



Aalborg Universitet

**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK

## **A Change for the Better?**

*A Life Course Analysis of the Housing Careers of Somalis and Turks in the Danish Housing Market*

Nielsen, Rikke Skovgaard

*Publication date:*  
2014

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Nielsen, R. S. (2014). *A Change for the Better? A Life Course Analysis of the Housing Careers of Somalis and Turks in the Danish Housing Market*. Aalborg Universitetsforlag.

### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal -

### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at [vbn@aub.aau.dk](mailto:vbn@aub.aau.dk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

# **A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER?**

**A LIFE COURSE ANALYSIS OF THE HOUSING CAREERS  
OF SOMALIS AND TURKS IN THE DANISH HOUSING MARKET**

**BY  
RIKKE SKOVGAARD NIELSEN**

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2014**



**AALBORG UNIVERSITET**

# **A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER?**

A life course analysis of the housing careers  
of Somalis and Turks in the Danish housing market

BY  
**RIKKE SKOVGAARD NIELSEN**



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK

PHD SERIES, FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE  
AALBORG UNIVERSITY

Thesis submitted: April 10, 2014

PhD supervisor: Adjunct Professor Hans Skifter Andersen,  
Aalborg University

Assistant PhD supervisor: Professor mso Ruth Emerek  
Aalborg University

PhD committee: University lecturer Marianne Abramsson,  
Linköping University  
Professor Ronald van Kempen,  
Utrecht University  
Associate Professor Anja Jørgensen,  
Aalborg University

PhD Series: Faculty of Engineering and Science, Aalborg University

ISSN: 2246-1248  
ISBN: 978-87-7112-143-8

Published by:  
Aalborg University Press  
Skjernvej 4A, 2nd floor  
DK – 9220 Aalborg Ø  
Phone: +45 99407140  
aauf@forlag.aau.dk  
forlag.aau.dk

© Copyright by Rikke Skovgaard Nielsen

Printed in Denmark by Rosendahls, 2014



## AUTHOR CV

Rikke Skovgaard Nielsen has a background in sociology (cand.scient.soc.) from University of Copenhagen. She has substantial methodological experience with in both quantitative and qualitative research methods as well as with working with mixed methods research designs. She has edited an anthology on mixed methods to be published in June 2014 together with Assistant Professor Morten Frederiksen and Professor Peter Gundelach. Thematically, Rikke's research focus is on settlement patterns, migration, ethnic minority groups, housing careers, segregation and urban development caused by settlement patterns. Her PhD was conducted as part of the NODES research project on the Nordic Welfare States and the Dynamics and Effects of Ethnic Residential Segregation, financed by NORFACE research programme on Migration in Europe – Social, Economic, Cultural and Policy Dynamics. Rikke is co-founder of Network of Young Housing Researchers in Denmark, co-director of the Danish Centre for Housing Research, member of the board of Danish Society for Survey Research, organizer of the Danish Housing Research Seminar 2011 and 2012 and of the Nordic Urban and Housing Research Network (NSBB) conference 2013. Rikke continues her work within the housing and urban research field through her current employment on the DIVERCITIES project, which focus on how social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance can be created in today's hyper-diversified cities.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*I can no other answer make but thanks,  
And thanks, and ever thanks;*

*Twelfth Night, Shakespeare, approx. 1601–02*

To some, writing a PhD is a lonely endeavour. For me it has been a journey I would never have completed without the assistance of these people whom I owe thanks and thanks and ever thanks.

I have been guided along the road by my supervisors. Hans Skifter Andersen, my main supervisor: you have guided me into the housing research field which was unknown land to me before the PhD project commenced. Thanks for the guidance, for all the comments to my papers and for adjusting your retirement plans so that you could stay by my side until the end of the journey. I have benefited immensely from your huge knowledge of the housing research field. Ruth Emerek, my co-supervisor: thanks for the patience with me when survival analysis and SAS programming became a challenge and for all the good discussions we've had along the way. You have always identified the weak spots and challenged me to improve my arguments. Kirsten Gram-Hanssen, my volunteer finish-the-thesis-mentor: You stepped in at just the right time when I needed someone to teach me how to say no (for a while at least) and how to prioritise my time. It made the last part of the journey a lot more bearable. Thanks to Trine Lund Thomsen and Sølvi Børresen for the very valuable comments at my pre-defence and to Hans Thor Andersen for reading a draft version of the thesis and identifying the missing pieces of the puzzle.

I have conducted the journey with my fellow NODES researchers in Norway, Sweden and Finland. It has been a great pleasure to get to know you all and to work with you. We have shared many memorable times and good discussions during the four years of the NODES project. I couldn't have wished for a better introduction into the research field and to the dynamics of working in an international project. I hope we get the opportunity to work together in the future. Thanks to NORFACE for the financial support that made the PhD project a reality.

I have had the company of my colleagues at the Danish Building Research Institute along the way. Thanks for the inspiring, interdisciplinary work environment. Thanks to my fellow PhD students. Since I started at SBi the group of PhD students has grown substantially and has become an actual PhD environment full of support and shared understanding of the ups and downs of PhD life. Thanks to Freja Friis and Jesper Rohr Hansen in particular for the companionship, for the talks on how to balance PhD life and family life and for always lending an ear when it was needed. Thanks

to Julie Kastoft-Christensen for the lunches and coffee breaks, and for talking about something else than PhD life.

I have had assistance in conducting the empirical leg of the journey. Thanks to Hans Skifter Andersen and Anders Rhiger Hansen for the extensive work on establishing the database prior to my work on it. Thanks to 'Rikke's girls' as you were nicknamed in the department: To Sara Hach, Line Jensen Buch, Line Sissel Jensen and Anne Grønne for the assistance with the interviews and for all the fruitful discussions of the interviews. To Anne Winther Beckman and Vigdis Blach for the assistance on the DIVERCITIES project. Without you, either the thesis or the DIVERCITIES project would have suffered. Most likely the thesis wouldn't have been completed yet.

I have shared the bumps, the straight stretches, the hair-pin bends and the U-turns with Sofie. The journey would have been much longer, much lonelier and with a lot fewer laughs without you by my side in cyberspace. Our writing getaways have been productive and intense but it is the daily email exchanges that I couldn't have done without. They have saved me in many a stuck place and helped me get back on track. Don't worry; I won't leave our virtual PhD-office until we have both crossed the line to the post-PhD world. And I hope that we will continue to be virtual workmates way past that line.

I have had the best supporting team along the route that one could ever wish for. Tina and family, you have been life-savers by looking after Laurits when he was ill and having him overnight when needed. Thanks for your help and for always offering it so willingly. Louise, Emma and Sebastian, you have supplied me with both London and Skype getaways from the thesis madness. I'll be back in London soon! Mor, Far og Søs [mum, dad and sis]: Having an always supportive family behind me has been a given all my life. You have always believed in me and supported me in doing precisely what I wanted to do – in this case a PhD. Thanks for the support and for all the love. Keep it coming! Thanks to my grandparents for being such a big part of my life and for being who you were – you would have loved to see this day. And last but not least. My husband and son. Kasper and Laurits. You have kept me sane. You have made me forget the thesis. You have reminded me that there are things far more important than how to frame an introduction, how to conduct a survival analysis or what to make of life course analysis. No amount of words can cover the gratitude I feel for having had you by my side along the PhD road. You are my most favourite people in the world.

RIKKE SKOVGAARD NIELSEN  
COPENHAGEN, 10TH OF APRIL 2014



# MANDATORY PAGE

Title: *A change for the better? A life course analysis of the housing careers of Somalis and Turks in the Danish housing market*

PhD Student: Rikke Skovgaard Nielsen

Main supervisor: Adjunct Professor Hans Skifter Andersen

Co-supervisor: Professor MSO Ruth Emerek

The thesis comprises four papers:

- Paper I      Skovgaard Nielsen, R: "Ethnic differences in home-leaving: A comparison of Turks, Somalis and Danes". Under review for *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*.
- Paper II     Skovgaard Nielsen, R: "Straight-line assimilation in home-leaving? A comparison of Turks, Somalis and Danes". Submitted to *Bengt Turner Award 2014*, European Network of Housing Researchers.
- Paper III    Skovgaard Nielsen, R: "Change in the Housing Careers of Turks and Somalis: Making Choices or Taking Options?" Under review for *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.
- Paper IV    Skovgaard Nielsen, R., E. Holmqvist, H. Dhalmann & S. Søholt: "Comparing Somalis' Perceived Possibilities in the Nordic Capital Housing Markets: Local Context and Cultural background". Submitted to *Housing Studies*. Decision 'Revise and Resubmit' received ultimo March.

This thesis has been submitted for assessment in partial fulfilment of the PhD degree. The thesis is based on the submitted or published scientific papers which are listed above. Parts of the papers are used directly or indirectly in the extended summary of the thesis. As part of the assessment, co-author statements have been made available to the assessment committee and are also available at the Faculty. The thesis is not in its present form acceptable for open publication but only in limited and closed circulation as copyright may not be ensured.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>   | <b>11</b> |
| The concept of the housing career                                   | 13        |
| Theories on settlement and mobility                                 | 15        |
| Aim and outline of the thesis                                       | 24        |
| <b>LIFE COURSE ANALYSIS</b>   | <b>31</b> |
| Life course analysis as the framework for analysing housing careers | 31        |
| The guiding principles  | 34        |
| Life course analysis in relation to the empirical analyses          | 36        |
| A concluding remark on the relevance of life course analysis        | 38        |
| <b>METHODS – OF DATA COLLECTION AND OF DATA ANALYSIS</b>            | <b>41</b> |
| Theoretical perspectives on mixing methods                          | 41        |
| Classifying the mixed methods research design of this study         | 44        |
| Register data   | 46        |
| In-depth interviews   | 48        |
| Combining the data sources  | 50        |
| A concluding remark on messiness                                    | 54        |
| <b>THE PAPERS</b>   | <b>55</b> |
| Paper I   | 55        |
| Paper II  | 56        |
| Paper III   | 57        |
| Paper IV  | 58        |
| <b>CONCLUSION</b>   | <b>61</b> |
| Key outcomes  | 61        |
| Thoughts on the chosen approach                                     | 65        |
| Implications  | 68        |
| <b>REFERENCES</b>   | <b>73</b> |
| <b>SUMMARY</b>  | <b>83</b> |
| <b>SAMMENFATNING</b>  | <b>85</b> |



# INTRODUCTION

*Time present and time past,  
Are both perhaps present in time future,  
And time future contained in time past.  
If all time is eternally present  
All time is unredeemable*

*Extract of Burnt Norton, T.S. Eliot, 1935*

On a very basic level, we all need a place to live: a roof over our head to protect us against nature. But we also need a home: a place of refuge, a place of safety and comfort, a place to seclude us from the outside world. Thus, access to housing is a primary need and a central aspect in establishing a home and a stable life (Murdie 2002; Gram-Hanssen & Bech-Danielsen 2012). But having access to a housing unit is for several reasons not enough in itself. First, housing needs to be stable to avoid the uncertainty and the resulting stress of not knowing where your household will live next week, next month or next year. Second, housing should be reasonably suitable for the household's needs. A one-bedroom flat might be better than no flat at all, but for a family of eight it quickly becomes overcrowded and causes a stressful living situation. Likewise, the standard of housing is vital for physical and mental well-being. Third, being able to buy housing results in independence from landlords, and in the right to decide over own space; it offers a potential profit when selling, thus making it possible to trade up to a more suitable and/or more desirable housing unit. For ethnic minorities, home-ownership signifies a long-term commitment towards the country of migration. Some argue that it is a key indicator of integration (Magnusson Turner & Hedman 2014) and that being disadvantaged in the housing market can hinder integration in other spheres of society (Murdie 2002; Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). While the notion of a link between residential segregation and integration has come under criticism in recent years (Bolt et al 2010), there is no doubt that housing is imperative for natives and minorities alike; whether linked to integration or not.

Research has shown that the housing situation of ethnic minorities and natives differs. This is true in Denmark as in many other Western countries (Børresen 2006; Damm et al 2006; Skifter Andersen 2010). More than 60% of ethnic minority households live in

public housing<sup>1</sup> compared to only 20% of all households in Denmark. All other things being equal, ethnic minorities have an increased probability of 125% of moving into public housing. Furthermore, while only 2% of all households live in neighbourhoods of more than 40% ethnic minorities, 22% of ethnic households do so. All else being equal, the probability of ethnic minorities moving into neighbourhoods of more than 40% ethnic minorities is 408%. Internationally, the differences are evident as well: Immigrants and descendants are less likely to live in owner-occupied properties and they more often live in the least desirable parts of the housing market, both in terms of housing unit and housing area (Abramsson et al 2002; Bolt & van Kempen 2002; Özüekren & van Kempen 2002; Bolt et al 2010).

For the individual, finding stable and suitable housing is imperative for natives and ethnic minorities alike. For society, ethnic differences in housing attainment and settlement can have major consequences. In many Western countries, ethnic settlement patterns leading to concentration of ethnic minorities in selected neighbourhoods are linked to notions of parallel societies, hindering integration and leading to a range of challenges such as high unemployment rates, high crime rates, low quality of schools and institutions and unbridgeable differences in norms between minority groups and the majority. While the extent of the many problems ascribed to ethnic concentration neighbourhoods is questionable (Bolt et al 2010), it is imperative to understand spatial segregation dynamics better, partly in order to establish whether such fears are warranted. Without presuming the links between ethnic settlement and issues of segregation and integration, it is still clear that ethnic differences in housing attainment and mobility patterns are of major societal importance. Analysis of housing careers offers a fruitful setting for understanding the causes of these differences. Consequently, several researchers have called for further research on the housing careers of ethnic minorities (e.g. Özüekren & van Kempen 2002; 2003).

While housing situations are often analysed as independent situations, they are in fact all but. Housing situations are linked to previous situations and impact on the ensuing housing options of an individual or a household. As in the quote by Eliot, present housing and past housing are present in future housing: through equity or debt, through knowledge of different housing sectors, and through attachment to, or dislike of, previous neighbourhoods. The concept of the housing career draws attention to this, providing us with a dynamic way of understanding housing. The concept points

1. *Danish public housing is owned by private non-profit housing organisations and subject to strict public regulation. Rent is calculated based solely on the expenses of each individual estate. Public housing is accessible for everyone who enters his/her name on the waiting lists. Internal waiting lists are also in place and are given preference. In 2000, a political wish to change the social composition of certain areas led to new allocation rules that give priority to people in employment or education. The Danish public housing sector is sometimes referred to as social housing. It does function as social housing by providing housing for those in need. However, as it is accessible to all, the term public housing is used here.*

backward and forward in time, and while grasping housing careers in their entirety is a methodological challenge, the notion of housing careers in itself aids housing studies in understanding that any situation in the housing market is not independent.

A housing career is made up of changes between housing situations and is influenced greatly by changes in other spheres of life. Change is thus inherent in the concept of the housing career. Focusing specifically on the ethnic differences in the preconditions of change and possibilities for change can lead us further in understanding the ethnic differences in housing careers. The aim of this thesis is: *to explore the preconditions of change and the possibilities for change in the housing careers of Somalis and Turks through an application of life course analysis*. Life course analysis offers a highly suitable analytical framework for an analysis of housing careers, as it directs attention to the dual impact of structure and agency over time on the life course of individuals. Change is shaped by societal structures as well as by individuals' own actions and preferences. The focus on change is translated into two strands of the study which focus respectively on ethnic differences in one specific transition of the housing career (home-leaving) and on ethnic differences in change in the housing career more broadly. Empirically, these two strands are examined through register data and in-depth interviews respectively, making the thesis as a whole a mixed methods research study. The first strand compares Somalis and Turks with Danes; the second focus on Somalis and Turks only. The study design will be described and motivated later in this extensive summary.

The original starting point of the thesis was the prevalent notion that ethnic minorities are in a disadvantaged position in the housing market. I set out to understand better why this was so. However, through the course of the study, it became apparent that this might not be the right starting point. Presuming ethnic minorities are disadvantaged in housing is at best jumping to conclusions. Even worse, it might be entirely wrong to assume that such disadvantagedness predominates ethnic housing experiences. While I do not argue that ethnic minorities are not, at least in some respects, in a disadvantaged situation in the housing market, I believe that by presuming the prevalence of this disadvantage, we run the risk of overlooking signs pointing to the contrary. Thus, my approach changed towards a more open approach of trying to understand how Turks and Somalis come to be in the position they are in; whether disadvantaged or not. The concept of the housing career offers an advantageous starting point for this by directing attention to the process by which housing situations arise.

## THE CONCEPT OF THE HOUSING CAREER

A classical definition of the housing career was phrased by Pickles & Davies, defining a housing career at its simplest as: *“a description of the sequence of dwellings a household occupies during its history”* (1991:466). The importance of the notion of housing careers is that it reflects the dynamic nature of housing. The housing situation

of an individual at any given point in time depends on previous events, conditions and decisions in the housing career of the individual. Path-dependence is created between housing situations (de Valk et al 2011; Wiggins et al 2011). Thus, to understand the current situation one has to look back at the career that created it (Bolt & van Kempen 2002). Furthermore, current and past situations have implications for the possibilities of the future.

The housing career is a way for the household to adjust its housing consumption and housing situation to its housing needs and preferences (Magnusson & Özüekren 2002; Clark & Huang 2003). In a career there is an overall aim of progress understood as the aim to find as suitable a housing unit as possible. As with working careers, you normally start at the bottom and work your way up, improving your housing situation as you go along. Sideways and downwards moves also take place, as not all moves constitute a step up the ladder compared to the previous dwelling (Murdie 2002). At the same time, a change in housing is multi-dimensional and can thus be judged on a range of different parameters (Rossi 1980). Consequently, a move does not necessarily constitute an improvement on all parameters. The general aim, however, is for each new step in the housing career to constitute an improvement for the specific household, offering a better fit with its perceived needs and preferences. Apart from forced moves, improving this individually perceived fit between reality on one hand, and needs and preferences on the other hand, is the driving force of the housing career.

Numerous factors contribute individually and interact in creating the housing career of a household. The availability and accessibility of housing is determined on a societal level by the situation on the housing market in terms of supply, demand and prices; housing legislation and access rules for different sectors of the housing market; and finally the general economic situation in the country. At household level, possibilities, restraints, needs and preferences are essential (Özüekren & van Kempen 2003; Hedman 2011). There might be differences between household members regarding preferences and the weight these are given, making negotiations between household members decisive. Intertwined in this is the connectedness of housing situations in the housing careers: previous housing shapes our options through the knowledge we have obtained through previous experiences, through experiences in specific neighbourhoods leading to preferences regarding staying in or leaving them, and through financial implications of previous housing choices influencing the possibilities of the ensuing career. The multiple factors shaping housing careers mean that differences in housing attainment between ethnic minorities and natives are most likely to have multiple causes.

Mobility is the means for conducting a housing career and a prerequisite for adjustment of housing situation to housing needs. Previous research has shown that ethnic minorities move more often than natives over the course of their housing career (Abramsson et al 2002). This could be a sign that it requires more steps for ethnic minorities to reach a desired and suitable housing situation. One explanation could



be that limited knowledge of the housing market leads to a less direct path towards a desired goal. Another could be that more, smaller steps are necessary to approach a given goal if the resources for bigger steps are unavailable. Further knowledge is needed on the dynamics of the housing career: *“A fundamental question is whether the current situation of an immigrant household can be seen as just a first step on the housing ladder or as a situation from which no escape seems possible. This distinction is fundamental in exploring the nature, strength, and permanency of possible barriers to housing for particular groups.”* (Özüekren & van Kempen 2002:366). Empirical knowledge of the mechanisms of the housing career can lead us closer this.

Clapham (2002) criticises research on housing careers for assuming that the preferences of households are universal and acted upon rationally in attempts at meeting these preferences. However, as Abramsson (2003), I argue that this is not inherent in the concept itself. Rather, it is a consequence of the application of the concept and thus an avoidable pitfall. As described in the next section, I perceive housing careers as being shaped by a mix of preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints. The coupling with life course analysis helps underline the importance of agency as well as the specific preferences and choices of individuals within individual and structural restraints. As such, this thesis provides an example of how the concept of housing careers can be employed in a manner very different from the one criticised by Clapham and how life course analysis aids in this process.

## THEORIES ON SETTLEMENT AND MOBILITY

At the heart of housing careers lie the moves between housing situations and thus residential mobility. The study of residential mobility was introduced by Peter H. Rossi in 1955 in his seminal study *‘Why families move’*. Rossi had as his starting point the Chicago School’s focus on the link between social pathologies and residential mobility (Rossi 1980<sup>2</sup>). However, during the course of the study Rossi’s focus changed as he found little evidence of negative effects of mobility. He thus adopted an understanding of residential mobility as a phenomenon that was driven by changes in the family composition and conditioned by individual as well as housing market opportunities. The legacy of his study is clear in research today. In *‘Why families move’* Rossi formulated the since much-quoted sentence: *“The findings of this study indicate the major function of mobility to be the process by which families adjust their housing to the housing needs that are generated by the shifts in family composition that accompany life cycle changes”* (Rossi 1980:35). The sentence captures the strong link between housing and family composition. In line with his time, Rossi talked of life cycle, which has now been largely replaced by the concept of the life course, as will be described in chapter 2. However, the point is no less valid: apart from forced moves, changes

---

2. The second edition of *‘Why families move’* from 1980 is used here for its valuable additional introduction.

in housing are closely connected to the life phase and to changes in the life course of households or individuals.

Despite the great degree of variation in housing careers, some common trends can be identified regarding the changes in housing situations and housing opportunities over the life course (Rossi 1980; Bolt & van Kempen 2003; Skifter Andersen 2003). While living in the parental home, the opportunities of the young adult to influence his or her housing situation are usually limited. When leaving home, more opportunities arise as a consequence of becoming the centre of their own housing career, meaning that the choices available are theirs to choose between. However, restraints are often fairly substantial in terms of limited financial means and limited knowledge of the housing market. At the same time, most young adults wish to remain flexible as opposed to settling down, making renting as opposed to buying the favoured option (Skifter Andersen 2011). As income level rises, knowledge of the housing market is gained and the need for flexibility lessens, the choice set widens. Starting a family often leads to settling down in a specific area, causing mobility to fall, especially so when children reach school-age (Clark & Onaka 1983). As the children leave home, mobility could be expected to rise as the needs of the household change yet again. Nevertheless, mobility is lower in older age for a number of reasons, including attachment to home and place as well as it being easier to accept a surplus of space than a shortage of space (Rossi 1980). Due to the close connection between the life course and housing, differences in settlement can to some extent be seen as a consequence of differences in life courses and of being in different phases of the life course. However, differences also exist for those in the same phase of the life course. This can be explained by differences in preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints.

The housing career of a household or an individual is shaped by an ever-changing mix of preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints, which together determine the choices available at a given point in time (Abramsson 2003; Hedman 2011). *Preferences* are based on the goals that individuals or households have in life more generally; transformed into actual and more specific preferences (Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). Both the more general goals of life and the translation into specific preferences change over time. The concepts of preference and choice should not be confused, as they sometimes are in housing research according to Jansen et al (2011). *“Preference refers to the relative attractiveness of an object, while choice refers to actual behavior”* (Jansen et al 2011:2). Preferences, including housing needs, are closely linked to household characteristics such as family size and age-composition of children (Bolt & van Kempen 2002; Murdie 2002). The life-style and values of the household influence preferences as well (Clapham 2002; Abramsson 2003) e.g. whether they prefer to rent or buy and the percentage of their income they are willing to spend on housing. Furthermore, cultural norms influence the perceived needs of the household e.g. number of rooms and dwelling layout. In the case of housing, such preferences relate both to the housing unit (e.g. size and tenure), to the housing area (e.g. amenities and services) and to the wider geographical location (e.g. due to place

attachment and/or desired commuting distance) (Howel & Freese 1983; Mulder 2007). Some studies focus exclusively on one or the other, but in reality the two are likely to be connected in most cases (Hedman 2011). A final source of differences in preferences lies in the preference hierarchies, i.e. in the individual evaluation of different preferences against each other when not all preferences can be met.

*Resources* cover the cognitive, financial, political and social resources of the household (Bowes et al 2002; Özüekren & van Kempen 2003; Skifter Andersen 2010). Financial resources determine the strength of the household in the housing market and the choices available. Knowledge of the housing market is a key resource, as the possibility for attaining a housing unit within a given sector requires knowledge of how to do so. Education can lead to a better understanding of how the housing market works (Özüekren & van Kempen 2003). Political resources relate to the ability of the individual or household to understand, attain and defend its formal rights (Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). Social resources in terms of networks can create housing opportunities and offer financial assistance and further knowledge, thus supporting the housing search (Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). Social resources are particularly important in sectors with gate-keepers such as landlords in private rental. However, through the social ties within local housing areas, networks may also potentially bind the household to specific areas and thus the opportunities within them (Dhalmann 2013).

*Possibilities* and *restraints* are determined by the material, cognitive and social resources of the household as well as the structural conditions and the historical and economic context (Abramsson et al 2002). Some of the most important aspects are the situation on the housing market, the financial situation, the availability of housing (supply), the amount of competition in a given housing sector (demand), access rules of the different sectors, the welfare system and legislation in relation to housing (Bowes et al 2002; Murdie 2002). Furthermore, discrimination can play a major role. Within all the different housing sectors, key gatekeepers function as a restraint in the housing careers of minorities if they exert discriminatory practices (Dhalmann 2013, Skifter Andersen, Søholt & Magnusson 2013). Mixing policies, aiming to lower the proportion of minorities in given areas, also limit the choices of ethnic minority groups (Özüekren & van Kempen 2003). Other structural factors relate to the layout of the housing market, i.e. tenure segmentation and the link between tenure and house type (e.g. few one-family houses are available for rent in Denmark) (Skifter Andersen, Søholt & Magnusson 2013). The opportunity structure in the housing market differs between geographical areas. As households are often tied to specific geographical areas through social and work-related bonds, they conduct their housing career within these areas and are faced with the specific opportunity structures of the areas.

Preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints together form the choice set of households (Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). The choice set is dynamic, as preferences, possibilities, resources and restraints change over time due to societal and household changes. The possibilities and restraints of the household in relation to housing

determine whether preferences and needs can be met (Özüekren & van Kempen 2002; Abramsson 2008). The choice set is made up by what is actually possible and what is perceived as possible by the household. In this sense, preferences, possibilities, resources and restraints are linked, as resources, possibilities and restraints influence housing preferences (Abramsson 2003). Restraints can even be internalised to the extent that options perceived as unrealisable are never pursued and the perceived limitations thus never tested (Özüekren & van Kempen 2003).

## ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN HOUSING ATTAINMENT

A multitude of research studies have identified ethnic differences in housing attainment over the housing career. On an overall level, two kinds of explanations can be given for such differences (Bolt & van Kempen 2002). These explanations are not mutually exclusive. Rather they supplement each other in explaining the differences between ethnic groups in the housing market.

On the one hand, differences can be caused by ethnic minorities and natives having different needs and preferences in relation to housing (Abramsson et al 2002; Bolt & van Kempen 2003; Skifter Andersen 2010; Dhalmann 2013). The family career of ethnic minorities is different from that of natives and thus leads to different needs and preferences. Also, some immigrants have a wish to return to their country of origin or are undecided as to their future country of residence. This makes it less relevant to invest in property in the host country. Some have prioritised buying property in their country of origin and/or to remit money to family, thus limiting the financial means for housing consumption. Furthermore, the preferences of ethnic minorities can be shaped by the housing standards and housing norms of the country of origin: expectations to housing might be lower due to lower standards in the country of origin and preferences might be influenced by the norms of the home country. For descendants, expectations might be influenced by those of their parents or by their Danish peers, either leading to preferences similar to those of immigrants or those of Danes. The hierarchy of preferences might also differ between immigrants, descendants and Danes. For instance, Bowes et al have shown that Pakistanis prioritize their wishes regarding the housing area over their preferences in relation to the actual housing unit (Bowes et al 1997).

On the other hand, differences can be caused by ethnic minorities being less able to realise their actual preferences. Again, there are several potential causes for this: lack of knowledge of the housing market; discrimination from landlords, agencies, banks and others involved in the housing market; limited social network relevant to the process of house hunting; limited financial resources and an access structure favouring natives directly or indirectly (Özüekren & van Kempen 2003). For immigrants, knowledge about the housing market in the country of origin has been shown to influence positively the possibilities on the housing market in the country of migration (Abramsson et al 2002, Søholt 2007). This means that those with little or limited knowledge from

their home country have less possibility for realising their preferences in a new country. Descendants might be influenced by this, as they have less access to knowledge through their parents and other family relations. Furthermore, the availability of housing is important. Several studies have identified how white flight and white avoidance are relevant in a European context as well (e.g. Bråmă 2006; Crowder & South 2008; Andersson 2013). These theories focus on the settlement patterns of natives stipulating that when the share of ethnic minorities starts to grow in a neighbourhood and reach a certain level, natives leave these areas (white flight) or avoid moving to them (white avoidance). Such processes have a range of implications; one being that better housing options are created for ethnic minorities in these neighbourhoods, while the neighbourhoods preferred by natives become shut off for many. This creates an opportunity structure in the market that affects the choices available to ethnic minorities, making it harder to realise actual preferences (Skifter Andersen et al 2014).

Differences between ethnic minority groups can be explained similarly, either by differences in housing preference based e.g. on different housing norms in home country, or by different opportunities for realising preferences due to e.g. different starting points and different backgrounds influencing their housing career after migration (Abramsson et al 2002; Gram-Hanssen & Bech-Danielsen 2012). Studies of ethnic differences in housing differ as to whether they primarily take a choice-oriented or a constraint-oriented approach i.e. giving priority to preferences and limited resources, respectively, when explaining ethnic settlement patterns (Magnusson & Özüekren 2002; Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). The approach of this study is based on an ambition to include both through the application of life course analysis.

## ETHNIC SEGREGATION PATTERNS

Spatial segregation can be defined as *“a spatial separation of ethnic or socially different groups leading to increasing social or cultural differences between these groups”* (Skifter Andersen 2003:13). Thus, ethnic segregation patterns arise when different ethnic groups are distributed unevenly across cities, resulting in areas of ethnic minority concentration. While such ethnic minority concentrations can have both negative and positive consequences (Dhalman 2013), it is in both cases imperative to understand why such patterns arise. This has led to extensive research of the causes of ethnic segregation.

Assimilation has been, and still is, a key concept for explaining and discussing ethnic segregation patterns. While the concept has been extensively discussed, and by some authors rejected completely, Alba & Nee make a convincing argument for the relevance of the concept today; arguing that a range of the criticisms put forward are, in fact, based on interpretations that are not integral to the concept itself (Alba & Nee 1997). In their paper, they provide an excellent canonical account of the emergence of the assimilation concept; an account which is a key source for the presentation here.

Alba & Nee relay a range of the criticisms put forward against the various theoretical perspectives of assimilation. Not all these criticisms are brought up here. The key point is that assimilation as a concept offers vital insights into processes of ethnic segregation patterns.

The research field of ethnic segregation patterns was pioneered by the Chicago School in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Researchers such as Park and Burgess described the spatial settlement patterns of ethnic minority groups in Chicago and, based on this, phrased an ecological theory of segregation patterns that we are building on today. The theory is based on a focus on the relationship between the spatial and the social, employing biological metaphors and analogies in the development of the theoretical framework (Jørgensen 2014). The dynamics of settlement patterns were described by the Chicago School as a process of invasion, succession and dominance (Skifter Andersen 2003; Bolt et al 2008). As a consequence of migration, new groups invade spatial areas, making the original inhabitants feel less at home in the areas. As the original inhabitants move elsewhere, more members of the new group move in. Succession takes place. This process continues until the new group replaces the old one, thereby dominating the spatial area. The contribution of the Chicago School was comprehensive; rooted in extensive empirical work (Jørgensen 2014).

A contribution by the Chicago School of particular interest here is the early definition of assimilation coined by Park & Burgess (1921). This definition focused on assimilation as a process of interpenetration and fusion based on intra-group interaction, where groups of different ethnic origins living in the same geographical space acquire common experiences and history which then lays the ground for a common communal life and cultural solidarity. Notably, this definition did not imply that assimilation requires ethnic minority groups to obtain completely the cultural patterns of the majority. Neither did it presuppose that the process is one-sided i.e. that the mainstream culture remains unchanged. These have been two of the major criticisms put forward. In some fields of research, assimilation is distinctive from integration, with assimilation signifying the situation where, by entering into relations with the majority, ethnic minority individuals lose their attachment to their original culture (Bolt et al 2010). This is however not the understanding of assimilation employed by Park & Burgess, nor is it the understanding applied in this thesis. In this thesis, as is common in studies of residential segregation patterns, assimilation is considered as synonymous with integration i.e. “*the process whereby the differences between the ethnic/racial groups and the reference population gradually decline across a range of domains*” (Bolt et al 2010:173).

Another criticism of the framework of Park & Burgess is the seeming inevitability of the assimilation process. Assimilation was by Park identified as the end-stage of a race-relations cycle (Alba & Nee 1997). The initial *contact* between ethnic groups occurring due to migration is followed by *competition* in which groups struggle to position themselves in an advantageous position. After stabilisation of the situation,



*accommodation* takes place through a settled social structure and understanding of group positions, however uneven they often are. Finally, the end-stage of *assimilation* comes about as a consequence of personal relations across group boundaries. Park has been criticised for depicting assimilation as a seemingly inevitable outcome (Alba & Nee 1997). Whether or not this was his intention is irrelevant here. His contributions, along with those of other Chicago School authors, in introducing the concept of assimilation and describing segregation patterns are indisputable.

Assimilation as a concept was developed further in a systematic manner by Gordon (1964). His key contribution lay in the recognition of assimilation as consisting of different dimensions and as a process that can be perceived as consisting of stages of assimilation. Of the several dimensions of assimilation in Gordon's definition, the distinction between acculturation and structural assimilation was the pivotal point (Alba & Nee 1997; Bolt & van Kempen 2003). Here, acculturation takes place when ethnic minority groups acquire the cultural patterns of the host country i.e. norms, language and values. Structural assimilation is the social assimilation of ethnic minority groups that happens as minorities are included in society through primary-group relations with the majority. Gordon saw it as an inevitable process, starting with acculturation and progressing towards structural assimilation that would inevitably lead to complete assimilation. This causal process Gordon seemed to imply has been criticised. Furthermore, Gordon's framework was based on presumptions of a homogenous native culture, a two-group framework of one native group and one minority group as well as on all change taking place on the part of the minority group. However, Alba and Nee (1997) argue that assimilation theory can be adapted to take into account the heterogeneity of the native culture and the multi-group nature of countries today. Furthermore, acculturation can be understood as a common process where mainstream culture changes as well. This does not have to be in the manner conceptualized by the notion of the melting pot in which the different cultural elements melt together to create a homogenous, common culture; it can be more of a gradual incorporation of different cultural traits into the mainstream; traits which thereby lose their association with a specific ethnic group.

The concept of assimilation was made more dynamic by the notion of straight-line assimilation. In this view, assimilation is seen as a process unfolding in a sequence of generational steps, where each generation is on average more assimilated than the previous one (Alba & Nee 1997). This means that generations become the motor for change. While it has been specified that the process does not necessarily proceed linearly towards segregation (recreation and even renaissance of ethnicity can take place), the key notion is that through a generational dynamic the overall process over time moves society closer to assimilation.

