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## **Formation and Realisation of Moving Intentions across the Adult Life Course**

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# **Formation and Realisation of Moving Intentions across the Adult Life Course**

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## **Abstract**

In the theoretical discussion on migration and moving behaviour, it is frequently argued that life course events such as the birth of a child or entry into retirement can act as potential triggers for moving decisions. However, in order to fully understand moving behaviour, it is important to examine not just people's actual life course and moving events, but also their prior plans, as not all life course intentions and potentially related moving intentions are realised. In this paper, we analyse representative data for Norway that provide us with a rare opportunity to study these issues empirically. For the purposes of our study, we linked information from the Norwegian Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) with follow-up data from the Norwegian population register. The GGS is a representative life course survey that covers the adult population of Norway. It provides rich information on intentions in a broad range of life domains. In our multivariate analyses, we distinguish three life phases: the young adult phase, the family phase, and the retirement phase. Our outcomes confirm existing findings that moving intentions are highly predictive of subsequent behaviour. For all three life phases, we obtain highly significant associations between intentions in various life domains and moving intentions. In line with the theoretical framework, we find that the relationship between these intentions and subsequent moving behaviour is relatively weak, while the subsequent occurrence of life course events is more strongly related to actual moves.

## **Keywords**

Moving intentions, moving decisions, life course events, migration, residential mobility, Norway

## **Acknowledgements**

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## 1 Introduction and Motivation

In the recent literature on migration and residential mobility, it is often stressed that the moving decisions of individuals are best understood from a life course perspective, as at each life stage, events in various life domains can trigger or prevent moves (Findlay et al., 2015; Geist & McManus, 2008; Kley, 2011; Rossi, 1955; Thomas et al., 2016). The number of empirical studies that have taken the life course perspective has increased substantially in recent years (e.g., Coulter & Scott, 2015; De Groot et al., 2011; De Jong & Graefe, 2008; Falkingham et al., 2016; Kulu, 2008). At the same time, longitudinal life course research has made important strides in integrating both moving intentions and moving events into comprehensive analyses (e.g. De Groot et al., 2011; Kley, 2011; Lu, 1998). So far, however, only a few empirical investigations have been able to take into account that the life course events that appear to trigger moving decisions are also the result of a planning process (exceptions include Coulter & Scott, 2015 and Kley, 2011). Hence, we do not yet fully understand how moving events or the absence of such events are related to individuals' intended or unrealised moving plans, and how this relationship is affected by individuals' intentions in various life domains that might be realised or abandoned. The main aim of this paper is to contribute to closing these existing knowledge gaps. Gaining a better understanding of these relationships would improve our ability to model moving behaviour and predict future moving patterns (see also Coulter & Scott, 2015). The identification of gaps between moving intentions and realised moves among groups with specific characteristics might also allow us to detect challenges in the housing market that could be addressed by policy interventions.

For our analysis, we linked the Norwegian Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) with follow-up data from the Norwegian population register. This combination of GGS survey data and longitudinal register data is very well suited to investigating how the formation and the realisation of plans in different life domains relates to the formation and realisation of moving intentions across the whole adult life course. Our dataset covers individuals who were between the ages of 18 and 79 at the time of the interview. In line with considerations by Thomas et al. (2016), we do not specify models for the whole age range, but rather for distinct stages of the adult life course. We therefore acknowledge that the factors that affect moving intentions and their realisation are likely to differ during specific stages of the adult life course. We distinguish between the following phases: the *young adult phase*, the *family phase*, and the *retirement phase*. These phases are explained in detail below.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These phases roughly correspond to three of the four life course stages defined by Thomas et al. (2016), though we are able to specify them in greater detail as we have richer data available.

## 2 Background

In our study, we generally follow Lindenberg's (1996) theory of subjective well-being, which postulates that people commonly strive for physical and social well-being (see also Kley, 2011). These forms of well-being are achieved by means of instruments that encompass goals in specific life domains, including partnership and family, education, work life, and housing. As the *geographies of opportunities* vary by place of residence, individuals or groups might form an intention to move to a location that they perceive as providing better opportunities for reaching these goals. Existing moving intentions might or might not be implemented. From this perspective, moving intentions and decisions are seen primarily as instrumental behaviours (see Sell & De Jong, 1978; De Jong & Fawcett, 1981), which are related to goals in an individual's various life domains. For example, we expect to find that young adults seeking to enter the labour market, young couples with family formation intentions, or older employees considering retirement, will be more likely to plan and to realise a move than other individuals at a similar age without such intentions.

The understanding of moving intentions and decisions outlined above corresponds to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). This theory, which is a social-psychological model for explaining or predicting behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), guided to some degree the development of the GGS questionnaire. In the TPB, performing a behaviour is seen as a reasoned action, as it is based directly on an intention, which is itself formed through a process of reasoning. The determinants of intentions include three background factors, (1) attitudes, (2) subjective norms, and (3) perceived behavioural control; while the realisation of intentions may also be affected by actual enablers and controls. Subjective norms can be understood as social norms. Perceived behavioural control and attitudes measure to what degree an individual relates the specific behaviour to different life domains. This behaviour includes, for example, the individual's assessment of the consequences a move would have on his or her housing, partnership, employment, and financial situation (attitudes); and to what degree moving itself depends on these factors (perceived behavioural control). According to the TPB, the decision to perform a behaviour, such as moving to a new address, is directly linked to a positive (existing) intention. In addition, the impact of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control should be channelled through the intention; i.e., if we control for the intention, the three factors should have no impact on the behaviour. Finally, actual enablers and controls can be understood as objective measures of factors related to the behaviour (e.g., the individual's actual income, marital status, and terms of employment), and may have an impact on both the formulation of the intention and the actual behaviour.

The GGS includes questions that capture moving intentions, but not on the three TPB background factors for this intention. However, different intentions in other life domains are measured in the survey, and we apply them as a proxy for perceived behavioural control. For example, instead of asking whether moving is related to childbearing plans, we control for fertility intentions. Similarly, we use satisfaction with housing and neighbourhood as a proxy for attitudes in the TPB model. A similar approach was taken by Lu (1998) in his analysis of moving intentions and behaviour in the U.S. Although he also lacked direct measures of the three background factors, Lu used the TPB as a theoretical model in his study. In line with our approach, Lu (1998) defined dissatisfaction with current residence and neighbourhood as a proxy for attitudes. We differ, however, from Lu (1998) in our interpretation of factors such as income, education, and tenure status; which he considered to be proxies of perceived behavioural control. From our perspective, by contrast, such objective measures resemble the actual enablers and controls in the TPB model. Yet apart from these small deviations, our approach is very similar to the one followed by Lu (1998). We can, however, apply our approach to a much richer dataset which includes plans in various life domains.

