

Leaving the parental home among children of immigrants in France

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Theoretical background

Leaving the parental home is one of the crucial steps of the transition to adulthood (Avery et al. 1992, Marini 1984). The timing, as well as the destination chosen, of this key step to independence shape later life, especially family behavior. Over the last decades, timing, and patterns of leaving home have changed considerably. Compared to previous generations, the pathways to residential independence for young adults in Western countries occur later in life (Brückner and Mayer 2005). Furthermore, the reasons for leaving home have diversified, with more young individuals opting for unmarried cohabitation and independent living instead of direct marriage as they transition from their family of origin (Goldscheider & Goldscheider 1999). It is important to differentiate between potential paths of departure from the family of origin, as distinct factors may influence the choice of leaving home for independent living, cohabitation, or marriage (Goldscheider & Goldscheider 1999, Zorlu & Mulder 2010, Iacovou 2010).

Despite the living arrangements of children of immigrants being indicative of their economic and social integration (Treas and Batalova 2011), research on the residential independence of such individuals is scarce. This research is often limited to contexts with a sufficiently long history of immigration. Studies focusing specifically on the departure from the parental home of children of immigrants have been conducted in the US (Glick and Van Hook 2002; Lei and South 2016), the Netherlands (Zorlu & Mulder 2011, de Valk & Billari 2007; Kleinepier and de Valk 2017), Sweden (Bernhardt et al. 2007), Denmark (Nielsen 2014), and Germany (Windzio, 2011). These studies highlight differences in home-leaving behaviors between most children of immigrants and the native population, influenced by their origins and the provisions of the welfare state and modes of integration. The most notable difference is the type of union at the time of leaving home. Some attribute these differences to cultural factors related to their parents' countries of origin (Impicciatore 2015), while others emphasize the challenges faced by minority youth when striving to establish themselves as adults (Andersson et al. 2016).

In France, children of immigrants now constitute a significant and growing segment of the young population. They are more likely to belong to the lower socioeconomic strata, experience higher rates of unemployment or unstable employment, and thus face greater challenges in accessing housing facilities (Safi 2008; Silberman, Alba & Fournier 2007). These factors may affect their residential autonomy, especially given the limited provisions for young adults. Their parents originate from diverse countries, potentially resulting in distinct patterns of leaving the parental home. While researchers have focused on the overall transition to adulthood among children of immigrants (Ferrari & Pailhé 2017, Impicciatore 2015, Kleinepier & de Valk 2016) and have shown that this process takes longer for children of immigrants from North Africa and Southern Europe compared to natives, a detailed analysis of the routes of departure from the family of origin is lacking.

This paper aims to address this research gap by investigating whether the process of leaving the parental home differs between children of immigrants from various countries and native individuals in France and the underlying causes for these differences.

Research aims and hypotheses

The purpose of this paper is twofold. Firstly, it seeks to explore disparities in home-leaving behavior between descendants of immigrants and native individuals in France. This exploration encompasses the manner in which they depart from their parental homes (e.g., through direct marriage, cohabitation, or independent living), the timing of their departure (i.e., the age at which they leave), and also considers these aspects from a gendered perspective. Secondly, the study aims to evaluate

the influence of the country of origin on these behaviors, considering a range of potential factors, such as cultural background, parents' socio-economic status, and life course events. To accomplish these objectives, the paper is guided by three research hypotheses:

Culture hypothesis: This posits that values and behaviors are transmitted across generations. It suggests that children of immigrants from less secularized countries or regions, where parent-child ties are emphasized, may take longer to leave the parental home compared to natives. They might also be more inclined to follow traditional pathways, such as leaving home to get married. We expect that accounting for religiosity and the length of time parents have resided in the country, any discrepancies in home-leaving patterns between children of immigrants and native individuals will be mitigated.

Opportunity structure hypothesis: This hypothesis centers on the socio-economic resources of the family of origin. Children of immigrants may face structural barriers when deciding to leave home. They might have fewer financial resources to support independent living, which could result in a delayed departure from the parental home compared to native individuals. We expect that by adjusting for socio-economic backgrounds, any remaining distinctions in home-leaving patterns between children of immigrants and native individuals will be substantially reduced.

Life course hypothesis: This hypothesis emphasizes the simultaneousness of life events and their mutual influence. Based on this hypothesis, we expect that adjusting for the transition from school to work will significantly diminish variations in home-leaving patterns between children of immigrants and native individuals, especially for groups affected by high unemployment.