The ideas of the Chicago School were part of the basis for Massey's later development of the spatial assimilation theory (Massey 1985; Bolt et al 2008). The *spatial assimilation theory* states that while immigrants often live in ethnic neighbourhoods

when they are new to a country, they move to other areas when they become better integrated (Massey & Mullan 1984; Alba & Nee 1997; South et al 2008). Thus, living in an ethnic neighbourhood is a temporary phase and assists individuals in establishing themselves in the housing market and in society in general. Spatial dispersion comes about as a consequence of acculturation and social mobility through education and employment (Bolt & van Kempen 2003; Bolt et al 2008). As the basis for evaluating the degree of assimilation, whether spatial or socioeconomic, two contrasting principles can be applied<sup>3</sup> (Alba & Nee 1997): assimilation can be seen as achieved when the distribution of minorities is the same as that of natives in general, or when the distribution is the same as that of natives of similar background. The first notion implies social mobility, the second equality of treatment. The latter notion allows for the variation or addition to assimilation theory called *segmented assimilation*: the idea that assimilation patterns differ between groups according to their differences in resources (Valdez 2006; Zorlu & Mulder 2007). In contrast to spatial assimilation theory, other theories argue that assimilation and adoption of native housing norms will not lead to spatial dispersion of ethnic minorities. *The place stratification theory* states that discrimination and the structure of the housing market constrain ethnic minorities in progressing in the housing market and hinder them from realising their preferences (Bolt & van Kempen 2003; Bolt et al 2008; Magnusson Turner & Hedman 2014). *The cultural preference approach* is based on individuals preferring to live in an area where their own ethnic group dominates and that this preference is so strong that it persists despite acculturation and social mobility (Bolt et al 2008). Finally, *the ethnic resources theory* (Portes & Bach 1985) states that because ethnic minorities have access to ethnic resources in ethnic neighbourhoods they will stay in these neighbourhoods despite assimilation.

Numerous American studies have tested the theses with varying results as to their relevance for different groups in an American context (e.g. Massey & Mullan 1984; Valdez 2006; South et al 2008; Park & Iceland 2011). As the American and European contexts differ in a range of ways, the relevance of spatial assimilation in a European context cannot be presumed on the basis of American studies. However, limited knowledge exists in a European context, and especially in a Danish context. Skifter Andersen (2010) found that in Denmark differences exist between in-movers and out-movers from ethnic neighbourhoods. While this is consistent with spatial assimilation theory, further empirical knowledge is needed to determine the relevance of the theories presented above.

---

3. *Regarding spatial assimilation, a third meaning exists as well (Alba & Nee 1997): the existence of ethnic neighbourhoods. However, this is also implied in the other two meanings, as the identification of ethnic neighbourhoods would still be linked to a comparison with either the average neighbourhood of natives or with the neighbourhoods of those with a comparable background.*



An addition to the explanations for ethnic segregation that pertain to the specific situation of ethnic minorities and their assimilation, a cause of segregation is the organisation of the housing market and housing market segmentation. The different tenures of the housing market have different conditions legally, financially, and with respect to official and unofficial access requirements (Skifter Andersen 2003). As a consequence of these differences, the different social groups prefer, are restricted to, or have particularly good opportunities within the different tenures, creating “*a division of the housing market into sub-markets that are demanded by different social groups*” (Ibid:19). To the extent that the different segments are distributed unevenly geographically, segmentation leads to segregation (Skifter Andersen et al 2014). Furthermore, the actions of natives in the housing market, such as white flight and white avoidance, can create an opportunity structure for ethnic minorities that creates, maintains or further increases segregation levels. Such causes of segregation are part of the argumentation behind place stratification theory.

## OTHER THEORETICAL APPROACHES

The above review has provided an overview of some of the central theoretical perspectives on ethnic settlement patterns, although it is in no way exhaustive. Patterns of ethnic segregation, their causes and consequences, are approached in a number of ways. On the micro-level, one approach focuses on the importance of place attachment for settlement patterns (Skifter Andersen 2011; Bailey et al 2012). Place attachment studies analyse the impact of the attachment of people to specific places, which shapes their location preferences and thus their options in the housing market. Such place attachment is often to areas where the individual feels comfortable and secure, e.g. the place they grew up, and it is often an attachment to the social environment rather than the physical environment. Another field is the growing body of theoretical and empirical contributions to the study of neighbourhood effects (e.g. Friedrichs et al 2003; Hedman 2011). Neighbourhood effects are the causal effects of living in a particular residential environment on outcomes at individual and group levels, such as income and education. Another field focuses on the potentials and impacts of political and planning initiatives on segregation patterns i.e. gentrification as a consequence of urban renewal (Larsen & Hansen 2008) and the effects of social mixing policies such as mixed housing tenure policies (e.g. Manley et al 2011). Yet another group of studies analyses the effects of segregation and segmentation patterns for cities and countries on a macro-level (Skifter Andersen 2003). More generally, the expectancy-value model and the decision-making approach are employed in housing research for the respective purposes of firstly explaining and predicting attitudes and secondly of understanding the process through which choices are made (Jansen et al 2011).

## AIM AND OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

The aim of this thesis is, as mentioned in the introduction, *to explore the preconditions of change and the possibilities for change in the housing careers of Somalis and Turks through an application of life course analysis*. By this I intend to focus the thesis on the factors that make change possible or hinder change of housing for Somalis and Turks as well as on the possibilities that ethnic minorities have for change in their housing careers. This relates both to the preconditions and possibilities for change within the housing career of individuals and households as well as for change between generations. The relevance of this broader aim has been argued in the initial part of the introduction. The aim is pursued through two empirical strands explored in four independent papers, as presented below.

## THE TWO STRANDS AND THE FOUR PAPERS

The first strand focuses on the start of the housing career. An essential transition in the housing career of the individual takes place when he or she leaves the parental home. Leaving the parental home signifies the start of a new housing career. This initial phase of the housing career is of special importance, as the conditions and characteristics of the first housing unit *imprint* themselves on the following career (Myers 1999; Bolt & van Kempen 2002). Two aspects of leaving the parental home are analysed in the thesis. The first relates to the ethnic differences in the general home-leaving patterns with respect to the factors that impact on the home-leaving process. While fairly extensive research has covered general home-leaving patterns in Western countries (Zorlu & Mulder 2011), knowledge on ethnic differences in home-leaving patterns is limited. The changed norms and individualisation of the second demographic transition have led to greater flexibility in the life course, including home-leaving (van de Kaa 1987, Billari et al 2001; Mulder et al 2002). One aspect of this is that home-leaving and marriage are no longer intrinsically connected. However, it is not known whether this has impacted ethnic minorities living in Western countries as well. The second aspect analysed in this thesis relates to whether ethnic minority home-leavers start their career in an ethnic or a non-ethnic neighbourhood and whether there are differences between Somali immigrants, Turkish immigrants, Turkish descendants and Danes<sup>4</sup>. Such differences could significantly influence the ensuing housing careers and are thus imperative to uncover. Spatial assimilation theory, place stratification theory,

- 
4. *An ethnic neighbourhood is for analytical purposes defined as a neighbourhood with more than 30% non-Western ethnic minorities. Setting such a boundary is per definition arbitrary. This is discussed in greater detail in paper II. The terms used to describe such a neighbourhood can be discussed at length with pros and cons for most terms. Here the term 'ethnic' has been chosen for several reasons: it is widespread in a Danish context, it is short and compared to the term 'multi-ethnic neighbourhoods', it does not presuppose that there is a mix of different ethnic groups. While acknowledging that Danes and groups of Western origin also belong to an ethnic group, the term ethnic neighbourhood is used as short for non-Western ethnic minority neighbourhoods.*

cultural preference theory, and ethnic resources theory provide the theoretical framework for the analyses. The empirical evidence from a European context is limited for these theories. As the American and European context differ in a range of aspects, it is necessary to gain empirical knowledge of the European context in order to establish the relevance of American theories. By comparing with Danes in this strand of the thesis, evidence of spatial assimilation or the lack thereof can be obtained. In both papers, socio-economic variables are controlled for to establish their impact on home-leaving as well as to consider the different characteristics of the ethnic groups. Thereby this thesis subscribes to the notion of assimilation being achieved when the spatial distribution is the same as that of natives of similar background.

The second strand of the thesis revolves around the choice of the individual when conducting a housing career and the possibility for realising preferences through making choices. While the constraints on ethnic minorities in the housing market can be extensive, choices do exist. However, the amount of choice can differ between ethnic groups and a central question thus becomes: to what extent is it possible for ethnic minority households to choose their housing and thus to realise their housing preferences through changes between situations? One aspect of this relates to whether there are differences between ethnic minority groups with respect to preferences as well as options for realising their preferences within a specific housing market. The first paper of the second strand focuses on Turks and Somalis conducting their housing career in the context of the Copenhagen housing market, thus comparing two groups in the same housing market. A second aspect of understanding the possibilities for choice and the realisation of preferences is whether an ethnic minority group has similar preferences across housing markets on the basis of their shared country background and the extent to which these preferences are impacted by the local housing market conditions in specific housing markets. This is the basis for the second paper of the second strand, which analyses differences between Somalis acting within four different Nordic capital housing markets. Together the two papers provide knowledge of the preconditions of change and the possibilities for change in the housing career of Turks and Somalis more broadly.

The four foci are addressed through corresponding research questions in the four papers of the thesis. **Paper I** analyses the home-leaving of Somali immigrants, Turkish immigrants, Turkish descendants and Danes. The purpose is to establish whether there are ethnic differences in home-leaving patterns with specific focus on the link between the two life-events of marriage and home-leaving. **Paper II** analyses the spatial segregation patterns of home-leaving Somalis, Turks and Danes. The purpose is to evaluate the evidence for spatial assimilation and straight-line assimilation in a Danish context by analysing the impact of individual and parental acculturation and socio-economic situation on whether young home-leavers move to an ethnic or a non-ethnic neighbourhood when leaving home. **Paper III** analyses the driving forces for change in the housing careers of Somalis and Turks in the Copenhagen region. The purpose is to understand how change comes about in the intersection between

preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints, and how housing preferences are shaped by resources, possibilities and restraints. **Paper IV** analyses Somalis' own perceptions of their possibilities for change in the housing market across the four Nordic capitals of Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo and Stockholm<sup>5</sup>. The purpose is to understand how Somalis' experiences and perceptions of their housing career are affected by local context and cultural background.

## THE TWO ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS IN FOCUS

Ethnic minority groups differ in many respects, e.g. home country context, home country norms, reasons for migration, years as a group in a given country, educational level, employment situation, demographic behaviour and the attitudes with which they are met from the native population. Talking of ethnic minorities as one, homogenous group is thus erroneous and becomes unfeasible when conducting empirical research, as too many differences would have to be ignored. The two specific groups have been chosen for their relevance in a Danish context and for the differences between them. Somalis and Turks are groups of substantial size in the total immigrant population of Denmark<sup>6</sup>, as table 1 shows.

*Table 1: Absolute numbers and share of total population*

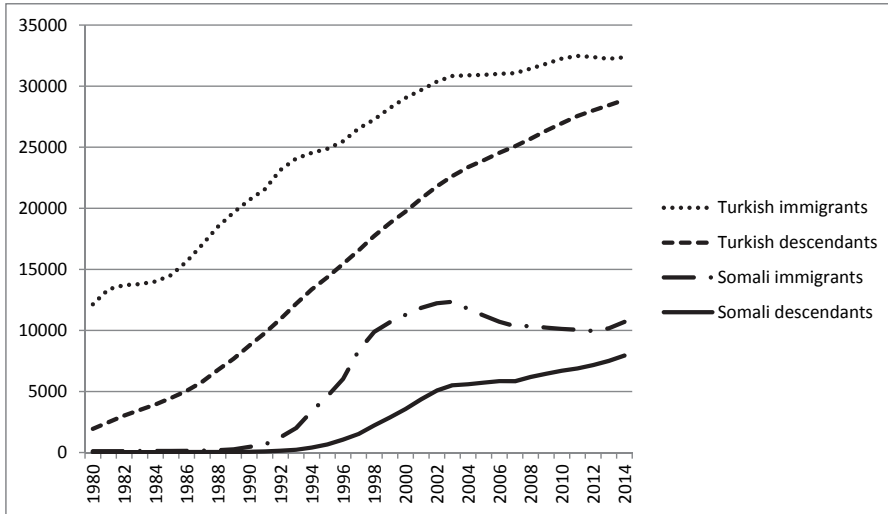
|                               | Absolute numbers |             | Share of total population |             |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|
|                               | Immigrants       | Descendants | Immigrants                | Descendants |
| Turkish origin                | 32,364           | 28,877      | 11.7%                     | 22.6%       |
| Somali origin                 | 10,704           | 7,941       | 3.9%                      | 6.2%        |
| Non-Western countries - total | 276,230          | 128,027     | 100.0%                    | 100.0%      |
| Danes                         | 5,001,165        |             | 88.9%                     |             |
| Total population of Denmark   | 5,627,235        |             | 100,0%                    |             |

Source: Statistics Denmark ([www.statistikbanken.dk](http://www.statistikbanken.dk), FOLK2)

5. *In this paper, only Somalis are included. There are two primary reasons for this. First, Somalis as a group are fairly similar in the four Nordic countries, with similar migratory history. Other groups such as Turks differ much more between the countries, e.g. with respect to their relative size or reason for migration. Second, comparing one group across four capitals is more than enough content for one paper.*
6. *In Danish registers, an immigrant is defined as a person born abroad whose parents are both (or one of them if there is no available information on the other parent) foreign citizens or were both born abroad. If there is no available information on either of the parents and the person was born abroad, the person is also defined as an immigrant. A descendant is defined as a person born in Denmark whose parents (or one of them if there is no available information on the other parent) are either immigrants or descendants with foreign citizenship. If there is no available information on either of the parents and the person in question is a foreign citizen, the person is also defined as a descendant.*

The arrival of Somalis and Turks to Denmark started at different times and has developed differently over time (see figure 1). Turks came primarily as migrant workers in the late 1960's and early 1970's or were family reunified with migrant workers in the ensuing decades. Somalis came primarily as refugees following the civil war in Somalia in the early 1990's. They are one of the largest refugee groups in Denmark. The length of stay of the Turkish group and the forced nature of the Somali migration could mean that their return perspectives differ. Turks are the largest migrant group in Denmark and, combined with their length of stay as a group, they also form the largest group of descendants. Adult Somali descendants constitute a minor group due to their shorter immigration history. Socio-economically, the situations of Somalis and Turks in Denmark differ: Turks have a higher employment rate and more stable family situations than Somalis, where divorces and separated families are more common and the unemployment rate is high (Jagd 2007).

Figure 1: The absolute number of Somali and Turkish immigrants and descendants, 1980-2014



Source: Statistics Denmark ([www.statistikbanken.dk](http://www.statistikbanken.dk), FOLK2)

Apart from the relevance of the two groups based on their size, the differences between them mean that it becomes possible to consider the housing career experiences and patterns of ethnic minority groups in different situations. The two groups represent two critical cases (Flyvbjerg 2004). Critical cases are cases of specific importance for a more general situation. In Denmark, Turks constitute the biggest group and a well-established one, while Somalis form one of the most exposed and stigmatised groups (Kleist 2007). In themselves, the two groups are thus of particular importance. By analysing and comparing them, it furthermore becomes possible to discuss the

housing career of ethnic minorities in Denmark more generally. The groups have thus been chosen as a strategically good foundation for conclusions that are likely to be of relevance for ethnic groups in a broader context than for the two groups in themselves.

In the analyses of register data, Turks are divided into immigrants and descendants. Thereby it becomes possible to discuss the persistence of settlement patterns between generations. While differences in settlement patterns are expected, understandable and maybe even beneficial for the first generation of immigrants, persistent ethnic differences over generations are problematic. Therefore, comparing immigrants and descendants from the same country of origin allows for further input to the development over time.

## SOME GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE APPROACH OF THE THESIS

The thesis seeks to increase the understanding of the housing career of ethnic minorities through a focus on the preconditions of change and the possibilities for change. Understanding why a given household at a given point in time is in a given housing situation is seldom simple, as a myriad of subjective and objective factors are at play, working together or against each other. As a consequence of the multi-faceted nature of the housing career, it is impossible to describe it in its completeness within one Ph.D. Consequently, I have chosen to focus on selected, specific aspects of the housing career. I do not claim that the chosen focus points are the only ones relevant, nor that the thesis will be able to explain all the factors involved in creating the housing career of ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, insight into specific key transitions and into broader patterns of change can help us move forward in understanding the complex processes taking place. The two strands of the thesis are explored in two papers each, based on the same data sources: register data and in-depth interviews respectively. The papers have different focus points, methodological choices, analytical approach and theoretical approach which are presented in the papers. In each case, priority has been to make the right choices in relation to the specific research question. Therefore the differences between the papers are substantial. The advantage of primarily seeing the papers as independent units is that the design in each paper has been optimised for the specific research focus.

The approach of this thesis is a sociological view of spatial mobility and housing choice, applied by the use of life course analysis and the tools that this offers. Some of the theoretical perspectives presented above see segregation on a macro-level as broader processes taking place in society and shaping the socio-spatial layout of cities and countries. Alba & Nee argue that any analysis of assimilation must pay attention to macro-level processes (1997). This thesis takes a micro-level approach to analysing the ethnic differences in housing careers by focusing of the patterns of individuals and groups. The purpose is thus not to analyse the macro-level processes and their effects. However, the role of macro-level structures and changes is in no way dismissed.

Rather, it is brought to the forefront through the application of life course analysis focusing on the link between structure and agency over time. With respect to ethnic segregation and its causes, the theories on assimilation and the explanations for ethnic differences in housing attainment are central to the thesis and they are drawn upon to varying extent in the four papers. On a more general level, the theoretical perspective underlying the whole thesis is that of life course analysis, which will be presented in the next chapter. While by no means depreciating the importance of other theories, life course analysis is seen as representing a hitherto unfulfilled potential for migration research; a potential which this thesis explores.

The overall aim of the thesis is empirical rather than theoretical. Through analyses of extensive empirical material, I wish to identify and discuss some of the key forces at play in ethnic minority housing careers. The role of theory will be to aid in analysing and understanding the empirical patterns and to relate the results of the analyses to existing knowledge. As mentioned above, two data sources form the basis of the thesis: in-depth interviews and register data. While these data sources are not integrated in the individual papers, the Ph.D. as a whole is designed as a mixed methods research study. The purpose and implications of this will be addressed later in this summary. However, the overall aim of combining data sources has been to be able to gain empirical knowledge of key aspects of the housing career through methods seen as the most appropriate for the given aspect of the overall focus.

The context of the study is Denmark, although one paper has a comparison with other Nordic countries. The relevant aspects of the Danish context are presented in the papers and thus not in this extensive summary. Empirical results offer important specific, national knowledge of the housing careers of ethnic minorities. However, as will be shown, the results offer empirical insights relevant for the shared pool of knowledge on the housing careers of ethnic minorities in Western-European countries.

## STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis comprises four individual papers and this comprehensive summary. As the papers differ greatly, the summary focuses on aspects common for them all. The summary commences in **section 2** with an introduction to life course analysis, which is the theoretical orientation behind the thesis as a whole and the backdrop for all the papers. Subsequently, the methodological approach is presented in **section 3**. Emphasis is on the mixed method research design which characterises the Ph.D. as a whole. Next, the papers are presented in **section 4**. The order of the papers is to some extent arbitrary. However, the first two papers relate to home-leaving as the first independent housing situation, while the latter two relate to the career more broadly. Paper I establishes relevant factors for explaining home-leaving which paper II builds on. All of the papers can be read independently. Finally, in the concluding **section 5** of the summary, the papers and their results are drawn together. The section discusses the empirical

and theoretical approach, the key outcomes of the thesis and the implications of the thesis' findings.



# LIFE COURSE ANALYSIS

*In summary, a life-course perspective directs inquiry toward understanding the process by which lives are lived.*

*Elder & Rockwell, 1979*

By directing inquiry to the process by which lives are lived, life course analysis offers a fruitful framework for an analysis of housing careers (Clark & Huang 2003). As will be elaborated upon below, life course analysis does not constitute an overarching, coherent analytical framework. Rather, it offers a theoretical orientation (Elder et al 2003) and guidelines on how to understand the links between structure and agency over time. Furthermore, it constitutes a so far unexploited potential for migration research (Wingens et al 2011). While less explicit in paper IV, it guides the analysis of all the four papers of this thesis and will thus be presented here.

The section comprises three parts and a concluding remark. The first part describes and discusses life course analysis as a framework for an analysis of housing careers. The second presents eight principles of life course analysis. The third focuses on life course analysis in relation to the empirical analyses of the thesis. Finally, a concluding remark on the relevance of life course analysis is made.

## LIFE COURSE ANALYSIS AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSING HOUSING CAREERS

The concept of the life course was formulated as an alternative to, or an adaption and extension of, the earlier concept of the life cycle (O'Rand & Kreckler 1990; Abramsson 2008; Jansen et al 2011). In life cycle analysis it is presumed that individuals follow a more or less fixed life cycle of stages that are universal, strictly ordered and coherent (Blenstrup 2010). Thus, everyone goes through the stages in the same order, without returning to previous stages and with individuals in the same stage sharing a consistent and meaningful set of attributes (Johnson-Hanks 2002). The life cycle has often been described by presuming that the individual follows the same stages over time as the stages identifiable in cross-sectional data analysis. The life cycle framework, however, led to a rigid view of individuals' lives; a view criticised for presuming an order and a universality that simply was not empirically true. This led to life course analysis. In life course analysis the sequences of life are not presumed to follow a specific order; instead it is the objective of the analysis to describe the sequences and how they follow each other over time (Myers 1999): *"From a life course perspective, individuals make transitions between states of being, that is, between the various*

*stages of the life cycle, following a nonlinear pattern of change. The individual may, over his life course, bypass some states of being (such as parenthood), leave and return to other states (such as marriage or the labor force), and spend little or much time in any state (such as residence in parent's household)* (Espenshade & Eisenberg Braun 1982:1026). Transition is a key concept for the change occurring during the life course (Blenstrup 2010) and is defined by Elder as “*changes in state that are more or less abrupt*” (Elder quoted in Wingens 2011). The development within housing studies corresponds with the general shift from life cycle to life course analysis. Thus, the early studies from the 1950's and 1960's focused on the housing life cycle: a fairly fixed notion of how housing circumstances change for a household over its life cycle (Myers 1999). Later, housing studies turned to life course analysis instead: as opposed to presuming a specific order of stages in the housing career, the aim is to describe the path of housing careers, making room for the variations that exist.

A helpful account of life course analysis is presented in Wingens et al 2011. Here, life course analysis is seen as offering a potential starting point for overcoming the micro-macro divide through seeking to understand and explain the links between structure and agency over time. As opposed to the life cycle model, life course analysis does not presume an ordered and generally applicable pattern across individuals' lives (Johnson-Hanks 2002). However, the existence of a pattern across individuals' lives is recognised, leading to a quest to identify and explain the systematic regularities across individual experiences. Life courses are at least partially organised according to societal structures, resulting in expectable and recognisable patterns of the order and timing of life course events (Wingens et al 2011). Not everyone lives by them. However, they are clearly identifiable. The focus in life course analysis is on the complex interplay between actors and structures: on the structuring effect of society's institutional arrangements on the life course of actors and on the possibilities for actors to shape their life course within these structures. Through their life courses, individuals impact societal structures and institutions as well; changing, shaping and reproducing them (de Valk et al 2011). Despite the changed norms and the growing individualisation of the life course linked to the second demographic transition, patterns across individual life courses do, to some extent, persist. These patterns are what life course analysis aims to describe and understand by linking the micro-level of individual lives with the macro-level of society's structures. This link is situated in time<sup>7</sup>: society and its structures change over time, and the individual's aging process and previous, time-situated experiences influence how the individual acts within the structures. Inherent in this lies another central contribution of life course analysis: the recognition that human development and aging are lifelong processes (Elder et al 2003) and that it is not enough to study only the initial phases of the life course. Fundamental changes can take place at all ages. Mayer (2009) identifies a tendency in life course research to put too much emphasis on early life course experiences.

---

7. *To draw a parallel, a central characteristic of the Chicago School sociology is the emphasis put on change and development over time (Jørgensen 2014).*

However, this criticism relates to the application of life course analysis and not to the analytical approach itself.

As mentioned, life course analysis has yet to be developed into a coherent theoretical framework. At present, it offers a theoretical orientation, pointing to key aspects of the link between actors and structures. These can be applied as principles in empirical work. Criticising the current state of affairs, Mayer (2009) contends that the development of theoretical explanations for the mechanisms of the life course, along with the further development of appropriate methods, are imperative for the continued relevance of life course analysis. Life course analysis does not explain empirical findings. Instead it helps us identify patterns which we then need other theories to explain and understand. Thus, other theories such as theories on settlement and mobility are drawn upon in the papers of this thesis to explain and understand the empirical findings. For such a combination to make sense, the other theories must acknowledge both structure and agency or at least be modifiable to do so. This is the case for the theories drawn upon in this thesis. Apart from that, as specific theoretical explanations have yet to be developed for life course analysis, there are no inherent contradictions between the theories that prevent the combination of them.

As an analytical tool for empirical analyses, life course analysis has a lot to offer. Wingens et al (2011) identify six principles that are the most commonly used guiding principles<sup>8</sup> for empirical analyses based in life course analysis: historical time and place, situational imperatives, accentuation, linked lives, agency and life stage. While these are the most common according to Wingens et al, a number of other principles based in life course analysis can be formulated. Their relevance depends on the purpose with which the specific life course analysis is conducted. For this project, two further principles are relevant: the principle of linked careers and the principle of age and life phase. These are based on key aspects of life course analysis, as will be shown below. Apart from their relevance here, the principles are generally applicable for life course analysis and thus capture additional aspects to the principles by Wingens et al. While Wingens et al do not claim to have covered all the guiding principles of life course analysis, I find that the two additional principles cover imperative aspects of life course analysis and thus should be included.

---

8. *Elder et al identify five principles of life course analysis (2003). Four of these overlap with the principles of Wingens et al. The fifth principle is The principle of Life-Span Development. This states that human development and aging are life-long processes. While this is an essential notion of life course analysis, it is less of a guiding principle for empirical analyses and more of a key understanding behind the whole approach to life course. I find the additional principles of Wingens et al very useful and thus take their presentation as a starting point, but refer to Elder et al where relevant.*

## THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*The principle of age and life phase* is centred on the importance of age and the phases of life individuals go through over the life course (Elder 1975; Settersten 2009). While age and life phase are essential to life course analysis, they are not included in the principles by Wingens et al. It is thus one of the two principles that I have added. Elder defines the life course as the “*age-structured pathways across settings from birth to death*” (Elder 1981:509). While life phases are not ordered in a linear way, some phases do belong primarily to certain parts of life and are thus related to chronological age. Likewise, age sets minimum and maximum limits for the possibilities life offers (Settersten 2009). Finally, an extensive set of age-related norms influences when individuals do what in their lives (Espenshade & Eisenberg Braun 1982; Elder et al 2003; Blenstrup 2010). It is common to speak of being early or late in relation to the important events in life e.g. having a baby, finishing an education or buying one’s first home. Deviations from the norm are not only judged on the basis of the deviation itself, but also on the situation of the individual/household in other spheres of life (Elder 1975; Elder & Rockwell 1979). Likewise for housing: age and life phase of the individual have implications for housing needs as well as for the possibilities and restraints on the housing market. Age is viewed differently in different contexts i.e. the meaning of age is socially constructed and varies from one cultural setting to another (Blenstrup 2010). This is essential to acknowledge in a study of ethnic minorities, since it implies that the age-related norms in relation to housing can differ between the cultural setting of Denmark and that of the respective countries of origin of ethnic minorities. Different age-related family and housing norms can lead to different housing preferences and thus different housing careers. They can also result in conflicts between two sets of norms, especially for descendants.

*The principle of time and place* highlights the importance of context<sup>9</sup> (Elder et al 2003). The historical and social context significantly influences the possible ways in which a housing career can be shaped (Özüekren & van Kempen 2003). Firstly, different social and historical contexts have different age-related norms affecting the preferences and the perceived needs of individuals and households (Abramsson 2008). Secondly, different historical time periods are characterised by different economic situations influencing the possibilities of individuals in general and in relation to the housing market. Thirdly, the legal framework and subsidies related to housing change over time. For immigrants, immigration and integration policies are part of this context. Also the situation at arrival is important; specifically whether an immigrant arrives as part of the first wave of immigrants from his/her country of origin or whether the person is part of a later wave (Murdie 2002). Network and institutions will already be in place for those who arrive as part of a later wave and this can potentially help later arrivals get established in the housing market. As the cohort relates individuals

---

9. To draw another parallel, a central characteristic of the Chicago School sociology is the notion that social life has to be understood in relation to the social time and place within which it is localised (Jørgensen 2014).

to a historical time that has implications for their life course (Ryder 1965; Elder et al 2003), the cohort is a very relevant variable to consider. Furthermore, the cohort in itself constitutes an important part of the context, as the size and the composition of the cohort influence the possibilities of the individuals within it (Elder 1975). Cohort effects differ from period effects, i.e. the effects of social change that are relatively uniform across the cohorts that experience the change (Elder et al 2003; Blenstrup 2010).

*The principle of life stage* relates the impact of a societal change or event to the life stage at which the individual experiences it. Elder et al (2003) and Settersten (2009) call it the principle of timing, which comes about through the dual focus in life course analysis on age and context: “*The principle of timing is that the age at which an experience occurs has a lot to do with how it is experienced*” (Settersten 2009). This relates both to experiences and events in the life course of the individual as well as to changes to the society in which the individual lives. It can also be a change from one society to another, such as when migrating.

*The principle of situational imperatives* relates to the impact on individuals of finding themselves in a new situation. Again, such changed situations can relate to an individual's own life or to wider societal changes. In both cases, new situations lead to new social demands on the individual's behaviour and consequently to limited opportunity for learned role-related behaviour. For immigrants, an example of this is the impact of migration on housing opportunities: migration means ending the housing career in the home country, thereby having to start more or less all over (Magnusson & Özüekren 2002).

*The principle of accentuation* relates to societal change as well as behavioural patterns. In a situation of societal change, previously acquired and learned behavioural patterns such as norms, values and traditions can become more pronounced. One such situation of societal change arises after migration, when the individual has to navigate in a new context. This can lead to new and unknown social demands regarding role-related behaviour and at the same time to more pronounced norms, values and habits originating in the culture of the home country.

*The principle of linked lives* relates to the interconnectedness of the lives of individuals (Elder et al 2003). Lives are embedded within networks of social relations, and these networks influence the life course of individuals. The social relations refer to smaller networks such as families and friends and to larger networks such as the ethnic community which influence through shared cultural expectations (de Valk et al 2011). Understanding life courses necessitates consideration of the impact of social relations on different levels and acknowledging the impact these have on individual lives.

*The principle of agency* recognises the importance of the actor within the societal structures and the opportunities of the individual for shaping its life course (Elder et al 2003; Blenstrup 2010). A consequence of the shift from life cycle to life course

analysis is a heightened attention to agency: Changes in housing over the life course do not just happen to individuals; they involve choices based on preferences, perceptions of suitable housing, economic considerations and many other factors (Abramsson 2008; Skifter Andersen 2010; Hedman 2011). This is one of the major advantages of life course analysis as opposed to the preceding life cycle framework in which the evolution between stages seemed inevitable (Johnson-Hanks 2002). In life course analysis, the choices of individuals are influenced by societal structures but not determined by them. This is also true in relation to housing. Structures limit the choices available. For ethnic minorities, the structural limitations are definitely significant and probably even more so than for Danes. Nevertheless, there are choices to be made over the course of the housing career, and through these choices ethnic minorities shape their housing career (Hedman 2011).

*The principle of linked careers* underlines the linked nature of the various careers of life, emphasizing that: “*changes in one dimension of the household-aging process are necessarily linked to changes in other dimensions*” (Clark & Huang 2003:324; Jansen et al 2011). This is the second principle that I have added to those by Wingers et al. Analysing specific aspects of the life course, such as the housing career, necessitates continual acknowledgment of the intricate and interconnected nature of the different spheres of life. This is what the principle of linked careers captures. The other careers of life affect housing careers in two ways: through making housing change desirable, thus triggering a move, and secondly through making housing change possible (Mulder & Hooimeijer 1999; Magnusson-Turner & Hedman 2014). Over a life time, the circumstances provided by the other careers change, and this in turn influences housing opportunities (Mulder & Hooimeijer 1999; Abramsson et al 2002; Abramsson 2008). Furthermore, the housing preferences of the individual are based on events relating to the course of life (recent, previous and expected). Research has shown that young households move more often than older households, that the wealthy and well-educated are more mobile than others, and that the older and richer the household becomes, the more housing it consumes (Clark & Huang 2003).

## **LIFE COURSE ANALYSIS IN RELATION TO THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSES**

Life course analysis offers a way of framing the understanding of a range of aspects of ethnic minority life courses, e.g. how the societal change of migration disrupts the life course, leading to constrained role-related behaviour and a potential accentuation of home country culture; how the life courses of ethnic minorities are shaped by the structures of the host country, at the same time leaving room for agency within the structures; and how lives are linked within small and large networks that influence the actions of individuals. Wingers et al argue: “*Understanding migrants’ behaviour and explaining the cumulative effects resulting from their actions, which in turn are embedded in societal structures and framed by institutions, requires just the*

*kind of dynamic research approach the sociological life course perspective suggests”* (Wingens et al 2011:2). On a more specific level, Wingens et al call for European studies, studies focusing on other aspects of the life course than labour market participation, and studies explicitly applying life course analysis. This thesis covers all three aspects. The specific use of life course analysis and the employed principles vary between the papers.

In the part based on register data, the ethnic differences in housing careers are analysed by use of event history analysis, a key method of life course analysis and highly suitable for retrospective data (Hoerning 1996). Life course analysis frames the analyses by highlighting key aspects of the links in life courses. Together with existing knowledge, this supplies the grounds for the selection of the key covariates. The central principles employed are those of age and life phase, linked careers, linked lives and time and place. The two principles of accentuation and situational imperatives support the argument for distinguishing between Turkish immigrants and descendants in the analyses. Finally, the principle of agency is touched upon as well. While the actor's preferences and actions within the structures cannot be included in analyses based on register data, the principle reminds us never to presume that all aspects of home-leaving can be covered in a longitudinal analysis of register data. Life course analysis highlights differences between groups originating in different contexts; between groups coming to Denmark in different times and at different ages, between immigrants and descendants, between cohorts, and between different kinds of immigrants i.e. work immigrants and refugees. These various groups have had very different contexts for their immigration and thus for their following housing careers in Denmark.

