, while lowering it for marriage. Educated mothers can also be expected to serve as role models and shape their children in accordance with new and equal gender roles. There is not much empirical evidence to draw upon when it comes to the employment status of the mother. Goldscheider and DaVanzo (1989) found that in the early 1970s, children with professional mothers were more likely to leave home, but this effect disappeared later. In a similar way, empirical evidence in the case of Britain is contradictory. Murphy and Wang (1998) found that children with less educated mothers, or blue-collar mothers, left home later. On the other hand, Holdsworth (2000) found that sons, but not daughters, with working mothers were more likely to leave home through the pathway partnership. In Spain, Holdsworth (2000) found that sons as well as daughters with working mothers were more likely to leave home than children to non-working mothers.¹

In Sweden, female employment has increased during the post-war period, especially during the 1960s and 1970s (Stanfors 2003). The expansion of market work activities has occurred for single and married women as well as for women with young children. This dramatic

¹ In the case of Spain, the effect was, however, limited to those leaving home for reasons other than partnership, which was an untypical pathway out of the parental home.

change is closely linked to economic and social change, but also linked to women's quest for equality and the so-called gender revolution. *The Swedish Family Survey* suggests that whereas more than 50 per cent of the cohort born in 1949 was raised with full-time homemaker mother, a mother who specialized in homemaking raised only about a third of the cohort born in 1964. Homemaking gradually became less common as more women took up a career. About 60 per cent of the cohort born in 1964 had a working mother. Swedish women, today, make up a large part of the labor market, are important breadwinners for their families and are independent and self-sufficient in a way that was unusual only three or four decades ago. Working women and mothers are likely to serve as role models for girls and young women. Thus, the increase in female employment should increase young women's quest for independence and make them leave home earlier. The increase in female employment and the decrease in full-time homemakers should also increase the likelihood of leaving home, as the care and nurture of a worker-mother is more limited than that of a full-time carer-mother. The limited care and increased demands to help in the household would affect girls as well as boys. In some cases, a working mother may indicate a tight household budget and an actual need for additional resources, and this might also increase the likelihood to leave the parental home and strengthen a wish for independent living.

It is plausible that children with employment and income of their own are more likely to leave home, since they have the opportunity to buy themselves independence or to get married and establish a household of their own. This is commonly found. On the other hand, it is, in some cases, found that unemployment increases the likelihood of leaving home, probably in order to move to a better labor market situation and to search for a job or suitable training (Ermisch and Di Salvo 1997; Holdsworth 2000). High unemployment generally delays leaving home and young people resort to their parents good will (Buck and Scott 1993, Ermisch and Di Salvo 1997). This can probably be explained by the fact that higher rates of unemployment make young people's outlook of the future more pessimistic, and thus they postpone the establishment of an independent household and family formation, and more likely to continue into higher education (cf. Easterlin 1980).

Theoretical considerations and a gender perspective

Traditional neoclassical theory characterizes migration as the result of an individual decision to move, in which a person has weighed the expected net costs and benefits of moving or staying. If the expected benefits exceed the estimated costs, the person in question will move.

At the micro-level, the individual decision to move can be seen as an investment in human capital (Sjaastad 1962). The potential migrant will move to the locality that offers him or her the greatest real value of net expected benefits. Both costs and benefits can be economic as well as non-economic. The benefits are primarily pecuniary gains such as a higher wage and income, but also psychological gains such as finding a more agreeable environment or living arrangement. The costs are both direct costs of making a move and indirect costs such as opportunity costs while moving and settling down, and psychological costs due to homesickness and a result of the parting from friends and family. In the case of leaving the parental home, the individual decision to move can be seen as the result of weighing costs and benefits together and, if the benefits of a life on one's own are higher than the estimated costs, the person in question will move (Galenson 1987). Leaving home can thus be explained by the standard push and pull factors. Expectations, in the case of leaving home, are based on the probability of finding greater personal freedom, employment or education and housing. The existence of transfer payments and government subsidies of various kinds are likely to be influential in the decision to leave home and so is the existence of social networks. Thus, the pattern of leaving home is likely to vary over time by demographic group, by nation or region, as well as in concert with the business cycle.

Often migration models are seen as "gender neutral" as it is assumed that laws governing the decision to move are the same for men as for women. The models do not problematize or rule out the possibility that the determinants of the decision to move differ systematically for men and women and thus fail to explain gender-specific aspects. From a gender perspective, a critique of the neoclassical individual approach is that it does not take into account the family setting in which the decision to move is made, and that it ignores many household-level factors that may influence the individual and his or her decision and the timing of the move. The economic agents analyzed are assumed to be gender-neutral as well, but the concept of economic agency is highly idealized and mainly limited to impersonal market relations. It is not a universal concept that captures all human relations that may distort rational action

guided by self-interest by affection, emotions or obligations. Thus, it does not capture the parent-child relationship or sibling relationship or any other similar relationship that may have bearing on the topics in focus for this analysis (e.g. Katz 1999; Woolley 1993).