The existing research provides support for the view that the relevance of different life domains for moving intentions and decisions shifts substantially across the adult life course (Coulter & Scott, 2015; Kan, 1999; Kley, 2011; Mulder, 1993; Thomas et al., 2016). Even though life courses are less standardised today than they were throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they still seem to occur in a rather systematic manner (Findlay et al., 2015; Geist & McManus, 2008). Among young adults, leaving the parental home, gaining access to post-secondary and tertiary education, and entering the labour market are important goals; and the desire to achieve these goals may motivate young adults to move (Thomas et al., 2015). As people reach their mid-twenties, employment-related moves remain relevant, while family formation plans tend to become increasingly important push and pull factors for migration decisions (Bielby & Bielby, 1992; Kulu & Milewski, 2007; Kulu, 2008; Sørli et al., 2012). Couples who are not yet co-residing usually consider moving in together, which implies that at least one partner needs to change his or her place of residence. In addition, when co-residing couples split up, one of the partners tends to move out quickly, while the second partner is also at greater risk of moving (De Groot et al., 2011). The birth of a(nother) child might incentivise a couple to move to a larger home. The characteristics of the neighbourhood, such as the quality of its schools and its safety levels, might be relevant in the early family phase in particular (see also Clark & Ledwith, 2006; Huinink & Kley, 2008; Landale & Guest, 1985). As children grow older, parents tend to become less willing to move over a longer distance, as a major move would mean that the children would have to change schools and lose access to their existing network of friends (Mulder &

Hooimeijer, 1999; Scanlon & Devine, 2001). As individuals pass age 50, and are thus nearing retirement, their main motivations for moving tend to shift again (Litwak & Longino, 1987; Duncombe et al., 2001). Parents whose children have already left the parental home might consider downsizing to a smaller home. Entering retirement can also motivate individuals to reflect on moving to a new home or to a new community, especially if their current housing situation is not suitable for older people.

When looking at the debate on what factors motivate moving behaviour, it is important to recognise that intentions are not equal to desires (Coulter et al., 2011; De Groot et al., 2011). For example, some survey respondents may wish to move, but do not report having a moving intention because they believe they lack the means to move. Conversely, some survey respondents may want to stay where they are, but report having an intention to move because they are being forced to move by circumstances beyond their control. The GGP questionnaire does not make a distinction between desires and intentions, and we will reflect on this issue in our discussion section.

In analysing moving intentions and behaviour, it is also relevant to note that the implications of a move might differ substantially depending on the distance involved (Niedomysl, 2011). Even if individuals are just relocating within the same residential area, such moves can have tremendous implications for the quantity and quality of available housing. Other factors, such as access to social networks or to educational and employment opportunities, are, on the other hand, less likely to be strongly affected by moves over shorter distances. If persons are moving over longer distances, either within the same country or abroad, their geographies of opportunities could change completely. In this paper, we cover in our main models all moves, regardless of their spatial dimension. But as we recognise that short- and long-distance moves may differ in nature, we present additional models in which we focus on intended and implemented moves across somewhat longer distances (i.e., across municipal boundaries). As such moves are much smaller in number, we assume that our main models cannot adequately disentangle the factors that are primarily related to moves over longer distances.

### **3 Data and Analytical Strategy**

#### **3.1 Data**

The analyses presented in this paper are based on data from the Norwegian Generations and Gender Survey (GGS), enriched with individual-level data from administrative registers. The Norwegian GGS is a representative survey of the Norwegian adult population (aged 18-79)

carried out in 2007/08, with a response rate of 60% (Lappegård & Veenstra, 2010). The original dataset includes 14,891 respondents. Using the unique person-numbers that are assigned to each resident of Norway, we were able to add specific information for the respondents from different administrative registers for the period from 2008-2011, including their registered addresses. These addresses are of central relevance for our analysis, as in line with De Groot et al. (2011), we define a moving event as a change in the address an individual reports as his or her main place of residence. To ensure that a move listed in the register had indeed occurred between the interview and the end of the observation period, it was important to check whether the address information for our respondents at the beginning of the observation period was consistent in the GGS and the register. We only kept those 11,278 respondents (76%) in the sample for which this was the case.<sup>2</sup> The respondents' moving behaviour and changes in regard to a number of other characteristics were followed up until the end of 2011.

### 3.2 Analytical Strategy

In the results section, we will first present descriptive statistics on the relationship between moving intentions and behaviour over the whole adult life course using the complete selected sample of 11,278 respondents aged 18-79 at the time of the interview. Next, in the main part of the results section, we focus on moving intentions and behaviour in three specific life phases: the *young adulthood phase*, the *family phase*, and the *retirement phase*. The analyses of these life phases are based on subsamples from the Norwegian GGS. To gain an understanding of the extent to which individuals achieve their goals, we first present descriptive statistics on the relationship between moving intentions and realised moves for the different life phases. In addition, we investigate for the full sample how goal attainment levels differ if we consider the spatial nature of the intended and/or realised move as well (i.e., within the municipality, to another municipality in Norway, abroad). This section is followed by a model section in which we again focus on our three life phases. We provide insights into how plans in specific life domains and other potentially important determinants are related to existing moving intentions;

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<sup>2</sup> We investigated whether the excluded individuals represent a very select group, which might affect our results. These checks showed that the proportion of excluded individuals was highest among the youngest respondents (under age 25) (De Groot et al., 2011, suggested similar age patterns in mismatches due to delayed reporting of moves for the Dutch register). It is likely that these young respondents with inconsistent address information were still registered in the parental household, but moved out to pursue higher education. Descriptive analyses of the registered moving behaviour of the excluded respondents after the interview did not show any systematic differences between them and the selected sample.

and how these intentions and potentially intervening events are linked to subsequent moving behaviour.

The respondents in the first phase (*young adults*) are transitioning to adulthood. Among the events and/or conditions that characterise this life course stage are leaving the parental home, entering the labour market, participating in higher education, and forming a first co-residential union. Our subsample consists of respondents who were aged 18-24 and were childless at the time of the interview ( $n=744$ ). In a comparative perspective, the upper age limit might be considered quite low (see Kley, 2011). However, individuals in Norway are comparatively young when they move out of the parental home (the median age is under 20), and when they form their first co-residential union (Dommermuth, 2009; Dommermuth & Wiik, 2014).

For our second life course stage, the *family phase*, an individual's union formation, marriage, and fertility intentions, as well as his or her current family situation, are important motivations for moving decisions. The subsample reflecting this phase consists of respondents aged 18-44 who were not living in the parental household at the time of the interview ( $n=4629$ ). Very few individuals over age 44 (still) have positive fertility intentions.

The individuals in the third phase, the *retirement phase*, are in the last stage of their working career, or are already retired. In Norway, the standard retirement age (with full pension benefits) is 67. But because most employees have the option of taking early retirement starting at age 62, the average effective retirement age was around 65 during the period 2009-2014 (OECD, 2015). Our analyses of the retirement phase are thus based on information reported by respondents who were aged 56-70 at the time of the interview ( $n=2456$ ).