The part of the study based on in-depth interviews offers a more nuanced understanding of the housing career as seen from the perspective of ethnic minorities themselves: *“Studying migration biographies means to strongly focus on individual life paths and to aim at an in-depth understanding of individual experiences and decision making”* (de Valk et al 2011:295). It adds the perspective of the actor. In this part of the empirical work, life course analysis will be applied in order to understand the meaning ascribed to the housing career by the individual. Focus will be on how choices influence the careers and on how individuals try to make sense of their housing careers i.e. how the individual navigates within the societal structures influencing housing careers. In paper III life course analysis is applied explicitly by focusing the analysis of the interviews on six principles of life course analysis: linked careers, linked lives, historical time and place, situational imperatives, agency and accentuation. These six principles are actively used as ways into the empirical material. Paper IV bears only cursory reference to life course analysis by presenting the principle of agency as a foundation for the paper's approach of referring to individuals *“constructing their life courses [...] as self-monitored actors within the particular opportunities and constraints they face”* (Wingens et al 2011:12). However, life course nevertheless underlies the analyses. The paper revolves around the impact of structures on actors and the agency of individuals within the societal structures. Key foci in the paper relate to how



individual actors negotiate the structures of local housing market contexts in order to achieve desired change (principle of historical time and place); how cultural norms and fear of social stigmatization from peers influence the individual's negotiation of the structures in striving for change (principle of accentuation and principle of linked lives); and finally how individuals have to adapt to new societal structures requiring unknown role-related behaviour (principle of situational imperatives). Underlying it all is the principle of agency: that the housing career of ethnic minorities cannot be understood without acknowledging the individual's agency. Furthermore, for ethnic minorities, the importance of societal structures implies that the specific country of settlement could have a substantial influence on how their life courses evolve after migration. This makes cross-country comparisons such as paper IV highly relevant.

Paper IV is an example of the way in which life course analysis is often present without being explicitly referred to, as Wingens et al note. In this case it is caused by the negotiations of comparative work. More generally, a reason for this could be that life course analysis as a framework builds on notions which are generally widespread in empirical work. The structure and agency divide lies at the heart of social sciences, and ways of analysing these in relation to each other are thus widely present, whether referred to as life course analysis or not. The power of life course analysis is that it sums these up in a useful manner and assists in understanding a range of ways structure and agency interact. The development of life course analysis into a coherent theoretical framework would most likely aid the explicit application of it in empirical work.

## **A CONCLUDING REMARK ON THE RELEVANCE OF LIFE COURSE ANALYSIS**

The potential of life course analysis for migration research lies in the focus on the impact of structural setting on the individual and on the possibilities for the individual to act within these structural settings. It highlights how migrating from one structural context to another impacts individuals and their actions. It highlights how not having grown up in a specific structural setting means that one does not have the foundation in the structures and therefore potentially acts differently within the structures of the host country. It aids in understanding both the general and the specific conditions of different ethnic groups as well as between immigrants and descendants. With focus on the link between agency and structure, and the impact of previous as well as current structural conditions, life course analysis can contain both the differences and the similarities of different ethnic groups.

Life course analysis is coupled here with a mixed methods research approach. The register part of the study focuses on establishing which covariates impact on home-leaving patterns i.e. the causal relations behind ethnic differences in housing careers. The interview part focuses on understanding the individual perspectives of Somalis and Turks i.e. the meaning they ascribe to their housing career. Through the dual attention



to structure and agency over time, life course analysis can contain perspectives of both cause and meaning. This makes life course analysis a meaningful framework for mixed methods research.



# METHODS – OF DATA COLLECTION AND OF DATA ANALYSIS

*If this is an awful mess ... then would something less messy make a mess of describing it?*

*John Law, 2007*

The reality that we as researchers are trying to understand is not ordered and organised. On the contrary: it is very often, if not always, a mess<sup>10</sup>. Presupposing that we can understand even a fraction of this mess through always only applying one method at a time is problematic. This is not to say that MMR will always lead us to better answers. The point is that we need to be willing to accept the ‘mess’ of mixing methods in the cases where our research questions require it of us.

As the appropriate methods for the two strands of this thesis are quantitative and qualitative respectively, a mixed methods research design has been chosen. The grounds for this are presented in this section. The section commences with an outline of the theoretical perspectives of mixed methods research, followed by a presentation of the mixed methods research design of the Ph.D. It then presents the two data sources of the study: register data and in-depth interviews. Subsequently, it describes how the two data sources are combined and how they work together to create a better understanding of the housing career of ethnic minorities. Finally, it returns to the issue of messiness in a concluding remark to the section.

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MIXING METHODS

The discussion on whether one can mix methods or not and how to do so is on-going and has been for more than 20 years. Nevertheless, what is now called Mixed Methods research has been conducted for far longer than that; with the Marienthal study as one of the early and very extensive examples (Brewer & Hunter 2006; Moran-Ellis et al 2006; Guest 2013). The Marienthal study from 1933 employed a very wide range of methods in uncovering the implications of unemployment in a community and became influential in that it aimed to move beyond unemployment as a purely statistical phenomenon. However, Marienthal and other early studies were conducted without consideration as to the implications of mixing methods. Today, there is extensive debate on the questions of whether to mix, how to mix and why one should mix. A pivotal

---

10 . *The implications of this go further for Law than here. Nevertheless, Law inspires a thinking less constricted by a search for order.*

issue in this debate is whether or not quantitative and qualitative methods are based in different paradigms that are incompatible and thus whether or not the two methods can be combined in one study<sup>11</sup>. There are three types of answers to this. First, Smith & Heshusius (1986) and Giddings (2006), amongst others, perceive quantitative and qualitative methods to be based in different paradigms. This means that they cannot and should not be combined in one study. This is the incompatibility thesis (Bergman 2008). At the most, two parallel studies can be undertaken involving several researchers linked together in a ‘*multi-methodological co-operative inquiry*’ (Giddings 2006). Second, researchers such as Jick (1979), Bergman (2008) and Hammersley (2008) see the link between methods and paradigms as an early construct that is no more than a construct, albeit a very robust one: qualitative and quantitative methods respectively are not ontologically linked with constructivism and positivism respectively. Even within the two groups of quantitative and qualitative methods there are vast differences between the individual methods (Bergman 2008). Therefore, combining the two groups of methods is possible. Third, there are those who advocate grounding mixed methods research in a third research regime: pragmatism (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004; Morgan 2007): “*The pragmatic rule or maxim or method states that the current meaning or instrumental or provisional truth value (...) of an expression (...) is to be determined by the experiences or practical consequences of belief in or use of the expression in the world*” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). Thus, in relation to mixing methods, this means that researchers are to choose whichever method(s) work the best in relation to the specific research question in focus<sup>12</sup>. This Ph.D. is based on the second of these three approaches: that no method is inherently linked to a specific paradigm. Therefore, there are no automatic links between subscribing to a specific paradigm and choices in relation to the design of one’s research. Instead it is necessary for the researcher to justify choices of methods, as these are not pre-given by a chosen paradigm – whether conducting mono or mixed methods research. As Bergman states: “*specific data collection and data analysis techniques must now be connected far more directly and explicitly to a research focus, research context and research design*” thus “*embedding and justifying our selected methods*” (Bergman 2008).

---

11. Linked to this is the discussion of what a paradigm is. See Morgan 2007.

12. For the two latter approaches to mixed methods research, the consequence is that you can mix methods and that the determining factor is which method(s) is/are most suitable in relation to the research questions of a given study. The difference lies in the argument – i.e. that there is no predetermined link with paradigms or that mixed methods research should be based on a new paradigm.

Closely related to the discussion of mixed methods research is the discussion of triangulation<sup>13</sup> (Jick 1979; Hammersley 2008). The basic issues are the same but with the difference that triangulation does not presuppose the division of methods into qualitative and quantitative methods. Instead, triangulation is the combination in one study of any two or more methods; whether they are of the same kind or not. Hammersley advocates against using the term mixed methods, arguing that it preserves the division between quantitative and qualitative methods, while trying to bridge it (Hammersley 2008). At the same time, it presupposes that triangulation only takes place when combining qualitative and quantitative methods when it actually also includes combining different qualitative methods and combining different quantitative methods respectively. Rather than giving up the term mixed methods, Brewer & Hunter (2006) propose an alternative classification of methods. This offers a fruitful way of moving beyond the classical distinction of quantitative and qualitative research; allowing for all combinations of methods. The distinction is based purely on the kind of data collected and not on the analytical approach to data. This makes it possible to focus on the suitability of specific combinations of methods in relation to specific research questions without theoretical and paradigmatic links determining which methods are available. The Brewer & Hunter classification consists of four principal methods or research styles: field work, survey research (both interviews and questionnaires<sup>14</sup>), experimentation and nonreactive research (research where the individual is not affected by, or involved directly in, the collection of data e.g. register data). To Brewer & Hunter, mixing methods constitutes a fifth style of data collection which has as its fundamental strategy to “*attack a research problem with an arsenal of methods that have nonoverlapping weaknesses in addition to their complementary strengths*” (2006:4). Consequently, the biases of each method are seen as counterbalancing each other. More aspects of the phenomenon under study can thus be discerned through combining methods, thereby leading to a higher degree of explanatory power.

Some researchers argue more or less explicitly that mixed methods research always or often results in superior research (Jick 1979; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). Others advocate against the mixing of methods, arguing that it is erroneous to present Mixed Methods Research as the best alternative with more methods per definition leading to more and better knowledge (Giddings 2006). In this respect I agree with Bergman

---

13. *The concept of triangulation stems from geometry and is a technique used in e.g. navigation (Bazeley & Kemp 2012). By knowing the length of one side and two angles of a triangle, the length of the other sides and the last angle can be determined. As a metaphor for mixed methods research, triangulation can thus be criticised for presuming that reality can be completely uncovered through the application of enough methods. This understanding is not, however, inherent in the concept (Gibbs 2007; Hammersley 2008) and it is not how I use it, as will be described later.*

14. *While Brewer & Hunter’s description of survey research is mostly relevant for quantitative research, i.e. based on questionnaires as opposed to the qualitative aspects of in-depth interviewing, they do define the category ‘survey research’ as both in-depth interviews and questionnaires.*

(2008): mixing methods is not per definition the superior approach. It depends on the research question of the study. In some studies, a mono-method design is fitting; in others, mixing methods will lead to more in-depth answers to the research questions. As mentioned, we need to be willing to accept the ‘mess’ of mixing methods in the cases where our research questions require it of us.

## CLASSIFYING THE MIXED METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN OF THIS STUDY

Several classification schemes separating and defining different kinds of mixed methods research have been developed. While a discussion of the pros and cons of these classification schemes is outside the scope of this Ph.D., it can be fruitful to use some of the descriptions in these schemes to describe the research I have undertaken and the aim of the mixing taking place. The mixing of methods in this study is an example of what Hammersley calls ‘triangulation as seeking complementary information’ which he describes in the following way, quoting Erzberger & Kelle: *“the use of different methods to investigate a certain domain of social reality can be compared with the examination of a physical object from two different viewpoints or angles. Both viewpoints provide different pictures of this object that might not be useful to validate each other but that might yield a fuller and more complete picture of the phenomenon concerned if brought together”* (Erzberger & Kelle in Hammersley 2008). This definition emphasizes that mixed methods research studies can lead to a fuller picture of the research subject but not *the* full picture and therefore, unlike others, they do not lean on an idea of a stable object that can be fully uncovered (Bergman 2008). In Greene’s scheme, the purpose of this study can be understood as *mixing methods for purposes of complementarity* (Greene 2007): as the phenomenon of housing careers is multi-faceted and as I want to understand different central aspects of the housing career, I employ different methods that each can uncover different dimensions of the overall phenomenon (Moran-Ellis et al 2006) of the housing careers of ethnic minorities.

When triangulating as a means for seeking complementary information, a critical point to consider is *“how we should decide what additional information is and is not relevant to our study”* (Hammersley 2008). I do not claim in this study to have covered all of the information relevant in studying the housing careers of ethnic minorities. What I do claim is to have chosen key aspects of it and to have chosen methods suitable for the purpose of understanding these aspects. Furthermore I also claim that the combination of the methods I have chosen in relation to the specific questions leads us further than one method could have done on its own.

The type of mixed method study conducted should be a consequence of decisions regarding the suitability of different methods for the different aspects of the phenomenon under study (Brewer & Hunter 2006; Greene 2007; Bergman 2008). Consequently, this study has become a mixed methods research study through consideration of the

suitability of different methods in answering the questions in focus in each of the four papers. The first two papers focus on the actual patterns of the housing careers of Somalis and Turks in relation to leaving the parental home. If we are to understand better the actual patterns of housing careers as they unfold for the two groups, then an analysis of register data is a suitable tool. Nonreactive research like register data has the advantage of reducing “*the risk of error stemming [...] from the bias of studying only living, competent and cooperative subjects*” (Brewer & Hunter 2006:61). Thus, as the Danish registers contain yearly information about everyone who has lived in Denmark at some point since as early as 1980, there is no participation bias. This is very relevant, especially when focusing on groups that can be hard to get in contact with such as ethnic minority groups, as previous studies have shown<sup>15</sup>. Conversely, when analysing register data one runs the risk of understanding the patterns in data as being a consequence of decisions made by the actors involved. Patterns in the registers can easily lead to presumptions regarding the mechanisms behind the career; presumptions that might be wrong. Thus, in-depth interviewing is an appropriate choice of method for answering the other two research questions where the aim is to understand why the changes in the housing career take place as they do (Jick 1979; Tulloch 2003). The agency involved in conducting a housing career is brought to the forefront.

Behind the discussions on whether one can mix methods or not lays a difference in the perception of the reality that we as researchers are trying to understand (Hammersley 2008): is there one reality which can be uncovered through choosing the right method(s) or are there several realities (or maybe no reality at all)? My standpoint is that there is a single reality out there, but that it is not one we can ever hope to uncover and describe completely. The understanding of reality depends on who is trying to understand it (Greene 2007). As a social science researcher, one can only ever understand the world through the eyes of the one who is looking at it and thus we can never ‘see’ the reality independently of the lens of eyes we are looking through. Register data does show actual patterns and therefore somehow reality as it actually is. However, the lens is still there: in the variables that are available in the registers, in focusing on particular aspects of data, in describing the data and in analysing the data. Furthermore, the full picture of reality is far too complicated to be described. No model will be big enough; no book long enough. Therefore, as opposed to the researcher adding pieces to a puzzle which can be completed, I perceive the job of the researcher to be to add pieces to an infinite and ever-changing puzzle (Brewer & Hunter 2006; Hammersley 2008). While we will never complete the puzzle, carefully planned research can reveal more of the picture in the puzzle.

---

15. In a Danish study on the values of ethnic minorities, both the percentage-wise matching of persons in a drawn sample with phone numbers and the response rate were distinctly lower for the ethnic minority groups than for Danes (The Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs 2007).

When conducting any kind of research study it is necessary to specify the unit of study and the unit of analysis<sup>16</sup> (Brewer & Hunter 2006). Units of study can be defined “*as those entities about which we collect data and about which we want to generalize or make inferences*” (Brewer & Hunter 2006; emphasis in original). In this case the unit of study is the housing career, as this is what the study ultimately aims at understanding aspects of. The unit of analysis on the other hand is the unit from which data is collected; in this case the individual. Even though a large part of the housing career is carried out as part of a household (Rossi 1980), the unit of analysis in this study is the individual. For the analysis of home-leaving patterns, the individual is the appropriate unit of analysis, as home-leaving takes place as an individual. Even when leaving home to live with someone, the transition is individual, as the parental homes differ. For the analysis of actors’ perceptions of change and preferences, individuals are interviewed<sup>17</sup>. Doubtlessly, there is some correspondence between the preferences of the individual and those of the other household members, as preferences are formed in relation to the situation of the household as a whole and in dialogue within the household. However, individuals within households might still have different opinions on housing preferences, possibilities and restraints. Furthermore, they have had different housing careers and experiences before forming the household. Therefore it cannot be presumed that individuals represent the perception of the household.

## REGISTER DATA

The first strand of the study is based on the extensive Danish public registers. These contain a wide range of information about individuals, their housing circumstances, family relations, work, education and much more. Data covers more than 25 years. The database<sup>18</sup> created for the project on the basis of the registers contains information on everyone from age 16 and up registered as living in Denmark at some point between 1985 and 2008<sup>19</sup>. In order to create a dataset that can run smoothly during

---

16. Brewer & Hunter use the two phrases ‘unit of analysis’ and ‘unit of study’ interchangeably. What I call the unit of analysis, they instead name ‘the unit of observation’. I have chosen to distinguish the meaning of the terms in the same way as Brewer & Hunter but with different names, as I find that these correspond instinctively better with the actual distinction being made. Unit of observation also creates a link to observational studies and these are not relevant here.

17. All interviews were conducted individually except for one where both husband and wife were interviewed. Nevertheless, their stories were told primarily individually, as the husband joined the interview later and as the wife left the interview before the husband.

18. I am grateful to Hans Skifter Andersen and Anders Rhiger Hansen for their extensive work on establishing a database based on the Danish registers prior to my work on it.

19. The registers go back to 1980. However, some of the key variables only go back to 1985. The NODES project, which this Ph.D. is part of, started in 2009 and this is when data was ordered from Statistics Denmark. Therefore the database covers the years 1985-2008.



analysis, a random sample of 7 per cent was created for Danes. For immigrants and descendants everyone is included.

Register data is unique in that it allows us to follow individuals over a large time span; much larger than what would be realistic to achieve by collecting survey panel data. It includes everyone who at some point since 1985 has lived in Denmark and it links people within families, thus expanding the options of analysis. Furthermore, the Danish registers cover a wide range of themes, offering a large number of variables. Other sources of similar longitudinal data are few and consequently longitudinal research on housing careers is scarce (Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). The possibilities in the Danish registers are incomparable. The disadvantage, on the other hand, is that the information is limited to what is in the registers. Nevertheless, as the Danish registers are extensive, the central aspects of the individual's housing career are covered.

The method of data analysis is event history analysis. Event history analysis is equivalent to survival analysis which is used in health science for determining survival time e.g. the survival time of individuals with a specific disease given different treatments. Social science has adopted this method to determine the time until an event occurs for different groups under different circumstances and for the effect of covariates on the hazard of experiencing a given event. The major advantage of event history analysis is that it allows for inclusion in the analyses of those who do not experience the event during the study and for whom we thus do not know the exact survival time (Kleinbaum & Klein 2005). Such right-censored data includes those who either never experience the event during the follow-up time or who leave the population before the event occurs (e.g. die or leave the study) (Allison 2010). In register data, individuals can only be censored if they leave Denmark or die before experiencing the event. If censored data were not included, one would lose substantial information. Furthermore, if the characteristics of the censored event-times were different from those not censored, this would lead to a non-representative data set. Event history analysis allows us to estimate the effects of variables on the hazard for experiencing a given event. This is essential as it thus becomes possible to identify which variables make Somalis and Turks leave the parental home, and the effect of these home-leaving variables on different outcomes. More specifically, Cox regression models are estimated. Cox regression models have become a preferred method for conducting event history analysis for two reasons in particular. First, the Cox model is semi-parametric, meaning that it does not require selection of a particular distribution for the time to event. Second, it can incorporate time-dependent variables. Some of the models for paper I and all the models for paper II are estimated in a competing risks design, estimating the impact of the covariates on the hazard for leaving the parental home for different outcomes.

The analytical approach to register data is deductive. While the inductive theory has as its starting point the contents of data, a deductive approach aims explicitly at testing hypotheses or a theoretical argument (Olsen 2002). The deductive approach is suitable, as fairly extensive research has been conducted on home-leaving patterns

and on ethnic difference in housing, thereby laying the grounds for the formulation of hypotheses or theory-based research questions on ethnic differences in home-leaving. In paper I, the hypotheses are formulated on the basis of the existing literature on home-leaving and the findings from the interviews of the study. In paper II, the research questions are formulated on the basis of the theory of spatial assimilation and linked theoretical concepts. With a deductive approach, the pre-understandings of the research field, and thus of me as a researcher, are employed explicitly for the purpose of theory-testing.

Further information on methods and approach are found in paper I and paper II.

## IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The second strand of the study is based on 28 interviews in the Copenhagen metropolitan region: 15 with Turkish work migrants or descendants thereof and 13 with Somali refugees. The comparative paper is based on the 13 Somali interviews along with an additional 43 Somali interviews in total in the three other capital cities. The interviews were conducted on the basis of a semi-structured interview guide created together with the research partners in Norway, Sweden and Finland but adapted to a Danish context. The interview guide covered the housing career of the individual from arrival from the home country for immigrants, or from birth for descendants, to the present housing situation. This part of the interview guide was similar to the life history method (Abramsson 2008), but with primary interest in the housing career and the aspects of other careers relevant to housing options, preferences and restraints. In addition, the interview guide covered four specific themes: ideal housing situation; sense of belonging to home country and Denmark; social networks; and discrimination. These themes were chosen for their expected relevance for the individuals' perceived housing options, preferences and possibilities for realising preferences.

Recruitment of the interviewees took place through a range of channels. The goal was to achieve diversity within the two ethnic groups as well as between them, thereby obtaining varied answers as to how change was experienced by the Somalis and Turks making a housing career in the Copenhagen housing market. This made it possible to look for similarities despite differences both within and between the two groups.

Based on the work of Yin, Small (2008) suggests that in-depth interview studies should be understood as multiple-case studies as opposed to small-sample studies. Each interview represents a single case that can be explored in-depth and according to the specificity of that case. By this logic, it becomes imperative to cover a diversity of experiences in an in-depth study, as the study at hand does. The interviewees' diverse situations mean that the answers to the research questions relate to a greater variance of experience.

An often raised issue in ethnic minority research is the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee when the former belongs to the majority and the latter to a minority. Some argue that this poses a problem, as the fact that the researcher is an outsider will produce less accurate research (Shah 2004). I disagree. As Tinker & Armstrong (2008) write, ethnic belonging is only one of many characteristics of both researcher and research subject, thus making them both insiders and outsiders to each other, depending on what sphere of life one focuses on. Furthermore, there can be advantages to the researcher having an outsider status (Tinker & Armstrong 2008). First, it can lead to less fear of judgement when expressing views in conflict with cultural values of own minority group. Second, a lack of cultural knowledge on the part of the researcher can elicit more detailed responses as the interviewee tries to explain central issues to the interviewer. Thirdly, it can allow the interviewee to be the expert, thus adjusting the power relation of the interview situation. Furthermore, when the researcher is an insider, there is a risk of the pre-existing assumptions of the researcher influencing the interviews, making the researcher blind to unexpected input from the interviewee. There are advantages and disadvantages of being an insider or an outsider respectively. Being aware of the challenges is the key. As an outsider it is imperative to ask questions not only about what, but also about why and how in order to understand the interviewees' perceptions and experiences.

The analytical approach to the interviews is inductive. The inductive approach offers an analytic strategy where the ideal is for data to speak without presupposed categories, ideas or theories determining what we see (Charmaz 2006). Even if it is not possible to strip oneself completely of pre-understandings and theoretical background, the effort to put it aside will lead to an inductive approach where unanticipated topics in data can more easily be seen. An inductive approach offers the possibility of exploration, of identifying yet undiscovered issues, of letting the voices of the individuals in focus be heard, and of allowing conflicting aspects within the material or between the material and existing theory to stand out (Glaser 1998; Lincoln 2002; Charmaz 2006; Dahler-Larsen 2007). Often, inductive and deductive approaches are combined through adding theory and hypotheses after the initial inductive analysis, and then going through data again in order to secure inclusion of all relevant material in data. Thus, in many cases, analysis becomes a two-sided process, alternating between an inductive and a deductive approach to data (Morgan 2007; Bergman 2008). This is to some extent also the case here. The inductive strategy is of particular relevance in this study due to the combination of interviews with register data, as it gives the subjects under study the voice that is so lacking in the registers. Thus, it transforms them from unidentified, unspecific subjects into actual people with meanings, feelings, ideas, contradictions and ambiguity.

The interviews have all been coded in the program Nvivo. Coding has been done with the assistance of colleagues. This has secured the possibility for cross-checking and discussion of code contents; enhancing the coding reliability (Gibbs 2007). The inductive approach has been employed through a starting point in open coding of the

interviews (David & Sutton 2004; Lofland et al 2006; Gibbs 2007). The aim of coding is to put 'labels' on text in order first to organise data and then to assist in comparing data: comparing within and between cases, but also comparing with categories and with theory, if relevant. To code is to try to understand data and thus to analyse. The inductive coding in this study has been a two-phase process. The first phase was an initial, open coding (Charmaz 2006) of two of the interviews in each group i.e. two Turks and two Somalis. The aim of this was to approach the material openly and to let unexpected categories arise, as opposed to predefining categories on the basis of theory or previous studies. While I, as a researcher, can never shed myself completely of my pre-understandings, an inductive approach and open coding aids in putting these pre-understandings in the background. Differences between the groups were expected, not only in attitudes and experiences within codes and categories, but also in relation to which codes and categories were relevant. Therefore it was important to open-code two of the interviews from each group.

The second phase of the coding process was focused coding (Charmaz 2006). Based on the open coding, the most significant and frequent categories that had arisen during the interviews were formulated and selected. This led to a focused coding of all the interviews. Through the coding process, categories were developed and new ones arose. Adjustments to the initial focused coding were made throughout the process and the interviews coded first were reviewed again in order to secure a complete comparison of the material, thus living up to the criteria of inclusion (Dahler-Larsen 2007). Everything relevant for a specific category was included; not only the most well formulated or the most clear-cut. This secured a close fit between analysis and data. Correspondingly, contradictions within interviews and contradicting statements between interviews were also included. The focused coding developed and defined the individual categories (axial coding) and defined the relationships and links between categories (theoretical coding), thus bringing the analysis together in something closer to a whole compared to the initial coding (Charmaz 2006). Through this, the process of coding became not only the onset for analysis but it constituted a substantial part of the analysis in itself.

Further information on methods and approach are in paper III and paper IV.

## **COMBINING THE DATA SOURCES**

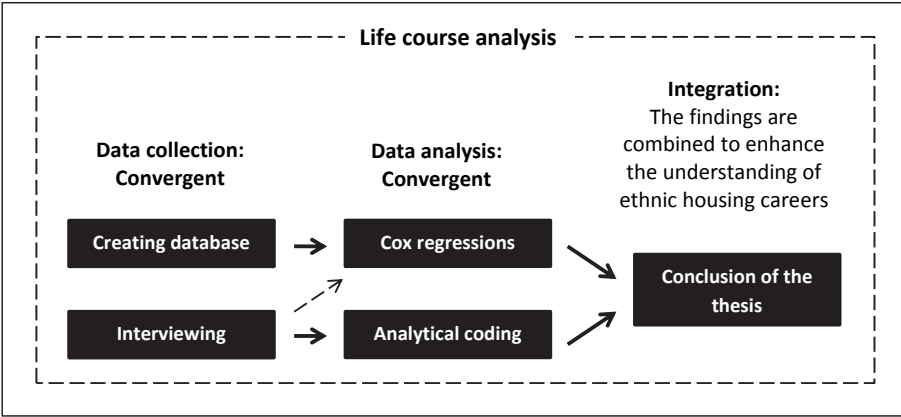
The development of mixed methods research into a field has led to the development of several typologies, each trying to organise and distinguish the various versions of mixed methods research design (e.g. Moran-Ellis et al 2006; Greene 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009; Bazeley & Kemp 2012; Guest 2013). As mentioned earlier, the purpose here is not to discuss the usefulness of such typologies more generally, nor to choose one over the other. Instead, I make use of some of the typologies as tools for describing the design of this study.

Guest argues that the typologies have become too complicated, while at the same time not actually fulfilling their purpose of e.g. aiding the design process and structuring the field of mixed methods research studies (Guest 2013). He instead advocates focus on points of interface, i.e. any point where methods are connected as opposed to a focus on the study as a whole. Thereby, the complexity of a study can be described. Further, he argues for the use of only two dimensions when describing integration in mixed methods research design: the timing and the purpose of the mixing taking place. These two, he argues, are critical for any mixed method research study and at the same time have the necessary descriptive power to distinguish studies. Timing relates to which part of the study the methods are connected within. The purpose of the integration relates to why mixing takes place at the given point of interface and is thus inseparable from the purpose of the study as a whole. In this study there are two points of interface, namely 1) the qualitative interviews providing input for the hypotheses of the register data analysis and 2) the conclusion of this extensive summary in which the four papers and their conclusions are drawn together (this point being the primary integration and the one planned from the outset). The purpose of the first point of interface is to qualify the grounds for the hypotheses. The purpose of the second point of interface is to combine the knowledge of different aspects of the housing career in order to gain empirical knowledge of different aspects of the housing career. Such a purpose can be characterised as being a purpose of extension (Greene 2007): the two strands of the project describe contiguous phenomena, making it possible to study a larger part of the greater phenomena complex that a housing career is. The integration of the study is based on a theoretical unison (Moran-Ellis et al 2006) through the common backdrop of life course analysis.

The mixed method research design employed in this study is fairly simple, as only two data sources are used and as integration only takes place at two stages. While Guest has a very valid point for more complex studies which are nearly impossible to put in a typological box, simpler studies can be meaningfully categorized within typologies (a point set forth by Guest as well). One such typology is proposed by Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009). They divide analyses of mixed methods research into six types: parallel mixed data analysis, conversion mixed data analysis, sequential mixed data analysis, multilevel mixed data analysis, fully integrated mixed data analysis and application of analytical techniques from one tradition to another. The analysis conducted in this study belongs to the first category: the analysis of the register data and the qualitative analysis took place as two separate, parallel processes. As they focused on different research questions relating to different aspects of the housing career, the two analyses are neither able to confirm nor oppose each other. While the analyses are therefore independent by design, they still influence each other in something analogous to them ‘talking to each other’ in Teddlie & Tashakkori’s words (2009). As both analyses were conducted by the same researcher, they cannot be completely separated, as the researcher, knowingly or otherwise, might have been influenced by findings within one analysis when conducting the other. A specific way in which the two strands ‘talked to each other’ in this study was that the interviews provided input

to the hypotheses tested in the registers. However, as data in this case refers to different aspects of the housing career, the influence was limited and similar to the way in which any prior knowledge as a researcher is never ‘not there’ when analysing new data. What links the papers, the research questions, and thus the methods is the focus on different aspects of the housing career. Furthermore, all this is understood through the framework of life course analysis. Thus, while the integration in this mixed methods research study is less ambitious in that mixing takes place at a late stage, it is a consequence of the study’s purpose to analyse different aspects of the housing career through different methods, as opposed to analysing the same aspect of the housing career with different methods.

Figure 2: The mixed methods design of the study (inspired by Guest 2013)



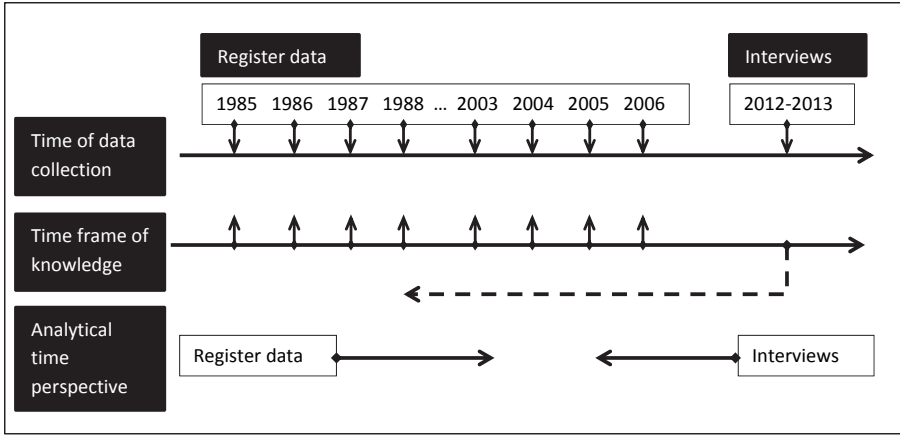
Data collection and data analysis have taken place as two convergent or parallel processes (Guest 2013) as depicted in figure 2. No explicit integration took place in the data collection process. In the data analysis, the analysis of the interviews added to the formulation of hypotheses for the analyses of home-leaving patterns. Despite the different foci, the interviews touched upon and inspired ideas for the analysis of register data. This point of integration was not planned from the onset of the study. However, as the ideas emerged from the interviews, they were integrated in the register data analysis. This shows how any research process, mono or mixed methods, cannot be anticipated in its entirety from the onset. Apart from this, as mentioned above, it is inevitable that the convergent processes will influence each other at a sub-conscious level in the researcher in a combined knowledge process for the study.

As described, the analytical approach to the interviews was inductive, while the approach to the register data was deductive. This, again, is due to the different purposes

of the two strands of the thesis. Furthermore, as Bergman writes, “*few research projects are entirely inductive or deductive*” (2008:13), whether mono or mixed methods. This study shows how a potential consequence of working with mixed methods research as convergent processes is that the two strands of the study might move in different directions, resulting in bigger differences between the foci of the strands than initially planned. The initial plan for the register data strand of the study was not to focus entirely on home-leavers. However, this focus emerged by following what turned out to be the most interesting in the data and the area where entirely new empirical knowledge could be gained. The interview strand of the study proceeded more in line with the original plans. While this meant that the differences became bigger, I argue that as it has led to greater empirical gains within each of the strands; it was worth it. This is especially true since from the outset the project was planned as parallel mixed data analysis, with integration limited to the conclusion of the project and with the two strands working together by extension.

As explained in the theoretical section, housing careers are linked to time. That the unit of study is temporal has implications for the unit of analysis as depicted in figure 3. Registers contain data collected for numerous points in time and the interviewees were asked to tell their housing story over time. The knowledge from the two sources differs in the link to time. Registers are retrospective, referring to time that has already passed and where data is collected for a given time at that given time. The interviews primarily refer to the present. While the interviewees were asked about previous housing situations, their knowledge about the past was their current perception and memory of the past and not (necessarily) as it actually was when it happened (Hoerning 1996). In a similar manner, expectations and dreams for the future were seen from the present life situation. Analytically, time is present as well. The Cox regression models analyse the effects of covariates on home-leaving in a prospective sequence in which covariates at a time preceding home-leaving are used to estimate the hazard for home-leaving. The inductive analyses of the interviews analyse the housing careers as seen from the present looking back at the past. Time thus comes into play in different ways in relation to the two data sources. This is an unavoidable consequence of the data sources and data analysis methods chosen. It is a consequence of utilizing the respective strengths of the two sources. This has to be kept in mind when combining the methods: the results of the two strands cannot be integrated completely, but can inform each other and provide potential explanations for the results of the other strand.

Figure 3: The presence of time in the two empirical sources



### A CONCLUDING REMARK ON MESSINESS

In some ways, the combination of methods leads to a messy appearance of the study as a whole. Nevertheless, while aiming to avoid messiness through making uniform choices might lead to ‘prettier’ studies, it can also lead to studies uncovering less of the messiness that characterises the reality researchers are trying to grasp. Furthermore, it would be meaningless if an aim of homogeneity in mixed methods research studies led to choices that were less than optimal with respect to each of the specific methods employed. In this study, focus is on answering each of the research questions in the best possible way, employing the most suitable method in each case (Hedman 2011). While this might lead to a more fragmented thesis with regards to methods and methodological choices, it also leads to better answers to the individual research questions. And this in turn lays the grounds for moving further in understanding the housing careers of Somalis and Turks.



# THE PAPERS

*In this context, studying housing careers by linking life-course events and mobility processes between housing units provides a dynamic basis for understanding housing choices and the factors enabling or constraining households on the housing market.*

*Özuekren & van Kempen, 2002*

## PAPER I

Paper I focuses on ethnic differences in home-leaving patterns, comparing Somali immigrants, Turkish immigrants, Turkish descendants and Danes. Specific attention is given to the link between marriage and home-leaving. Changed norms have led to individualisation of home-leaving in Western countries and have made it generally acceptable to leave home prior to marriage. However, it is unknown whether this has impacted ethnic minority groups as well. For the analyses, a database based on Danish registers was utilized and a range of covariates relevant to home-leaving was identified based on the literature on home-leaving and on life course analysis. These pertained to the individual, the parental family and the parental housing unit respectively. If differences in home-leaving patterns persisted when controlling for key covariates, it would indicate the existence of different cultural norms for the transition of home-leaving.