Gender is, nevertheless, an important part of the explanation for empirically observed differences in migration as well as in patterns of leaving home. An individual's economic and social options depend on gender, but also on the interaction between gender and other dimensions of collective identity that are also socially constructed (Folbre 1994:51-70). Since gender is highly contextual, relational and interrelated to other structures of constraint, many analyses in feminist economics start with an examination of the gender division of labor and the role that the division of labor plays in the social construction of gender. In a very general sense, the gender division of labor is the division between productive paid market work and reproductive housework, childrearing and the care for others, which is mainly unpaid. For long, reproduction has been considered women's work and the social expectations about the meaning and substance of women's work have created as well as perpetuated gender inequality through mechanisms as variant as the construction of gender roles (e. g. Holter 1962), other social psychological processes (e. g. Ridgeway 1993), and discrimination (e.g. Aigner and Cain 1977; Bergmann 1974). In the case of leaving home, the gender division of labor is the point of departure for an examination of the way in which the mechanisms mentioned may contribute to different outcomes when it comes to leaving home patterns for men and women.

Theoretical considerations as well as previous research take us closer to an understanding of the leaving home process. The model estimated below draws from previous research and includes a number of explanatory variables that control for cohort, place of upbringing (rural/urban), family context, father's and mother's employment, and family religiousness.

The pattern of leaving home in Sweden

Today, few people leave home before age 17. The leaving home process starts at age 18 and the completion of secondary school, which has become almost universal. By age 25, most people have left their parental home. Young women are more prone to leave home and leave home earlier than young men.

For most young people in contemporary Sweden, the transition to adulthood is the same as leaving the parental home and setting up of an independent household. Leaving the parental home is an important process of emancipation. The timing and the character of this process is likely to depend on individual ability and aspirations but also on structural factors such as labor market opportunities, education and the supply of housing, factors varying in accordance with business cycle patterns. All these factors varied substantially during the twentieth century and also had gender-specific effects when they interacted with norms and social institutions.

The results of the *Swedish Family Survey*, in table I, shows mean ages at leaving home by sex and cohort. The survey data suggest, as also shown above by the Census material, that females leave home about a year earlier than males (at 19 years compared to 20 years). A comparison between cohorts born 1949-1964 shows very little change over time in the mean age at leaving home for males, but the mean age at leaving home for females declined a little from 19.3 for those born in 1949 to 18.9 for those born in 1964.

To provide an illustration of the process of leaving home, figures 1 and 2 display the proportion of children still living in the parental home (and never having left) at different ages. Figure 1 indicates differences between men and women when it comes to the timing of leaving home and shows that women leave home earlier than men. In general, few have left home before 17, but thereafter the process is quite rapid. By 25 very few, well less than ten per cent, still live at home. By 30 almost everyone has left. The process of leaving home is a rather concentrated process in modern Sweden and take place between ages 17 and 25, most rapidly between ages 18 and 23. Differences between men and women are established early, as early as at age 17 and it takes until the late twenties before this difference disappears.

Figure 2 suggests that cohort differences are not as pronounced as sex differences even though they are more pronounced for women than men. The multivariate analysis below shows that the figures conceal some important differences between cohorts for certain subgroups in the population.

Table II shows that most young people leave home for independent living on their own - only a good fourth of children leaving home, pretty much regardless of cohort, leave home in order to get married or cohabit right away. About 25 per cent of males in all three cohorts move directly to live with a spouse or a partner. The corresponding figure for females is about 35 per cent. There is little change over time in the propensity to stay at home until marriage /cohabitation. With marriage rates declining since the 1960s, a simultaneous increase in non-marital cohabitation has taken place, leaving the proportion of people in the early twenties living in some kind of union rather unchanged (Bracher and Santow 1998). This change in family formation, it seems, has not affected the propensity to live with a partner immediately after leaving the parental home, which, in turn, may be seen as a further indication that the decline in proportions married at younger ages has not implied a dramatic change in living arrangements. Interestingly to note, women are more likely to remain with their parents until they set up a household together with a partner, despite the fact that they leave home a year earlier than men.