In the modelling part of our analysis, we use the same modelling strategy for all three life phases by specifying two logistic regression models for each phase. In the first model, the moving intention is the dependent variable; while in the second model, we use as dependent variable whether respondents actually realised a move (see also Lu, 1998). In the latter model, we control for whether the individuals reported a moving intention at the beginning of the observation period. The variable for the moving intention is based on a question from the survey: "*Do you intend to move within the next three years*"; with the valid response categories "*yes*" or "*no*". The variable capturing the moving behaviour is based on the individual's registered address at the time of the interview, and at the end of the years 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011. If the addresses differ at any of these points, the respondent is considered to have moved. Unlike De Groot et al. (2011), we also take into account moves abroad (registered as emigrated in the population



register).<sup>3</sup> Respondents who died within the observation period after the interview are excluded from all analyses.

In line with the theoretical framework that defines moving as an instrument to achieve other goals (De Jong & Fawcett, 1981), the most important covariates in our models are intentions and events in the various life domains of an individual. After transferring these covariates to the general TPB model on decision-making, we apply intentions in different life domains as a proxy for perceived behavioural control, and expect to find that they have a direct impact on the formulation of moving intentions. In the GGS, all of the questions related to intentions ask respondents whether they have specific intentions, such as whether they intend to have a(nother) child within the next three years. In the models on the young adult phase, we consider intentions related to moving in with a partner, having a first child, and finishing education. In the models on the family phase, we control for the intention to move in with a partner, the intention to have a(nother) child, and the intention to change jobs. In the retirement phase, we focus on the intention to enter retirement.

Regretfully, the agreement with the GGS respondents regarding which of their follow-up data could be derived from the population register does not cover all of the dimensions we would have liked to have included. We can, however, capture whether an individual has a(nother) child or enters retirement (by whether a person starts receiving pension benefits). Related to the intention to finish education, we control for whether the highest level of education has changed in the years after the interview. We use this information in those models that focus on the moving behaviour. Unfortunately, we are not able to monitor all possible shifts in the respondent's relationship status, as we are not allowed to look at changes in the household composition. The latter information would, for example, be helpful for identifying changes in cohabiting unions, which are widespread in Norway (Lappegård et al., 2014). We are also not able to track whether an individual changed employers. For cases in which we cannot control for whether an intention in another life domain was realised, we retain the information on intentions and union status/employment situation at the time of the interview in the second behaviour model of each of the three life phases. As individuals may intend to move in anticipation of or after an upcoming event, we do not place any restrictions on the order of the events we observe in the period after the interview.

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<sup>3</sup> For those respondents who moved abroad, we have no information on life course events that occurred after leaving Norway. But as their share of the sample is very small (see results sections), we do not expect this lack of information to introduce substantial bias into our analysis.

In addition to the intention questions, we include socio-demographic variables, such as age and sex. We also account for whether the respondents indicated they were satisfied with their housing and their neighbourhood at the time of the survey. We apply these measures as a proxy for attitudes in the TPB model, and expect to find that dissatisfaction with housing and neighbourhood increases the likelihood of having a positive moving intention. Within our employment and retirement intention covariates, we control for individuals' general employment status and/or whether they are in education. We also have information on the respondents' declared income at the time of the interview and in the follow-up period. We considered different specifications for these income data, as they also allow us to control for changes in income. But implementing controls for changes in income in a meaningful and consistent manner across the three life course phases turned out to be quite difficult, as individuals of different ages vary considerably in their likelihood of moving from employment to inactivity, and vice-versa. We therefore settled on a rather simple specification that uses income as an indicator of social status. In the intention model, we control for the income quartiles, specified for each life phase, at the time of the interview. For the behavioural model, we instead use the income quartiles in the follow-up period between 2008 and 2011. We are also able to control for whether the respondents were living in rented or owned housing (either alone or with their parents) at the time of the interview. Compared to people who own their home, those who rent are more likely to move, as they are less financially tied to their current housing situation (De Groot et al., 2011).

For individuals in the retirement phase, we can also account for whether they reported that their current housing situation is adequate for older people. Moreover, we are able to check whether the respondents had moved in the year before the interview; information that might allow us to identify individuals who move frequently, or who might be more likely to make an adjustment move after a recent move. In order to control for differences between urban and rural areas, we use a characterisation of Norwegian communities provided by Statistics Norway that allows us to distinguish the most central municipalities from more peripheral municipalities.<sup>4</sup> In central municipalities, housing markets tend to be tighter, which could make it more difficult for people to realise their intended moves.

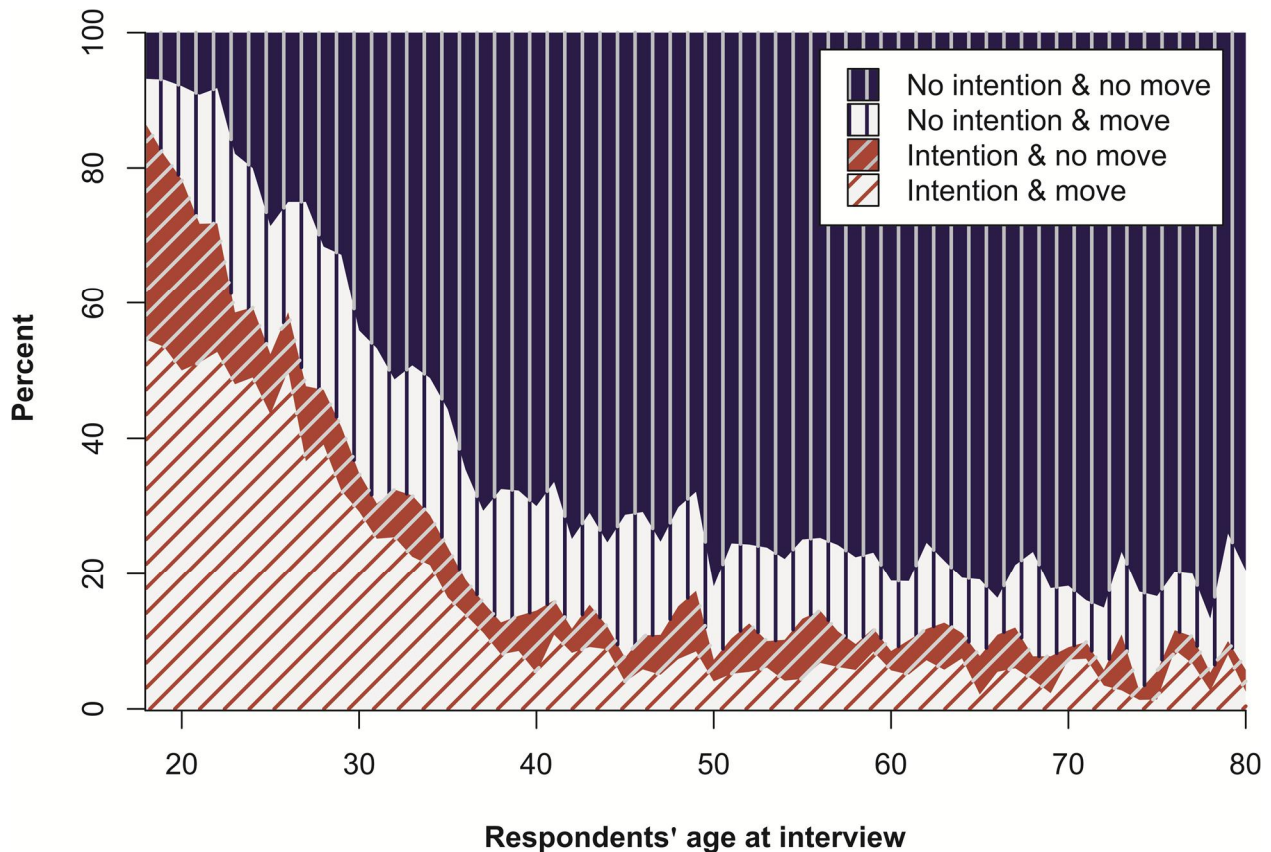
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<sup>4</sup> Centrality is a measure of a municipality's geographical position in relation to a centre where higher order services are available (banks, post offices, etc.). We distinguish between the most central municipalities (which normally have a population of at least 50,000 and fulfil the function of a regional centre) versus all other municipalities.