First, the analyses identified ethnic differences in the timing of home-leaving, with Somalis leaving home earlier than Danes, and Turks leaving home later. This indicates the existence of different age norms for home-leaving. Second, ethnic differences were identified regarding gender and education of the individual, as well as the impact of parental income and the relative size of the parental housing unit. Regarding the latter, one reason could be that the housing norms of the four groups differ in relation to what is perceived as crowdedness and appropriate dwelling size. Similarities were found as well. A higher individual income led to a higher hazard for home-leaving. Income thus seems to facilitate home-leaving by making it financially possible to live independently from parents. Furthermore, similarities were found regarding a range of covariates that seemed to work as push factors making young adults leave home. These push factors were a parental household of more than five people, living with one parent as opposed to both parents, parental unemployment or retirement and living outside of Copenhagen. The notion of a feathered nest effect was supported for Danes and Turks, where high parental income and living in owner-occupation led to a lower hazard for home-leaving. Third, the analyses supported the notion of a strong link between marriage and home-leaving for Turks, but not for Somalis. Covariates that could be proxies for living in a more traditional parental family led to more traditional

home-leaving patterns amongst Turks. Turkish descendants in general acted similar to Turkish immigrants, but with some exceptions. Socio-economic assimilation led to less traditional home-leaving patterns with regards to marriage. Thus, to the extent that the socio-demographic characteristics of descendants differ from that of their ancestors, home-leaving patterns become increasingly similar to those of Danes.

All in all, the paper found evidence of differences in home-leaving patterns, indicating different cultural norms for the transition of home-leaving. However, support was also found for the notion of straight-line assimilation i.e. the gradual normative and socio-economic assimilation of ethnic minorities. While this process seems to be moving at a slow pace for Turks, change is happening. Consequently, ethnic differences in home-leaving patterns can be expected to diminish further over time.

## PAPER II

Paper II analyses home-leaving as well, but with a specific focus on whether the young adult leaves home to live in an ethnic or a non-ethnic neighbourhood. As barriers to spatial mobility may also constitute barriers to social mobility, it is crucial to identify and understand spatial barriers. The papers test the evidence for spatial assimilation and straight-line assimilation in the specific transition of home-leaving. Competing risk Cox regression models were estimated for the two potential outcomes. The present paper builds on paper I by including in the models the covariates of relevance to home-leaving identified in paper I. Furthermore, covariates on the share of non-Western ethnic minorities in the parental home were included, as well as covariates indicating whether the home-leaver moved to a dwelling in the same neighbourhood as the parents.

Two main findings emerged from the analyses. First, while spatial segregation patterns were obvious for the home-leavers, inter-generational mobility did take place, supporting the notion of straight-line assimilation. Ethnic differences were identified, but diminished greatly when controlling for key covariates. Thus, while Somalis and Turks were more likely than Danes to start their housing career in an ethnic neighbourhood, part of this was explained by differences in the covariates influencing home-leaving for the two competing outcomes. Second, inter-generational effects were identified. While there was no indication that parental socio-economic situation affected the spatial segregation of home-leavers, evident and substantial effects were found for the share of ethnic minorities in the parental neighbourhood: the higher the share of ethnic minorities in the parental neighbourhood, the higher the hazard for moving to an ethnic neighbourhood and the lower the hazard for moving to a non-ethnic neighbourhood. Interestingly, this effect existed for ethnic minorities and Danes alike. For Turks and Somalis, moving to the same neighbourhood as the parents led to a generally higher hazard for home-leaving, but particularly so towards moving to an ethnic neighbourhood. In several ways, the analyses highlighted the linked nature of lives in this case between parents and their home-leaving children.

In line with paper I, paper II finds evidence of an assimilation process, however slow-moving, taking place with respect to the specific transition of home-leaving. Over time, immigrants and descendants do indeed seem to acquire native patterns. This provides the basis for a less pessimistic view on spatial segregation patterns in a Danish context: while perhaps a slow process, spatial assimilation is taking place. Furthermore, similarities in the patterns of natives and the three ethnic minority groups indicated that the processes taking place might be about more than assimilation or the lack of it between generations. Further research is needed in order to understand why this is so.

### PAPER III

Paper III focuses on the link between preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints in the housing careers of Turkish migrant workers and Somali refugees in Denmark. Focus is aimed at the driving forces for change: Are Turks and Somalis in a position to make choices, or must they simply take the options available in order to achieve change? The purpose is to show 1) how change comes about in the intersection between preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints, and 2) how the housing preferences of actors are shaped by resources, possibilities and restraints. Through an explicit application of the framework of life course analysis, an in-depth analysis was conducted of 28 interviews.

The paper showed that while Turkish migrant workers and Somali refugees faced constraints in relation to housing, there were choices available to them in the Copenhagen housing market. These choices were for the most part perceived as rather good. Furthermore, they were in general seen as identical to those of Danes. The structural restraints imposed were caused by the tight housing market of Copenhagen and discrimination played a minor role, according to the interviewees. All in all, the interviewees found it possible to be active in shaping their own housing career by making choices based on their preferences. As identified by life course analysis, housing careers took place in the intersection between individual agency and societal structures: careers were shaped by the structures in which they took place, but not determined by them. The two interviewed groups differed in many respects both between and within the two groups. While the choices were better for the more resourceful interviewees, even the unemployed interviewees living in temporary housing situations had choices available to them. The diversity of the interviewees emphasised the role of choice even for those most constrained. Furthermore, the analysis showed how preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints are closely linked together in an intricate way. Including both migrant groups in the study made it possible to highlight the similarities despite the differences with respect to the possibility of making choices. It also brought to light the different interpretations of religion and the different weight given to religious beliefs. These meant that the two groups adapted differently to the Danish housing market.

Paper III highlights the importance of choice within constraints and shows how a seemingly disadvantaged situation is perceived differently by the individuals themselves. It brings to light ethnic-cultural differences between and within ethnic groups. And it highlights the complexity of a housing career and the interconnectedness of preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints, thus accentuating the need for studying housing careers in the context of the housing markets they take place in. Preferences are shaped by resources, possibilities and restraints and consequently should be studied as such.

## PAPER IV

Paper IV is co-authored with Emma Holmqvist (Institute for Housing and Urban Research (IBF), Uppsala University), Hanna Dhalmann (The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland<sup>20</sup>) and Susanne Søholt (Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research). The paper is a comparative Nordic study of Somalis focusing on their own perceptions of possibilities for change in the housing market. Analyses were conducted on the basis of 56 interviews with Somalis across four Nordic capitals: Copenhagen (Denmark), Helsinki (Finland), Oslo (Norway) and Stockholm (Sweden). Three research questions guided the analysis: What do Somalis strive for concerning housing in the Nordic capitals? How do Somalis perceive their possibilities for improving their housing situation? And, how are Somalis' experiences and perceptions of their housing situation affected by local context and cultural background?

With respect to the first research question, paper IV identifies a common goal for change that the interviewees were striving for across the capitals: a stable and permanent housing situation. Apart from stability, the main preferences expressed by the interviewees were better and/or bigger dwellings, specific neighbourhood characteristics and specific locations. Across the cities, home-ownership was not regarded as a preference in itself. With respect to the second research question, it was clear that the possibilities for change differed between the cities and that housing preferences were easier to satisfy for the interviewees in some cities than in others. The extremes were found between perceived possibilities in Copenhagen and Oslo. While a desired housing career was experienced as possible inside the public housing sector in Copenhagen, a change to home-ownership was believed necessary to obtain a stable housing situation in Oslo. Thus, despite not having a preference for home-ownership many of the Somali interviewees had to strive for this sector out of necessity. Furthermore, in Helsinki and Oslo interviewees highlighted how lack of transparency and predictability in access to housing leads to a feeling of powerlessness. In contrast, the Copenhagen interviewees knew the allocation criteria as well as their place on the waiting list. This was important to them as it allowed them to master their own situation. Finally, with respect to the third research question the analyses showed that the

---

20. At the time of writing, Hanna Dhalmann was employed at Department of Geosciences and Geography, University of Helsinki.

prioritising of cultural convictions to local context is individual. In all four capitals, ownership entailed loans with interests, something that the interviewees were reluctant to obtain because of religious norms and/or negative attitudes in their particular Somali community. Some evaluated that a stable housing situation was more important than religious norms, while others put religion before housing situation. The analyses showed how local context influence not only the possibilities of Somalis in the housing market but also their housing preferences. At the same time, cultural background evidently impact preferences. When local context and cultural background were at odds, the interviewed Somalis negotiated this conflict individually, within the framework of the social settings they referred to.

Paper IV highlights how perceived possibilities for housing change arise in an intersection between individual capacities, cultural background and local context, and that both local context and cultural background influence housing preferences and thus the desired change. Conflicts are handled individually. Individual actors thus play a central role for their own housing careers as they navigate structures on the basis of individual resources.



# CONCLUSION

*When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.*

*John Muir, 1911.*

The aim of this thesis was to explore the preconditions of change and the possibilities for change in the housing careers of Somalis and Turks through an application of life course analysis. The concept of the housing career offers a dynamic perception of housing that can lead us further in understanding the ethnic differences in housing attainment and settlement patterns. The overall purpose of the thesis was to gain knowledge of one specific transition and of change more generally in the housing careers of Somalis and Turks. Life course analysis was employed as a theoretical orientation, guiding the analyses through specific principles on the links over time between structure and agency. The study was designed as a mixed methods research study, combining register data and in-depth interviews. The purpose of this mix was to enable the application of the method most suitable for the two strands followed in the study, as well as to make the two strands of the study extend each other in understanding the phenomena complex that housing careers are.

The four papers have each led to independent empirical findings on the ethnic differences in housing careers. These have made it clear how interconnected housing careers are in a range of ways. Despite the independence of the papers, some concluding points are relevant to all. These relate to the combined key outcomes of the thesis, thoughts on the chosen approach and the implications of the thesis.

## KEY OUTCOMES

Relating the findings of the papers to the overall aim of the thesis more specifically, the following short summary can be made. Preconditions for change are limited in the Danish housing market. It is in fact possible to acquire desired change in the housing career, also for the unemployed and the single parents. Even those in temporary housing situations have options to choose between and have the possibility to influence their own housing career. The possibilities are believed by the interviewees to be the same as those of Danes. Resources do matter, however. In particular, financial resources widen the scope of options for change. This is the case both for change within the housing career of individuals or households and for the change between generations. A higher income of the home-leaver facilitate home-leaving while a higher parental income seem to make it more comfortable to stay in the parental

home for longer. Religious-cultural norms also impact on the possibilities for change. This is seen with regards to tenure: while it is possible to conduct a housing career within the public housing sector, a further range of possibilities become available for those whose religious-cultural norms allow for paying interests and thus for buying. Indications of the impact of cultural norms are also found in the home-leaving transition where norms on the link between marriage and home-leaving impact the change from the parental home to independent living. In a range of ways, the link between lives across generations as well as within social groups are found to impact possibilities for housing change, and these links thus become part of the preconditions for housing change. Based on the papers, there are four additional key outcomes that I want to draw forward here.

**First key outcome: While the process is not completed over one generation, assimilation is taking place.** The first strand of the thesis focused on ethnic differences in the specific transition of home-leaving (paper I and II). Combining the results from the two papers it is clear that socio-economic variables influence home-leaving patterns and explain part of the ethnic differences in home-leaving patterns. Furthermore, the socio-economic covariates have similar effects for the ethnic groups. Based on the notion of assimilation being achieved when the distribution of minorities is the same as that of natives i.e. implying equality of treatment, this means that the home-leaving patterns of Somalis, Turks and Danes are not, in fact, that different. Furthermore, several covariates are identified as push-factors in a similar manner for the different ethnic groups, again indicating similarities in the home-leaving patterns. While there for Turks was evidence of traditional norms persisting regarding the connection between home-leaving and marriage, there was however also indications of change taking place towards less traditional patterns. For Somalis, there were no indications of persisting traditional norms. For Somali immigrants, Turkish immigrants and descendants alike, the share of home-leavers moving to an ethnic neighbourhood was lower than for their parents; one sign amongst others of straight-line assimilation. These are all signs of assimilation taking place and of support for the spatial assimilation model. However, it is equally clear that part of the ethnic differences persist despite controlling for key covariates and that inter-generational effects exist. Assimilation in home-leaving patterns is not completed in one generation which is in line with the point made by Alba & Nee (1997)<sup>21</sup> that assimilation takes time and cannot be expected to be completed in one generation. Ethnic differences in the preferences regarding home-leaving patterns do not disappear between first and second generation. It seems to be a differentiated process, too, where some groups are quicker to adopt Western home-leaving patterns or have more similar cultural patterns for home-leaving from

---

21. In a discussion of the similarities and differences between the previous and the current era of migration, Alba & Nee (1997) argue that assimilation was previously only clearly identifiable in the 3rd or 4th generation. Thus, it would be no surprise if assimilation is not too evident in the 2nd generation of immigrants that dominates the group of descendants in Western countries at present.



the outset. Somalis are more similar to Danes in home-leaving patterns than Turkish immigrants and descendants. As the initial phase of the housing career imprints itself on the ensuing career, the ethnic differences in home-leaving can be expected to lead to different housing careers. Further research is needed to establish this. Paper I & II also highlight the intergenerational links in housing, showing that the housing careers of the parents influence the start of the housing careers of the young adults. An interesting finding is that the share of ethnic minorities in the parental neighbourhood is of major importance for explaining the ethnic settlement of the young adults. This is the case for Danes as well. Again, further research is needed in order to understand the reasons for this.

**Second key outcome: Preferences are shaped by resources, possibilities and restraints, and change comes about in the intersection between the four. While constraints can be substantial, room for choice does exist.** The second strand focused on the possibilities of Somalis and Turks for shaping their housing career through making choices, and their possibilities for realising their preferences within the local housing market. Combining the results from the two papers underscores the importance of agency in shaping individual housing careers. A housing career is not purely a consequence of structural and individual possibilities and restraints determining the room for manoeuvre and change. Despite limitations, which for some are extensive, the individual has room within which to make choices and to act according to preferences for change between situations. Change comes about in the intersection between preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints. The Nordic comparison made it possible to see how the structures of the Danish housing market offer better opportunities for shaping one's housing career than structures in the other Nordic countries, but also that even within local contexts of greater structural restraints the actor perspective is of importance. Local context and cultural background interact in creating locally-grounded preferences. When they conflict, the prioritisation is individual. Thus, the role of the actor should not be underestimated if we wish to understand the ethnic differences in housing careers and the changes within those careers. Furthermore, the existence of ethnic differences in housing preferences was substantiated. In a Danish and Nordic context of home-owners it is striking how home-ownership was not a preference in itself for the interviewed Somalis, and a less prevalent one for the interviewed Turks. In addition, religious-cultural preferences were of importance and differed between Somalis and Turks. Consequently, to the extent that these preferences can be realised, which in a Danish context was generally possible, they offer an explanation of the ethnic differences in housing careers. All in all, the housing career is shaped by the societal structures, the individual resources and the actors' preferences as well as the individual mediation between these.

**Third key outcome: While there are differences in the possibilities for realising preferences between ethnic minority groups and natives, differences in preferences is a key cause of ethnic differences in the housing market as well.** First, the differences in the specific transition of home-leaving could be attributed to

discrimination. However, as the interviewees assigned discrimination a minor part in the Danish housing market, other explanations of the differences are likely to be relevant as well. The interviews highlight the importance of individual agency and housing preferences. The ethnic differences in home-leaving that persist when controlling for socio-economic variables are thus likely caused at least partially by differences in preferences. The young interviewees, who had recently left home, supported this as they reported no experiences with discrimination and felt that they, thus far, had been as able as their Danish peers to shape their housing career. Second, the Cox regression models identified ethnic differences in home-leaving to live either as a single, as a cohabitating couple or to form a marriage union. These differences were supported in the qualitative material as being caused by differences in religious-cultural norms for home-leaving. The Danish pattern of leaving home without marriage was accepted amongst Somalis while Turks preferred home-leaving to coincide with marriage. This was the case for descendant and immigrant Turks alike. Ethnic differences are thus of importance for differences between natives and minorities, as well as between ethnic minority groups. The fact that both interviewed minority groups have a Muslim background didn't change this. Third, the interviews identified a preference for living in public housing and a perception of public housing as offering good opportunities for conducting a housing career according to individual preferences. Home-ownership was not seen as a value in itself. Furthermore, a preference for living with co-ethnics and/or family and friends was expressed by some interviewees, but most also preferred to live with Danes i.e. in mixed neighbourhoods. These points can explain why Somali and Turkish home-leavers are more likely to move to ethnic housing when leaving home, despite controlling for key socio-economic covariates. Based on the interviews, a probable explanation is that this behaviour is at least partly caused by a preference for living with co-ethnics and/or close to family and friends and less caused by discrimination. Furthermore, as ethnic neighbourhoods are highly dominated by public housing, the preference for public housing and the lack of preference for owner-occupation is another explanation for the ethnic differences. Finally, the greater familiarity with public housing in general and with ethnic neighbourhoods in particular could play a role which would explain why Danes display similar patterns, where the share of ethnic minorities in the parental neighbourhood impacts on the disposition towards moving to an ethnic neighbourhood. All in all, neither differences in preferences nor differences in possibilities for realising preferences can stand alone in explaining ethnic differences in housing careers.

**Fourth key outcome: Change is linked to both choices and constraints and take place in an intersection between preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints.** The focus on change gave us an eye for both specific transitions as well as more general patterns of change in the housing career of ethnic minorities. Change is where preferences are realised – or where they are not. Change is not just choice. Change is not just constraints. Furthermore, change does not happen in a vacuum. It is linked to the broader societal context, the cultural context of the ethnic group, as well as the narrower relations of the individual or household. All of these influence

the choices made by individuals or households, but do not determine them. Structures determine the choice set of possible changes within which the actor must choose based on individual preferences and an individual evaluation. Choosing not to change housing is also an option of the choice set. Given that preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints change throughout the life course, so too does the housing choice set of individuals and households. Consequently, acknowledging the dynamic nature of housing is imperative.

## THOUGHTS ON THE CHOSEN APPROACH

Two choices regarding the approach have characterised the thesis as a whole: life course analysis and the mixed methods research design. This section considers the implications of the two choices.

### LIFE COURSE ANALYSIS

For the papers in general life course analysis has been the theoretical basis from which the empirical material was approached. In papers I, II and III life course analysis is explicitly brought to the forefront as an approach to data. Paper IV draws on life course analysis less explicitly. But, as has been argued previously, it is nonetheless the backdrop against which the empirical data is understood, however less explicitly.

Analytically, life course analysis has had extensive impact on the thesis. To the six guiding principles for empirical life course studies formulated by Wingens et al (2011), I added two principles. These capture additional aspects of life course analysis that are imperative in this specific context, as well as more generally applicable. Together the eight principles constitute analytical grips on the empirical material, highlighting fundamental aspects of the housing career as they unfold over time in a mutual relationship between structure and agency. Relevant theories have been applied in each of the papers. Life course analysis has thus worked alongside theories for explaining the specific empirical patterns identified, with life course analysis providing the lens through which to look at data. The possibilities for addressing the structure-agency divide and the links between the two makes life course analysis a powerful companion in a range of theoretical fields.

Methodologically, the thesis shows how life course analysis can be applied fruitfully in migration research, underscoring its underexploited potential. The attempts of life course analysis to bridge the structure-agency divide and the guiding principles derived from it point to key aspects of the migration process and the migration experience. It directs attention to the agency of the individual within structures and the impact of structural changes on the individual's life course, as well as to how this is situated in a historical time and place. Thereby it assists us in seeing just how disruptive structural changes due to migration are, while at the same time underscoring that the actions of migrants themselves, their agency and their navigation within the

structures of a given context are equally imperative to consider when trying to understand ethnic differences in the life course. Furthermore, the mixed methods research design has shown that life course analysis offers useful guiding principles for analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, for analysis of both causes and meaning. While longitudinal analyses of quantitative data is one of the more common approaches in studies based on life course analysis (Hoerning 1996; Elder et al 2003), analyses of qualitative data are less common. The thesis has demonstrated the promises that life course analysis carries in this respect and will thus hopefully inspire further qualitative studies based on life course analysis. Finally, the thesis extends the use of longitudinal studies based in life course analysis from the labour market to the housing market, showing the relevance of life course analysis for the field of housing career studies.

Thematically, life course analysis highlights the importance of considering both structures and agency when analysing housing careers. This should be kept in mind, especially when the actor's point of view cannot be incorporated in the analyses, such as with register data. The actor matters, even in a context of substantial structural restraints. While this is in no way meant to refute the restraints imposed on ethnic housing careers by societal structures, it reminds us that housing careers cannot be understood without understanding individual preferences and negotiations of the structures. Thereby, the analyses have also shown how the concept of housing careers can be employed without presuming that housing preferences are universal and acted upon rationally, contrary to Clapham's criticism. Furthermore, the guiding principles of life course analysis identify specific ways in which structures impact actors, but where individuals at the same time have room for acting within the structurally imposed conditions. Additionally, the focus on structure and agency over time means that the importance of specific contexts both structurally and historically are brought forward, reminding us never to forget the context within which housing careers take place.

As life course analysis has thus far not been developed into a coherent theoretical framework, further theoretical work is needed. For now, however, it points at useful ways forward for migration research with respect to understanding how ethnic minorities navigate within host country contexts. Being a theoretical orientation it doesn't explain empirical findings, rather it helps us identify patterns which we then need other theories to explain and understand. Finally, the focus on structure and agency over time should not make us forget the impact of individual resources and capacities which aids or restrains the individual in its navigation within structures. The individual relies on such resources and capacities to act and the nature of these thus impacts the possibilities of the individual for realising its agency.

## MIXED METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN

This study has been designed as a mixed methods research study with a convergent data collection process and a convergent data analysis process. A theoretical unison

was provided by life course analysis being the theoretical ground for all the papers. The integration of the results was from the outset planned to take place in the conclusion, but also ended up taking place in the formulation of hypotheses for paper I.

The convergent design meant that it was less possible to integrate the methods during the study. This was planned from the outset and thus expected. However, the risk with a convergent design is that the respective methodological parts of the study develop in different directions. This was the case here. The two strands and their foci developed in directions that lead them to some extent further apart. This means that the potential for integration is more limited than if they had developed closer to each other. In a sequential design, the impact between the methods becomes more straight-forward. While the development of the two strands have led to more limited possibilities for integration, the guiding principle throughout the process has been to optimise the design of the two strands respectively and follow the most interesting results of the empirical data collection. Thus, while this might have led to limited realisation of the potential of a mixed methods research design, I believe that it has been the right strategy to follow. The mixed method design ought never to overrule the individual methods, as dubious decisions on the grounds of homogeneity with respect to the empirical parts will undermine the parts and thereby the design as such.

On a methodological level the mixed methods research design allowed for further exploration of the potential offered by life course analysis. A traditional approach to life course analysis was applied with the longitudinal analyses, but with the uncommon subject of housing careers. A less traditional approach to life course analysis was applied with the analyses of in-depth interviews through the life course principles. The mixed methods research approach has thus aided in exploring the potential of life course analysis for migration research. Finally, as I as a researcher has been a common denominator for the two methods, the process becomes a combined knowledge process. As the methods are applied in the results analysed by the same researcher, the methods will inevitably impact each other through the impact they each have on the researcher's understanding of his/her subject field.

The purpose of conducting a mixed methods research study was from the outset to allow for the analysis of different aspects of the career with the method most suitable for it. While the potential for integration could thus have been bigger, the original purpose of the mixed methods research design was fulfilled. Consequently, implications for future mixed methods research is that it should be considered in the design phase whether a convergent design leads to less integration than desired. An evaluation on the pros and cons of a convergent design in relation to the wish for integration of the methods should be made. The study highlights that a mixed method design, as any study design, is not made and applied from the outset. Rather it is a process unfolding: a design emerging through the empirical and analytical process.

## IMPLICATIONS

As noted by Johnson & Onwuegbuzie: *“we only obtain probabilistic evidence, not final proof in empirical research; in short, we agree that the future may not resemble the past”* (2004:16). However, the future is never to be known for certain. Therefore, empirical knowledge supplies us with the best available indication of what to expect. While the empirical research was conducted for two specific ethnic groups, the strategic selection of the groups make it probable that the findings persist for ethnic minority groups more generally. This is supported by the findings of a range of similarities despite the differences between and within the two ethnic groups. Consequently, the research has implications that go beyond the specific findings for the two groups. Five key points are highlighted here.

First, the public housing sector apparently offers good opportunities for conducting a progressive housing career and for the realisation of housing preferences. The allocation system is perceived as understandable, transparent, negotiable and equal to all. It thus seems that the options of vulnerable groups in the Danish housing market are rather good as the public housing sector secures stable housing of a generally good quality. Changes to this sector are thus likely to have major consequences for the housing careers of ethnic minority groups. Consequently, it is imperative to consider how changes to the public housing sector affect those with very few other options. The allocation rules introduced in Denmark since 2000 potentially challenge the current situation. Two of the key tools respectively allow municipalities and the housing associations to give priority to people in employment, attending education or being 55+ (flexible allocation) and permit the rejection of applications from unemployed individuals and couples (combined allocation). The purpose is to change the social composition of deprived areas, many of which are ethnic neighbourhoods. To the extent that the rules are applied without considerations of the alternative options available to the most vulnerable groups, it may challenge the experience of choice within ethnic minority groups. A potential consequence of a less accessible public housing market can be a situation more similar to that of the Oslo housing market where more ethnic minorities live in owner-occupation, but in much worse conditions and with an insecurity that is a great deal higher.

Second, and linked to the above, the cause of the underrepresentation of ethnic minority groups in the private rental sector cannot be automatically assumed to be primarily based on discrimination. While landlords might show discriminatory attitudes and practices, it does not follow that these are experienced by the majority of ethnic minorities, if these do not test their opportunities within the private rental sector. The lack of experience with discrimination is not likely to be an indicator of the Danish housing market being devoid of discrimination. Rather it is a consequence of ethnic minorities having good options in the public housing sector and conducting their rental career within this sector primarily. Again, a change for the worse in the options available within public housing would have major consequences for ethnic minority groups.

Third, while home-ownership is the dominating tenure preference of native Danes, it is a much less prevalent preference within ethnic minority groups. And, when other alternatives are good, there is no reason to strive for owner-occupation. As a consequence, identifying the housing situation of ethnic minorities as disadvantaged because of a lower share in owner-occupied housing is not as straight-forward. One valid reason for characterising the housing situation of ethnic minorities as disadvantaged is that owner-occupation offers a potential financial profit. However, there is more to it than that and the role of preferences have to be considered. Similarly, using home-ownership as an indicator of level of integration of specific ethnic minority groups is a questionable approach. As a reason for the difference in the rate of home-ownership is differences in preferences, this would imply that integration is only achieved if ethnic minorities acquire the tenure preferences of the majority.

One possible explanation for the limited prevalence of a preference for home-ownership relates to the intertwined careers of life. Buying a home often takes place in the first part of a family career when the need for more living space is felt, and at the point of the employment career where education is completed and stable employment is secured. These conditions together make owner-occupation a suitable choice. However, renting is a meaningful choice as long as you are uncertain about your future country of residence and if your employment situation is unstable, or if you feel unsure whether you will in the long run be able to manage the costs of owner-occupation. These conditions are more predominant for ethnic minorities than for natives. When immigrants reach the point (if they do) of feeling settled enough for home-ownership to make sense, the point in the family career where buying makes sense might have been passed. We can envision this as careers running parallel to each other, mutually influencing each other, where the financial window of opportunity for a change to home-ownership has to coincide with the life phase within which such a change makes sense. As so many spheres of life influence housing opportunities and needs, it is the simultaneity of a range of conditions that make it possible and desirable to buy. Again, the straight-forward equation between home-ownership and integration becomes questionable. The key point becomes the changes between generations and the equality of treatment that make home-ownership possible if later generations of ethnic minorities acquire this preference.

Fourth, the widespread fear in Western societies, including Denmark, of spatial segregation seems in the Danish context to be at least partly unwarranted. The analyses identified clear signs of assimilation taking place and a wish amongst the Somalis and Turks to live in mixed neighbourhoods i.e. to live with Danes. While ethnic differences are still identifiable and the assimilation process seems rather slow, change is happening towards assimilation. It is for a range of reasons expectable and understandable that the early generations of immigrants have different settlement patterns than the majority. It can even be desirable for society as well as individuals, as ethnic concentration has potential positive consequences especially for new-comers. The problems arise if the ethnic differences persist over time, turning into more permanent spatial



segregation patterns. This does however not seem to be the case, thus questioning the grounds for the fear of these patterns. Time seems to solve the problem. If the preferences of ethnic minority groups in general lean towards mixed neighbourhoods, it might be that spatial segregation patterns are in fact caused at least in part by the actions of the majority, i.e. white flight and white avoidance. This should be investigated further in a Danish context.

Fifth, and finally, what is by deduction imperative is the tenure structure of the housing market i.e. segmentation. If ethnic minorities for a range of structural and individual reasons prefer public housing and have much less of a preference for owner-occupation than natives, tenure mix could be one way of achieving more mixed neighbourhoods and less spatial segregation. This point becomes even more valid with the result from the home-leaving analyses that living in an ethnic neighbourhood (which in the Danish case will also be a public housing area) with your parents leads to a higher hazard for moving into such an area when leaving home. For Danes, Somalis and Turks alike it seems that knowing the public housing sector and ethnic neighbourhoods more often leads to starting the housing career in such areas, and that public housing and ethnic neighbourhoods thus become inherited preferences. The preference for mixed neighbourhoods identified in the interviews underscores this point. As areas with owner-occupied housing in Denmark are also areas where the vast majority of residents are natives, moving to home-ownership would mean moving to an area with no or very few ethnic minorities. With a preference for mixed neighbourhoods, choosing owner-occupation becomes less relevant. Again, housing market segmentation becomes a key issue.

A fundamental insight emanating from this study is that while you can be inspired by the empirical findings from other countries, and especially those of a similar societal structure, you would be wrong to presume that results can automatically be transferred between contexts. Hypotheses or ideas from other contexts have to be tested and evaluated in the specific context of interest. Even in the Nordic countries which are often described as very similar, important differences exist. This has implications for researchers as well as for politicians and practitioners who should consider the context-specific circumstances when evaluating evidence from other contexts. This is underscored by the weight put on context in life course analysis and by the empirical results of the thesis. However, the points drawn forward above can be utilised in other contexts for challenging presumptions on ethnic segregation patterns and for encouraging context-specific studies of a similar kind.

The starting point of this thesis was the prevalent notion that ethnic minorities are in a disadvantaged position in the housing market. As described, this notion proved itself problematic as the study progressed. This is a fundamental point of the study: there are two sides to the coin. While ethnic settlement patterns might be deemed disadvantageous from the outside, it does not follow that they are perceived as such from the inside. Instead, it seems that the situation as seen from the inside is perceived as



good. Consequently, seeing the large share in public housing and the low share in owner-occupation as inherently synonymous with disadvantage or with a lack of integration misses imperative aspects of the housing experience of ethnic minorities. By focusing on the preconditions for change and the possibilities for change in the housing career of ethnic minorities, the importance of understanding choice and constraint in relation to each other becomes apparent. Preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints interact in shaping the housing career of ethnic minorities and thus in creating the ethnic differences in housing attainment and spatial settlement patterns.



# REFERENCES

**Abramsson, M. (2003)**

*Housing Careers in a Changing Welfare State. PhD dissertation, Umeå University.*

**Abramsson, M., L.-E. Borgegård & U. Fransson (2002)**

*"Housing careers: Immigrants in Local Swedish Housing Markets". Housing studies, 17:3, 445-464.*

**Abramsson, M. (2008)**

*"Housing Careers in a Changing Welfare State – A Swedish Cohort Study". Housing, Theory and Society, 25:4, 231-253.*

**Alba, R. & V. Nee (1997)**

*"Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration". International Migration Review, 31:4, 826-874.*

**Allison, P.D. (2010)**

*Survival Analysis Using SAS. A Practical Guide. Cary: SAS Institute.*

**Andersson, R. (2013)**

*"Reproducing and Reshaping Ethnic Residential Segregation in Stockholm: The Role of Selective Migration Moves". Geografiska Annaler B, 95:2, 163-187.*

**Bailey, N., A. Kearns & M. Livingston (2012)**

*"Place Attachment in Deprived Neighbourhoods: The Impacts of Population Turnover and Social Mix". Housing Studies, 27:2, 208-231.*

**Bazeley, P. & L. Kemp (2012)**

*"Mosaics, Triangles, and DNA: Metaphors for Integrated Analysis in Mixed Methods Research". Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 6:1, 55-72.*

**Bergman, M.M. (2008)**

*"The Straw Men of the Qualitative-Quantitative Divide and their influence on Mixed Methods Research". In: M.M. Bergman (ed.): Advances in Mixed Methods Research. London: Sage.*

**Billari, F.C., D. Philipov & P. Baizán (2001)**

*"Leaving home in Europe: the experience of cohorts born around 1960". MPIDR WORKING PAPER WP, 2001-014, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research.*

**Blenstrup L.T. (2010)**

*Family Histories – A register-based socio-demographic life course analysis of the family formation process in young adulthood within a Danish birth cohort.*  
PhD thesis, Aalborg University.

**Bolt, G. & R. van Kempen (2002)**

*“Moving Up or Moving Down? Housing Careers of Turks and Moroccans in Utrecht, the Netherlands”.* *Housing Studies*, 17:3, 401-422.

**Bolt, G. & R. van Kempen (2003)**

*“Escaping poverty neighbourhoods in the Netherlands”.* *Housing, Theory and Society*, 20:4, 209-222.

**Bolt, G., R. van Kempen & M. van Ham (2008)**

*“Minority Ethnic Groups in the Dutch Housing Market: Spatial Segregation, Relocation Dynamics and Housing Policy”.* *Urban Studies*, 45:7, 1359-1384.

**Bolt, G. & R. van Kempen (2010)**

*“Ethnic segregation and residential mobility: Relocations of minority ethnic groups in the Netherlands”.* *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36:2, 333-354.

**Bolt, G., A.S. Özüekren & D. Philips (2010)**

*“Linking Integration and Residential Segregation”.* *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36:2, 169-186.

**Bowes, A., N. Dar & D. Sim (1997)**

*“Tenure preference and housing strategy: An exploration of Pakistani experiences”.* *Housing Studies*, 12:1, 63-84.

**Bowes, A.M., N.S. Dar & D.F. Sim (2002)**

*“Differentiation in Housing Careers: The Case of Pakistanis in the UK”.* *Housing Studies*, 17:3, 381-399.

**Brewer, J. & A. Hunter (2006)**

*Foundations of multimethod research.* London: Sage.

**Bråmås, Å. (2006)**

*“ ‘White Flight’? The Production and Reproduction of Immigrant Concentration Areas in Swedish Cities, 1990-2000”.* *Urban Studies*, 43:7, 1127-1146.