It is not only of interest to ask what living arrangement was set up after the move away from the parental home but also to know what type of activity people were involved in. Plausible activities to get involved in at the prime ages for leaving home, 18-23, are education, employment, and military service. There is a possibility that some people leave home and end up in temporary search unemployment, and that some people get married or start a family of their own and thus are involved in homemaking or child minding activities. Table III shows the different types of activities that those who left home were engaged in within a period of three months after having left home.² It is shown that, regardless of sex and cohort, employment is, by far, the most common activity to be involved in after leaving home. A slightly declining tendency is seen from the cohort born in 1949 to the cohort born in 1964, although a larger proportion of home-leavers born in 1959 got involved in full-time employment. The cohort born in 1959 also left home at somewhat younger ages than other cohorts. The second most common activity is education. Depending on sex and cohort, between 12 and 25 per cent are enrolled in some kind of education, mostly at secondary or higher levels, after home-

² A period of three months is chosen since the respondents were asked about activities lasting at least three months. Furthermore, since only activities after the age of 17 are included in the survey, only individuals at or above this age are included.

leaving. Women are more likely to go to school or university than men. 20 to 25 per cent of female home-leavers are involved in some education, whereas the corresponding share of male home-leavers is 12 to 16 per cent. There are considerably more differences between men and women when it comes to education than employment.

Another example of activities with striking differences between men and women is the military service - an activity that only men are involved in. A good ten per cent of all male home leavers leave home to join the military.³ On the other hand, only women are involved in full-time housework or parental leave. Eight per cent of women born 1949 left home in order to become a homemaker. This figure declined, however, to only two per cent among women in the other cohorts. The decline in young full-time homemakers reflects the increase in female labor force participation during this period. A large part of the increase in women's work, however, took place before the period under consideration here. Women belonging to the birth cohort 1949 were among the first to have a natural labor market attachment as they were among the first to benefit from educational reform and expansion of the female-dominated public sector and the shift to a more knowledge- and service-based economy. During the 1960s and 1970s, more women came to participate in longer education and, to a higher extent than before, in the labor market.

The results of what type of activity people were involved in, three months after leaving the parental home, indicate two important features. One is the fact that a majority enter full-time employment within three months after leaving home, which is evidence that leaving home is connected with independence and self-sufficiency and that having an income is a basic prerequisite for being able to leave the parental home. Although the importance of employment declines somewhat over time, even in the most recent cohort (1964) more than 50 per cent of all children entered the labor force immediately upon leaving home. For those who are involved in education, transfers and student loans serve as a reliable source of income. The other important feature is that the two activities that show large differences between men and

³ For the cohorts under consideration here military service was compulsory for all (reasonably healthy) males, which implies that some remained at home while serving in the military, while others might have left before doing their service.

women (e.g. to leave home for military service and full-time homemaking) clearly manifest differences rooted in a historically established gender division of labor.

Data and method

The empirical analysis is based on the *Swedish Family Survey*. The sample includes both males and females (1949, 1959 and 1964), and consists of a total of 3 671 individuals. 53 individuals had to be excluded since they could not state when they left home, and another four individuals were excluded because they were not included in the part of the register picturing the educational and occupational history. The result is a sample of 3 582 individuals, of which 31 still lived at home, with their parents, at the time the survey was undertaken. The survey provides information on the social and economic background and upbringing of interviewees, dates of leaving home and the formation of an independent household, and information on highest education and present employment as well as a detailed history of education, employment and other activities from age 17 onwards.

The age at leaving home can be seen as a survival time living in the parental household, which makes it useful to employ survival analysis in the study of leaving home.⁴ In the multivariate analysis the Cox proportional hazards model is used to estimate the effects of various determinants (covariates) on the hazard of leaving home. The Cox model, compared to other proportional hazards models, does not require any specification of the baseline hazard, which implies that there is no need to make any assumptions concerning the shape of this underlying hazard function. The model can be written as:

$$h_i(a) = h_0(a) e^{\beta x(i)}$$

where $h_i(a)$ is the individual hazard of leaving home for the i^{th} individual as a function of age, $h_0(a)$ is the baseline hazard, $x(i)$ is the vector of covariates for the i^{th} individual, and β is the vector of parameters being estimated.

⁴ The proportion of children living with their parents will be illustrated by the Kaplan-Meier estimate of the survival function.

Each observation represents an individual and indicates the survival time in the parental home, that is, the age at leaving home, as well as the values of a number of covariates. Individuals who had never left home at the time of the interview were truncated at this time. No time-varying covariates are included in the analysis.