## 4 Results

In Figure 1, we display the distribution of moving intentions and subsequent moving behaviour by the ages of the respondents at the time of the interview. This distribution allows us to investigate to what degree positive or negative moving intentions are realised. For Figure 2, we calculated the average proportion by five-year age groups to show the main differences across age. It provides the sum of respondents with a moving intention (sum of the two lower surfaces in Figure 1), the sum of respondents with an actual move (sum of the second and fourth surfaces in Figure 1), and the sum of respondents who acted on their intentions (i.e., they wanted to move and did so, or they did not want to move and did not change their place of residence).

**Figure 1.** Moving intentions and moving behaviour by age

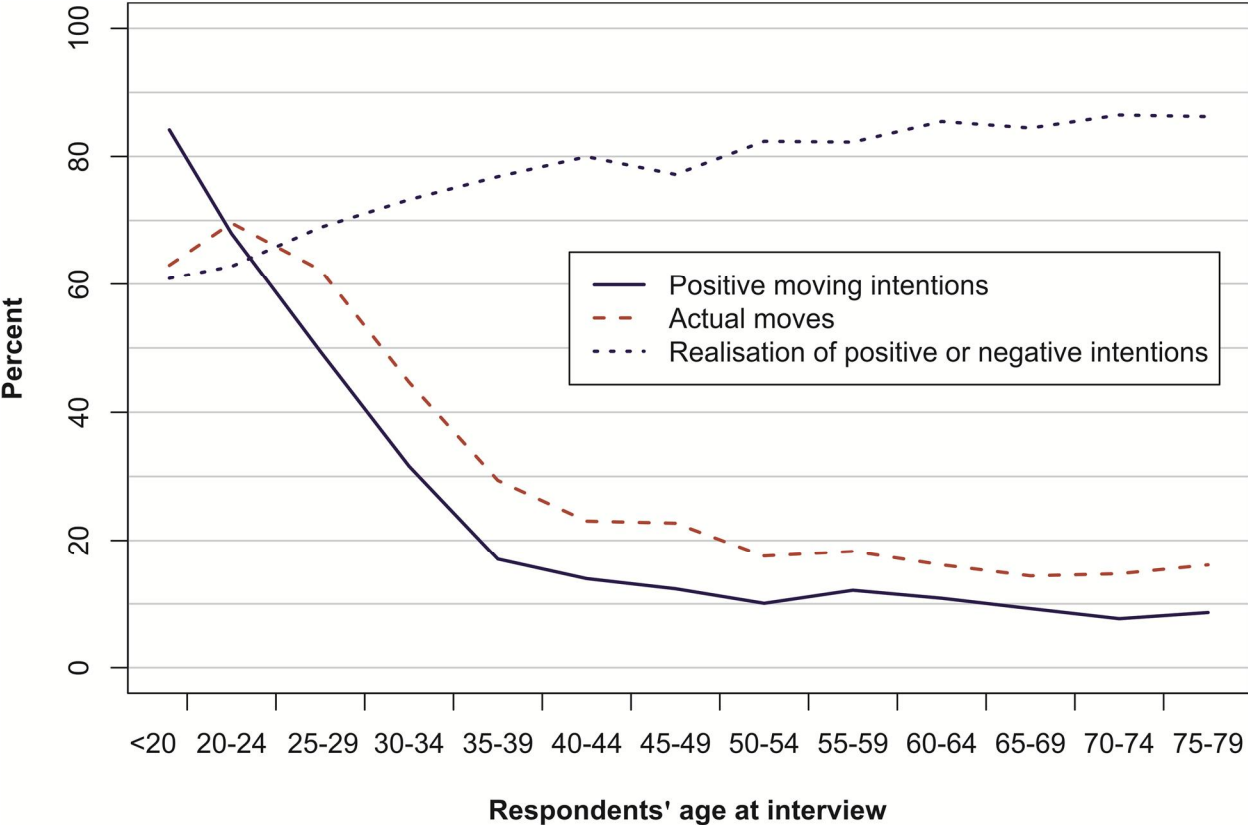


Source: Norwegian GGS, Norwegian Population Register; own calculations

The outcomes confirm existing knowledge that intentions and behaviour, as well as levels of realisation or non-realisation of intentions, vary substantially across the adult life course. The proportion of individuals who stated a positive moving intention is highest among the youngest respondents: i.e., at about 80% among those aged 18-20, and more than 55% among those aged

21 to 29 (see Figure 2). Interestingly, among the respondents aged 22 or under, the proportion that indicated a positive intention exceeds the proportion who did actually move; primarily because a relatively large share of the young respondents did not realise stated moving intentions.

**Figure 2.** Specific combinations of moving intentions and behaviour by age groups



Source: Norwegian GGS, Norwegian Population Register; own calculations

While the proportion of respondents with a positive moving intention at interview is very large among younger adults, it decreases sharply across those aged 18 and 39. The share of respondents who actually moved peaks among those aged 20-24, but falls rapidly across those aged 25-40. Among the respondents aged 40 and older, we observe few differences across ages. However, like among respondents aged 25-40, the shares of respondents aged 40 and older who stated an intention to move are about 5% to 10% lower than the shares of those who actually moved (see Figure 2). The shares of respondents whose subsequent moving behaviour is consistent with their positive and negative moving intentions are lowest at young adult ages (app. 60%), and increase gradually across ages to more than 80% at ages 50 and older (Figure 2). The

largest proportions of respondents with unintended moves are not, however, among those at the youngest ages; but among those aged 23 to 35, at more than 20% (see Figure 1).

**Table 1.** Moving intentions and moving behaviour in three life phases

	Young adults	Family phase	Retirement phase
<b>Intention and move</b>	52.4%	20.6%	5.5%
<b>Intention and no move</b>	21.9%	6.3%	5.1%
<b>No intention and move</b>	16.4%	18.9%	10.3%
<b>No intention and no move</b>	9.3%	54.2%	79.1%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>N</b>	744	4629	2456

Source: Norwegian GGS, Norwegian Population Register; own calculations

Differences in the levels of moving intentions and moving behaviour across the life course also become clearly visible in the descriptive statistics for the three selected life phases (see Table 1). Moving intentions and actual moves are most common among the young adults, and least common among the retirees. Among the respondents in the family phase, we find a comparatively high proportion of individuals with unintended moves; while among the young adults, unrealised positive moving intentions explain the comparatively low realisation rate visible in Figure 2.