Data and methods

To test the research hypotheses mentioned above, we utilize data from the "Trajectoires et Origines" surveys, conducted by the French Institute for Demographic Studies (INED) and the French National Statistical Office (INSEE) in 2008/09 (TeO) and 2019/20 (TeO2). These are national representative repeated surveys that oversample the immigrant population. The survey provides retrospective information on residential, conjugal, and employment trajectories. Our analysis focuses on two groups: immigrant descendants born and raised in France (2G) and children of immigrants who arrived in France before the age of 7 (1.5G). We compare the 2G and 1.5G samples to a sub-sample of native respondents. Due to data accessibility issues, our current analysis is based on preliminary results from the first edition only, allowing us to examine a sample of 10,786 individuals aged 18 to 50 in 2008. For the upcoming conference, our goal is to construct a pooled sample that will also include data from the second edition.

As for the analytical methods, we use a discrete-time duration model with competing risks (Allison 1982). T is the duration of stay in the parental home, from age 15 ($T = 0$) to the time at leaving home ($T = t$, with $t \leq 30$). The subsample of people who have not left the parental home yet (right-censored) represents our reference category to be compared to individuals having left home for direct marriage ($j = 1$), unmarried cohabitation ($j = 2$) or independent living ($j = 3$); $h_{ij}(t)$ is the hazard rate of leaving home for the i_{th} individual, in state j and in period t , and it is measured as the conditional probability of a transition into state j in this interval t , given the *survival* in the parental home until t :

$$h_{ij}(t) = \Pr(T_i = t_i, J = j | T_i \geq t_1 - 1), i = 1, 2, \dots, n$$

We suppose the discrete interval-specific hazard to follow multinomial logistic distribution (Allison 1982):

$$h_j(t|x_i(t)) = \frac{\exp(\alpha_j(t) + \beta_j x_i(t))}{1 + \sum_{l=1}^3 \exp(\alpha_l(t) + \beta_l x_i(t))}$$

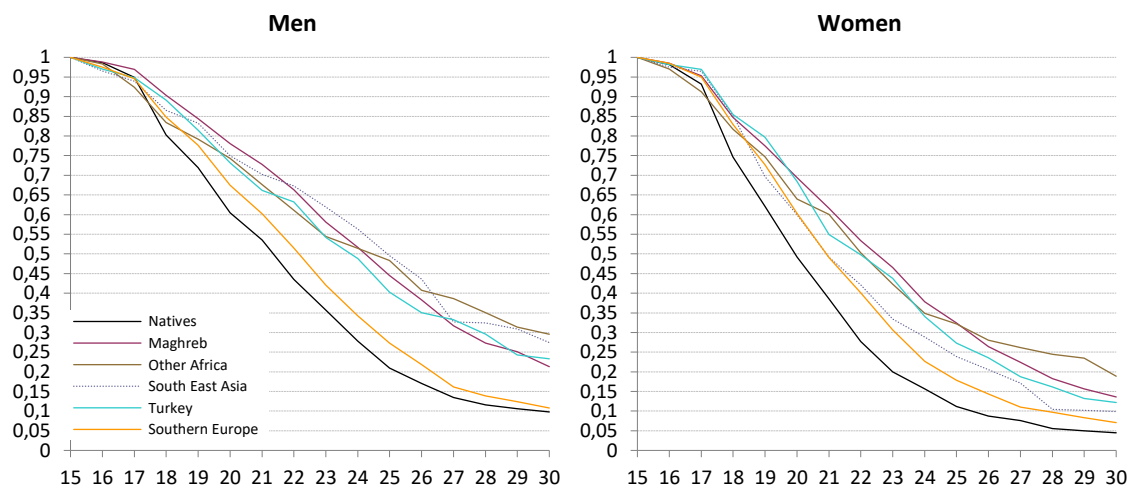
Where $x_i(t)$ is the vector of explanatory variables, β_j the corresponding parameters to be estimated, and $\alpha_j(t)$ describes the variation in the baseline hazards, which captures the destination-specific duration dependence. After having tested the proportionality of risks by origin over time, we decided to split the sample into three duration categories (from 16 to 22 years (α_1), from 23 to 26 years (α_2), and from 27 to 30 years (α_3)) and to further include an interaction term between durations spells and ethnic origin. To show how the process of transition differs by gender, the whole analysis is run separately for men and women.

The main independent variable is country of origin, with French natives considered as our reference category; other covariates include socioeconomic individual characteristics (age, cohort, time-varying education and employment), cultural background factors (mixed parentage, importance of religious upbringing), structural background variables (parental education, employment and divorce, number of siblings and experience of financial problems during childhood).