An analysis of the determinants of leaving home

In the multivariate analysis of the determinants of leaving home, two models will be estimated. One is a general model of the determinants of leaving home. The other is a competing risk model, with living as single or married/cohabiting as the optional outcomes. The event of interest is the first move out of the parental household that lasted for at least six months. In the competing risk model the event of interest is leaving home for the outcome under consideration, while those moving for other reasons are censored. The outcomes in the competing risk model were constructed by comparing the responses to questions on the date of leaving home with the responses to when the individual started to cohabit, got married, began different kinds of education, employment, et cetera. If certain activities or living arrangements happened within the first three months after leaving home, they were considered connected to each other and the outcome was defined accordingly.

Both models contain the same set of explanatory variables (covariates). *Cohort* (1949, 1959, 1964) is included to control for potential changes over time in the leaving home pattern. *Place of upbringing* is divided into four categories: rural (population 0-500), small town (population 500-10 000), medium town (population 10 000-150 000), and large town (population 150 000 and more). *Family context before age 16* indicates whether or not the child had experienced a divorce or the loss of a parent before this age. It also indicates if the divorce happened before age 13 or between ages 13 and 16. Covariates are also included, indicating father's employment, mother's employment, the number of siblings and if the family of origin was actively religious or not.

The results are presented as relative risks (hazards), which are measures of the differences between groups with different values of the covariates. The relative risk expresses the difference in the hazard of leaving home for the group under consideration, relative to the reference category. A value of 1.50 implies that the hazard, or risk, of leaving the parental

household in the group is 50 per cent higher than in the reference category, while a figure of 0.50 implies that the hazard, or risk, is only 50 per cent of the hazard in the reference category.

Table IV displays the model estimates for the likelihood of leaving home for the first time, and table V reports the results of estimating the competing risk models. The effect of cohort differs between men and women. There are no cohort differences between males of different cohorts regarding the timing of leaving home, whereas women in younger cohorts seem to have left home earlier than women in older cohorts. In particular, women born in 1959 left home earlier than women born in 1949. Women born in 1959 were also considerably more likely to move to some kind of partnership than were women born in 1949 and 1964 (see table V). Those belonging to the cohort born in 1959, to a high degree, not only left home earlier but also left for reasons other than education. This might be interpreted as indicating that it became less common for females to remain at home, after getting into the regular labor force, waiting to get married. A job or education meant independence and there did not have to be a male partner present in order to set up an independent household. Women born in the late 1940s mark a turning point and a break away from old-fashioned ideals and gender roles. This manifested itself in changed gender roles, with more of a focus on female independence and agency than before. At this time, women's productive as well reproductive roles were questioned and changed as women experienced significant advances in education and oriented themselves more towards market work than towards homemaking. Women born in 1949 left their parental homes in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. It might have been a little too early for the truly liberal ideals and the new gender roles, and it may very well have taken time, until the late 1970s, for the new ideals to soak in. They definitely affected women born in 1959 more. In later cohorts (1959 and 1964) women left home earlier, but still moved to some form of partnership, although cohabitation replaced marriage (cf. Bracher and Santow 1998).

The effect of place of upbringing also shows differences between males and females. There is no statistically significant effect for males, but women in urban areas seem to remain at home for a longer time than do women from rural areas. Women raised in larger urban centers (population over 150 000) remain for the longest time at the parental home. The effect is limited to women moving to live on their own.

To a certain extent this finding is surprising since one would expect rural women to be more traditional and urban women to be more independent. The effects are probably due to difficulties for women in rural areas to find a job, or to go to school at a close enough distance for them to remain at home. It may also have to do with a wish for independence and to break free from traditional gender roles in the parental household. Young women in rural areas may be expected to be more domestically oriented and their parents may demand that they help out in the household, whereas their male counterparts and brothers are not requested to help with the upkeep of the household or the minding of siblings. Taken together, these factors make young women leave home earlier than young men and they leave to live on their own. These factors also lead young rural women to leave home earlier than their more urban counterparts who can more easily combine an independent life as a young adult with staying with their parents. Naturally, insufficient and expensive housing alternatives help urban people to accept that the transition to truly independent living and adulthood might take time.

The family situation during the formative years of childhood and adolescence, before age 16, seems to affect boys and girls similarly, but not identically. Experiencing a divorce increases the likelihood of leaving home for both males and females, but it does not seem to matter a great deal if the divorce happens when a teenager (between 13 and 16) or when a younger child. The results of the competing risk model in table V show that the effect of parental divorce is strongest for those (both males and females) moving to live as single, although there is also an effect for females moving to partnership. It may be that a divorce experience as a teen contributes to an early entry into the labor market and an early exit from the parental home for both men and women. One reason to believe that teenagers respond so much to their parents' divorce is the fact that fighting and turmoil precede divorce most likely and this makes young adults want to break away from home. Another reason is that many divorces result in new partnerships and it may be hard to take when a teenager. Males, but not females, are also affected by the death of a parent, in such a way that they leave earlier to live as single. Hence, the death of a parent apparently increases the opportunities for early independence for males, whereas no similar effect can be found for females who may be more prone to stay at home and help with chores and be of emotional support.