**Table 2.** Moving intentions and moving behaviour by type of move – all respondents (N=11,278)

	No move	Moved within the same municipality	Moved to a different municipality	Moved abroad	Total
<b>No intention to move</b>	80.7%	15.0%	4.2%	0.1%	100%
<b>Intention to move within the same municipality</b>	32.3%	56.8%	10.5%	0.5%	100%
<b>Intention to move to a different municipality</b>	27.9%	18.3%	53.5%	0.3%	100%
<b>Intention to move abroad</b>	36.1%	32.8%	17.7%	13.5%	100%
<b>Does not know where to move</b>	43.6%	30.3%	22.9%	3.2%	100%
<b>Total</b>	70.3%	20.5%	8.9%	0.4%	100%

Note: For the categorisation of the realised moves we considered the first move recorded.

Source: Norwegian GGS, Norwegian Population Register; own calculations

The extent to which respondents attain their moving goals might differ depending on whether the intended and/or realised move is to a location within the same municipality, to another municipality in Norway, or to another country. In Table 2, we present the relationship between moving intentions and subsequent behaviour for these different types of moves for the full selected sample. The table shows that when the type of move is considered as well, the share of respondents who attained their goals is lower, but is still quite substantial in most sub-categories. Among the respondents who stated an intention to move within the same municipality, 56.8% actually relocated within the same town or city in their first move after the interview. Among the respondents who said they intend to move to a different municipality, the share who made such a move as first move is 53.5%. We find very low levels of goal attainment only for intended moves to other countries. Of respondents who reported an intention to move abroad, just 13.5% actually moved abroad, while 36.1% did not move at all.

### **Young adults**

The model outcomes for the young adult phase are presented in Table A1 in the appendix, with model 1 focusing on intentions, and model 2 on behaviour. This group includes respondents who were aged 18-24 and childless at the time of the interview. For respondents for whom we are able to control for events in their life course after the interview, these variables are marked in the table with an arrow in the front of the variable description. The model results provide support for the view that a moving intention is a good predictor of subsequent behaviour. With a value of 1.81, the odds ratio (OR) is far above one, and is highly significant (see model 2 in Table A1).

The existing intentions in different life domains are partially associated with moving intentions, while the association between these intentions and realised behaviour is somewhat weaker. When we look at intentions related to union status, we see that those respondents who were in a non-residential union at the time of the interview, and who wanted to move in with their partner, were most likely to report a moving intention. Their odds ratio (2.45) is significantly higher than that of our reference group, which covers individuals who were not living with their partner, and who had no intention of moving in with him or her. Respondents who had no partner at the time of the interview, or who were already living in a co-residential union, have odds ratios far below one. These ratios are, however, not significantly different from the ratios of the reference category. If we look at the moving behaviour, we see the unexpected outcome that those respondents who were in a non-residential union at the time of the interview and said they intend to move in with a partner are actually less likely to have moved than the reference group in the observation period after the interview (2007/08-2011); although the difference is not significant.

The only significant outcome is that individuals without a partner at the time of the interview are less likely to have moved (OR: 0.56). These mixed outcomes might be attributable to the rather high frequency of union status changes among young adults, a factor for which we cannot adequately control with the available data.

As expected, the odds ratio to have stated a moving intention is higher among the respondents who also reported having a childbearing intention compared to those without a childbearing intention. However, the difference is not significant. In model 2 on subsequent behaviour, in which we control for having had a child since the time of the interview, we actually obtain a significantly higher odds ratio of having moved (OR: 1.95). For the intention to finish education, our reference category is made up of respondents who were in education at the time of the interview, and who were not planning to graduate within the next three years. In the intention model, all of our other three categories reported significantly higher odds ratios. These categories include respondents who were employed, who intended to finish education within the next three years, or who were in other situations (e.g., unemployment or military service). As we cannot directly control for whether a respondent who was in education at the time of the interview completed his or her vocational training or studies, we use as a proxy covariate changes in the highest level of education in the period after the interview. In the model that takes into account subsequent moving behaviour, our results indicate that young adults whose highest level of education changed are more likely to have moved (OR: 1.32). If we exclude the variables that control for the main activity at the time of the interview, this difference becomes significant at the 5% level (results not shown). Compared to respondents who were in education at the time of the interview, those who were already employed are significantly less likely to have moved during the subsequent observation period (OR: 0.68).

Among our socio-demographic background variables, we do obtain among the controls for sex elevated odds ratios for females both in the intention model (OR: 1.25) and the behaviour model (OR: 1.41), with the latter being significant. In our analysis of the income levels at the time of the interview, we get the unexpected outcome that the respondents with higher income levels are the least likely to have stated a moving intention. But if we look at the respondents' subsequent behaviour while controlling for income levels in the period 2008-2011, we actually find evidence of a positive income gradient. Compared to the respondents in our reference category (lowest quartile), the respondents in the highest income quartile have an odds ratio of 4.40. In our analysis of the housing situation, our reference group is formed by respondents who were still living with their parents in a home owned by their parents. In contrast to them, individuals who had already left the parental home before the interview are significantly less likely to have stated a moving intention. But if we look at subsequent behaviour, we observe that only those

respondents who had left the parental home at the time of the interview, and were in rented accommodations, are significantly more likely to have moved (OR: 2.28). A consistency between the intention and behaviour model is that those respondents who said they were not satisfied with their housing situation are more likely to have reported a moving intention (OR: 3.75) and to have moved (OR: 2.88). Dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood is, on the other hand, not significantly associated with the moving intentions and decisions of the young adults, although the odds ratio of the respondents who said they were dissatisfied is elevated in the intention model.

As we mentioned above, we have also calculated alternative models that focus on intentions to move at least across municipal borders (vs. intentions to not move or to move within the same municipality), and on moves in which the respondents crossed at least one municipal border (vs. did not move or moved within the same municipality). In the behaviour model, the predictive power of the moving intention is also significant and substantially higher (OR: 3.95 in comparison to 1.81). In addition, we obtain in both models significant differences by sex, as women are more likely than men to have said they intended to move (OR: 2.33) and to have moved across municipal boundaries (OR: 1.77).

### **Family phase**

The family phase models are presented in Table A2 in the appendix. Respondents in the family phase were aged 18-44 at the time of the interview, and had left the parental home. The intention to move is an even more important indicator of subsequent behaviour among this group than among the young adults, with the odds ratio being 5.08. In examining the union status of these respondents, we chose a reference category that differs from the category used for the young adults in order to account for differences in the distribution of cases across the considered categories. For the family phase, the reference category is made up of individuals who were at interview cohabiting with a partner and had no intention to marry. Compared to this group, the individuals who were in a non-residential union at the time of the interview are significantly more likely to have reported a moving intention, and to have moved in the follow-up period. This is the case for those who both did and did not say they intended to move in with a partner. Married people are significantly less likely to have moved.