Preliminary results and conclusions

The analysis of the proportion of men and women remaining in the parental home reveals significant disparities (Figure 1). Natives, along with the majority of children of Southern Europeans, show a trend of leaving the parental home earlier in life, with a substantial portion achieving this by age 25. Conversely, approximately 50% of sons from the Maghreb, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia continue to live in the parental home by the age of 25. Moreover, men generally extend their stay in the parental home compared to women. This divergence is most pronounced in the context of Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Figure 1 Proportion of men and women staying in the parental home



Source: own elaborations on TeO1 data (INED & INSEE, 2008/09)

Estimates of the multivariate analyses are partially displayed in Table 1 (estimates for the country of origin only). Immigrants' children –both males and females- are more likely to stay in the parental home than natives. Through the comparison of variable's confidence intervals (not shown), we notice that there are no significant differences between origins.

When they leave the nest for marriage, there are generally no differences between descendants of immigrants and natives, with the important exception of sons and daughters of Turkish immigrants who show significantly higher likelihood than other ethnicities to marry directly. In addition, among females, also daughters of Maghrebins and Southern Europeans are more likely to follow this pathway than other origins; however, the former and daughters of Turkish immigrants have a significantly higher probability to leave for marriage with respect to other origins.

All young people of immigrant origin, of both sexes, show lower odds than natives to leave to start a cohabiting union. Differences between origins exist for this pathway too: daughters of immigrants from Turkey are significantly less likely to cohabit than daughters of immigrants from Southern Europe and South East Asia. However, those from Southern Europe and South East Asia are more likely to cohabit with respect to daughters of immigrants from Maghreb. For young men, only those whose parents come from Southern Europe show the same probability as natives and significantly higher probabilities than other origins to leave the parental home for cohabitation.

Leaving for independent living is also less likely for children of immigrants as compared to natives. Further, there are no significant differences among ethnic origins for this destination, with the exception of daughters of immigrants from Turkey who leave for independent living less likely than daughters of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa.

Table 1 Estimates of competing risks models by sex: average marginal effects computed on multinomial logistic coefficients.

	Males				Females			
	Stay	Marriage	Cohabitation	Indep.	Stay	Marriage	Cohabitation	Indep.
Origin: Natives (Ref)								
Maghreb	0.046***	0.000	-0.013***	-0.033***	0.069***	0.018***	-0.033***	-0.053***
Other Africa	0.046***	-0.003	-0.019***	-0.025***	0.065***	0.004	-0.030***	-0.039***
South East Asia	0.050***	-0.001	-0.017***	-0.032***	0.068***	-0.001	-0.016***	-0.051***
Turkey	0.053***	0.016***	-0.026***	-0.044***	0.086***	0.023***	-0.042***	-0.067***
Southern Europe	0.033***	0.000	-0.005**	-0.028***	0.056***	0.007***	-0.018***	-0.046***

Source: own elaborations on TeO1 data (INED & INSEE, 2008/09)

Cultural factors play a substantial role in shaping the patterns of leaving the parental home, and the extent of this influence often centers on the cultural divergence between the country of origin and the host country. For South-East Asians, South-Eastern Europeans, and Sub-Saharan Africans, whose cultural backgrounds show smaller differences from the French context, these factors are less influential. Notably, the impact of cultural factors tends to be more pronounced for women than for men, indicating that cultural traditions and norms influence more female household-leaving behaviors. Moreover, the importance of religious upbringing becomes evident in the type of first union, distinguishing between direct marriage and cohabitation. Gender disparities in household departure also emerge, with women displaying higher odds of leaving the parental home to marry or cohabit at earlier ages, irrespective of their cultural origins. This gender differential is especially pronounced among descendants of Maghreb immigrants who received a religious upbringing and among women of Turkish descent. Interestingly, female descendants of South-East Asians tend to adopt a more prevalent French model of household-leaving, which typically involves cohabitation and independent living. The variety and unconventionality of behaviors among descendants of immigrants in comparison to their country of origin reveal diverse integration processes across different cultural backgrounds. However, this pattern is less pronounced among children of Turkish immigrants, suggesting a distinct influence on their household-leaving behaviors.

The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it represents the first study in the French context. Second, it delves into the relative timing of critical life events, including gaining secure employment, completing education, initiating a union, and leaving the parental home. Additionally, it considers not only the timing of home-leaving behaviors but also the prevalence of three possible destinations: direct marriage, unmarried cohabitation, and independent living, using a competing risks approach. Third, it takes a gendered perspective in comparing several groups with vastly different cultural origins from both the host country and their respective origin countries, including Southern Europe, the Maghreb, Sub-Saharan Africa, Turkey, and Southeast Asia. This approach aids in disentangling the extent to which leaving the parental home is influenced by economic and/or normative constraints.