Much previous research has stressed the role of parental income or parental social status for the timing of leaving home. In the case before us, the effects seem to be less influential and less consistent. For both sexes, the effect of father's occupation (often used as a proxy for familial social status) is that children of farmers are less likely to move to marriage /cohabitation than are children of blue-collar workers. The effect of self-employed fathers is the same as that of farmers but only for daughters. This may be a result of the fact that children are involved in the family enterprise and their higher likelihood of remaining "at home" even after marriage, as they will be taking over the family business or farm. This may also be a result of the fact that some parents provide good conditions and "feather the nest" for their children. There is no statistically significant effect on leaving home of mother's employment, for either sons or daughters. This is somehow surprising since it would be expected that an employed mother would serve as a role model and bring about more emancipated manners, in particular among their daughters. However, labor force participation has become almost universal and has increased tremendously since the 1960s, throughout society. Increased female labor force participation is therefore such a fundamental structural change that encompasses many women. Due to the fact that this variable only measures whether the mother was employed or not, no more relevant aspects of female labor force participation are caught, such as, for example, full-time or part-time work, or whether the mother was a professional or blue-collar worker. Besides, there is no indication of the mother's career orientation. An effect of mother's employment might have been seen if aspects like this had been caught.

As expected, children with more siblings leave home earlier. With each additional sibling the likelihood of leaving home increases. This finding has been made in several other studies and is generally explained by the fact that a more crowded parental home gives fewer opportunities for independence and privacy. This conclusion is reinforced by the result of the competing risk model, which shows that leaving home for single living is more likely when having many siblings than is leaving home directly to cohabitation.

The effect of religiousness, that is, being raised in an actively religious family is non-existent when it comes to timing of leaving home. However, when looking at the effects on leaving to live a single life and marriage/cohabitation, somewhat contradictory effects are found.

Women raised in actively religious homes are more likely to leave home to live a single life and less likely to move to marry/cohabit. This might be explained by a lower propensity to cohabit as unmarried among people from religious homes, who, instead, leave home to live as singles and wait until marriage before setting up a household together with a partner. Males do not show any statistically significant effect on moving to single living, but they show the same negative effect for moving to marry/cohabit. Dribe and Stanfors (2001) however, show some interesting differences between home-leavers with different religious background in the reasons for leaving home. Both males and females with a religious background are considerably less likely to leave home to enter the labor market than are people with a non-religious background. Instead, they are more likely to pursue other activities, and females from a religious background are more likely to move to education.

When analyzing the results from a gender perspective, it becomes obvious that many of the differences observed between men and women, regarding their decision to leave home, are rooted in the gender division of labor. According to the gender division of labor, men specialize in productive work whereas women engage in reproductive as well productive work. The division of labor may be dictated by comparative advantage but norms and social institutions also uphold it. Since increased gender equalization over time tends to obscure the continued responsibility of women for household work and caring, it is often forgotten how deeply rooted the division of labor is and what gendered effects it generates. Not only do parents treat their sons and daughters differently they have different aspirations for them and place different demands on them. These aspirations and demands are very much in line with existing social norms about suitable behavior for males and females, and are also to be traced to institutions and incentives of different character. The gendered aspects of leaving home are changing over time and they are complex. The causation runs not only from the different roles of men and women within the family, but also from their treatment in the educational system and the labor market, together with social norms and institutions.

Conclusion

The analysis indicated that the leaving home process is complex and pointed out some important characteristics of this process in post-war Sweden. For one, there appear to be distinct differences between men and women in leaving home, some of which have been

shown in previous studies. In general, females leave the parental home about a year earlier than males. Females are also seem more likely to leave home in order to enter marriage or a cohabiting relationship and they are more likely than males to leave home for education, while males more often leave home for full-time employment. Swedish women have experienced more changes in their pattern of leaving home than Swedish men. For two, many differences in the pattern of leaving home have gendered roots. A gender aware analysis, starting out from the gender division of labor and different structures of constraint, indicates change among women and confirms this as well as a gradual change in gender roles and in the economic roles of Swedish women. One example of this is the importance of full-time employment for being able to leave home. Full-time employment is the most common activity after leaving home and even among the youngest cohort (1964) more than every second person, male or female, was engaged in full-time employment within three months after having left home. Thus, for many young adults having a job and an income is an important prerequisite for residential independence, and a crucial step towards establishing a separate household outside the parental home. This has become more important over time for the leaving home pattern of females, as indicated by their earlier nest-leaving and their high degree of labor market attachment. In modern Sweden, women are now more likely to leave home when getting employment and income. This has to do with changes in female education and skills, improved work opportunities and female-to-male wages together with new gender roles. This change of pattern is also intimately connected with the changing living arrangements of young people and cohabitation replacing marriage.