The individuals who said in the interview they intended to have a(nother) child are significantly more likely to have also stated a moving intention (OR: 1.57). In controlling for children born after the interview, we faced the problem that a control for this event would overlap with our



variable age of the youngest child at the end of the observation period. We thus decided to create in the latter measure two categories that comprise children who were born after the interview.<sup>5</sup> Those respondents whose youngest child was born after the interview have the highest odds ratios of having moved. Compared to the reference group, which is made up of those respondents whose youngest child was aged 6-12 at the end of 2011, the odds ratio is 2.43 for those whose youngest child was aged 0-1 at the end of 2011, and 1.75 among those whose youngest child was aged 2-4 at that point in time. These differences are significant. Additional tests in which we changed the reference groups provide evidence that the odds ratios of these two groups with very young children are also significantly higher than the odds ratios of the other categories, which include respondents with no children under age 18 (OR: 1.33), with a youngest child aged 4-5 (OR: 1.21), or with a youngest child aged 13-17 (OR: 1.16). For employment, we use as our reference category the respondents who were in employment at the time of the interview and who did not report an intention to change jobs. The respondents in this group are significantly less likely to have reported a moving intention than the respondents in the other two groups, which include those who said they intended to change jobs (OR: 1.87), and those in other situations (e.g., in education or unemployed, OR: 1.46). In our analysis of subsequent moving behaviour we find little difference between the respondents who did and did not report an intention to change jobs.

When we look at the socio-demographic variables, we see that our models generate clear support for the existence of a negative age gradient for both moving intentions and subsequent behaviour. However, we find no significant gender differences. The ages of the respondents' children seem to be relevant, as the respondents whose youngest child was aged 2-12 at the time of the interview are less likely to have said they intended to move. This is in line with the findings for the behavioural model which we already discussed above when discussing the relevance of the birth of a child during the observation period.

Our analysis of the role of income indicates there is a positive gradient in the likelihood of intending to move, with the respondents in the third and fourth quartiles having significantly higher odds ratios than the respondents in our reference category (first quartile). We also see this gradient when we look at moving behaviour, but unlike in the young adults group, it appears that these differences are not significant in the family phase model. As among the young adults, we find that the family phase respondents who were in rented housing were more likely than their counterparts who owned their home to have stated an intention to move (OR: 4.61) and to have made a move (OR: 2.40). Another consistent outcome is that those respondents who said they

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<sup>5</sup> These categories include births of children who died during the observation period.

were not satisfied with their housing have significantly higher odds ratios in terms of both intentions and behaviour. We find, however, a difference when we look at dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood. Individuals in the family phase that were dissatisfied with the neighbourhood are significantly more likely to have said they intended to move (OR: 3.33) and to have moved (OR: 1.21). The respondents who were living in a central municipality are more likely to have stated a moving intention (OR: 2.12), whereas they hardly differ from the other respondents in their behaviour.

In our alternative models, in which we focus on intentions for moves and moving events that at least crossed municipal boundaries, we find that—in line with the results of the models for the young adults—the respondents' intentions regarding such moves have an even greater predictive power for subsequent moves of this kind (OR: 11.79 vs. 5.01 in model 4). Furthermore, they show that the age gradient for moving behaviour across municipal borders is less steep, and that only the respondents in the oldest age category of 40-44 have a significantly lower likelihood of having moved (reference category: 30-34 years). The differences by the age of the youngest child are also somewhat steeper in the behaviour model when only moves across municipality boundaries are considered. Compared to the reference group made up of the respondents with a youngest child aged 6-12, the respondents with no children under age 18 (OR: 1.93) and the respondents with a youngest child under age one (OR: 2.85) or aged 2-4 (OR: 2.39) have higher odds ratios than in the main models. The outcomes also differ for respondents who were living in central municipalities at interview. While model 4 on all moves shows no big differences by centrality of the municipality, persons in central municipalities are significantly more likely to have made a move across municipality boundaries (OR: 1.37).

### **Retirement phase**

The retirement phase models are presented in Table A3 of the appendix. This group consists of the respondents who, at the time of the interview, were aged 56-70, and were either retired or still employed. Of the three groups studied, these individuals are the least likely to have reported a moving intention (see Table 2). But we again find that moving intentions are significantly related with subsequent behaviour, with this group having the highest odds ratio of the three groups (OR: 7.32 in model 6). In our analysis of plans in other life domains, we can control for the intention to retire. In the intention model 5, the reference group is made up of employed respondents who said in the interview that they do not intend to retire within the next three years. Compared to this reference group, employed respondents who stated an intention to retire are exhibiting an elevated odds ratio to have also reported a moving intention in the survey (OR:

1.87). The odds ratio is also significantly elevated for the category that covers all other individuals including those who were already retired at the time of the interview (OR: 1.55). But in our analysis of subsequent moving behaviour in model 6, we find no significant differences between those who moved from employment to retirement and our reference group, which is made up of those respondents who were still in employment at the end of the observation period. The odds ratio is, however, in the expected direction (OR: 1.22).

When we look at the socio-demographic controls, we again detect no significant differences by sex. Moving intentions seem to decrease with age, while there is no clear trend across age when we look at subsequent behaviour. Of our income controls, none is significant. In our analysis of union status, we find that the respondents who were married or were cohabiting at the time of the interview have significantly lower odds ratios of reporting a moving intention than the reference group, which is made up of respondents who were not in a union. If we focus on housing conditions, we again see that the respondents who were renting are more likely to have reported a moving intention (OR: 2.99). The same is true for those who reported in the interview that their housing was not suitable for older people (OR: 3.91). However, when we look at subsequent behaviour, we find for the two aforementioned housing-related variables odds ratios above one, but these values are not significantly higher than those of the reference categories (homeowners or those in housing considered suitable for older people). Similar to the family phase, we observe a disparity between the intention and behaviour models in the covariate that refers to living in a central municipality. Those who were living in a central municipality at the time of the interview are significantly more likely to have reported a positive moving intention than the reference group, which consists of all other respondents. But if we look at the behaviour model, we see that those respondents who lived in a central municipality at the time of the interview are significantly less likely to have moved. For those respondents who indicated they were not satisfied with their housing, we find significant odds ratios of above one in both models. This corresponds with the model outcomes for the other two life phases. Similar to the family phase, we obtain also for the retirement phase a significant outcome in both models for satisfaction with the neighbourhood, as those respondents who said they were not satisfied are more likely to have stated a moving intention (OR: 2.20) and to have moved (OR: 1.37).

If we focus in this subsample on (intended) moves in which the respondents at least crossed municipal boundaries, we end up with a very small number of cases with positive intentions and realised moves. Nevertheless, we get highly significant outcomes for the predictive power of a moving intention, with an odds ratio of 26.7. In line with the outcomes for the family phase, we also obtain differences by the centrality of the municipality. While persons who were living in central municipalities are significantly less likely to have made any move (OR: 0.64), their odds

ratio to have made a move across municipality boundaries is elevated (OR: 1.45), though not significant. Apart from the discussed aspects, the few other significant variables do not diverge substantially from our main models on the retirement phase.