**Børresen, S.K. (2006)**

*“Etniske minoriteters bosætning. Hvad viser forskningen?”* Hørsholm: Statens Byggeforskningsinstitut.

**Charmaz, K. (2006)**

*Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis.* California: Sage.

**Clapham, D. (2002)**

“Housing Pathways: A Post Modern Analytical Framework”. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 19:2, 57-68.

**Clark W.A.V, Y. Huang (2003)**

“The life course and residential mobility in British housing markets”. *Environment and Planning A*, 35, 323-39.

**Clark, W.A.V. & Onaka, J.L. (1983)**

“Life cycle and housing adjustment as explanations of residential mobility”. *Urban Studies*, 20, 47-57.

**Crowder, K. & S.J. South (2008)**

“Spatial Dynamics of White Flight: The Effects of Local and Extralocal Racial Conditions on Neighborhood Out-Migration”. *American Sociological Review*, 73:5, 792-812.

**Dahler-Larsen, P. (2007)**

*At fremstille kvalitative data.* Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag.

**Damm, A.P., M.L. Schultz-Nielsen & T. Tranæs (2006)**

*En befolkning deler sig op?* Copenhagen: Gyldendal.

**David, M. & C.D. Sutton (2004)**

*Social Research – The Basics.* London: SAGE, 203-211.

**de Valk, H., M. Windzio, M. Wingens & C. Aybek (2011)**

“Immigrant Settlement and the Life Course: An Exchange of Research Perspectives and Outlook for the Future”. In: M. Wingens, M. Windzio, H. de Valk & C. Aybek (eds.): *A life-Course Perspective on Migration and Integration.* Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, New York: Springer, 283-297.

**Dhalmann, H. 2013**

“Explaining Ethnic Residential Preferences – The Case of Somalis and Russians in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area”. *Housing Studies*, 28:3, 389-408.

**Elder, G.H. Jr. (1975)**

“Age Differentiation and the Life Course”. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1, 165-190.

**Elder, G.H. Jr. & R.C. Rockwell (1979)**

*"The Life-Course and Human Development: An Ecological Perspective". International Journal of Behavioral Development, 2:1, 1-21.*

**Elder, G.H. Jr. ( 1981)**

*"History and the Family: The Discovery of Complexity". Journal of Marriage and Family, 43:3, 489-519.*

**Elder, G.H. Jr., M. Kirkpatrick Johnsen & R. Crosnoe (2003)**

*"The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory". In: J.T. Mortimer & M.J. Shanahan (eds.): Handbook of the life course. New York, Boston, Dordrecht, London, Moscow: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 3-19.*

**Espenshade, T.J., & R. Eisenberg Braun (1982)**

*"Life Course Analysis and Multistate Demography: An Application to Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage". Journal of Marriage and Family, Methodology: The Other Side of Caring, 44:4, 1025-1036.*

**Flyvbjerg, B. (2004)**

*"Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research". In: C. Seale, G. Gobo, J.F. Gubrium & D. Silverman (eds.): Qualitative Research Practice. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 420-434.*

**Friedrichs, J., G. Galster & S. Musterd (2003)**

*"Neighbourhood effects on social opportunities: the European and American research and policy context". Housing Studies, 18:6, 797-806.*

**Gibbs, G. (2007)**

*Analyzing Qualitative Data. Los Angeles: Sage, 73-77.*

**Giddings, L.S. (2006)**

*"Mixed-methods research: Positivism dressed in drag?" Journal of Research in Nursing, 11:3, 195-203.*

**Glaser, B.G. (1998)**

*"Forcing the data". In: B.G. Glaser: Doing Grounded Theory. Issues and Discussions. Mill Valley: The Sociology Press, 81-100.*

**Gordon, M. (1964)**

*Assimilation in American Life. New York: Oxford University Press.*

**Gram-Hanssen, K. & C. Bech-Danielsen (2012)**

"Creating a new home. Somali, Iraqi and Turkish immigrants and their homes in Danish social housing". *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 27:1, 89–103.

**Greene, J. (2007)**

*Mixed Methods in Social Inquiry*. San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons.

**Guest, G. (2013)**

"Describing Mixed Methods Research: An Alternative to Typologies". *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 7:2, 141-151.

**Hammersley, M. (2008)**

"Troubles with triangulation". In: M.M. Bergman (ed.): *Advances in Mixed Methods Research*. London: Sage, 22-36.

**Hedman, L. (2011)**

*Residential Mobility and Neighbourhood Effects: A Holistic Approach*. PhD Thesis, Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, Geografiska regionstudier 88.

**Hoerning, E. (1996)**

*Life Course and Biography: Approaches and Methods*. Aalborg: Aalborg University, Institut for Samfundsudvikling og Planlægning. Series No. 199.

**Howell, F.M. & W. Freese (1983)**

"Size of place, residential preferences and the life cycle: How people come to like where they live", *American Sociological Review*, 48:4, 569–580.

**Jagd, C.B. (2007)**

*Medborger eller modborger?: Dansksomalieres kamp for at opbygge en meningsfuld tilværelse i det danske samfund - gennem et arbejde*. København: Københavns Universitet.

**Jansen, S.J.T., H.C.C.H. Coolen & R.W. Goetgeluk (2011)**

"Introduction". In: S.J.T. Jansen, H.C.C.H. Coolen & R.W. Goetgeluk (eds.): *The Measurement and Analysis of Housing Preference and Choice*. Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, New York: Springer, 1-26.

**Jick, T.D. (1979)**

"Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Triangulation in Action". *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24:4, *Qualitative Methodology*, 602-611.

**Johnson, R.B. & A.J. Onwuegbuzie (2004)**

*"Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come". Educational Researcher 33:7, 14-26.*

**Johnson-Hanks, J. (2002)**

*"On the Limits of Life Stages in Ethnography: Toward a Theory of Vital Conjunctions". American Anthropologist 104:3, 865-880.*

**Jørgensen, A. (2014)**

*"Chicago-sociologi – Hverdagslivets modernisering". In: M.H. Jacobsen & S. Kristiansen (eds.): Hverdagslivet – sociologier om det upåagtede". Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Publishers.*

**Kleinbaum, D.G. & M. Klein (2005)**

*Survival Analysis: A Self-Learning Text. New York: Springer.*

**Kleist, N. (2007)**

*"Ambivalent encounters: negotiating boundaries of Danishness, Somaliness, and belonging". In: A.M. Kusow & S. Björk (Eds) From Mogadishu to Dixon. The Somali Diaspora in a Global Perspective. New Jersey: Red Sea Press.*

**Larsen, H.G. & A.L. Hansen (2008)**

*"Gentrification: Gentle or Traumatic? Urban Renewal Policies and Socioeconomic Transformations in Copenhagen". Urban Studies, 45:12.*

**Law, J. (2007)**

*"Making a Mess with Method". In: W. Outhwaite & S.P. Turner: The Sage Handbook of Social Science Methodology. London: Sage.*

**Lincoln, Y.S. (2002)**

*"Emerging Criteria for Quality in Qualitative and Interpretive Research". In: Y.S. Lincoln & N.K. Denzin (Eds.): The Qualitative Inquiry Reader. California: Sage.*

**Lofland, J., D. Snow, L. Anderson & L.H. Lofland (2006)**

*Analyzing Social Settings. A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis. 4. Edition. Toronto: Wadsworth/Thomson, 200-209.*

**Magnusson, L. & A.S. Özüekren (2002)**

*"The Housing Careers of Turkish Households in Middlesized Swedish Municipalities". Housing Studies, 17:3, 465-486.*

**Magnusson Turner, L. & L. Hedman (2014)**

*"Linking Integration and Housing Career: A Longitudinal Analysis of Immigrant Groups in Sweden", Housing Studies, 29:2, 270-290.*



**Manley, D., M. van Ham & J. Doherty (2011)**

*"Social Mixing as a Cure for Negative Neighbourhood Effects: Evidence Based Policy or Urban Myth?"*. IZA Discussion Paper Series, IZA DP No. 5634.

**Massey, D.S. & B.P. Mullan (1984)**

*"Processes of Hispanic and Black Spatial Assimilation"*. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 89:4, 836-873.

**Massey, D. (1985)**

*"Ethnic Residential Segregation: A Theoretical Synthesis and Empirical Review"*. *Sociology and Social Research*, 69, 315-350.

**Mayer, K.U. (2009)**

*"New Directions in Life Course Research"*. *Annual review of Sociology*, 35, 413-433.

**Moran-Ellis, J., V.D. Alexander, A. Cronin, M. Dickinson, J. Fielding, J. Sleney & H. Thomas (2006)**

*"Triangulation and integration: processes, claims and implications"*. *Qualitative Research*, 6:1, 45-59.

**Morgan, D.L. (2007)**

*"Paradigms Lost and Pragmatism Regained: Methodological Implications of Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods"*. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1:1, 48-76.

**Mulder, C.H. & P. Hooimeijer (1999)**

*"Residential Relocations in the Life Course"*. In: L.J.G. van Wissen & P.A. Dykstra: *Population Issues*. New York: Springer.

**Mulder, C.H., W.A.V. Clark & M. Wagner (2002)**

*"A comparative analysis of leaving home in the United States, the Netherlands and West Germany"*. *Demographic Research*, 7, 565-592.

**Murdie, R.A. (2002)**

*"The Housing Careers of Polish and Somali Newcomers in Toronto's Rental Market"*. *Housing Studies*, 17:3, 423-443.

**Myers, D. (1999)**

*"Cohort Longitudinal Estimation of Housing Careers"*. *Housing Studies*, 14:4, 473-490.

**Olsen, H. (2002)**

*Kvalitative kvaler – kvalitative metoder og danske interviewundersøgelers kvalitet. København: Akademisk Forlag, 111-123.*

**O’Rand, A.M. & M. Krecker (1990)**

*“Concepts of the Life Cycle: Their History, Meanings, and Uses in the Social Sciences”. Annual Review of Sociology, 16, 241-262.*

**Park, R.E. & E.W. Burgess (1921)**

*Introduction to the Science of Sociology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.*

**Park, J. & J. Iceland (2011)**

*“Residential segregation in metropolitan established immigrant gateways and new destinations, 1990-2000”. Social Science Research, 40:3, 811-821.*

**Pickles, A.R. & R.B. Davies (1991)**

*“The empirical analysis of housing careers – a review and a general statistical modelling framework”. Environment and Planning A, 23, 465-484.*

**Portes, A. & R.L. Bach (1985)**

*Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.*

**Rossi, P.H. (1980)**

*Why Families Move (2nd edition). Beverly Hills: Sage.*

**Ryder, N.B. (1965)**

*“The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change”. American Sociological Review, 30:6, 843-861.*

**Settersten, R.A. (2009)**

*“It Takes Two to Tango: The (Un)easy Dance Between Life-course Sociology and Life-span Psychology”. Advances in Life Course Research, 14, 74-81.*

**Shah, S. (2004)**

*“The Researcher/Interviewer in Intercultural Context: A Social Intruder!” British Educational Research Journal, 304: 549-575.*

**Skifter Andersen, H. (2003)**

*Urban Sores. On the interaction between segregation, urban decay and deprived neighbourhoods. Aldershot: Ashgate.*

**Skifter Andersen, H. (2010)**

“Spatial Assimilation in Denmark? Why do Immigrants Move to and from Multi-ethnic Neighbourhoods?” *Housing Studies*, 25:3, 281-300.

**Skifter Andersen, H. (2011)**

“Explaining preferences for home surroundings and locations”. *Urbani izziv*, 22:1, 100-114.

**Skifter Andersen, H., R. Andersson, T. Wessel & K Vilkama (2014)**

“Housing Systems and Ethnic Spatial Segregation: Comparing the Capital Cities of Four Nordic Welfare States”. *Forthcoming in Housing Studies*.

**Skifter Andersen, H., Magnusson Turner, L. & Søholt S. (2013)**

“The Special Importance of Housing Policy for the Housing Situation of Ethnic Minorities. Evidence from a Comparison of Four Nordic Countries”. *International Journal of Housing Policy*, 13:1, 20-44.

**Small, M.L. (2008)**

“Lost in Translation: How Not to Make Qualitative Research More Scientific”. In M. Lamont & P. White (eds.): *Workshop on Interdisciplinary Standards for Systematic Qualitative Research*. Washington, DC: National Science Foundation, 165-71.

**Smith, J.K. & L. Heshusius (1986)**

“Closing Down the Conversation: The End of the Quantitative-Qualitative Debate Among Educational Inquirers”. *Educational Researcher*, 15:1, 4-12.

**South, S.J., K. Crowder & J. Pais (2008)**

“Inter-neighborhood Migration and Spatial Assimilation in a Multi-ethnic World: Comparing Latinos, Blacks and Anglos”. *Social Forces*, 87:1, 415-443.

**Søholt, S. (2007)**

*Gjennom nåløyet – en sammenligning av tilpasninger til boligmarkedet blant hushold av pakistansk, tamilsk og somalisk bakgrunn, Oslo 1970-2003. PhD Thesis. Oslo: Institute for Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo.*

**Teddlie, T. & A. Tashakkori (2009)**

“The Analysis of Mixed Methods Data”. In: T. Teddlie & A. Tashakkori: *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research*. London: Sage, 249-284.

**The Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs (2007)**

*Etniske gruppers verdier – Baggrundsrapport. København: Tænketanken om udfordringer for integrationsindsatsen i Danmark.*

**Tinker, C & N. Armstrong (2008)**

*"From the Outside Looking in: How an awareness of Difference Can Benefit the Qualitative Research Process". The Qualitative Report, 13:1, 53-60.*

**Tulloch, M.I. (2003)**

*"Combining classificatory and discursive methods: Consistency and variability in responses to the threat of crime". British Journal of Social Psychology, 42, 461-476.*

**Valdez, Z. (2006)**

*"Segmented Assimilation among Mexicans in the Southwest". The Sociological Quarterly, 47, 397-424.*

**van de Kaa, D.J. (1987)**

*"Europe's Second Demographic Transition". Population Bulletin, 42:1, 3-38.*

**Wingens, M., M. Windzio, H. de Valk & C. Aybek (2011)**

*"The Sociological Life Course Approach and Research on Migration and Integration". In: M. Wingens, M. Windzio, H. de Valk & C. Aybek (eds.): A life-Course Perspective on Migration and Integration. Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, New York: Springer, 1-26.*

**Zorlu, A. & C.H. Mulder (2007)**

*"Initial and Subsequent Location Choices of immigrants to the Netherlands". IZA Discussion Paper Series, IZA DP No. 3036.*

**Zorlu, A. & C.H. Mulder (2011)**

*"Ethnic Differences in Leaving Home: Timing and Pathways". Demography, 48, 49-72*

**Özüekren, A.S. & R. van Kempen (2002)**

*"Housing Careers of Minority Ethnic Groups: Experiences, Explanations and Prospects". Housing Studies, 17:3, 365-379.*

**Özüekren, A.S. & R. van Kempen (2003)**

*"Special issue editors' introduction: dynamics and diversity: housing careers and segregation of minority ethnic groups". Housing, Theory and Society, 20:4, 162-171.*

# SUMMARY

The aim of the thesis is to explore the preconditions of change and the possibilities for change in the housing careers of Somalis and Turks through an application of life course analysis. The concept of the housing career offers a dynamic perception of housing. A housing career is made up of changes between housing situations and is influenced greatly by changes in other spheres of life. Change is thus inherent in the concept of the housing career. Focusing specifically on the ethnic differences in the preconditions of change and possibilities for change can lead us further in understanding the ethnic differences in housing careers. Life course analysis guides the analyses through specific principles on the links between structure and agency over time. By directing inquiry to the process by which lives are lived and highlighting the importance of both structure and agency, life course analysis offers a rewarding framework for an analysis of housing careers and of how change in the housing career is shaped by societal structures as well as by individuals' own actions and preferences. The aim of the thesis is pursued through two different strands. The first focus on one specific transition in the housing career, leaving home, and is based on analyses of register data. The second focus on change more generally in the housing careers of Somalis and Turks through analyses of in-depth interviews. These two empirical strands are explored in four independent papers.

**Paper I** analyses the general home-leaving patterns of Somali immigrants, Turkish immigrants, Turkish descendants and Danes. The paper finds some evidence of ethnic differences in home-leaving patterns, indicating the existence of different cultural norms for the transition of home-leaving. However, similarities are found as well. Such similarities support the notion of straight-line assimilation i.e. the gradual normative and socio-economic assimilation of ethnic minorities. A link between marriage and home-leaving is identified for Turks, but not for Somalis. However, socio-economic assimilation leads to less traditional home-leaving patterns for Turks with regards to marriage. Thus, to the extent that the socio-demographic characteristics of descendants differ from that of their ancestors, home-leaving patterns become increasingly similar to those of Danes. **Paper II** analyses the spatial segregation patterns of home-leaving Somali immigrants, Turkish immigrants, Turkish descendants and Danes. Two main findings emerge from the analyses. First, while spatial segregation patterns are obvious for the home-leavers, inter-generational mobility does take place, supporting the notion of straight-line assimilation. Ethnic differences are identified, but diminish greatly when controlling for key covariates. Second, inter-generational effects are found for the share of ethnic minorities in the parental neighbourhood: the higher the share of ethnic minorities, the higher the hazard for moving to an ethnic neighbourhood and the lower the hazard for moving to a non-ethnic neighbourhood when leaving home. Interestingly, this effect exists for ethnic minorities and Danes alike. In line with paper I, paper II finds evidence of an

assimilation process, however slow-moving, taking place with respect to the specific transition of home-leaving.

**Paper III** analyses the driving forces for change in the housing careers of Somalis and Turks. The paper shows that while Turkish migrant workers and Somali refugees face constraints in relation to housing, there are choices available to them in the Copenhagen housing market. These choices are for the most part perceived as rather good and as generally identical to those of Danes. The structural restraints imposed are caused by the tight housing market of Copenhagen and discrimination plays a minor role, according to the interviewees. Furthermore, the analyses show that change comes about in the intersection between preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints, and that housing preferences are shaped by resources, possibilities and restraints. As identified by life course analysis, housing careers take place in the intersection between individual agency and societal structures. **Paper IV** analyses Somalis' own perceptions of their possibilities for change in the housing market across the four Nordic capitals of Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo and Stockholm. The results show that the possibilities for change differ between the cities and that housing preferences are easier to satisfy for the interviewees in some cities than in others. It is easiest in Copenhagen and hardest in Oslo. The analyses show that the prioritising of cultural convictions to local context is individual and how local context as well as cultural background influences both the possibilities of Somalis in the housing market and their housing preferences. When local context and cultural background are at odds, the interviewed Somalis negotiate this conflict individually, within the framework of the social settings they refer to. Perceived possibilities for housing change arise in an intersection between individual capacities, cultural background and local context.

Combining the papers, four key outcomes emerge. First, while the process is not completed over one generation, assimilation *is* taking place. Second, preferences are shaped by resources, possibilities and restraints, and change comes about in the intersection between the four. While constraints can be substantial, room for choice does exist. Third, while there are differences in the possibilities for realising preferences between ethnic minority groups and natives, differences in preferences is a key cause of ethnic differences in the housing market as well. Fourth, change is linked to both choices and constraints and takes place in an intersection between preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints. To understand ethnic minority housing careers it is imperative to consider preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints together.

# SAMMENFATNING

Dansk titel: *Forandring til det bedre? Livsforløbsanalyse af somaliere og tyrkere boligkarriere på det danske boligmarked*

Formålet med denne afhandling er at undersøge forudsætningerne for og mulighederne for forandring i tyrkere og somaliernes boligkarrierer gennem anvendelse af livsforløbsanalyse. Begrebet boligkarriere tilbyder en dynamisk forståelse af boligsituation. En boligkarriere består af forandring mellem boligsituationer og påvirkes i høj grad af forandringer i andre dele af livet. Forandring er således et iboende element i konceptet boligkarriere. At fokusere specifikt på de etniske forskelle i forudsætningerne for og mulighederne for forandring kan øge vores forståelse for de etniske forskelle i boligkarrierer. Livsforløbsanalyse guidede analyserne gennem en række specifikke principper omhandlende relationen mellem struktur og aktør over tid. Ved at henlede opmærksomheden på den proces, hvormed livet leves, og ved at fremhæve vigtigheden af både struktur og aktør, tilbyder livsforløbsanalyse en givtig ramme for en analyse af boligkarrierer, og for hvordan forandring i boligkarrieren påvirkes af samfundets strukturer såvel som individets egne handlinger og præferencer. Formålet med afhandlingen forfølges gennem to forskellige grene af det samlede studie. Den første fokuserer på én specifik transition i boligkarrieren, at flytte hjemmefra, og er baseret på analyser af registerdata. Den anden fokuserer på forandring i boligkarrieren mere generelt igennem, belys igennem dybdegående interviews med tyrkere og somaliere. Disse to empiriske grene udforskes i fire selvstændige artikler.

**Artikel 1** analyserer de generelle mønstre for at flytte hjemmefra for somaliske indvandrere, tyrkiske indvandrere, tyrkiske efterkommere og danskere. Artiklen identificerer en række etniske forskelle i mønstrene for at flytte hjemmefra, hvilket indikerer at der eksisterer forskellige kulturelle normer for den transition, det er at flytte hjemmefra. Samtidig er der dog også ligheder imellem grupperne. Sådanne ligheder støtter teorien om, at der over generationer finder en gradvis normativ og socioøkonomisk assimilation sted for etniske minoriteter. For tyrkere identificerer analyserne en kobling mellem at blive gift og at flytte hjemmefra, hvilket ikke gælder for somaliere. Dog leder socioøkonomisk assimilation til mindre traditionelle mønstre for koblingen mellem ægteskab og at flytte hjemmefra. I det omfang, at efterkommere adskiller sig socioøkonomisk fra de ældre generationer, bliver mønstrene for at flytte hjemmefra således mere lig danskernes. **Artikel 2** analyserer de rumlige segregeringsmønstre for somaliske indvandrere, tyrkiske indvandrere, tyrkiske efterkommere og danskere, der flytter hjemmefra. To primære resultater fremkommer fra analyserne. For det første: selvom rumlige segregeringsmønstre er tydelige for dem, der flytter hjemmefra, så finder der rent faktisk mobilitet sted imellem generationer, hvilket støtter teorien om, at der finder en gradvis normativ og socioøkonomisk assimilation sted for etniske minoriteter over generationer. Etniske forskelle er identificerbare, men mindskes

betydeligt, når der kontrolleres for centrale forklarende variable. For det andet: andelen af etniske minoriteter i forældrenes område påvirker de unge fraflytteres bosætning: jo højere en andel af etniske minoriteter i forældrenes boligområde, jo højere en risiko for at de unge fraflyttere starter deres boligkarriere i et etnisk område, og jo lavere en risiko for at de starter i et ikke-etnisk område. Særligt interessant er det, at denne effekt findes både for de etniske minoritetsgrupper og for danskerne. I tråd med artikel I finder artikel 2 således indikationer på assimilation, om end langsom, i den specifikke transition, som det at flytte hjemmefra er.

**Artikel 3** analyserer de drivende kræfter bag forandring i somaliere og tyrkeres boligkarrierer. Artiklen viser, at mens der er begrænsninger for tyrkere og somaliere i forhold til boligmuligheder, så er der også valgmuligheder for dem på det københavnske boligmarked. Disse valgmuligheder bliver af de fleste opfattet som gode og som identiske med danskeres muligheder. Strukturelle begrænsninger skyldes den hårde konkurrence på boligmarkedet i København, og diskrimination spiller en mindre rolle ifølge interviewpersonerne. Analyserne viser desuden, at boligrelaterede forandringer sker i mødet mellem præferencer, ressourcer, muligheder og begrænsninger, og at boligpræferencer formes af ressourcer, muligheder og begrænsninger. Som påpeget af livsforløbsanalyse finder boligkarrierer sted i mødet mellem den individuelle aktørs ageren og samfundets struktur. **Artikel IV** analyserer somaliernes egen opfattelse af deres muligheder for forandring på boligmarkedet på tværs af de fire nordiske hovedstæder København, Helsinki, Oslo og Stockholm. Resultaterne viser, at mulighederne for forandring varierer mellem byerne, og at boligpræferencer er nemmere at tilfredsstille i nogle byer end i andre. Det er nemmest i København og sværest i Oslo. Analyserne viser ydermere, at prioriteringen af kulturelle overbevisninger overfor den lokale kontekst er individuel, og at både lokal kontekst og kulturel baggrund influerer mulighederne for somaliere på boligmarkedet såvel som deres boligpræferencer. Når lokal kontekst og kulturel baggrund ikke harmonerer, løser de interviewede somaliere konflikten på individuel vis indenfor rammerne af det sociale miljø, de refererer til. De individuelt opfattede muligheder for forandring af boligsituationen opstår i skæringspunktet mellem individuelle kompetencer, kulturel baggrund og lokal kontekst.

Når man ser på tværs af artiklerne, fremkommer der fire hovedresultater af afhandlingen. For det første: mens processerne ikke er tilendebragt i løbet af én generation, så finder der assimilation sted. For det andet: præferencer formes af ressourcer, muligheder og begrænsninger, og forandring finder sted i skæringspunktet mellem de fire. For det tredje: selvom der er forskelle i mulighederne for at realisere præferencer mellem etniske minoriteter og majoritet, så er forskelle i præferencer ligeledes en afgørende årsag til etniske forskelle på boligmarkedet. For det fjerde: forandring sker ud fra både valgmuligheder og begrænsninger og finder sted i skæringspunktet mellem præferencer, ressourcer, muligheder og begrænsninger. For at forstå etniske minoriteters boligkarrierer er det afgørende at se præferencer, ressourcer, muligheder og begrænsninger i relation til hinanden.



# PAPER I



# ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN HOME-LEAVING: A COMPARISON OF TURKS, SOMALIS AND DANES

**Rikke Skovgaard Nielsen**

Danish Building Research Institute, Aalborg University, [rsn@sbi.aau.dk](mailto:rsn@sbi.aau.dk)

**ABSTRACT** *The paper focuses on the first step of the housing career: leaving the parental home. Despite home-leaving being a key transition in the life course of the individual, knowledge about ethnic differences in home-leaving is lacking. This study provides empirical knowledge on such differences by comparing Turkish and Somali immigrants, Turkish descendants and Danes. Life course analysis constituted the analytical framework and aided in identifying key covariates. Event history analyses were conducted on extensive Danish registers; estimating Cox regression models for the event of home-leaving. Results showed that while some differences disappeared when controlling for covariates, others persisted, thus indicating cultural differences in home-leaving patterns. A strong link between home-leaving and marriage was substantiated for Turks, but not for Somalis. The home-leaving patterns of Somalis were much more similar to those of Danes. Overall, Turkish descendants were similar to Turkish immigrants but with some differentiation. All in all, the analyses identified the existence of cultural differences in home-leaving patterns but also found evidence of change towards less traditional patterns i.e. straight-line assimilation.*

**Keywords:** home-leaving, event history analysis, longitudinal data, life course analysis, Cox regression, straight-line assimilation

**Acknowledgements:** I am grateful to Hans Skifter Andersen and Anders Rhiger Hansen for their extensive work on establishing a database based on the Danish registers prior to my work on it.

## INTRODUCTION

During the last 30 years, a growing diversification has taken place in the order of early life course events in Western countries (Evans, 2013; Billari et al, 2001). Concurrently, norms have changed making it generally acceptable to leave home to cohabit with a partner without marrying and to have children outside of marriage. These changes have been caused by both structural-institutional changes and ideational changes (Evans, 2013). The changed norms of home-leaving is linked to the more general shift in values deemed the second demographic transition (Mulder et al, 2002): changes in cultural values towards individualisation and a focus on self-fulfilment have led

to individualisation in life paths and to greater flexibility in the life course, including home-leaving (Billari et al, 2001; van de Kaa, 1987).

Leaving the parental home is a key transition in the housing career, for ethnic minorities and natives alike (Zorlu & Mulder, 2011; Mitchell, 2000). For the individual, breaking free of the parents is fundamental for achieving adult status. During childhood and as part of the parental household, it is primarily the choices, possibilities and restraints of the parents that determine the housing of the children (Abramsson et al, 2002). When leaving the parental home, the individual becomes the focus of his or her own career. Furthermore, as each transition in the career is on one hand formed by the previous housing career and on the other hand will influence the following housing career of the individual, the first step is important not just in itself but also as part of the housing career as a whole. Consequently, extensive research has been conducted on the patterns of the home-leaving of native young adults in Western countries (Zorlu & Mulder, 2011).

Despite its importance, however, few studies have analysed the ethnic differences in home-leaving (Windzio, 2011; Zorlu & Mulder, 2011). A key question is whether the Western tendency of a separation of home-leaving from marriage has affected ethnic groups as well. This paper provides empirical findings to answer this question. Based on longitudinal data from Danish registers, four groups are analysed: Somali immigrants, Turkish immigrants, Turkish descendants (defined in the Danish registers as those who are born in Denmark to foreign parents) and Danes. In a Danish context, these groups are interesting as they are some of the major groups of refugees, work migrants and descendants respectively. Furthermore, initial analyses of survival curves indicated that Turks and Somalis are two of the most different groups in terms of the timing of home-leaving (see Figure A1 in the appendix). If differences persist in home-leaving when controlling for the central covariates, such as financial means and civil status, it would suggest that cultural norms influence home-leaving and thus that the Western patterns and the second demographic transition have not influenced the home-leaving patterns of Somalis and Turks (Zorlu & Mulder, 2011). Furthermore, by including two migrant groups and a descendant group, it becomes possible to see whether norms have affected the groups differently.

Danish registers offer a unique opportunity for longitudinal studies as they contain extensive yearly data covering a span of more than 30 years. Data were utilised for event history analyses by estimating Cox regression models on the event of leaving home. Thereby this study adds important empirical knowledge on the ethnic differences in home-leaving. The extensive Danish welfare state offers an interesting setting for a study of ethnic differences in home-leaving as welfare benefits and the free education system should allow young adults to leave home when they so desire (Furstenberg, 2010). Theoretically, the paper draws on life course analysis, which offers an underexploited analytical potential for migration research (Wingens et al, 2011). Longitudinal individual-level data are especially suitable for life course analysis (Mitchell, 2000; Wingens et al, 2011).

## BACKGROUND

Education is free in Denmark and students are entitled to a student allowance (SU) and a student's loan at a favourable interest rate. Foreign citizens obtain the right to SU after 5 years in Denmark. However, prior to that there are several grounds on which you can obtain equal status with Danish citizens, for instance that you have arrived in Denmark with your parents prior to turning 20. Housing allowance is obtainable for most students (depending on income and rent levels) when living in private rental or public housing<sup>1</sup>. Unemployment benefits are at a level that allows young adults to leave home despite being unemployed. All in all, the Danish welfare state should allow young adults to leave home when they so desire.

The majority of Turkish immigrants came to Denmark as guest workers in the late 1960s and early 1970s or as family members who were later reunified with guest workers. As much of the early migration to Denmark came from Turkey, this is also the country where by far the largest descendant group originates (Statistics Denmark, 2010). The vast majority of Somalis came to Denmark as refugees, arriving primarily in the early and mid-1990s. Consequently, most Somali descendants are not yet adults. In terms of housing, the differences between Somalis, Turks and Danes are substantial. As table 1 shows, there are major differences in tenure distribution. The majority of Danes live in owner-occupation while public housing is the primary tenure for Turks and especially so for Somalis. To a greater degree than Somalis, Turks live in owner-occupation. Turkish immigrants and descendants are fairly similar, with the share in owner-occupation slightly higher for descendants and the share in public housing higher for Turkish immigrants. The tenure distribution can be partly contributed to the fact that Turks and Somalis are more concentrated in Copenhagen than Danes, where there are more flats and fewer houses than in the country as a whole.

Table 1: Distribution of tenure, 2008, in %

| Housing tenure       | Somali immigrants | Turkish immigrants | Turkish descendants | Danes   |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------|
| Owner-occupied house | 0.9               | 14.8               | 18.3                | 59.8    |
| Owner-occupied flat  | 0.4               | 6.0                | 7.0                 | 4.1     |
| Co-operative         | 0.9               | 3.4                | 4.0                 | 6.2     |
| Private rental       | 8.3               | 6.4                | 6.4                 | 13.6    |
| Public housing       | 86.9              | 68.8               | 63.8                | 15.4    |
| Other                | 2.5               | 0.5                | 0.6                 | 0.9     |
| N                    | 7,961             | 28,397             | 9,388               | 359,521 |

Source: Danish Building Research Institute's database based on data from Statistics Denmark.

1. The Danish public housing sector is often referred to as social housing. It does function as social housing by providing housing for those in need. However, as it is accessible to all, the term public housing is used here.

Research shows that young immigrants and descendants living in Denmark are less satisfied than young Danes with their housing situation even when controlling for the kind of housing they are in (Larsen, 2009). Similar to the general pattern, young immigrants and descendants are more likely to live in public housing and less likely to live in private rental and owner-occupied detached housing than Danes. Furthermore, immigrants have less living space per person. While 7% of Danes live in housing units with less than one room per person (excluding bath and kitchen), 28% of immigrants do so (Skifter Andersen, 2012). This is related to the facts that immigrants more often live in public housing where large units are limited and that the average number of persons in an immigrant household is higher than in Danish households.

## HYPOTHESES

This paper is part of a research project that combines register data with interviews with Somalis and Turks. While this paper focuses solely on the analyses of register data, the interviews are partly the basis for the hypotheses presented below.

The literature shows that children in families with fewer material resources leave home earlier than others and that low housing quality and crowdedness leads to acceleration of the home-leaving process (Mitchell, 2000; Zorlu & Mulder, 2011). As the housing situation of immigrants in general is worse than that of Danes, young adults of immigrant families can be expected to be quicker to leave home. However, when controlling for central covariates such differences should disappear. If they do not, it would indicate differences in cultural norms regarding home-leaving. Religious beliefs are a key root of cultural norms leading to more traditional home-leaving patterns (Aassve et al, 2013) with a stronger connection between leaving home and marriage. The interviews that are part of this study indicated that Somali immigrants leave home earlier than Turks and that home-leaving prior to marriage is accepted. Turks on the other hand preferred to stay in the parental home until marriage, i.e. with a prolonged stay as a consequence. This is in line with previous research on Turks (Windzio, 2011; Zorlu & Mulder, 2011). Thus, the first two hypotheses are:

*H1: Differences in age at home-leaving between Danes, Somalis and Turks persist when controlling for covariates thus indicating cultural differences in home-leaving patterns.*

*H2: For Turks, there is a strong link between the two life events of marriage and home-leaving: Turks more often than Danes and Somalis leave home for marriage.*

A perfect synchronisation between home-leaving and marriage cannot be expected (Windzio, 2011; Billari & Liefbroer, 2007). The latter hypothesis should thus be supported both by marriage prior to home-leaving leading to home-leaving for Turks and by competing risk models for Turks moving into marriage. Evans (2013) and

Mulder et al (2002) find differences in the factors influencing home-leaving to enter a relationship versus leaving for other reasons. Such differences are explored as well.