Family context also generate effects on the timing of leaving home as well as on the destinations. Parental divorce, the number of siblings and a religious upbringing are factors that all affect the decision to leave home in some way. The effects differ between males and females. Surprisingly, the social status of the family (as measured by father's occupation) did not play a large role in explaining leaving home, and neither did the mother's employment and her serving as a possible independent role model. It cannot, however, be ruled out that other, more accurate, measures of social status and maternal employment would change these results. In modern Sweden, parental resources ought not to be as important for leaving home as other aspects of family context and the child's own labor market prospects. In other words, it appears as if the *social* situation in the family (parental divorce, family composition, place

of upbringing) plays a more important role for leaving home than the *economic* situation, as measured by father's employment. At the same time, it appears as if the economic situation of the individual as well as the general economic conditions matter and play an important role for leaving home. The social situation of the family, in many ways, reproduces gender differences and thereby contributes to the gendered aspects of leaving home. The gender division of labor also reproduces gender differences and contributes to other gendered aspects of the process of leaving home. This, taken together, takes us one step further to an understanding of gender aspects of the meaning of leaving home among young men and women in post-war Sweden.

Table I Mean ages at leaving the parental home for the first time.

Cohort	Males			Females		
	Mean	Standard deviation	N	Mean	Standard deviation	N
1949	20.4	3.4	615	19.3	2.8	653
1959	20.4	2.9	369	18.6	2.3	663
1964	20.2	2.6	611	18.9	2.2	640
All	20.3	3.0	1595	18.9	2.5	1956

Source: The Swedish Family Survey.

Table II Family context after leaving home.

Cohort	Males			Females		
	Single	Marriage/ Cohabitation	N	Single	Marriage/ Cohabitation	N
1949	74 %	26 %	615	66 %	34 %	653
1959	73 %	27 %	369	65 %	35 %	663
1964	76 %	24 %	611	66 %	34 %	640

Source: See table I.

Table III Type of activity after leaving home. Males and females leaving home at or above age 17 (per cent).

	Males			Females		
	1949	1959	1964	1949	1959	1964
Primary education	2	1	1	6	2	2
Secondary education	2	3	6	4	9	11
Higher education	9	4	6	7	5	5
Other education	3	4	3	6	3	7
Part-time employment (1-24 h.)	0	0	1	1	1	2
Full-time employment (25+ h.)	59	63	57	55	58	51
Housework/parental leave	0	0	0	8	2	2
Unemployed	1	2	1	1	2	3
Military service	13	11	11	0	0	0
Other activities	6	8	7	7	10	8
N.A.	5	4	7	5	8	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	99
N	538	335	546	562	530	532

Source: See table I.

Table IV Cox regression estimates of leaving home.

	Males		Females	
	Rel.risk.	p-value	Rel.risk.	p-value
Cohort:				
1949	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.
1959	1.028	0.683	1.356	0.000
1964	1.062	0.325	1.118	0.055
Place of upbringing:				
Rural	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.
Small town	1.131	0.125	0.869	0.048
Medium town	1.062	0.424	0.863	0.035
Large town	0.965	0.683	0.576	0.000
Family context before age 16:				
With both parents	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.
Divorce before 13	1.434	0.000	1.542	0.000
Divorce 13-16	1.544	0.016	1.564	0.003
One parent dead	1.391	0.039	0.989	0.940
Other	1.288	0.146	1.443	0.014
Father's employment:				
Blue collar	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.
White collar	1.053	0.514	0.978	0.770
Self-employed (<10 empl.)	0.999	0.988	0.983	0.833
Self-employed (>10 empl.)	0.921	0.749	0.741	0.145
Farmer	0.699	0.003	0.957	0.695
Other	1.324	0.122	1.361	0.033
Mother's employment:				
Homemaker	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.
Employed	1.057	0.371	1.072	0.234
Siblings:				
None	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.