## **5 Discussion and Conclusion**

Our results for Norway confirm existing findings that moving intentions are highly predictive of subsequent moving behaviour (e.g., Coulter & Scott, 2015; Kley, 2011; Lu, 1998). We obtained evidence which supports this claim in all of the adult life course stages we studied. The evidence seems to be especially clear for the family and retirement phases, and for moves other than local residential moves. The strong link we identified between intentions and behaviour fits within the theoretical framework of the TPB. In line with our theoretical understanding of moves as an instrument for pursuing various life goals (Sell & De Jong, 1978; De Jong & Fawcett, 1981) and the TPB model (Ajzen, 1991), we found in all three life phases highly significant associations between plans in various life domains and moving intentions. Our results on moving behaviour are also in line with the TPB, as our models provide support that the impact of intentions in different life domains on actual moving behaviour is channelled through moving intentions. This means that intentions in various life domains have no direct predictive power on moving behaviour, provided we control for moving intentions. If, for example, the moving intention is removed as an explanatory variable from the behaviour model in the family phase, the intention to change jobs has a significant positive impact on actual moves. The actual behaviour of an individual in various life domains is, however, directly linked to the individual's moving behaviour.

Interestingly, among the young adults, we found that fertility intentions are not significantly associated with moving intentions. A possible explanation for this result is that the respondents in this subsample are relatively young (under 25 years old), and the few who had a childbearing intention may have already obtained adequate housing. The birth of a first child is, however, positively related to actual moves. For the family phase, our results corroborate existing findings that plans related to childbearing are highly positively associated with moving intentions, while childbearing behaviour is linked to realised moves. On the other hand, having children aged 2-12 seems to decrease the likelihood that a move is planned or implemented, especially across longer distances. These outcomes align with theoretical considerations that parents with children of these ages are less inclined to move, as they fear that a move would disrupt the social development of the child (Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999; Scanlon & Devine, 2001).

Around retirement, many people seem to reconsider their living arrangements. But our models suggest that moving intentions expressed in that life course stage are more ambivalent in nature, and are often not realised. The outcomes for both the retirement and the family phases suggest that people who live in central municipalities are especially unlikely to realise moving intentions. These findings are remarkable given that we are looking at moving intentions, which, unlike mere moving desires, are generally reported primarily by those individuals who believe they can implement their moving plans. Interestingly, when it comes to moves across municipality boundaries, the odds ratios rather point in the direction that inhabitants of central municipalities are more likely to move. One possible interpretation of these outcomes is that individuals living in central municipalities face difficulties if they want to realise moving plans within the central municipality—an issue that could be addressed through policy interventions. However, at this stage we can also not rule out alternative explanations such as that this gap might be attributable to higher levels of ambivalence among these individuals, or to the greater proneness of people living in central municipalities to experiencing intervening events that could cause them to abandon moving intentions.

In line with the findings of Coulter and Scott (2015) for Great Britain, our results show few differences by sex (after controlling for all other factors). The only group for whom we found gender differences are the young adults, which indicate that women are more likely to move than males. It would be interesting to explore in future research whether this gender gap is an age or a cohort effect. An argument in favour of the gap being an age effect is that the existing research shows that women experience a number of life course events earlier in life than men. These events include moving out of the parental home, living in a co-residential union, and the transition to parenthood. The generally low gender disparities we obtain for Norway might be specific to that country, as gender inequality levels are low in Norway. The results might be different for countries with greater gender role distinctions (evidence from Lu, 1998, for the U.S. points in this direction).

We applied dissatisfaction with the housing situation and neighbourhood as a proxy for attitudes in the TPB model. According to the TPB, attitudes have a direct impact on intentions, but not on the behaviour under control of the intention. However, we found that dissatisfaction with the housing situation seems to be an important determinant of intentions *and* of moving behaviour across all three life course phases. This is in line with observations made by Lu (1998) for the U.S. A possible explanation for this discrepancy between the TPB model and our results is that we lack objective measures of the individuals' housing situation (e.g., size and quality of the dwelling, noise exposure, social profile of neighbourhood). Future research might investigate whether the direct link between dissatisfaction with the housing situation and subsequent moving

behaviour remains after controlling for such housing characteristics. When we turn to satisfaction with the neighbourhood, previous studies that captured this aspect with slightly different controls have provided evidence for a negative impact on moving intentions, and to some degree on subsequent moving behaviour (Lu, 1998; Coulter & Scott 2015). Our findings indicate that the relevance of neighbourhood characteristics varies across the life course. Among young adults, dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood is not significantly related with moving intentions and behaviour. But for the family and retirement phases, we found significant positive associations between dissatisfaction and both moving intentions and behaviour.

We were rather surprised that we observed relatively few significant differences for our income controls, as other studies have found significant positive gradients in the association between income and moving behaviour, even after controlling for moving intentions (De Groot et al., 2011, for the Netherlands). In our models on behaviour, we obtained a significant positive gradient only among the young adults. However, the non-significant odds ratios we obtained in the behaviour model we applied to the respondents in the family phase are at least in the expected direction.

While we have access to rich data, we were not able to control adequately for a number of events that might have affected the link between moving intentions and actual moving behaviour. For example, because precise measures of the respondents' union status after the survey were not available, we had to rely on the information from the interview, and include related intentions (e.g., intention to move in with a partner). In line with the TPB model, our results suggest that such intentions had no direct impact on actual moves when we controlled for moving intentions. In addition, the GGS data only allowed us to look at moving intentions, and did not include information on desires. Therefore, we focused on the second stage of the decision-making process, in which individuals had already developed an intention to move (see also Coulter et al., 2011). Nevertheless, we believe that the rich data we have access to enabled us to disentangle how plans and events in various life domains are related to the formation and realisation of moving plans and events at different stages of the life course. The comparison of our findings with research outcomes by Coulter and Scott (2015) for Great Britain, De Groot et al. (2011) for the Netherlands, Kley (2011) for Germany, and Lu (1998) for the U.S. was very fruitful; and we hope that in the future similar research based on longitudinal data will be conducted for other countries. An enriched cross-country comparative perspective is likely to further increase our understanding of how the formation and realisation of plans in various life domains of individuals are relevant for the formation and realisation of moving intentions across the life course. We hope that these insights will also improve our ability to predict future moving and migration patterns.