Based on the literature, Turkish descendants can be expected to leave home earlier than Turkish immigrants to the extent that, through growing up in Denmark, they have adopted the Danish norms of home-leaving (Zorlu & Mulder, 2011). This would be in line with the notion of straight-line assimilation, i.e. that each new generation represents a new stage of assimilation closer to complete assimilation in all areas (Alba & Nee, 1997). In contrast, the interviews indicated that the descendants were similar to Turkish immigrants in preferring to stay in the parental home until marriage. Furthermore, the Turkish immigrants included in this study had to have migrated at some point during their childhood to be potential home-leavers. Thus, siblings can be respectively descendants and immigrants depending on whether they were born prior to the migration of their parents or not. This would lead to an expectation of similarity between Turkish immigrants and descendants. Thus, two opposing hypotheses can be formulated:

*H3: Turkish descendants are similar to Danes in their pattern for leaving home.*

*H3Alt: Turkish descendants are similar to Turkish immigrants in their pattern for leaving home.*

The analyses will focus on establishing the evidence confirming or disproving the four hypotheses.

## UNDERSTANDING HOUSING CAREERS

Leaving home signifies the onset of the individual housing career of the young adult. The housing career can be defined as the sequence of dwellings that an individual occupies during his life course (Pickles & Davies, 1991). While sideways and downwards moves do take place, the general aim is to improve the housing situation over time and to adjust housing consumption to needs by making a housing career (Clark & Huang, 2003; Magnusson & Özüekren, 2002).

A housing career is shaped by an ever-changing mix of preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints which together determine the choices available to the individual. Accordingly, two different kinds of explanations can be given for ethnic differences in housing careers (Bolt & van Kempen, 2002). On one hand, the differences can be caused by ethnic differences with regard to needs, preferences and norms in relation to housing. Different demographic behaviours lead to different housing needs. Preferences, preference hierarchies and housing norms might also be ethnically diverse both in terms of tenure, neighbourhood and layout of dwelling (Bowes et al, 1997). The preference of descendants might be influenced by their parents, by their Danish peers or by both. On the other hand, differences can be caused by ethnic

minorities being less able to realise their actual preferences. There are several potential causes for this: lack of knowledge of the housing market; discrimination by landlords, agencies, banks and others involved in the housing market; limited social networks relevant to the process of house hunting and limited financial resources. Descendants might have less access to knowledge and networks through their parents and other family relations compared with Danes but better access through peers compared with immigrants.

Life course analysis offers a fruitful way of understanding the dynamics of a housing career and highlights aspects to be taken into account when analysing transitions in the housing career. At its core lies an aim to analyse the complex interplay between agency and structure over time (Wingens et al, 2011). Transition is a key analytical concept. It is defined as a change from one state to another, i.e. from living in the parental home to living independently.

A focal point for life course analysis is the importance of age, age-related norms and the life phase (Elder, 1975; Billari & Liefbroer, 2007). Age-related norms relate for instance to the age at which home-leaving is perceived as appropriate (Aassve et al, 2013). These norms might differ between ethnic groups to the extent that the social norms originate within social networks as opposed to within society as a whole. The life phase of an individual has implications for housing needs, perceptions of suitable housing as well as for the possibilities and restraints on the housing market. Additionally, the life phase at which an event or a societal change is experienced influences the effects on the individual's life course (Wingens et al, 2011).

Essential in life course analysis is the linked nature of careers as well as lives. The life course can be perceived as consisting of several interlinked careers that run parallel to and influence each other. Other careers provide both a motive for moving, thus triggering change in housing, and determine the choice set of the household through the resources and restrictions that the other careers provide for the move (Clark & Huang, 2003; Magnusson Turner & Hedman 2014). Lives are linked as well as an individual's life is embedded in networks of social relations (Windzio, 2011; Blenstrup, 2010). To understand the life course of an individual, you have to consider events and conditions of the key social relations that are linked to it. Consequently, for home-leavers the situation of the parents can be expected to be important, providing motives for leaving or staying and maybe financial aid as well.

Furthermore, an individual's life course is embedded in and shaped by time and place (Blenstrup, 2010; Wingens et al, 2011). Key contextual aspects of a housing career are the local, national and global context of the general economic situation, the situation on the housing market and housing policy. For home-leaving, the educational system, the labour market and the welfare system are decisive (Aassve et al, 2013). While social structures shape the life course of the individual, life course analysis emphasises the agency of the individual as well (Wingens et al, 2011; Blenstrup, 2010). Over the



course of a housing career there are choices to be made and through these choices, individuals shape their housing career (Özüekren & van Kempen, 2003; Peach, 1998). While agency cannot be included in the present analyses, it is essential not to underestimate its importance.

Yet two principles are central in life course analysis: accentuation and situational imperatives (Wingens et al, 2011). Through socialisation, the social and psychological resources and dispositions of the individual are shaped into a behavioural pattern, which can be accentuated with societal change. For immigrants, migration can lead to more traditional behavioural patterns which in this case should be seen by an adherence to the idea of marriage prior to home-leaving. As descendants have not experienced the change of migrating, this is one reason why differences can be expected between immigrants and their descendants. Situational imperatives refer to change as well: changed situational circumstances lead to new social demands which in turn lead to a containment of the individual's role-related behaviour. To the extent that the young immigrants have internalised role expectations of their home-country prior to migration, this can influence their behavioural patterns in the migration country. Consequently, this is another reason to allow for differences between immigrants and descendants.

Based on the above and on previous research, a set of covariates have been selected for inclusion in the model.

## THE INDIVIDUAL

Gender is an important covariate as women tend to leave home earlier than men (Billari & Liefbroer, 2007; Aassve et al, 2013). Even in an advanced welfare state, the financial resources of the individual and his employment situation can be expected to influence opportunities for home-leaving by determining the individual's financial options in the housing market (Mulder et al, 2002). Educational level<sup>2</sup> indicates cognitive resources that are important for identifying and understanding the options in the housing market as well as for the expectations for future employment career and thus income level. Other studies have indicated that highly educated young adults leave home earlier than others (Billari & Liefbroer, 2007). Historical time and place has, as mentioned, decisive impact on the life course of the individual<sup>3</sup>. As the cohort connects the individual to a specific historical time (Elder, 1975; Ryder, 1965;

- 
2. *Educational level is defined here as the highest level of completed or ongoing education.*
  3. *The context at arrival can influence initial housing as well as subsequent housing career. The year of immigration of the first family member can indicate the shared pool of knowledge that the young adult can draw on. However, the covariates on the individual's year of immigration and on the first family member's year of immigration were insignificant and are therefore not included in the analyses.*

Blenstrup, 2010), the cohort is included in the analysis<sup>4</sup>. The cut points of the cohorts have been determined by testing for differences between years, leading to three cohorts: 1968-73, 1974-79 and 1980-88. For Turkish descendants, only the cohorts 1974-79 and 1980-88 were included in the analyses. For Somali immigrants, only the cohort 1980-88 was included. This is due to the low number of individuals in the two groups in the early cohorts.

### THE PARENTAL FAMILY<sup>5</sup>

Intergenerational effects are one aspect of linked lives (Evans, 2013). For young adults, the situation of their parents can be expected to influence home-leaving patterns, thus making household income and employment situation of household head important variables. Parental resources have been shown to lead to earlier home-leaving, possibly because of parents providing financial aid (Billari & Liefbroer, 2007). Furthermore, the size of the parental household can serve as a push factor leading young adults from large families to leave home earlier. Additionally, research has shown that children of broken families leave home earlier (Furstenberg, 2010).

### THE PARENTAL HOUSING UNIT

The characteristics of the parental housing unit might also influence home-leaving. The notion of the feathered nest implies that young adults living in parental homes of high standards might choose to stay longer in the parental home (Mulder et al, 2002). In contrast, poor housing conditions can serve as a push factor leading to earlier home-leaving. Therefore, variables on the relative size of the housing unit (here: at least one room per person) and the tenure form were included in the analysis. Urbanity of parental home is included as well. As many young adults are enrolled in education, which is in general clustered in major cities, earlier home-leaving could be a consequence for those in a parental home situated outside the educational centres<sup>6</sup>

- 
4. *The importance of context can be divided into cohort effects and period effects (Blenstrup, 2010). However, as the majority of home-leaving takes place within a very limited age-range, the cohort and the period of home-leaving are closely related. Therefore, only cohort is included here.*
  5. *As the study population contains siblings, it could be argued that the variables relating to parental family and parental housing unit are on a different level than the individual characteristics and that a multi-level design should be used. However, an array of variables can differ between siblings: gender, number in family of brothers and sisters, education as well as characteristics of family and parental housing unit at the time of home-leaving. These variables are seen as much more influential than whether individuals belong to the same family. Thus, a multi-level design was deselected.*
  6. *For the variable on urbanity, a multi-level design might also have been employed. As the variable is not the primary focus, this was deselected. Consequently, the strength of the HRs for urbanity is most likely estimated too high.*

## DATA AND METHODS

The analyses in this paper were based on the extensive Danish public registers. These contain a wide range of information about the individual, its housing circumstances, family relations, work, education and much more. The registers contain yearly information from as early as 1980 and thus allow you to follow the housing careers of everyone living in Denmark. For the study at hand, data contain information on the total population of Turks and Somalis and a random 7% sample of Danes for individuals from age 16 and above for the years 1986 to 2006.

Data was analysed with Cox regression models, one of several methods for event history analysis (see Allison, 2010 for an in-depth description including formulas). Methods of event history analysis (or survival analysis within the health sciences) are characterised by making censoring of data feasible, i.e. the inclusion in the analysis of those who do not experience an event. The Cox regression has become a preferred method for conducting event history analysis as it does not require the selection of a particular distribution for the time to event (i.e. it is semi-parametric), and as it makes the incorporation of time-dependent variables feasible. Competing risks were introduced when comparing the routes out of the parental home in terms of the civil status post home-leaving. The covariates in the models were tested for differences between categories in order to establish which categories could be combined.

A large part of the housing career is carried out as part of a household. However, the first move is often conducted individually, and the characteristics of the home that you leave, are individual even when forming a household simultaneously with the move. Thus, the appropriate unit of analysis for young adults leaving home is the individual. The event of interest in the analyses was leaving the parental home for the first time. While home-leaving is in reality a process (Mitchell, 2000), it is however often treated as an abrupt change in empirical studies. Likewise here, an event is defined as the change from being registered as living together with one or both parents to living with no parents. Recurrent events were not included, as home-returning and repeated home-leaving are distinct transitional behaviours requiring separate treatment (Mitchell, 2000).

The focus was on ‘permanent leavers’ operationalised as those who lived outside the parental home for at least two consecutive years<sup>7</sup>. An individual was followed from the year he/she turned 18 until he/she left home or was censored either because of turning 30, dying or leaving the country for at least two consecutive years. Data are thus only right-censored. The immigrants included in the analyses were only those who had not moved directly into housing on their own but had lived with their parents

---

7. *A person might be registered as living outside the parental home if he/she did military service or attended a one year continuation school. If you return after completion, it cannot be considered having left home. Therefore, only those who lived outside the parental home for two consecutive years were considered actual home-leavers.*

at least initially after arriving in Denmark. Excluded from the analyses are those who migrated to Denmark after having turned 17 or who did not live at home when turning 17. Thus, it was ensured that we knew what had happened in the adult life course of the home-leavers prior to leaving home. Continuous models were used as there is a true but unknown ordering of the event times behind the yearly grouped event times (Allison, 2010). Tied data were handled with the EXACT method<sup>8</sup>, which is suitable with heavily tied data.

As the Danish student allowance is higher for those living outside the parental home, some young adults might change their address without actually moving. However, in the highly organised Danish society such cases will be fairly few as there are considerable impracticalities involved in doing so (Zorlu & Mulder, 2011). Furthermore, there is no reason to expect differences between the groups in this respect. All in all, potential discrepancies in official and actual address are not presumed to influence the results.

In total, there were almost 116,000 sequences in the data set, out of which 96,352 terminated with an event<sup>9</sup>. The source of the data for all the analyses below was the Danish Building Research Institute's database based on data from Statistics Denmark.

*Table 2: Data summary of events and censored outcomes*

|                     | Total   | Event  | Censored | Censored % |
|---------------------|---------|--------|----------|------------|
| Danes               | 102,487 | 87,622 | 14,865   | 14.50      |
| Somali immigrants   | 1,404   | 917    | 487      | 34.69      |
| Turkish immigrants  | 5,624   | 4,300  | 1,324    | 23.54      |
| Turkish descendants | 6,422   | 3,513  | 2,909    | 45.30      |
| Total               | 115,937 | 96,352 | 19,585   | 16.89      |

Initially, survival curves for the four groups were plotted using the life-table method and Cox models were run including only ethnic origin. Subsequently, separate models

- 
8. *For the models including Danes, EFRON had to be used. The EXACT method for those models required the allocation of more than 4 GB which was not possible with the SAS 9.3 available on the research server of Statistics Denmark. For all the other models there was however hardly any difference in the estimates based on EFRON and EXACT respectively. Therefore, it is not perceived as a problem that some models had to be estimated with EFRON.*
  9. *For the database, information on housing units was drawn from the registers for selected years only (1990, 2000 and 2009). This information was imputed for the other years as e.g. dwelling type changes very rarely. As some addresses have been altered, added or removed between the years where data was drawn, information on housing units is lacking for individuals who lived at those addresses in the intervening years. Thus, sequences for these individuals had to be removed from data (approx. 5,000 sequences).*

were run for the four ethnic groups, thus making a variation in the impact of the covariates feasible. Finally, a competing risks design was introduced when analysing separate models for the four groups for leaving home to marry, to cohabit with a partner<sup>10</sup> or to live without partner or marriage (whether alone or with friends). All the covariates concerned the 1<sup>st</sup> of January of the year during which home-leaving took place<sup>11</sup>. Thus, they referred to the situation prior to leaving home. Some life changes can have an effect already when they are anticipated (i.e. enrolment in education). However, the only way to be sure that the covariates could potentially have influenced home-leaving was to choose a time of measurement that preceded the event of home-leaving. The majority of the covariates are time-dependent, recognising the fact that over time, the individual and household circumstances that influence housing options change (Abramsson et al, 2002).

## LEAVING THE PARENTAL HOME

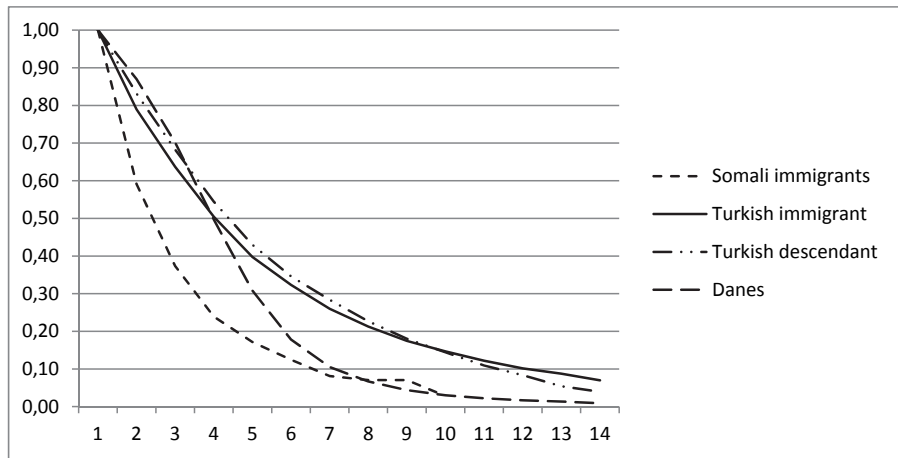
Somali immigrants were the earliest to leave home, as figure 1 shows. During the first years after turning 18, Danes, Turkish immigrants and Turkish descendants showed similar survival probabilities. After three years, at the age of 21, this changed as Danes became quicker to leave home. After seven years, Danes and Somalis had identical survival curves with less than 10% still living at home compared with over 25% of Turks. The age-related home-leaving patterns of Turkish immigrants and Turkish descendants were nearly identical. This was mirrored by the similar hazard ratios (HR) (see Table 3).

---

10. Cohabiting with a partner is defined as a couple consisting of a male and a female, with or without children, with an age difference of less than 15 years, living in a dwelling with no other adults registered at the address (apart from adult children, if any) and where the records in the registers do not indicate close kinship.

11. Except information on employment which refers to November the year before leaving home, as register data for employment are from November.

Figure 1: Survival rates of Somali immigrants, Turkish immigrants, Turkish descendants and Danes, years since the year of turning 18



A Cox regression with ethnic group as the only covariate confirmed the major differences in the age of home-leaving of Somalis, Danes and Turks (Table 3). The differences between the ethnic groups persisted in models including covariates. This indicates the existence of different age norms regarding the timing of home-leaving and could support the notion by Billari & Liefbroer (2007) that social influence operates at the level of social networks as opposed to the level of society.

Table 3: Results from the Cox regression for ethnic group, without and with covariates (1986-2006)

| Variables          | Model A<br>Without covariates | Model B<br>With covariates |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Dane               | -                             | -                          |
| Somali immigrant   | 1.869****                     | 1.294****                  |
| Turkish immigrant  | 0.704****                     | 0.589****                  |
| Turkish descendant | 0.672****                     | 0.614****                  |

- = reference category. \*\*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$ .  $N=115,937$   
The covariates included in model B are the same as in the model shown below.

As argued previously, three groups of variables were expected to influence the process of leaving the parental home. These were included in the Cox regression models for leaving home for the four ethnic groups<sup>12</sup> (Table 4).

12. The following variables were tested but did not have an effect: 'Retired incl. Disability for the individual', Family year of immigration and individual year of immigration. Indicator variables for missing values or irrelevant values of the covariates (e.g. living in an unidentified type of housing) have been included in the analyses but are not reported.

## THE INDIVIDUAL

The hazard for leaving home for women was much higher for Turks and Danes, confirming that women leave home earlier than men. For female Turkish immigrants, the HR was more than double that of males. Interestingly, female Somali immigrants had a lower hazard for leaving home compared to men. This indicates different cultural patterns between Somalis and Turks. For Turks, the cohort 1974-79 had a higher hazard for leaving home than the younger cohort, indicating earlier home-leaving in the older cohort. The hazard was near identical for Turkish immigrants and descendants. With respect to civil status, Turkish descendants and immigrants had a higher hazard for leaving home if they were married. This supports hypothesis H2 that for Turks marriage and home-leaving is connected. The HR was almost identical for descendants and immigrants, thus supporting hypothesis H3. That Turkish descendants are similar to Turkish immigrants in their pattern for leaving home. In contrast, married Danes had a lower hazard for leaving home than unmarried Danes. This might be a consequence of generationally shared households. An educational level of upper secondary or further education made Danes and Turks more likely to leave home. For Somalis, the HR for leaving home was lower for vocational training than for basic schooling. Again, ethnic differences can be identified. The employment situation of the individual primarily had an impact if the home-leaver was retired, which for young people can only be for health reasons. In that case, they were much less likely to leave home, as could be expected. The limited effect of employment situation could be a consequence of the Danish welfare support, allowing young adults to leave home early, whether in employment or not (Furstenberg, 2010; Mulder et al, 2002). For Somalis and Danes, being unemployed as opposed to being in employment even sped up home-leaving. Individual income of the home-leaver showed a clear and similar pattern across the groups: the hazard for leaving home was higher if the home-leaver had an income above the lowest category. Income thus seems to facilitate home-leaving, making it financially possible to live independently from parents.

## THE PARENTAL FAMILY

If the household consisted of more than five people, the hazard for leaving home was higher. A larger household size thus seemed to function as a push factor. Living with one parent as opposed to both parents led to a higher hazard for leaving home. This is in line with previous research which showed that broken parental households leads to earlier home-leaving (Mitchell, 2000; Furstenberg, 2010; Zorlu & Mulder, 2011). This goes for all groups with the exception that the HR of Turkish descendants and immigrants for leaving home was unaffected if the home-leaver lived with his/her mother. The employment situation of the parental family was highly influential as well. With a few exceptions, the hazard of leaving home was higher, if the household head was anything else than in employment. This indicates that parental unemployment and retirement can work as a push factor. A higher household income decreased the hazard for leaving home for Turks and Danes. Thus, it seems that parental resources were

not used as a means to speeding up the home-leaving process, contrary to what other studies have found (Mulder et al, 2002). Instead it could be perceived as an indicator of the feathered nest effect: higher parental income leads to better housing conditions which in turn delays home-leaving. For Somalis on the other hand, a household income of EUR 46,900-67,000 heightened the HR for leaving home indicating that for this group parental income might be used to speed up the home-leaving process.

## THE PARENTAL HOUSING UNIT

For Danes, less than one room per person in the household heightened the hazard of home-leaving. For Turks and Somalis, this was not the case. One reason could be that the housing norms of the four groups differ in relation to what is perceived as crowdedness and appropriate dwelling size, e.g. whether each child should have a separate bedroom. For Turks, another reason could be that large households indicate traditional families with more traditional attitudes towards marriage. With respect to tenure, living in owner-occupied housing decreased the hazard for leaving home. This could be in line with the idea of a feathered nest effect: owner-occupied housing is in general of a higher quality, of a bigger size and the vast majority of detached and semi-detached housing is owner-occupied. The effect of owner-occupation is insignificant for Somalis, most likely due to the very low number of owner-occupiers within this group. Living outside Copenhagen led to a higher hazard for home-leaving for all groups, in accordance with the expected effect of having to move to attend education. As the prices are high in Copenhagen and availability of housing is limited, those who can stay at home and attend studies might choose to do so as opposed to paying high prices and/or living on the outskirts of Copenhagen.



Table 4: Results from separate Cox regression models, with covariates (1986-2006)

| Variables       |   | Somali immigrants | Turkish Immigrants | Turkish descendants | Danes     |
|-----------------|---|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Individual      | x Man   | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
|                 | x Woman   | 0.847*            | 2.129****          | 1.675****           | 1.899**** |
|                 | x Cohort 1980-1988                                    | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
|                 | x Cohort 1974-1979                                    | Not relevant      | 1.176***           | 1.175****           | 0.976**   |
|                 | x Cohort 1968-1973                                    | Not relevant      | 1.093^             | Not relevant        | 1.027**   |
|                 | z(t) Unmarried  | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
|                 | z(t) Married  | 0.511             | 1.282****          | 1.247***            | 0.742**   |
|                 | z(t) Basic schooling                                  | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
|                 | z(t) Vocational training                              | 0.755*            | 1.010              | 0.979               | 0.903**** |
|                 | z(t) Upper secondary ('Gymnasium')                    | 0.848             | 1.321****          | 1.284****           | 1.003     |
|                 | z(t) Further education                                | 1.672             | 1.602****          | 1.238*              | 1.365**** |
|                 | z(t) In employment                                    | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
|                 | z(t) Retired incl. disability                         | 0.127**           | 0.419*             | 0.339***            | 0.462**** |
|                 | z(t) Unemployed or outside work force                 | 1.324**           | 0.966              | 1.069               | 1.242**** |
|                 | z(t) Studying   | 1.305**           | 0.987              | 1.093^              | 1.018     |
|                 | z(t) Income: up to approx. EUR 5400                   | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
|                 | z(t) Income: approx. EUR 5400-10,700                  | 3.396****         | 1.749****          | 1.757****           | 2.088**** |
|                 | z(t) Income: approx. EUR 10,700-16,100                | 3.066****         | 1.669****          | 1.665****           | 2.242**** |
|                 | z(t) Income: above approx. EUR 16,100                 | 1.881**           | 1.775****          | 1.978****           | 2.444**** |
| Parental family | z(t) 2-5 people in household                          | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
|                 | z(t) More than 5 people in household                  | 1.408***          | 1.126**            | 1.093*              | 1.093**** |
|                 | z(t) Live with both parents                           | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
|                 | z(t) Live with mother                                 | 1.255**           | 1.018              | 0.932               | 1.371**** |
|                 | z(t) Live with father                                 | 1.402**           | 1.200***           | 1.240*              | 1.445**** |
|                 | z(t) Household head: employed                         | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
|                 | z(t) Household head: Unemployed or outside work force | 1.203*            | 1.137**            | 1.087               | 1.213**** |
|                 | z(t) Household head: studying                         | 1.070             | 1.058              | 1.118*              | 1.159**** |
|                 | z(t) Household head: retired                          | 2.200*            | 1.957**            | 1.325               | 1.282**   |
|                 | z(t) Household income: up to approx. EUR 46,900       | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
|                 | z(t) Household income: approx. EUR 46,900-67,000      | 1.227*            | 0.788****          | 0.761****           | 0.832**** |
|                 | z(t) Household income: approx. EUR 67,000-87,100      | 0.639*            | 0.605****          | 0.552****           | 0.841**** |
|                 | z(t) Household income: above approx. EUR 87,100       | 0.532^            | 0.461****          | 0.454****           | 0.907**** |
|                 | z(t) At least one room per person                     | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
| Parental home   | z(t) Less than one room per person                    | 0.991             | 0.948              | 1.078^              | 1.141**** |
|                 | z(t) Public housing                                   | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
|                 | z(t) Co-op  | 0.504             | 1.163^             | 1.081               | 1.052*    |
|                 | z(t) Owner-occupied                                   | 1.157             | 0.759****          | 0.738***            | 0.890**** |
|                 | z(t) Private rental                                   | 1.197             | 1.051              | 1.039               | 1.050**   |
|                 | z(t) Copenhagen                                       | -                 | -                  | -                   | -         |
|                 | z(t) Three biggest cities outside CPH                 | 1.288**           | 1.510****          | 1.563****           | 1.240**** |
|                 | z(t) All other  | 1.298**           | 1.326****          | 1.304****           | 1.287**** |
| N               |   | 1,404             | 5,624              | 6,422               | 102,487   |

^  $p < .1$  \*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$  \*\*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$

- = reference category; x = time-independent variables; z(t) = time-dependent variables.

N=115,937

## CIVIL STATUS AFTER HOME-LEAVING

The analyses above supported hypothesis H2 in that marriage led to home-leaving for Turks, both for descendants and immigrants. This indicates that Turks do indeed choose the traditional path of marriage prior to home-leaving. To explore this further, competing risk models were estimated for the three outcomes of leaving home to live alone, to marry or to cohabit with a partner.

*Table 5: Routes out of the parental home: numbers, distributions and selected hazard ratios.*

| Number of events     | Single    | Married    | Cohabiting with partner |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|-------------------------|
| Somali immigrants    | 854       | 5          | 58                      |
| Turkish immigrants   | 2,190     | 1,944      | 194                     |
| Turkish descendants  | 2,342     | 960        | 211                     |
| Danes                | 61,066    | 658        | 25,920                  |
| <b>Events in %</b>   |           |            |                         |
| Somali immigrants    | 93.1      | 0.5        | 6.3                     |
| Turkish immigrants   | 50.6      | 44.9       | 4.5                     |
| Turkish descendants  | 66.7      | 27.3       | 6.0                     |
| Danes                | 69.7      | 0.8        | 29.6                    |
| <b>Hazard ratios</b> |           |            |                         |
| Dane                 | -         | -          | -                       |
| Somali immigrant     | 1.731**** | 0.564      | 0.374****               |
| Turkish immigrant    | 0.465**** | 10.370**** | 0.096****               |
| Turkish descendant   | 0.631**** | 12.191**** | 0.132****               |

- = reference category. \*\*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$ .  $N=115,937$

*The covariates from the previous models were all included but are not presented here.*

Initially the different ethnic distributions for the routes out of the parental home should be noted. Less than 1% of Danes and Somalis moved directly into marriage. For Somalis, this means that only five people in the population took such a step. In contrast, 27.3% of Turkish descendants and 44.9% of Turkish immigrants moved into marriage. Of the Danes, 29.6% moved directly into cohabitation with a partner while only 4.5-6.5% from the other three groups did so. The vast majority of Somalis moved into singlehood after leaving home. For Danes and Turkish descendants, 69.7% and 66.7% respectively lived as singles after leaving home and 50.6% of the Turkish immigrants did so. Consequently, H2 is supported: Turks more often than Danes and Somalis left home for marriage. Turkish descendants seemed to some extent to have adopted Danish norms as the share moving into marriage was markedly lower than for Turkish immigrants. The HRs, however, told a different story as the HR for marriage was higher for Turkish descendants than for Turkish immigrants. This lends support for H3Alt that Turkish descendants are similar to Turkish immigrants in their pattern for leaving home.

To understand the differences better, the Cox regression models for Turkish immigrants and Turkish descendants were examined in greater detail. The Cox models indicated interesting tentative explanations for the outcome differences between the two groups.

## THE INDIVIDUAL

Gender differences were similar for Turkish immigrants and descendants: women were approx. 4 times as likely as men to leave home for marriage. This indicates more traditional home-leaving norms for female home-leavers than for male. The cohort indicated changed patterns over time with the older cohort having a higher hazard for

leaving home for marriage and, for Turkish immigrants, a lower hazard for leaving for singlehood. Home-leaving patterns thus seem to have become more similar to Danish home-leaving patterns. This could indicate straight-line assimilation taking place. With respect to income, the analyses showed that the higher the individual income, the higher the hazard for leaving home for marriage. Educational attainment also influenced the traditional pattern of home-leaving into marriage. Both immigrants and descendants with a higher level of education were more likely to leave home to live alone. Descendants with a higher level of education were less likely to move into marriage. Education thus leads to less traditional home-leaving patterns. In line with this, those who were studying had a slightly higher hazard for leaving home to live as a single and, for Turkish immigrants, a lower hazard to leave for marriage.

### THE PARENTAL FAMILY

The result for the covariates on the parental family indicated the importance of traditional norms in the parental family for the home-leaving patterns of the young adult. Living in a large household led to a higher hazard for leaving for marriage than if living in a smaller household. Living with only one parent heightened the hazard for moving into cohabitation with a partner for both immigrants and descendants. Living with a father led to a higher hazard for living alone after home-leaving than if living with both parents. If the parents had divorced, a possible explanation could be that the break-down of the parental marriage leads to less traditional family values for the children. It could also be a consequence of single parents being less able to exercise pressure to uphold traditional values. Household income had a major effect for immigrants in particular, with a higher household income leading to a lower hazard for moving into marriage and higher hazard for moving into cohabitation. For descendants, the pattern was similar for all outcome types with a higher household income leading to a lower hazard for leaving home but with a particularly low hazard to leave for marriage. It thus seems that the higher the financial prosperity of the parental family, the less traditional patterns regarding home-leaving and marriage. For immigrants, if the household head was anything else than in employment, the hazard to leave for singlehood was higher. Otherwise, the employment situation of the parental family showed no clear or significant pattern.

### THE PARENTAL HOUSING UNIT

Less living space in the parental family, which again could be seen as an indicator for living in a more traditional family, resulted in a higher hazard for leaving home for marriage and, for Turkish immigrants, a lower hazard for singlehood and cohabitation. The tenure of the parental home showed no clear pattern except the general tendency of owner-occupation leading to a lower hazard for home-leaving. Finally, living outside of Copenhagen had a substantial effect on the hazard for leaving home to live

alone. While all the HRs indicate quicker home-leaving if living outside Copenhagen, they are not all significant. For leaving home to live alone, the HRs are significant and higher than for the other routes. This could indicate an acceptance of having to forego traditional norms in order to attend education, making it acceptable to live alone if studying. This is corroborated by the higher hazard of those studying for moving to singlehood.

Table 6: Results from separate competing risk models for Turkish immigrants and descendants

| Variables       |   | Turkish immigrants |           |          | Turkish descendants |           |          |
|-----------------|---|--------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|-----------|----------|
|                 |   | Single             | Married   | Cohabit. | Single              | Married   | Cohabit. |
| Individual      | x Man                                     | -                  | -         | -        | -                   | -         | -        |
|                 | x Woman                                   | 1.183***           | 4.360**** | 1.384*   | 1.209****           | 3.770**** | 1.215    |
|                 | x Cohort 1980-1988                        | -                  | -         | -        | -                   | -         | -        |
|                 | x Cohort 1974-1979                        | 1.085              | 1.789**** | 0.788    | 1.120*              | 1.382**** | 0.801    |
|                 | x Cohort 1968-1973                        | 0.810***           | 2.076***  | 0.733    | NR                  | NR        | NR       |
|                 | z(t) Basic schooling                      | -                  | -         | -        | -                   | -         | -        |
|                 | z(t) Vocational training                  | 0.964              | 1.014     | 1.041    | 0.960               | 0.959     | 0.962    |
|                 | z(t) Upper secondary ('Gymnasium')        | 1.363****          | 1.008     | 1.510^   | 1.576****           | 0.663**** | 0.939    |
|                 | z(t) Further education                    | 1.784****          | 1.457*    | 1.397    | 1.769****           | 0.517***  | 1.022    |
|                 | z(t) In employment                        | -                  | -         | -        | -                   | -         | -        |
|                 | z(t) Retired incl. disability             | 0.753              | 0.317*    | 0.000    | 0.745               | 0.063**   | 0.000    |
|                 | z(t) Unemployed or outside work force     | 1.010              | 0.876*    | 1.129    | 1.124^              | 0.975     | 0.912    |
|                 | z(t) Studying                             | 1.145**            | 0.681***  | 0.696    | 1.118*              | 1.069     | 0.850    |
|                 | z(t) Income: up to approx. EUR 5400       | -                  | -         | -        | -                   | -         | -        |
|                 | z(t) Income: approx. EUR 5400-10,700      | 1.679****          | 1.825**** | 1.839**  | 1.738****           | 1.737**** | 1.396    |
|                 | z(t) Income: approx. EUR 10,700-16,100    | 1.110              | 3.193**** | 1.260    | 1.278**             | 3.009**** | 1.481    |
|                 | z(t) Income: above approx. EUR 16,100     | 0.786***           | 4.472**** | 0.868    | 1.218*              | 4.391**** | 1.502    |
|                 | z(t) 2-5 people in household              | -                  | -         | -        | -                   | -         | -        |
|                 | z(t) More than 5 people in household      | 0.873*             | 1.584**** | 0.938    | 1.001               | 1.388**** | 0.802    |
| Parental family | z(t) Live with both parents               | -                  | -         | -        | -                   | -         | -        |
|                 | z(t) Live with mother                     | 1.061              | 0.930     | 1.810**  | 1.004               | 0.731**   | 1.463^   |
|                 | z(t) Live with father                     | 1.214**            | 1.107     | 1.776**  | 1.234^              | 1.016     | 2.661*** |
|                 | z(t) HH: employed                         | -                  | -         | -        | -                   | -         | -        |
|                 | z(t) HH: Unemployed or outside work force | 1.298****          | 1.004     | 1.122    | 1.182*              | 0.897     | 1.222    |
|                 | z(t) HH: studying                         | 1.180*             | 0.955     | 0.901    | 1.107               | 1.181     | 1.182    |
|                 | z(t) HH: retired                          | 2.170**            | 1.187     | 0.000    | 1.338               | 0.917     | 3.286    |
|                 | z(t) HH income: up to approx. EUR 46,900  | -                  | -         | -        | -                   | -         | -        |
|                 | z(t) HH income: approx. EUR 46,900-67,000 | 1.102^             | 0.485**** | 1.365    | 0.958               | 0.452**** | 0.762    |
|                 | z(t) HH income: approx. EUR 67,000-87,100 | 0.996              | 0.263**** | 1.577*   | 0.695****           | 0.310**** | 0.827    |
| Parental home   | z(t) HH income: above approx. EUR 87,100  | 0.851^             | 0.174**** | 1.530^   | 0.610****           | 0.203**** | 0.953    |
|                 | z(t) At least one room per person         | -                  | -         | -        | -                   | -         | -        |
|                 | z(t) Less than one room per person        | 0.849**            | 1.335***  | 0.671*   | 0.927               | 1.858**** | 0.946    |
|                 | z(t) Public housing                       | -                  | -         | -        | -                   | -         | -        |
|                 | z(t) Co-op                                | 1.083              | 1.266*    | 1.557    | 1.229^              | 0.694^    | 1.464    |
|                 | z(t) Owner-occupied                       | 0.801**            | 0.753***  | 0.833    | 0.677***            | 0.830^    | 0.943    |
|                 | z(t) Private rental                       | 1.002              | 1.182*    | 0.787    | 1.068               | 0.940     | 1.474    |
|                 | z(t) Copenhagen                           | -                  | -         | -        | -                   | -         | -        |
|                 | z(t) Three biggest cities outside CPH     | 1.824****          | 1.120     | 1.247    | 1.641****           | 1.322**   | 1.374    |
|                 | z(t) All other                            | 1.444****          | 1.250***  | 1.112    | 1.351****           | 1.194*    | 1.365^   |
| N               |   | 2,190              | 1,944     | 194      | 2,342               | 960       | 211      |

^  $p < .1$  \*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$  \*\*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$

- = reference category; x = time-independent variables; z(t) = time-dependent variables.