One	1.164	0.136	1.090	0.344
Two	1.293	0.014	1.268	0.010
Three	1.493	0.000	1.347	0.003
Four or more	1.499	0.000	1.412	0.000
Family religiousness:				
Non-religious	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.
Religious	0.926	0.274	0.985	0.821
Observations	1622		1960	
Events	1595		1956	
Time at risk	33332.7		37189.6	
Max log likelihood	-10280.2		-12853.4	
Chisq.	85.4		169.7	
Parameters	20		20	
Overall p-value	0.000		0.000	

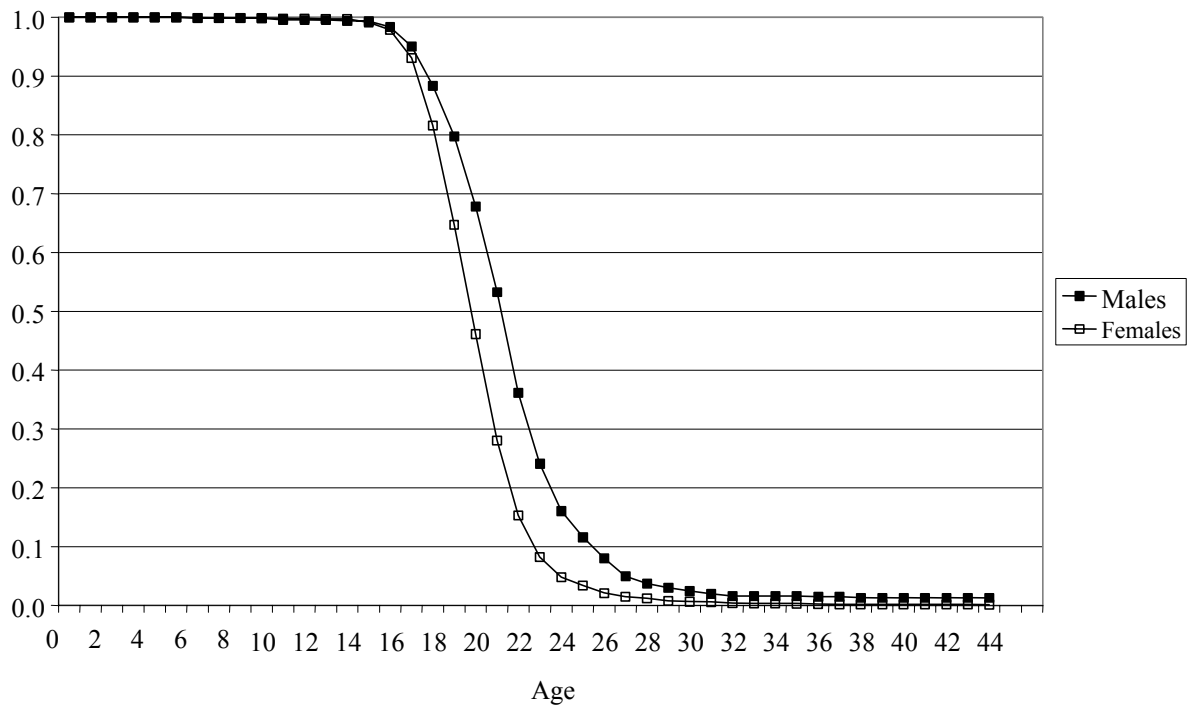
Table V Cox regression estimates of leaving home. Competing risk model by type of residence.

	Single		Married/Cohabitation	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
	Rel.risk. p-value	Rel.risk. p-value	Rel.risk. p-value	Rel.risk. p-value
Cohort:				
1949	1.000 ref.cat.	1.000 ref.cat.	1.000 ref.cat.	1.000 ref.cat.
1959	0.993 0.931	1.298 0.000	1.153 0.272	1.467 0.000
1964	1.069 0.341	1.073 0.325	1.043 0.732	1.206 0.061
Place of upbringing:				
Rural	1.000 ref.cat.	1.000 ref.cat.	1.000 ref.cat.	1.000 ref.cat.
Small town	1.220 0.035	0.816 0.018	0.897 0.481	0.994 0.961
Medium town	1.098 0.294	0.804 0.010	0.983 0.902	1.007 0.958
Large town	1.044 0.673	0.459 0.000	0.766 0.123	0.869 0.309