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**Table A1.** Logistic regressions: Moving intentions and behaviour among young adults (odds ratios)

	Moving Intention Model 1	Moving Behaviour Model 2
<b>Positive moving intention</b> (Ref.: No)	-	1.81***
<b>Union status at interview</b> (Ref.: Non-residential union, no intention to live together)		
Co-residential union	0.66	0.78
Non-residential union, with intention to live together	2.45**	0.78
No partner	0.77	0.56*
<b>Intention to have a first child within three years</b> (Ref.: No)	1.24	
à <b>Childbirth after interview</b> (Ref.: No)		1.95**
<b>Main activity at interview</b> (Ref.: On-going education, no intention to graduate)		-
à <b>Main activity by 12/2011</b> (Ref.: On-going education)	-	
Employed	1.80*	0.68*
On-going education, intention to graduate within three years	1.84*	-
Other main activity	2.35*	0.67
à <b>Change in highest level of education</b>		1.32
<b>Housing situation at interview</b> (Ref.: With parents, homeowners)		
With parents, rented	0.77	1.15
Moved out of parental home, homeowner	0.21***	0.95
Moved out of parental home, rented	0.32***	2.28***
à <b>Moved within one year prior to interview</b> (Ref.: No)	0.53**	1.09
<b>Living in central municipality at interview</b> (Ref.: Less or non-central municipality)	1.64**	1.39*
<b>Not satisfied with housing at interview</b> (Ref.: Satisfied)	3.75***	2.88***
<b>Not satisfied with neighbourhood at interview</b> (Ref.: Satisfied)	1.37	1.01
<b>Income at interview</b> (Ref.: Lowest income quartile)		-
à <b>Income, average of period 2008-2011</b> (Same ref.)	-	
2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile	0.50**	2.76***
3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile	0.67	2.71***
4 <sup>th</sup> quartile	0.30***	4.40***
<b>Age at interview</b> (Ref.: 20 years)		
18 years	1.70	1.21
19 years	0.89	1.11
21 years	1.08	0.95
22 years	1.18	1.01
23 years	0.60	1.10
24 years	0.96	0.77
<b>Sex</b> (Ref.: Men)	1.25	1.41*
<b>Intercept</b>	3.46**	0.46
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.19	0.14
<b>N/N with intention</b>	744/553	
<b>N/N with move</b>		744/512

\* $p < 0.1$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ 

Note: Where we are able to control for changes in the life of respondents after the interview, these variables are marked in the table with an arrow in front of the variable description.

Source: Norwegian GGS, Norwegian Population Register; own calculations

**Table A2.** Logistic regressions: Moving intentions and behaviour in the family phase (odds ratios).

	Moving Intention Model 3	Moving Behaviour Model 4
<b>Positive Moving intention</b> (Ref.: No)	-	5.08***
<b>Union status at interview</b> (Ref.: Cohabitation, no marriage intention)		
Married	0.89	0.79**
Cohabitation, intention to marry within three years	1.21	0.91
Non-residential union, intention to live together	3.31***	1.53**
Non-residential union, no intention to live together	2.12***	1.56**
No union	1.07	1.01
<b>Intention to have a(nother) child within three years</b> (Ref.: No)	1.57***	-
<b>Children</b> (Ref.: Youngest child aged 6-12 at interview → by 12/2011)		
No child under age 18 (→ By 12/2011)	1.89***	1.33**
Pregnant or youngest child aged 0-1 (→ 0-1 years by 12/2011)	1.92***	2.43***
Youngest child aged 2-5 (→ 2-4 years by 12/2011)	1.12	1.75***
→ Youngest child aged 4-5 by 12/2011, born before interview	-	1.21
Youngest child aged 13-17 (→ By 12/2011)	1.81***	1.16
<b>Main activity at interview</b> (Ref.: Employed, no intention to change jobs)		
Employed, intention to change jobs within three years	1.87***	1.01
Others (in education, unemployed, in early retirement, etc.)	1.46***	1.23*
<b>In rented housing at interview</b> (Ref.: Homeowners)	4.61***	2.40***
<b>Moved within one year prior to interview</b> (Ref.: No)	0.60***	1.08
<b>Living in central municipality at interview</b> (Ref.: Less or non-central municipality)	2.12***	1.02
<b>Not satisfied with housing at interview</b> (Ref.: Satisfied)	2.71***	1.33***
<b>Not satisfied with neighbourhood at interview</b> (Ref.: Satisfied)	3.33***	1.21*
<b>Income at interview</b> (Ref.: Lowest income quartile)		-
→ <b>Income, average of period 2008-2011</b> (Same ref.)	-	
2nd quartile	1.13	1.07
3rd quartile	1.27*	1.05
4th quartile	1.48***	1.18
<b>Age at interview</b> (Ref.: 30-34 years)		
Under 25 years	1.29	1.60***
25-29 years	1.45***	1.31**
35-39 years	0.64***	0.83*
40-44 years	0.55***	0.61***
<b>Sex</b> (Ref.: Men)	0.99	1.07
<b>Intercept</b>	0.01***	0.10***
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.26	0.27
<b>N/N with intention</b>	4629/1247	
<b>N/N with move</b>		4629/1829

\* $p < 0.1$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ 

Note: Where we are able to control for changes in the life of respondents after the interview, these variables are marked in the table with an arrow in front of the variable description.

Source: Norwegian GGS, Norwegian Population Register; own calculations

**Table A3.** Logistic regressions: Moving intentions and behaviour in the retirement phase (odds ratios).

	Moving Intention Model 5	Moving Behaviour Model 6
<b>Positive moving intention</b> (Ref.: No)	-	7.32***
<b>Main activity at interview</b> (Ref.: Employed, no intention to retire within next three years)		-
Employed, intention to retire within three years	1.87***	-
Others (in education, unemployed, in early retirement, etc.)	1.55**	-
<b>à Main activity in 2011</b> (Ref.: Still employed)	-	
From employment to retirement	-	1.22
Still retired	-	0.83
<b>Union status at interview</b> (Ref.: No union)		
Married	0.69**	1.01
Cohabitation	0.32***	1.31
Non-residential union	1.17	1.06
<b>Children</b> (Ref.: Child under 18 in the household)		
Childless or no child in the household	0.86	0.86
Adult child in the household	0.78	0.88
<b>Rented housing at interview</b> (Ref.: Homeowners)	2.99***	2.13***
<b>Housing at interview not suitable for older people</b> (Ref.: At least partly suitable for old age)	3.91***	1.21
<b>Moved within one year prior to interview</b> (Ref.: No)	1.24	1.02
<b>Living in central municipality at interview</b> (Ref.: Less or non-central municipality)	1.54***	0.64***
<b>Not satisfied with housing at interview</b> (Ref.: Satisfied)	2.73***	1.45*
<b>Not satisfied with neighbourhood at interview</b> (Ref.: Satisfied)	2.20***	1.37*
<b>Income at interview</b> (Ref.: Lowest income quartile)		
<b>à Income, average of period 2008-2011</b> (Same ref.)		
2nd quartile	0.84	0.81
3rd quartile	1.25	0.99
4th quartile	1.25	1.11
<b>Age at interview</b> (Ref.: 62-64 years)		
56-58 years	1.13	1.01
59-61 years	0.88	1.02
65-67 years	0.95	0.85
68-70 years	0.55**	1.24
<b>Sex</b> (Ref.: Men)	0.88	1.01
<b>Intercept</b>	0.02***	0.08***
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.09	0.10
<b>N/N with intention</b>	2456/259	
<b>N/N with move</b>		2456/389

\* $p < 0.1$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ 

Note: Where we are able to control for changes in the life of respondents after the interview, these variables are marked in the table with an arrow in front of the variable description.

Source: Norwegian GGS, Norwegian Population Register; own calculations