NR = Not relevant. N=7,841

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to gain empirical insights into the ethnic differences in home-leaving patterns. Despite extensive research on native home-leaving patterns, ethnic differences are an under-researched area. Life course analysis as a theoretical perspective framed the analyses and led to the identification of the key covariates. The Danish registers were utilised for event history analysis, a tool highly suitable for life course analysis. Cox regression models were estimated for the event of leaving home and for the three outcomes of moving out to live as a single, to marry and to cohabit with a partner. Four hypotheses were tested.

The first hypothesis stated that differences in age at home-leaving would persist when controlling for covariates thus indicating cultural differences in home-leaving patterns. While some differences disappeared when controlling for covariates, others persisted, thus supporting the notion of cultural differences in home-leaving patterns. The second hypothesis focused on union formation, stating that for Turks there would be a strong link between the two life events of marriage and home-leaving. A strong link between home-leaving and marriage was substantiated for Turks, but not for Somalis. While there was evidence of traditional norms persisting, there was however also indications of change taking place towards less traditional patterns. Thus it seems that the Danish home-leaving norms and the second demographic transition have affected Turkish home-leaving patterns to some extent. This indicates straight-line assimilation taking place for Turks but at a slow pace. Somalis were in general much more similar to Danes with the exception, despite the fact that Somalis as a group has lived in Denmark for fewer years than Turks. This suggests that Somali home-leaving norms are more similar to Danish norms or that Somalis have been more influenced by the Danish home-leaving norms despite a shorter group history in Denmark.

The two last hypotheses were the two opposing hypotheses of Turkish descendants being similar to Danes in their pattern for leaving home and of Turkish descendants being similar to Turkish immigrants in their pattern for leaving home. The empirical evidence showed a middle-way. When controlling for covariates, the differences between immigrants and descendants disappeared almost completely. As such, this would indicate limited straight-line assimilation taking place between immigrant and descendant home-leavers. However, to the extent that the socio-demographic characteristics of descendants differ from that of their ancestors, home-leaving patterns become increasingly similar to those of Danes. In this way, straight-line assimilation is taking place.

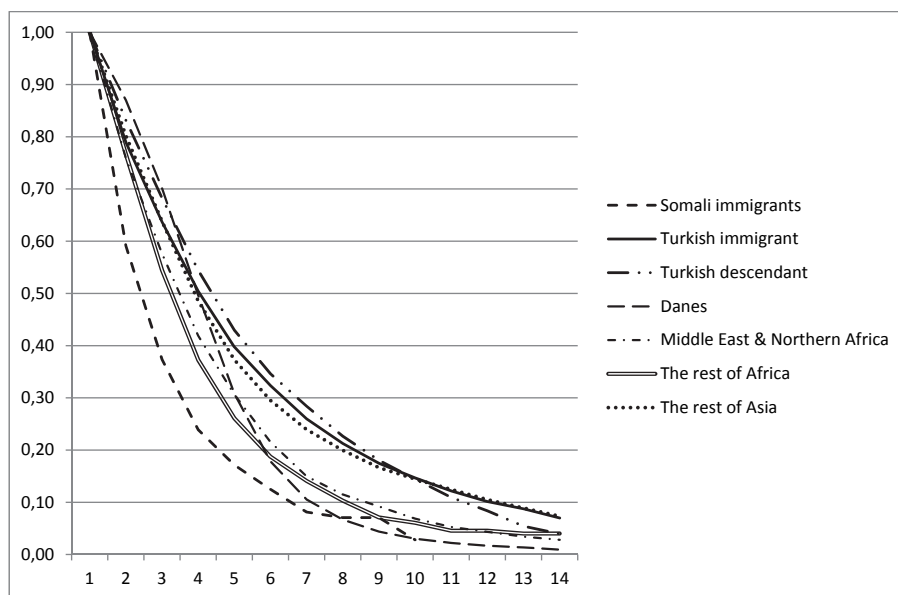
All in all, while cultural patterns persist between the ethnic groups, there are indications of assimilation taking place through concurrent normative and socio-economic assimilation. While this process seems to be slow moving for Turks, change is happening. Consequently, ethnic differences in home-leaving patterns can be expected to diminish further over time.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Financial support from NORFACE research programme on Migration in Europe – Social, Economic, Cultural and Policy Dynamics is acknowledged.

## APPENDIX

Figure A1: Comparison of survival rates, years since the year of turning 18



## REFERENCES

**Abramsson M, Borgegård L-E, Fransson U, 2002**

*“Housing careers: Immigrants in Local Swedish Housing Markets” Housing studies* 17(3) 445-464

**Alba R, Nee V, 1997**

*“Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration” International Migration Review* 31(4) 826-874

**Allison P D, 2010**

*Survival Analysis Using SAS. A Practical Guide (SAS Institute, Cary)*

**Aassve A, Arpino B, Billari FC, 2013**

*"Age norms on leaving home: multilevel evidence from the European Social Survey"*  
*Environment and Planning A* **45** 383-401

**Billari F C, Philipov D, Baizán P, 2001**

*"Leaving home in Europe: the experience of cohorts born around 1960"*, MPIDR  
*WORKING PAPER WP 2001-014*, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research.

**Billari F C, Liefbroer AC, 2007**

*"Should I stay or should I go? The impact of age norms on leaving home"*,  
*Demography* **44**(1) 181-198

**Blenstrup L T, 2010**

*Family Histories – A register-based socio-demographic life course analysis of the family formation process in young adulthood within a Danish birth cohort PhD thesis, Department of Sociology, Social Work and Organisation, Aalborg University*

**Bolt G, van Kempen R, 2002**

*"Moving Up or Moving Down? Housing Careers of Turks and Moroccans in Utrecht, the Netherlands"* *Housing Studies* **17**(3) 401-422

**Bowes A, Dar N, Sim D, 1997**

*"Tenure preference and housing strategy: An exploration of Pakistani experiences"*  
*Housing Studies* **12**(1) 63-84

**Clark W A V, Huang Y, 2003**

*"The life course and residential mobility in British housing markets"* *Environment and Planning A* **35** 323-39.

**Elder G H Jr., 1975**

*"Age Differentiation and the Life Course"* *Annual Review of Sociology* **1** 165-190

**Evans A, 2013**

*"Generational Change in Leaving the Parental Home"* in Evans A, Baxter J (eds.), *Negotiating the Life Course: Stability and Change in Life Pathways* (Springer, Dordrecht) pp 53-67

**Furstenberg Jr. F F, 2010**

*"On a New Schedule: Transitions to Adulthood and Family Change"* *The Future of Children* **20**(1), *Transition to Adulthood*, 67-87

**Larsen M M, 2009**

*De unges boligsituation. Endelig afrapportering af register- og spørgeskemaundersøgelse (AKF, Copenhagen)*

**Liefbroer A C, 2009**

*"From Youth to Adulthood: Understanding Changing Patterns of Family Formation From a Life Course Perspective". In: Heinz W R, Weymann A, Huinik J (eds.): The Life Course Reader. Individuals and Societies across Time (University of Chicago Press, Chicago) pp 311-337*

**Magnusson L, Özüekren A S, 2002**

*"The Housing Careers of Turkish Households in Middlesized Swedish Municipalities" Housing Studies 17(3), 465-486*

**Magnusson Turner L, Hedman L, 2014**

*"Linking Integration and Housing Career: A Longitudinal Analysis of Immigrant Groups in Sweden" Housing Studies 29(2) 270-290*

**Mitchell B A, 2000**

*"Integrating Conceptual, Theoretical and Methodological Developments in Home-leaving Research" Paper submitted to the workshop "Leaving Home: A European Focus," Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Research Group on the Demography of Early Adulthood, 6-8 Sept., 2000, [http://www.demogr.mpg.de/papers/workshops/000906\\_paper09.pdf](http://www.demogr.mpg.de/papers/workshops/000906_paper09.pdf)*

**Mulder C H, Clark W A V, Wagner M, 2002**

*"A comparative analysis of leaving home in the United States, the Netherlands and West Germany" Demographic Research 7 565-592*

**Peach C, 1998**

*"South Asian and Caribbean Ethnic Minority Housing Choice in Britain" Urban Studies 35(10) 1657-1680*

**Pickles A R, Davies R B, 1991**

*"The empirical analysis of housing careers – a review and a general statistical modelling framework", Environment and Planning A 23 465-484*

**Ryder N B, 1965**

*"The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change" American Sociological Review 30(6) 843-861*

**Skifter Andersen H, 2012**

*Housing policy in the Nordic countries and its implication for the housing of immigrants (Danish Building Research Institute, Hørsholm)*

**Statistics Denmark 2010**

*Indvandrerne i Danmark (Statistics Denmark, Copenhagen)*



**van de Kaa D J, 1987**

*Europe's Second Demographic Transition". Population Bulletin* **42**(1)

**Windzio M, 2011**

*"Linked Life-Events. Leaving Parental Home in Turkish Immigrant and Native Families in Germany". In: Wingens M, Windzio M, de Valk H, Aybek C (eds.): A life-Course Perspective on Migration and Integration (Springer) pp 187-209*

**Wingens, M, Windzio, M, de Valk, H & Aybek C (2011)**

*"The Sociological Life Course Approach and Research on Migration and Integration". In: Wingens, M, Windzio, M, de Valk, H & Aybek C (eds.): A life-Course Perspective on Migration and Integration (Springer) pp 1-26*

**Zorlu A, Mulder C H, 2011**

*"Ethnic Differences in Leaving Home: Timing and Pathways". Demography* **48** 49-72

**Özüekren A S, van Kempen R, 2003**

*"Special issue editors' introduction: dynamics and diversity: housing careers and segregation of minority ethnic groups" Housing, Theory and Society* **20**(4) 162-171



## **PAPER II**



# STRAIGHT-LINE ASSIMILATION IN HOME-LEAVING? A COMPARISON OF TURKS, SOMALIS AND DANES

**Rikke Skovgaard Nielsen**

Danish Building Research Institute, Aalborg University, [rsn@sbi.aau.dk](mailto:rsn@sbi.aau.dk)

**ABSTRACT** The impact of mobility on segregation and the specific transition taking place when leaving home are both under-researched. This paper has analysed the home-leaving patterns of Danes, Turkish immigrants, Turkish descendants and Somali immigrants. The focus was on testing the evidence for spatial assimilation and straight-line assimilation in a Danish context. The analyses led to two main findings. First, while spatial segregation patterns were clear for the home-leavers, inter-generational mobility did take place, supporting the notion of straight-line assimilation. Second, inter-generational effects were identified. While there was no indication that parental socio-economic situation affected the spatial segregation of home-leavers, clear and substantial effects were found for the share of ethnic minorities in the parental neighbourhood: the higher the share of ethnic minorities in the parental neighbourhood, the higher the hazard for moving to an ethnic neighbourhood and the lower the hazard for moving to a non-ethnic neighbourhood. Similarity in the patterns of natives and the three ethnic minority groups indicates that the processes taking place might be about more than assimilation between generations.

**Keywords:** ethnic neighbourhoods, home-leaving, event history analysis, spatial assimilation, straight-line assimilation

**Acknowledgements:** I am grateful to Hans Skifter Andersen and Anders Rhiger Hansen for their extensive work on establishing a database based on Danish registers prior to my further work on it.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, a fear of the consequences of spatial segregation has spread between politicians in many Western countries (Musterd & de Vos 2007; Zorlu & Mulder 2007). Simultaneously, extensive research has been carried out on various aspects of spatial segregation and its implications: residential mobility between neighbourhoods (e.g. Bolt & van Kempen 2010; Schaake et al. 2014), housing careers (e.g. Abramsson et al. 2002; Magnusson Turner & Hedman 2014), and the link between segregation and integration (e.g. Musterd & De Vos 2007; Bolt et al. 2010) to name some of the key themes. Living in ethnic neighbourhoods can have both positive and negative

consequences for the inhabitants (Musterd & de Vos 2007). However, as barriers to spatial mobility can function as barriers to social mobility (Bolt & van Kempen 2003), it is essential to identify barriers to spatial mobility and the relative importance of individual and household characteristics in overcoming such barriers.

A feared consequence of spatial segregation is in many Western countries the rise of parallel societies, hindering integration and challenging social cohesion. Denmark is no exception. In 2004, a strategy against ghettoization was launched by the then government (Regeringen 2004). Particularly deprived areas were identified and various measures were put in place in order to secure a de-concentration of minorities. In 2010 the strategy was updated under the name 'The ghetto back to society – A confrontation with parallel societies in Denmark' (Regeringen 2010; translation by the author). Colloquially, it is known as the ghetto strategy. Despite a change in government in 2011, the strategy has thus far been kept in place. It contains a set of criteria for determining which areas are included on the list of particularly deprived areas: the share of non-Western immigrants and descendants, the share with no attachment to the labour market or the educational system and the number of criminals convicted by selected paragraphs. However, what lies at the core of the ghettoization strategy's definition is the ethnic dimension. The strategy against ghettoization is based on the fear of parallel societies, which are assumed to hinder the social and cultural integration of ethnic minorities. This paper focus on the central, ethnic dimension, defining ethnic neighbourhoods by the share of non-Western ethnic minorities in the neighbourhood (the definition will be described later in the paper).

Despite the prevalent focus on spatial segregation, not much is in fact known about the settlement dynamics of ethnic neighbourhoods and the mobility of the people living in them (Musterd & de Vos 2007). The primary reason is the lack of suitable data for identifying the relative importance of covariates on moving to ethnic neighbourhoods. Longitudinal data on housing careers is required and such data are scarce (Özüekren & van Kempen 2003; Magnusson Turner & Hedman 2014). While cross-sectional data can be utilised for comparing the development of segregation levels over time, it cannot identify mobility patterns (Bolt & van Kempen 2010). The Danish population registers offer a unique possibility in this respect, containing substantial yearly data for the total population of Denmark. Individuals can be followed over time, allowing for longitudinal analyses and the estimation of the relative importance of covariates.

Housing situations are part of a housing career where the links between situations are essential (Pickles and Davies 1991). Understanding housing situations as dynamic parts of a housing career is fundamental as it underscores the nature of housing as ever-changing and closely linked to other aspects of life. Through conducting a housing career, it becomes possible for the household to adjust its housing situation to changing needs and resources (Magnusson & Özüekren 2002). Housing situations are linked over time in that early situations influence the ensuing options and preferences, potentially creating path-dependency (Wingens et al. 2011). This highlights the

importance of early transitions such as home-leaving. If segregation patterns spill over from parental household to the initial housing situation of young adults, it adds an additional perspective to the discussion of the issues of ethnic concentration namely the impact of inter-generational effects. Furthermore, as home-leaving signifies the onset of a housing career and influence the ensuing housing career, establishing whether the housing careers start differently is vital for understanding the housing attainment of different ethnic groups. Despite its significance, ethnic differences in home-leaving is however under-researched (Zorlu & Mulder 2011).

The purpose of this paper is to provide empirical knowledge on the mobility patterns of home-leaving Somalis, Turks and Danes with respect to ethnic spatial segregation. The analyses will evaluate the evidence for spatial assimilation and straight-line assimilation with respect to home-leaving in a Danish context. The focus is on the impact of individual and parental acculturation and socio-economic situation on whether young home-leavers move to an ethnic or a non-ethnic neighbourhood when leaving home.

Four groups are under study: Danes, Turkish immigrants, Turkish descendants and Somalis. Turks constitute the largest ethnic group in Denmark and one of the first groups that started migrating more systematically to Denmark as migrant workers. Turkish descendants are by far the largest descendant group. Somalis constitute a major refugee group and one of the earliest refugee groups to arrive in Denmark. Somalis' socio-economic situation is worse than that of Turks as the unemployment rate is higher and divorces are more common (Kleist 2007). The size of the two groups and the differences between them make them interesting groups to study in a Danish context. Furthermore, both groups are spatially segregated, as 43% of the adult population of Turkish origin and 49% of the adult population of Somali origin live in neighbourhoods with at least 30% non-Western ethnic minorities (source: SBI's database based on Danish registers). Danes have been included in the analyses in order to be able to establish whether identified patterns are specific for the ethnic groups or resembles that of natives.

## **EXPLANATIONS OF ETHNIC SETTLEMENT PATTERNS**

Overall, two complementary explanations can be given for ethnic differences in housing attainment (Bolt & van Kempen 2002). On one hand, it can be caused by ethnic differences in the possibilities for realising preferences i.e. by differences of the possibilities and restraints of households regarding especially financial resources, knowledge of the housing market, discrimination as well as social networks, the latter e.g. through the shared knowledge that households draw on when house-hunting (Özüekren & van Kempen 2002; Özüekren & van Kempen 2003). On the other hand, ethnic differences in housing attainment can be caused by ethnic differences in needs and preferences. Ethnic groups might simply strive for different things within the housing market, meaning that the difference in attainment is a consequence of choice.

One cause of differences between ethnic minorities and natives is a preference of some ethnic minority groups for living with friends, family and/or co-ethnics more generally (Skifter Andersen 2006, 2010).

Several theories have been put forward for explaining the development of ethnic settlement over time. These are primarily based on American studies. The word assimilation is here used in the meaning stated by Alba & Nee: “*In the most general terms, assimilation can be defined as the decline, and at its endpoint the disappearance, of an ethnic/racial distinction and the cultural and social differences that express it*” (1997:863). This definition does not presuppose for the process to be one-sided, it can be either one-sided or more mutual – or both. Focus in this paper is on the assimilation of ethnic minorities with respect to *where* ethnic minorities live and not *how* they live their lives.

According to *spatial assimilation theory* (Massey & Mullan 1984; Massey 1985; Alba & Nee 1997; Zorlu & Mulder 2007), ethnic minorities concentrate in ethnic areas on arrival in a new country in order to benefit from the ethnic community and its shared knowledge. Over time, however, cultural assimilation and socio-economic assimilation leads to spatial assimilation (Gordon 1964; Bolt & van Kempen 2003; Alba & Nee 1997). Inclusion in the labour market and/or educational attainment leads to socio-economic mobility. Concurrently, ethnic minorities acquire the language, norms and cultural values of the destination country as they become settled in the destination country. A gradual acculturation takes place (Bolt & van Kempen 2010). Thus, it becomes possible and desirable to leave the ethnic neighbourhoods with socio-economic mobility providing the resources for moving and acculturation leading to preferences more similar to those of natives e.g. for non-ethnic neighbourhoods. Based on spatial assimilation theory, the notion of *straight-line assimilation* has been developed: that there is a generational dynamic in the assimilation process with the generations being the motor for change towards increased assimilation (Alba & Nee 1997). The *segmented assimilation perspective* offers a modification of the spatial assimilation theory. This suggests that there might be differences in the assimilation patterns of different ethnic groups based on their differences in resources (Zorlu & Mulder 2007). An earlier Danish study (Skifter Andersen 2006) showed significant differences between Somalis and Turks concerning their resources and their social integration measured by language knowledge, participation in the labour market and social contacts to Danes. Based on the segmented assimilation perspective, Somalis should thus be more concentrated in ethnic neighbourhoods than Turks. All in all, the spatial assimilation approach implies that newcomers should be more segregated than settled migrants; that second generation immigrants should be more spatially assimilated than first generation immigrants; and that differences can be expected between ethnic groups based on differences in resources.

An alternative understanding is offered by the *place stratification theory*. While spatial assimilation theory emphasises the individual and household levels, place stratification



theory emphasises ethnic differences of the constraints faced on the housing market (Bolt & van Kempen 2003). Discrimination and the structure of the housing market hinder the progress of minorities' housing careers and lead to spatial stratification. As a consequence, ethnic minorities are unable to realise their preferences. This will not be changed by acculturation or the acquisition of socio-economic resources. With similar results but different causes, the *ethnic resources theory* (Portes & Bach 1985) and the *cultural preference theory* (Bolt et al. 2008) states that because ethnic minorities have access to ethnic resources in ethnic neighbourhoods respectively have a strong preference for living with co-ethnics that persist despite socioeconomic assimilation, they tend to stay in these neighbourhoods and conduct their housing careers within them (Skifter Andersen 2010).

Spatial assimilation theory would imply that if you control for socio-demographic characteristics, differences in settlement patterns should disappear. In contrast, both place stratification theory and ethnic resources theory should lead to ethnic concentration despite acculturation and socio-economic mobility. Natives face restraints on the housing market as well, but since they are not hindered by discrimination, the impact of economic resources should be weaker for minorities than for the majority (Bolt & van Kempen 2003). Bolt & van Kempen argue based on Alba & Nee that previous American research indicates that: *"While the place stratification model is more appropriate for the residential mobility of the most stigmatized groups (such as black immigrants in the American context), the spatial assimilation is more suitable to groups that face less discrimination, such as Asians and Hispanics"* (2003:212; Schaake et al. 2014). Consequently, it might be that the above models have different explanatory power for explaining residential segregation patterns of different ethnic groups.

## LIFE-COURSE ANALYSIS

On a more general level, the paper is based in life course analysis. The life course perspective offers a fruitful approach for migration studies (Wingens et al. 2011). It is founded in an ambition to overcome the divide between structure and agency by studying the dynamic interplay between the two over time. Underlying the focus on spatial assimilation in this paper is the notion that spatial assimilation is a process by which the individual adjust to the structures of the destination country over time.

Currently, life course analysis offers an analytical approach as opposed to an actual, coherent theoretical framework. From the life course approach, guiding principles for empirical work can be formulated (Wingens et al. 2011). Particularly fundamental for the purpose of this paper is the principle of linked lives. This states that the life course of an individual is closely linked to that of others and that changes in the life course of one individual can impact on the life course of others. For studying home-leaving, this implies that the parental housing situation and parental resources can be expected to influence the home-leaving patterns of their children. The focus in

this paper on inter-generational effect of acculturation and socio-economic mobility is tied to the principle of linked lives, in this case between parental household and young home-leavers.

Other life course principles are useful to note here as well. The principle of time and place highlights the importance of the social and historical context (Elder 1975). A housing career is carried out in a context that influences the possibilities of the household e.g. the general economic situation and the situation in the housing market (Özüekren & van Kempen 2003). Consequently, the cohort is a key covariate as it ties the individual to a specific historical time (Ryder 1965). The principle of agency underscores the importance of acknowledging agency within the opportunities and constraints individuals face. While the agency of the individual cannot be analysed with register data, its importance should not be forgotten. The principle of linked careers emphasises the linked nature of the various careers of life (Mulder & Hooimeijer 1999). In relation to housing, the family and work careers are central, as they impact greatly on housing needs, motives for change and financial opportunities. Key covariates to control for thus relate to the family and employment situation of the individual.

## PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of the paper is two-fold. First, the paper investigates the extent to which the notion of straight-line assimilation can be supported in the home-leaving process of Turks and Somalis in a Danish context. The focus is on *inter-generational mobility* in the first transition in the housing career, based on the research question:

*Are there indications of straight-line assimilation taking place, leading to ethnic minority home-leavers moving less often into ethnic neighbourhoods when they leave home compared to when they lived with their parents? Are there ethnic differences in indications of straight-line assimilation?*

Second, the paper investigates the *inter-generational effects* in the first transition in the housing career, based on the research question:

*Does the parental degree of acculturation and socio-economic situation impact on whether home-leavers move into ethnic neighbourhoods? Are there ethnic differences in terms of this?*

Together, the two questions establish the relevance of the theories presented above for the home-leaving process of Somalis and Turks in a Danish context.

Home-leaving descendants can be seen as potentially more acculturated than home-leaving immigrants. The descendants grew up in Denmark and have been

exposed to Danish culture and norms all their life. Their language level and knowledge of Danish society can be expected on an average level to be higher than that of immigrants even if home-leavers per definition have lived parts of their childhood in Denmark. Hence, by comparing Turkish immigrant and Turkish descendant home-leavers, it becomes possible to identify potential differences in their level of acculturation. The inclusion of Turks and Somalis is relevant based on the notion of place stratification being more appropriate for the most stigmatised groups and spatial assimilation for the less stigmatised (Bolt & van Kempen 2003; Schaake et al. 2014). Previous studies have identified Somalis as being at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy in Denmark (Kleist 2007). They can thus be expected to face more discrimination than Turks, who as a group have been in Denmark for longer and are less stigmatised.

## **THE DANISH HOUSING MARKET AND ETHNIC SETTLEMENT WITHIN IT**

Ethnic neighbourhoods in Denmark are found only in areas dominated by public rental housing, which comprises one-fifth of Danish dwellings (Skifter Andersen 2010). Public rental is not need-dependent in Denmark and the sector is accessible to all Danish residents<sup>1</sup>. Units are administered through waiting lists. Rent levels are subject to strict rent control with rent levels based on the building and maintenance costs of each specific housing estate. As there is no connection between location, demand and rent levels, some estates are highly popular resulting in long waiting lists. Other estates on the other hand are less popular and a unit can be obtained almost instantly. While this means that house-hunters are less likely to be forced to live with relatives in crowded conditions, it also creates a housing market potentially prone to ethnic concentration. Those with the least choices in the housing market end up in the areas with the shortest waiting lists. In recent years, new allocation systems have given local authorities the power to regulate the admission to housing estates with high concentrations of unemployed, which is also used to reduce concentrations of jobless immigrants. Crowded housing conditions, limited financial means and limited networks for house-hunting are all factors leading to fewer choices in the housing market and at the same time these are characteristics that are more predominant in ethnic minority groups.

An ethnically diverse population is a fairly new phenomenon in a Danish context. Currently, the share of non-Western immigrants and descendants living in Denmark is 7.2% (2014), having risen from 1% in 1980. Likewise, the spatial concentration of ethnic minorities is still a fairly new phenomenon in Denmark. The database for this project contains a division of Denmark into approx. 9,000 neighbourhoods with in

---

1. *The Danish public housing sector is often referred to as social housing. It does function as social housing by providing housing for those in need. However, as it is accessible to all, the term public housing is used here.*

average about 600 residents<sup>2</sup>. Here it is evident that prior to 1995, neighbourhoods of more than 30% non-Western inhabitants were a phenomenon of limited prevalence and magnitude (table 1). In 2008, a quarter of a million people lived in such neighbourhoods. At the same time, the average share of non-Western inhabitants has grown substantially in all areas: the neighbourhoods have in general become more ethnic.

*Table 1: Neighbourhoods with >30% non-Western ethnic minorities in Denmark, 1985-2008*

| Year | >30%         |                  |                              | <30%         |                  |                              | Total         |                  |                              |
|------|--------------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------------|
|      | No. of areas | No. of residents | Mean non-Western inhabitants | No. of Areas | No. of Residents | Mean non-Western inhabitants | No. of areas* | No. of residents | Mean non-Western inhabitants |
| 1985 | 15           | 7,910            | 35.4%                        | 9,213        | 4,969,617        | 1.4%                         | 9228          | 4,977,527        | 1.4%                         |
| 1990 | 49           | 24,640           | 36.1%                        | 9,182        | 5,110,769        | 2.3%                         | 9231          | 5,135,409        | 2.5%                         |
| 1995 | 131          | 76,578           | 42.5%                        | 9,224        | 5,043,464        | 3.0%                         | 9355          | 5,120,042        | 3.6%                         |
| 2000 | 287          | 171,872          | 43.8%                        | 9,068        | 5,158,148        | 4.0%                         | 9355          | 5,330,020        | 5.2%                         |
| 2005 | 401          | 223,506          | 44.3%                        | 8,926        | 4,871,338        | 4.8%                         | 9327          | 5,094,844        | 6.5%                         |
| 2008 | 444          | 236,426          | 45.5%                        | 9,943        | 5,059,187        | 5.2%                         | 9387          | 5,295,613        | 7.1%                         |

*\*Changes in address codes over time have meant that some addresses cannot be linked to an area. This in turn means that some of the very small areas cannot be included for all years.*

*Source: SBI's database based on Danish registers.*

The housing situation of ethnic minorities in Denmark has been described and analysed through numerous research studies (e.g. Skifter Andersen 2006, 2010; Damm et al. 2006, Børresen 2006). They show that there are significant differences between the housing situation of ethnic minorities and Danes. First, more than 60% of ethnic minority households live in public housing compared with only 20% of all households in Denmark. Second, while only 2% of all households live in ethnic neighbourhoods, 22% of ethnic households do so. (Skifter Andersen 2010<sup>3</sup>). Skifter Andersen (2010) finds support for the spatial assimilation theory in a Danish context: a study of the in- and out-mobility in ethnic neighbourhoods shows that those moving out are more integrated and have more resources than those moving in. However, as the study is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, it is not possible to follow the transitions of individuals over time.

2. *The neighbourhoods have been created by combining 100x100 meter grids based on a range of criteria e.g. physical barriers, proximity and homogeneity regarding housing tenure and type. They were originally created for a research project for the Rockwool Foundation and have kindly been shared with us. For more information see Damm et al. 2006.*
3. *In the study by Skifter Andersen, an ethnic neighbourhood is defined as a neighbourhood with more than 40% ethnic minorities.*

## DATA AND METHODS

The data sources for the analyses in this paper are the extensive Danish public registers. These contain information on all individuals living in Denmark on a wide variety of fields such as family composition, housing situation, financial situation, employment situation and educational attainment. Data have been gathered since as early as 1980 and the registers thus offer unique opportunities for longitudinal analysis. Based on the registers, a database was created containing yearly data on individuals from age 16 and above for the years 1986 to 2006 for the total population of Turks and Somalis and a random 7% sample of Danes<sup>4</sup>.

The analyses were carried out as event history analysis by estimating Cox regression models<sup>5</sup> for the time until leaving the parental home (see Allison 2010 for an in-depth description including formulas). Cox regression models are characterised by allowing for the inclusion of individuals who do not experience an event (censoring) and for the use of time-dependent variables. The Cox regression model is semi-parametric and therefore does not require the selection of a particular distribution for the time to event. Models were estimated in a ‘competing risks design’ of leaving the home to live in a non-ethnic neighbourhood versus leaving home to live in an ethnic neighbourhood. Continuous models were used: while data is only registered yearly, a true but an unknown ordering of the event times lies behind the yearly grouped event times (Allison 2010). Tied data were handled with the EXACT method<sup>6</sup>, which is suitable for heavily tied data.

- 
4. *Approx. 5,000 sequences had to be removed from the sample. The database only contains information about the dwelling for selected years. This information was imputed for the other years as e.g. dwelling type changes very rarely. However, building, combination and separation of housing units and changes in road names have led to new address codes and there was no dwelling information for these new codes. Consequently, individuals who had lived at least one year in a dwelling with no dwelling information were removed from the sample.*
  5. *For the variable on urbanity, a multi-level design might also have been employed. As the variable is not the primary focus, this was deselected. Consequently, the strength of the HRs for urbanity is most likely estimated too high. Furthermore, as the study population contains siblings, it could be argued that the variables relating to parental family and parental housing unit are on a different level than the individual characteristics and that a multi-level design should be used. However, an array of variables can differ between siblings: gender, number in family of brothers and sisters, education as well as characteristics of family and parental housing unit at the time of home-leaving. These variables are seen as much more influential than whether individuals belong to the same family. Thus, a multi-level design was deselected.*
  6. *For the three biggest models, EFRON had to be used. The EXACT method for those models required the allocation of more than 4 GB which was not possible with the SAS 9.3 available on the research server of Statistics Denmark. For all the other models there was however hardly any difference in the estimates based on EFRON and EXACT respectively. Therefore, it is not perceived as a problem that some models had to be estimated with EFRON.*

The unit of analysis was the individual. While many housing career moves are made as part of a household, leaving home is an independent move, as the housing situation prior to home-leaving is individual. Compared with other transitions in life, home-leaving is a particular kind as almost everyone will experience it at some point. Therefore, it is not a matter of whether you leave home but a matter of what you leave it for and how quickly you do it.

The event of interest is limited to the first, permanent move away from the parental home. Home-leaving is a process and some individuals leave home more than once (Mitchell 2000). However, leaving home for the first time, home-returning and repeated home-leaving are distinct transitional behaviours which cannot be presumed to carry similar characteristics. Furthermore, only permanent moves defined as living outside the parental home for at least two consecutive years were analysed. Those who live outside the parental home for one year e.g. to do military service or attend a one-year continuation school then to return to the parental home are not seen as actual home-leavers. Permanent is thus not defined as not returning. Instead it is defined as having actually left the parental home to live independently, whether you return later or not.

An individual was included in the analyses if he/she lived at home when turning 17 and still did when turning 18. Immigrants were only part of the study population if they had migrated to Denmark before turning 17 and had lived with their parents at least initially after arriving in Denmark and until turning 18. Thereby, it was ensured that we knew what had happened in the adult life course of the home-leavers prior to leaving home. The individual was then followed until the first permanent home-leaving took place or until turning 30, dying or leaving the country for at least two consecutive years, in which cases the individual was censored. By definition, data was thus only right-censored. The first year an event could happen was 1986 and the last was 2006.

Making a common and general definition of what constitutes an ethnic neighbourhood is not possible. Extensive debates have taken place on appropriate definitions. To go into these here would be too far-reaching as well as besides the purpose of the study. Therefore, a simple threshold definition was chosen. Ethnic neighbourhoods were here defined as neighbourhoods where the share of inhabitants originating from a non-Western country, including Eastern Europe, is higher than 30%<sup>7</sup>. Such a threshold is inevitably arbitrary (Bolt & van Kempen 2010). However, as the share of non-Western immigrants and descendants living in Denmark is 7.2%, 30% identifies neighbourhoods with a substantial and noticeable over-representation of ethnic minorities compared with the average neighbourhood. As a means of controlling the strength

---

7. *While the physical neighbourhoods are not demarcated in the same way, the neighbourhoods identified by the ghettoization strategy are most likely included here, as 33 of the 40 neighbourhoods currently on the list have a share of non-Western immigrants and descendants above 30%.*

of the results, alternative models were estimated on the basis of threshold values of 25% and 35%. The results were near identical to the models with the 30%-threshold.

## COVARIATES

A range of covariates were included in the Cox regression models based on the literature of spatial assimilation and of home-leaving patterns. All the covariates concerned the 1st of January of the year during which home-leaving took place<sup>8</sup>. The only way to be sure that the covariates could potentially have influenced home-leaving was to choose a time of measurement that preceded the event of home-leaving. The majority of the covariates are time-dependent, recognising the fact that over time, the individual and household circumstances that influence housing options change (Abramsson et al. 2002). The covariates in the models were tested for differences between categories in order to establish which categories could be combined.