Family context before								
age 16:								
With both parents	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.
Divorce before 13	1.496	0.000	1.627	0.000	1.245	0.295	1.402	0.015
Divorce 13-16	1.545	0.033	1.428	0.076	1.530	0.271	1.800	0.013
One parent dead	1.452	0.037	0.988	0.948	1.161	0.680	0.998	0.995
Other	1.365	0.110	1.693	0.003	1.071	0.861	1.023	0.936
Father's employment:								
Blue collar	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.
White collar	1.104	0.284	1.080	0.418	0.931	0.644	0.836	0.142
Self-employed (<10 empl.)	1.061	0.549	1.182	0.101	0.845	0.311	0.708	0.013
Self-employed (>10 empl.)	0.804	0.503	1.161	0.502	1.238	0.616	0.199	0.006
Farmer	0.808	0.128	1.145	0.315	0.459	0.001	0.662	0.054
Other	1.558	0.027	1.533	0.014	0.711	0.446	1.115	0.679
Mother's employment:								
Homemaker	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.
Employed	1.052	0.475	1.070	0.344	1.072	0.580	1.077	0.465
Siblings:								
None	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.
One	1.186	0.153	1.108	0.373	1.110	0.597	1.060	0.695
Two	1.289	0.037	1.348	0.010	1.325	0.160	1.123	0.445
Three	1.389	0.014	1.358	0.015	1.869	0.004	1.329	0.085
Four or more	1.605	0.000	1.384	0.009	1.176	0.475	1.471	0.015
Family religiousness:								
Non-religious	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.	1.000	ref.cat.
Religious	1.026	0.752	1.150	0.066	0.662	0.007	0.691	0.003
Observations	1622		1960		1622		1960	
Events	1188		1285		407		671	
Time at risk	33332.7		37189.6		33332.7		37189.6	
Max log likelihood	-7776.3		-8521.9		-2488.4		-4301.6	

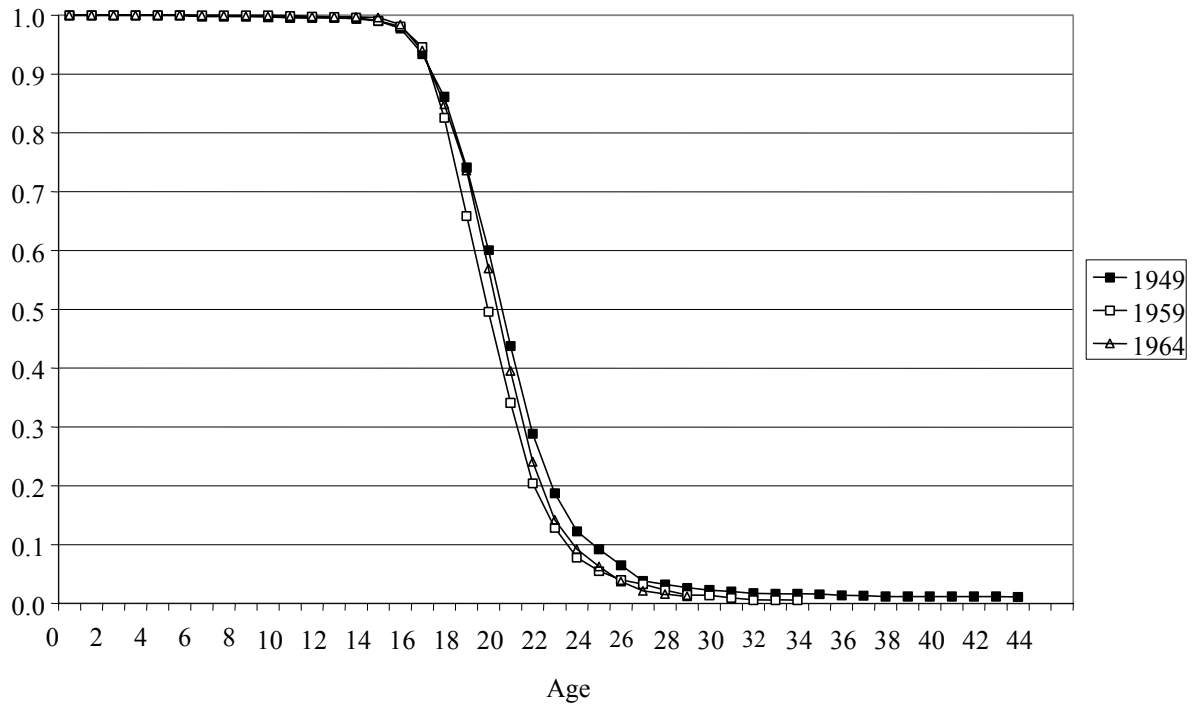
Chisq.	72.1	151.4	44.3	78.1
Parameters	20	20	20	20
Overall p-value	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000

Figure 1 Kaplan-Meier estimates of the proportion remaining in the parental home by sex.



Source: The Swedish Family Survey.

Figure 2 Kaplan-Meier estimates of the proportion remaining in the parental home by cohort.



Source: See figure 1.

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