Household income and households' social group are key indicators of parental socio-economic situation. These are included in the models. Acculturation of parents is more difficult to identify with register data. However, for the purpose of this study, the share of non-Western minorities living in the parental neighbourhood was seen as an indicator of the parental degree of acculturation. Based on spatial assimilation theory, acculturation of parents would lead to them moving to neighbourhoods with a smaller share of ethnic minorities. However, place stratification theory would argue that the cause of the parental segregation is not acculturation but discrimination. In this paper, I argue that it is fair to presume that acculturation plays some part in the parental housing situation, at least in a Danish context. Ethnic neighbourhoods in Denmark are only found in public housing areas; a sector which is regulated by specific rules of allocation. If anything, the new allocation rules should lead to less ethnic concentration as the municipality and the housing associations are allowed to give priority to people in employment and education which impact ethnic minorities disproportionately as they have lower employment rates. Thus, it is reasonable to presume that one cause of parental segregation level is the level of acculturation.

Individual income and educational level<sup>9</sup> of the young home-leavers are key covariates for determining the effect of own socio-economic situation. As emphasised by life course analysis, the cohort is essential as it ties the individual to a historical time, where specific home-leaving patterns existed. Furthermore, an effect of the share of minorities in the parental neighbourhood on the hazard for moving to an ethnic neighbourhood could be caused by home-leavers moving to a unit within the same neighbourhood as their parents. Consequently, a covariate was included to control

---

8. *Except information on employment which refers to November the year before leaving home. The reason is that register data for employment are from November.*

9. *Educational level is defined as the highest completed or ongoing level of education.*



for this. Additionally, as the change in home-leaving patterns over time could lead to different effect of covariates for different cohorts, the models were checked for interaction between cohort and covariates. The only significant interaction term was that of cohort and same neighbourhood as parents. This was thus included in the models. Finally, a range of other covariates relevant for home-leaving were also controlled for. These variables have been identified as relevant to home-leaving by previous studies (Mitchell 2000, Mulder et al. 2002, Zorlu & Mulder 2011) as well as by a study of more general home-leaving patterns conducted by the author of this paper (Skovgaard Nielsen Forthcoming)<sup>10</sup>. Some of these relate to the family and employment career of the individual, thereby taking the notion from life course analysis of linked careers into account. While they are crucial to control for, these covariates were however not of specific interest here. Furthermore, they did not reveal differences in the hazards for the ethnic groups that would explain the differences between the two neighbourhood outcomes and between the four ethnic groups. Consequently, they are not presented in the paper.

## **ACCULTURATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC MOBILITY BETWEEN GENERATIONS**

In the transition from living in the parental home to the first independent living situation, there were in fact indications of straight-line assimilation. For the three ethnic minority groups of the study, the share living in ethnic neighbourhoods was smaller post than prior to leaving home. The greatest change happened for Turkish descendants, where the share fell from 41% to 30% (for Somalis it fell from 46% to 38%; for Turkish immigrants from 34% to 27%). Still, there were major differences compared with Danes: while 2% of Danish home-leavers moved into ethnic neighbourhoods when leaving home, 27% of Turkish immigrants, 30% of Turkish descendants and 38% of Somali immigrants did so. This indicates persistent segregation patterns despite acculturation and socio-economic mobility between generations. It supports the notion that spatial assimilation is a process that takes time (Bolt & van Kempen 2010).

Turning to the link with parental spatial segregation, it was clear that those living in an ethnic neighbourhood with their parents were much more likely to move into ethnic neighbourhoods when leaving home (table 2). Even for Danes, this was the case. Home-leavers moving to the same neighbourhood as their parents only accounted

---

10. *Additional variables included: Social group (employed, retired, unemployed or studying), civil status and gender of home-leaver; tenure type of parental housing unit, size of parental household (2-5 people, more than 5 people), relative size of parental home (at least one room per person, less than one room per person), whether the young adult lived with both parents, mother or father and finally whether the parental home was located in Copenhagen, the three biggest cities outside CPH or other.*



for part of this. There thus seem to be an effect of living in an ethnic neighbourhood with your parents. This indicates that housing situations are indeed linked over time even between generations and that lives are linked as life course analysis predicts.

Table 2: Transitions between neighbourhoods when leaving home, in %

|                                     | Somalis            |                        | Turkish immigrants |                        | Turkish descendants |                        | Danes              |                        |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
|                                     | From ethnic n'hood | From non-ethnic n'hood | From ethnic n'hood | From non-ethnic n'hood | From ethnic n'hood  | From non-ethnic n'hood | From ethnic n'hood | From non-ethnic n'hood |
| Move to same ethnic n'hood          | 12.5               | -                      | 18.0               | -                      | 12.9                | -                      | 9.5                | -                      |
| Move to different ethnic n'hood     | 40.9               | 25.1                   | 33.0               | 14.0                   | 35.1                | 18.4                   | 14.7               | 2.0                    |
| Move to same non-ethnic n'hood      | -                  | 6.2                    | -                  | 14.2                   | -                   | 10.1                   | -                  | 6.0                    |
| Move to different non-ethnic n'hood | 46.3               | 68.6                   | 49.0               | 71.0                   | 52.0                | 71.0                   | 75.8               | 92.0                   |
| Total                               | 99.7               | 100.0                  | 100.0              | 99.2                   | 100.0               | 99.4                   | 100.0              | 100.0                  |

*N* = 115,937.

The notion of ethnic differences was supported by an estimation of Cox regression models without covariates except ethnic background (table 3). Somalis were 26 times more likely than Danes to move into an ethnic neighbourhood. Turks were 11 times as likely to move into ethnic neighbourhoods and half as likely to move into non-ethnic neighbourhoods as Danes. The ethnic differences were major. When including covariates in the model, however, the effect of ethnic background became smaller. The difference in hazard for moving to an ethnic and a non-ethnic neighbourhood respectively was thus partly explained by covariates e.g. by differences in socio-economic situation. Nevertheless, the differences in hazards did not disappear. When controlling for key covariates, Somalis were three times as likely and Turks almost twice as likely as Danes to move into an ethnic neighbourhood. Turks were half as likely as Danes to move into non-ethnic neighbourhoods.

Table 3: Results from Cox regression models for ethnic background

|                     | Model without covariates |                   | Model with covariates* |                   |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
|                     | Ethnic n'hood            | Non-ethnic n'hood | Ethnic n'hood          | Non-ethnic n'hood |
| Danes               | -                        | -                 | -                      | -                 |
| Turkish immigrants  | 10.556****               | 0.581****         | 1.825****              | 0.567****         |
| Turkish descendants | 10.958****               | 0.512****         | 1.798****              | 0.585****         |
| Somali immigrants   | 26.375****               | 1.046             | 2.907****              | 1.056             |

\*HR's for covariates not shown. The covariates included are the same as in the model shown in the next section. - = reference category. \*\*\*\*  $p < .0001$ . *N* = 115,937.

## INTER-GENERATIONAL EFFECTS OF ACCULTURATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC MOBILITY

In this section I turn to the question of whether the parental degree of acculturation and socio-economic situation impact on home-leavers moving into ethnic neighbourhoods or non-ethnic neighbourhoods respectively. The Cox regression models are presented in table 4<sup>11</sup>.

With regards to parental household income, the analyses showed that a higher household income led to less likelihood of leaving home both for ethnic and non-ethnic neighbourhoods. This is in line with the feathered-nest hypothesis that young adults living in parental homes of high standards stay longer in the parental home (Mulder et al. 2002). For Somalis, parental household income had no effect which could be due to the lower share with a household income above the lowest category. For each of the ethnic groups, the hazards for the income groups were very similar for ethnic and non-ethnic neighbourhoods. Thus, there is no indication that the parental economic situation impacts on the neighbourhood outcome of the home-leaver and thus no indication that a better economic situation of the parents leads to less likelihood of moving into an ethnic neighbourhood. Parental employment situation did impact on the home-leaving of their children but a clear effect in terms of moving to an ethnic or non-ethnic neighbourhood was not found.

The income level of the home-leavers themselves showed very similar patterns across ethnic groups: an income above the reference category of up to approx. EUR 5400 led to a higher hazard for home-leaving to both neighbourhood types. The only exception was for the Somalis of the highest income category where the hazard for moving to an ethnic neighbourhood was close to one and insignificant from the lowest category. This could be due to the low share of Somalis with an income in the highest category. Educational attainment of home-leavers showed no clear difference between educational level and spatial segregation, except for 'further education' leading to a higher hazard for moving to an ethnic neighbourhood for Somali and Turkish immigrants. There are thus very limited indications of the individual socio-economic situation impacting on whether you leave to move to an ethnic or a non-ethnic neighbourhood.

---

11. *Additional variables included: Social group (employed, retired, unemployed, studying), civil status, gender of home-leaver; tenure type of parental housing unit, size of parental household (2-5 people, more than 5 people), relative size of parental home (at least one room per person, less than one room per person), whether the young adult lived with both parents, mother or father; finally whether the parental home was located in Copenhagen, the three biggest cities outside CPH or other.*

Table 4: Results from Cox regression models, selected hazards

| Variables                                 | Somali immigrants  |                    | Turkish immigrants |                    | Turkish descendants |              | Danes              |                    |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|   | Ethnic             | Non-ethnic         | Ethnic             | Non-ethnic         | Ethnic              | Non-ethnic   | Ethnic             | Non-ethnic         |
| z(t)                                      | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                   | -            | -                  | -                  |
| HH income: up to approx. EUR 46,900 (PH)  |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 1.019              | 1.099              | 0.756***           | 0.806***           | 0.819**             | 0.788***     | 0.764**            | 0.838***           |
| HH income: approx. EUR 46,900-67,000 (PH) |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 0.505 <sup>Δ</sup> | 0.660              | 0.613***           | 0.603***           | 0.479***            | 0.634***     | 0.831 <sup>Δ</sup> | 0.844***           |
| HH income: approx. EUR 67,000-87,100 (PH) |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 0.242              | 1.028              | 0.427***           | 0.491***           | 0.414***            | 0.528***     | 0.802*             | 0.910***           |
| HH income: above approx. EUR 87,100 (PH)  |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                   | -            | -                  | -                  |
| HH: employed (PH)                         |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 0.898              | 1.077              | 1.253**            | 1.064              | 1.116               | 0.971        | 1.761***           | 1.167***           |
| HH: Unemployed or outside work force (PH) |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 1.424 <sup>Δ</sup> | 0.888              | 1.201              | 1.024              | 1.140               | 1.118        | 1.218              | 1.147***           |
| HH: studying (PH)                         |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 2.795*             | 1.976              | 1.955              | 1.843*             | 0.996               | 1.229        | 0.933              | 1.331**            |
| HH: retired (PH)                          |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                   | -            | -                  | -                  |
| Income: up to approx. EUR 5400            |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 3.056***           | 2.958***           | 1.805***           | 1.640***           | 1.877***            | 1.521***     | 2.199***           | 2.086***           |
| Income: approx. EUR 5400-10,700           |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 2.714***           | 3.537***           | 1.636***           | 1.638***           | 1.833***            | 1.453***     | 2.226***           | 2.388***           |
| Income: approx. EUR 10,700-16,100         |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 0.973              | 2.131*             | 1.869***           | 1.698***           | 1.897***            | 1.866***     | 2.113***           | 2.733***           |
| Income: above approx. EUR 16,100          |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                   | -            | -                  | -                  |
| Basic schooling                           |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 0.725              | 0.780              | 0.884              | 1.045              | 0.972               | 0.970        | 0.705***           | 0.949***           |
| Vocational training                       |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 1.081              | 0.802              | 1.297*             | 1.259***           | 1.153               | 1.286***     | 0.946              | 1.001              |
| Upper secondary ('Gymnasium')             |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 3.121 <sup>Δ</sup> | 0.653              | 2.184***           | 1.206              | 1.171               | 1.141        | 1.239 <sup>Δ</sup> | 1.263***           |
| Further education                         |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                   | -            | -                  | -                  |
| 0-10% ethnic minorities (PH)              |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 0.896              | 0.860              | 1.512**            | 0.904 <sup>Δ</sup> | 1.116               | 0.959        | 1.667***           | 0.998              |
| 10-20% ethnic minorities (PH)             |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 1.027              | 0.906              | 1.821***           | 0.848**            | 1.422*              | 0.899        | 2.678***           | 0.944 <sup>Δ</sup> |
| 20-30% ethnic minorities (PH)             |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 1.534              | 0.712 <sup>Δ</sup> | 3.849***           | 0.564***           | 2.421***            | 0.674***     | 6.962***           | 0.751***           |
| 30-40% ethnic minorities (PH)             |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 1.979*             | 0.466**            | 4.740***           | 0.446*             | 2.708***            | 0.654*       | 7.335***           | 0.709***           |
| 40-50% ethnic minorities (PH)             |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 2.192**            | 0.460**            | 4.147***           | 0.332***           | 3.346***            | 0.505***     | 7.407***           | 0.679***           |
| 50-60% ethnic minorities (PH)             |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 2.352**            | 0.502*             | 4.262***           | 0.411***           | 2.419***            | 0.564***     | 5.755***           | 0.654*             |
| 60-70% ethnic minorities (PH)             |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 2.623**            | 0.381***           | 5.328***           | 0.245***           | 2.869***            | 0.492***     | 14.525***          | 1.133              |
| 70-80% ethnic minorities (PH)             |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 1.913 <sup>Δ</sup> | 0.444*             | 5.732***           | 0.537*             | 2.473***            | 0.310***     | 0.000              | 0.293              |
| 80-90% ethnic minorities (PH)             |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 0.000              | 0.000              | 23.059**           | 0.000              | 4.143*              | 0.656        | 0.000              | 0.012              |
| 90-100% ethnic minorities (PH)            |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                   | -            | -                  | -                  |
| Different n'hood than parents             |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | 4.342***           | 1.432              | 5.256***           | 1.756***           | 5.991***            | 1.945***     | 1.825***           | 2.021***           |
| Same n'hood as parents                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | Not relevant       | Not relevant       | Not relevant       | -                  | -                   | -            | -                  | -                  |
| Cohort 1980-1988                          |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| x   | Not relevant       | Not relevant       | 1.179 <sup>Δ</sup> | 1.353***           | 1.037               | 1.390***     | 0.629***           | 1.146***           |
| Cohort 1974-1979                          |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| x   | Not relevant       | Not relevant       | 0.843              | 1.312              | Not relevant        | Not relevant | 0.304***           | 1.205***           |
| Cohort 1968-1973                          |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| Interaction same n'hood*cohort 1980-1988  |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | Not relevant       | Not relevant       | 0.523***           | 0.524***           | 0.371***            | 0.635**      | 0.628*             | 0.573***           |
| Interaction same n'hood*cohort 1974-1979  |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| z(t)                                      | Not relevant       | Not relevant       | 0.341***           | 0.655*             | Not relevant        | Not relevant | 0.214***           | 0.560***           |
| Interaction same n'hood*cohort 1968-1973  |                    |                    |                    |                    |                     |              |                    |                    |
| N   | 1,404              | 5,624              | 6,422              | 102,487            |                     |              |                    |                    |

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$  <sup>Δ</sup> $p < .1$  = ref. category; x = time-independent variables; z(t) = time-dep. variables; PH = parental home; HH = head of household

The share of ethnic minorities in the parental neighbourhood, on the other hand, had a major impact on the hazard for moving to an ethnic or a non-ethnic neighbourhood. The tendency was clear and similar across the ethnic categories: the higher the share of ethnic minorities in the parental neighbourhood, the higher the hazard for moving to an ethnic neighbourhood. Turkish immigrants living with their parents in a neighbourhood with 90-100% of ethnic minorities of non-Western origin were 23 times as likely to move to an ethnic neighbourhood as those who lived in neighbourhoods with 0-10% ethnic minorities<sup>12</sup>. Interestingly, the pattern was similar for Danish home-leavers: living in a neighbourhood of 70-80% ethnic minorities made the home-leavers almost 15 times more likely to move to an ethnic neighbourhood than if they had lived in a 0-10% neighbourhood. A potential explanation for this could be that the experience of living in an ethnic neighbourhood as part of the parental household leads to less prejudice against such neighbourhoods.

Interestingly, the hazards for Turkish descendants were markedly lower than those for Turkish immigrants. Thus it seems that the share of minorities in the parental neighbourhood affects immigrants more than descendants. For all the four groups, the higher the share of ethnic minorities in the neighbourhood, the lower the hazard for moving to a non-ethnic neighbourhood. Thus, on one hand the analyses can be argued to support the notion that low parental acculturation leads to a higher hazard for moving to an ethnic neighbourhood. On the other hand, Danes showed a similar pattern which can hardly be ascribed to parental acculturation. Two opposing explanations can be put forward: either the cause of the patterns differs between the ethnic groups. Or the cause is the same, meaning that parental acculturation is not the cause of the Somali and Turkish patterns. A third option is that it is a combination. In any case, the similarity of the patterns warns us against presuming that parental acculturation is the (only) cause.

Other interesting findings emerged from the estimated Cox regression models. For Turks and Danes, a clear pattern was found for the effect of cohort. The older cohorts had higher hazards for moving to a non-ethnic neighbourhood. For Danes, the older cohorts also had lower hazards for moving to an ethnic neighbourhood. As the older cohorts in general had left home at a time when there were fewer ethnic neighbourhoods, this is not surprising. Furthermore, moving to the same neighbourhood as your parents generally led to a higher hazard for home-leaving. However, for the three ethnic minority groups the hazard for moving to an ethnic neighbourhood was more than double the hazard for moving to a non-ethnic neighbourhood if moving to the same neighbourhood as the parents. Thus, it seems that lives are indeed linked and that inter-generational effects are at play. Moving to the same neighbourhood was the only covariate with significant interaction with the cohort. For the older cohorts, the effect

---

12. *The share of Somalis and Turks living with their parents in neighbourhoods with 0-10% non-Western ethnic minorities is approx. 20% for the total data selection (treating the data selection of those living in the parental home as person years).*

of moving to the same neighbourhood on the hazard for moving to either an ethnic or a non-ethnic neighbourhood was approx. halved for all groups. It thus seems that moving to the same neighbourhood is more common today than it was previously, for Danes and Turks alike. Further research is needed to understand why this is.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to analyse the inter-generational mobility and the inter-generational effects in the home-leaving patterns of Somalis, Turkish immigrants, Turkish descendants and Danes and the extent to which different patterns can be identified between the ethnic groups.

The first part of the analysis found evidence to support straight-line assimilation taking place: for all three minority groups, the share of home-leavers moving to an ethnic neighbourhood was lower than for their parents. However, it was still significantly higher than for Danes. Furthermore, those living in an ethnic neighbourhood with their parents were much more likely to move into ethnic neighbourhoods when leaving home. There were major ethnic differences in the hazard for moving to an ethnic neighbourhood; however these diminished substantially when controlling for key covariates. These results indicate that despite acculturation and socio-economic mobility between generations, spatial assimilation is a slow process.

The second part of the analysis found no indication of parental economic situation impacting on the neighbourhood outcome of the home-leaver. In contrast, the share of ethnic minorities living in the neighbourhood of the parental home had a clear and major impact: the higher the share of ethnic minorities in the parental neighbourhood, the higher the hazard for moving into an ethnic neighbourhood and the lower the hazard for moving into a non-ethnic neighbourhood. Interestingly, this effect existed for ethnic minorities and Danes alike. Bolt & van Kempen (2010) argue that proponents of spatial assimilation theory: *“assume that the effect of socio-economic status will be comparable among ethnic minorities and indigenous groups alike”* (pp. 218-219). This seems indeed to be the case for home-leavers on the Danish housing market, thus supporting the notion of spatial assimilation as opposed to place stratification theory. However, whether the explanation for these similar patterns is the same cannot be identified in analyses of register data. Qualitative studies would be able to add insights into the individual reasons of the home-leavers for moving to an ethnic or a non-ethnic neighbourhood. In any case, the similarity in the patterns warns us against presuming that parental acculturation is the (only) cause of ethnic settlement patterns of home-leavers.

The share of ethnic minorities in the parental neighbourhood affected Turkish immigrants more than it did Turkish descendants. This could indicate that home-leaving descendants are more spatially assimilated than home-leaving immigrants i.e. support

for the notion of straight-line assimilation. The share of ethnic minorities in the parental neighbourhood also affected Turkish immigrants more than Somali immigrants. Accordingly, there is no indication that the spatial assimilation model is less relevant for the more stigmatized group, the Somalis, compared to the less stigmatized group, the Turks. On the contrary. Overall, however, the ethnic differences were minor, meaning that the segmented assimilation perspective did not seem to be of relevance to the home-leaving patterns of the groups under study here.

Returning to the fears of spatial segregation touched upon in the introduction, the analyses could on one hand be seen to support this fear, as the home-leavers were indeed affected by the parental level of spatial segregation. On the other hand there were signs of spatial assimilation and straight-line assimilation taking place as well as of very similar patterns for the three ethnic groups and for Danes. Further studies on the continued progress of the ethnic housing careers are needed to establish whether or not the higher hazard for starting in an ethnic neighbourhood leads to careers conducted only in ethnic neighbourhoods. With respect to home-leaving patterns specifically, however, the results presented in the paper provides the basis for a less pessimistic view on spatial segregation patterns in a Danish context: while perhaps a slow process, spatial assimilation is taking place.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Financial support from NORFACE research programme on Migration in Europe – Social, Economic, Cultural and Policy Dynamics is acknowledged.

## REFERENCES

**Abramsson, M., Borgegård, L.-E. & Fransson, U. (2002)**

*“Housing careers: Immigrants in Local Swedish Housing Markets”*. *Housing studies*, 17:3, 445-464.

**Alba, R. & Nee, V. (1997)**

*“Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration”*. *International Migration Review*, 31:4, 826-874.

**Allison, P.D. (2010)**

*Survival Analysis Using SAS. A Practical Guide*. Cary: SAS Institute.

**Bolt, G. & van Kempen, R. (2002)**

*“Moving Up or Moving Down? Housing Careers of Turks and Moroccans in Utrecht, the Netherlands”*, *Housing Studies*: 17:3, 401-422.

**Bolt, G & van Kempen, R. (2003)**

*"Escaping poverty neighbourhoods in the Netherlands", Housing, Theory and Society, 20:4, 209-222*

**Bolt, G., van Kempen, R. & M. van Ham (2008)**

*"Minority Ethnic Groups in the Dutch Housing Market: Spatial Segregation, Relocation Dynamics and Housing Policy", Urban Studies, 45, 1359-1384.*

**Bolt, G. & van Kempen, R. (2010)**

*"Ethnic segregation and residential mobility: Relocations of minority ethnic groups in the Netherlands", Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 36:2, 333-354.*

**Bolt, G., Özüekren, A.S. & Phillips, D. (2010)**

*"Linking integration and residential segregation", Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 36:2, 169-186.*

**Børresen, S.K. (2006)**

*Etniske minoriteters bosætning. Hvad viser forskningen? Hørsholm: Statens Byggeforskningsinstitut.*

**Damm, A.P., Schultz-Nielsen, M.L. & Tranæs, T. (2006)**

*En befolkning deler sig op? Copenhagen: Gyldendal.*

**Elder, G.H. Jr. (1975)**

*"Age Differentiation and the Life Course". Annual Review of Sociology, 1, 165-190.*

**Gordon, M. (1964)**

*Assimilation in American Life. New York: Oxford University Press.*

**Kleist, N. (2007)**

*Spaces of recognition: an analysis of Somali-Danish engagement and diasporic mobilization. PhD thesis, Institute of Sociology, University of Copenhagen.*

**Magnusson, L. & Özüekren, A.S. (2002)**

*"The Housing Careers of Turkish Households in Middle-sized Swedish Municipalities", Housing Studies, 17:3, 465-486.*

**Magnusson Turner, L. & Hedman, L. (2014)**

*"Linking Integration and Housing Career: A Longitudinal Analysis of Immigrant Groups in Sweden", Housing Studies, 29:2, 270-290.*

**Massey, D.S. & Mullan, B.P. (1984)**

*"Processes of Hispanic and Black Spatial Assimilation". The American Journal of Sociology, 89:4, 836-873.*

**Massey, D.S. (1985)**

*"Ethnic residential segregation: a theoretical synthesis and empirical review", Sociology and Social Research, 69, 315–350.*

**Mitchell, B.A. (2000)**

*Integrating Conceptual, Theoretical and Methodological Developments in Home-leaving Research. Rostock: Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research.*

**Mulder, C.H. & Hooimeijer, P. (1999)**

*"Residential relocations in the life course". In: L. J. G. Wissen & P.A. Dykstra (eds) 1999: Population Issues. An interdisciplinary focus. New York: Springer: 159-186.*

**Mulder, C.H., Clark, W.A.V. & Wagner, M. (2002)**

*"A comparative analysis of leaving home in the United States, the Netherlands and West Germany", Demographic Research, 7, 565-592.*

**Musterd, S. & De Vos, S. (2007)**

*"Residential Dynamics in Ethnic Concentrations", Housing Studies, 22:3, 333-353*

**Pickles, A.R. & Davies, R.B. (1991)**

*"The empirical analysis of housing careers: a review and a general statistical modelling framework". Environment and Planning A, 23:4, 465–484.*

**Portes, A. & Bach, R.L. (1985)**

*Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.*

**Regeringen (2004)**

*Regeringens strategi mod ghettoisering. Copenhagen: Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration.*

**Regeringen (2010)**

*Ghettoen tilbage til samfundet et opgør med parallelsamfund i Danmark. Copenhagen: Socialministeriet.*

**Ryder, N.B. (1965)**

*"The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change", American Sociological Review, 30:6, 843-861.*

**Schaake, K., Burgers, J. & Mulder, C.H. (2014)**

*"Ethnicity, Education and Income, and Residential Mobility Between Neighbourhoods", Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 40:4, 512-527*



**Skifter Andersen, H. (2006)**

*Bo sammen eller spredt? Etniske minoriteters boligønsker og motiver for bosætning. SBI 2006:17. Hørsholm: Danish Building Research Institute.*

**Skifter Andersen, H. (2010)**

*"Spatial Assimilation in Denmark. Why Do Immigrants Move to and from Multi-ethnic Neighbourhoods?". Housing Studies, 25:3, 281-300.*

**Skovgaard Nielsen, R. Forthcoming**

*"Ethnic differences in home-leaving: A comparison of Turks, Somalis and Danes".*

**Wingens, M., Windzio, M., de Valk, H. & Aybek C. (2011):**

*"The Sociological Life Course Approach and Research on Migration and Integration". In: Wingens, M., Windzio, M., de Valk, H. & Aybek C. (eds.): A life-Course Perspective on Migration and Integration. Springer.*

**Zorlu, A. & Mulder, C.H. (2007)**

*"Initial and Subsequent Location Choices of immigrants to the Netherlands". IZA Discussion Paper Series, IZA DP No. 3036.*

**Zorlu, A. & Mulder, C.H. (2011)**

*"Ethnic Differences in Leaving Home: Timing and Pathways". Demography, 48, 49-72.*

**Özüekren, A.S. & van Kempen, R. (2002)**

*"Housing Careers of Minority Ethnic Groups: Experiences, Explanations and Prospects". Housing Studies, 17:3, 365-379.*

**Özüekren, A.S. & van Kempen, R. (2003)**

*"Special issue editors' introduction: dynamics and diversity: housing careers and segregation of minority ethnic groups". Housing, Theory and Society, 20:4, 162-171.*



## **PAPER III**



# CHANGE IN THE HOUSING CAREERS OF TURKS AND SOMALIS: MAKING CHOICES OR TAKING OPTIONS?

**Rikke Skovgaard Nielsen**

Danish Building Research Institute, Aalborg University, [rsn@sbi.aau.dk](mailto:rsn@sbi.aau.dk)

**Abstract** This paper focuses on the link between preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints in the housing careers of Turkish migrant workers and Somali refugees in Denmark. In a Danish context, these two groups differ greatly with respect to migration background, situation at and time of arrival, socio-economic resources and family characteristics. It is thus interesting whether these differences lead to different possibilities and restraints in the housing market. An in-depth analysis was conducted of 28 interviews, and the principles of life course analysis were applied as an analytical tool. Compared with previous research, insecurity, instability, poor housing conditions and limited progress were less evident. Most of the interviewees made their housing career within the public housing sector which seemed to offer good housing options as well as possibilities for influencing one's housing situation. Making choices and thus realising preferences was to a large degree possible even for the unemployed and those in temporary housing situations. The study highlights the relational nature of preferences and the necessity of studying preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints in relation to each other.

**Keywords:** choice, constraints, life course analysis, housing careers, Turks, Somalis,

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** I am grateful to Anders Høst, Emma Holmqvist, Susanne Søholt and Hans Skifter Andersen for comments on previous versions of this paper.

## INTRODUCTION

For most people, acquiring suitable housing is a process of change where mobility is the means for acquiring something better suited to the household's needs and preferences within the available resources (Murdie 2002; Bolt & van Kempen 2002). Thus, change makes improvement possible (Magnusson & Özüekren 2002; Clark & Huang 2003). Consequently, it is in a situation of change that choices may be better or worse for the individual and where the individual may feel more or less restricted in his/her choices. The extent to which the individual has choices to make and can act according to own preferences is fundamental for the individual's own perception of his/her situation. Thus, understanding housing change is essential.

The focus of this paper is the driving forces for change: do Turks and Somalis have choices to make or do they simply have to take the options available in order to achieve change? The purpose is to show 1) how change comes about in the intersection between preferences, resources possibilities and restraints, and 2) how the housing preferences of actors are shaped by resources, possibilities and restraints. The paper employs life course analysis for analysing housing careers. Life course analysis is a highly suitable tool for such an analysis: it focuses on the systematic patterns of life courses with an aim to understand how agency is performed within societal structures, offering an underexploited potential for migration research (Wingens et al. 2011).

The paper focuses on the subjective perception of the interviewees. Both internationally and in a Danish context, numerous studies identify the housing situation of ethnic minorities as disadvantaged (Bolt & van Kempen 2002; Özüekren & van Kempen 2002; Abramsson et al. 2002; Skifter Andersen 2010; Damm et al. 2006). However, what is deemed a disadvantaged position from the outside might not necessarily be perceived so when seen from the inside. Thus, it is imperative to study how immigrants themselves perceive their situation and their possibilities for shaping their own housing career.

Turkish migrant workers including their descendants and Somalis refugees are in focus in the study. These two groups have been chosen as Turks is the largest immigrant and descendant group in Denmark and as Somalis is a large refugee group, and at the same time highly stigmatised in Denmark (Kleist 2007). The two groups both originate from Muslim countries. The groups differ in that they have different starting points for their housing career in Denmark: they came at different times, originated from different countries and cultures, migrated for different reasons and were subject to different legislation when they arrived (Gram-Hanssen & Bech-Danielsen 2012). Furthermore, the two groups are in differing socio-economic situations in Denmark. And finally, their cultural background differs. Consequently, their cultural interpretations of Islam might differ. The comparison thus enables an analysis of the possibilities in the housing market for groups in different situations and of the similarities despite the differences.

The two migrant groups are studied in the context of the Copenhagen metropolitan region<sup>1</sup> of Denmark, thus expanding the knowledge of the specific local context. Furthermore, the study can lead to a broader understanding of the different kinds of experience of the same ethnic groups living in different countries. In Denmark, the public housing sector<sup>2</sup> is of great importance, offering alternatives to owner-occupation

- 
1. *The metropolitan housing market is here defined loosely as the Copenhagen area.*
  2. *When translated The Danish 'Almen bolig sektor' is sometimes called public housing and sometimes social housing. As it is accessible to all, it will be called public housing here. However, it is also the sector which is thought to secure housing for disadvantaged groups.*

and private rental. Thus, the Danish context offers an interesting case for studying how structural opportunities influence the preferences of actors in the housing market.

The paper aims to shed light on some of the key questions in the existing literature on housing careers of ethnic minorities. First and foremost, it adds to the discussion of the importance of constraints versus choice in the housing careers of minorities (Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). Secondly, the study provides input for the discussion on the disadvantagedness of ethnic minority housing careers (*ibid.*). Additionally, the analyses offer explanations for the proportionally high share of ethnic minorities in rental housing which persists, when controlled for key factors such as income, family composition and education (Kauppinen et al. Forthcoming). Finally, the paper discusses the extent to which discrimination influences the housing careers of immigrants (Søholt & Astrup 2009).

## CONTEXT

The local context of Copenhagen includes the general context of Denmark and the Danish housing market as well the specific context of Copenhagen. Like in many other capital housing markets, the housing market of the Copenhagen metropolitan region is tight and not particularly favourable to immigrants due to high price levels, long waiting lists and the importance of networks.

In Denmark as elsewhere, owner-occupied housing has been subject to rising prices, peaking in 2006 (Skifter Andersen 2010). Subsequently, prices have fallen somewhat but at the same time it has become more difficult to obtain a loan. The Danish tax level makes saving up for a house an unfeasible strategy for buying. Thus, being approved for a mortgage credit is a necessity. Apart from a 30% capital costs deduction, policy measures aimed at augmenting owner-occupation are limited. Co-ops used to be inexpensive as the price level was linked to the value of comparable rented property, which was kept low by rent control. Co-ops were primarily sold to friends and family as they were so attractive. Changes in regulation have led to parts of the co-ops now being priced at market value and sold through real-estate agents thus making the access to co-ops less based on social networks but much more expensive.

Private rental housing built before 1991 is subject to rent control, leading to prices below market value and a high demand. New rental housing is expensive. For both, no general allocation rules exist. This makes social networks important. Some landlords are reluctant to let their units to immigrants and as demand is high, landlords can afford to be selective (Skifter Andersen & Skak 2008). Public housing is owned by private non-profit housing organisations and accessible to everyone. Rent is subject to strict regulation. As the rent is calculated based on the expenses of each individual estate, it varies between estates depending on the costs at the time of building and with no connection with the quality of the dwelling and the location. Thus, some

estates are much more coveted than others resulting in long waiting lists of more than 20 years<sup>3</sup>. A study from 2004 showed that the average waiting time in the Copenhagen Region was about 18 months; for larger dwellings about twice as long (Fridberg and Lausten 2004). Internal waiting lists are given preference, thus making it possible to make a housing career within a housing association. The municipality has the right of disposition of 25% of the vacant public housing units. However, these dwellings are only given under very specific conditions to people of limited financial and social resources who have exhausted other options and are in an immediate need that is not self-inflicted. Within recent years, a political wish to change the social composition of socio-economically deprived areas has led to new allocation rules giving priority to people in employment or education to the targeted areas (flexible allocation) and permitting the rejection of applications from unemployed individuals and couples (combined allocation). This affects immigrants disproportionately as they are overrepresented in areas with flexible allocation and as a higher share of them is unemployed (Skifter Andersen 2004). The new allocation systems have reduced the proportion of dwellings allocated by the general waiting list.

Housing policies in Denmark aim to secure good housing at affordable prices with the aid of housing allowances. Housing allowances are needs-based, tax-free and given only to residents within the private rental and public housing sectors. The size of the allowance depends on the size of the flat, the rent level, the number of children and adults in the household as well as the income and assets of all household members. As an example, the highest level of allowance for people who are not disabled or pensioners is currently approx. EUR 450 monthly for a family of two adults and two children with a minimum self-payment of just below EUR 260.

## SOMALIS AND TURKS IN A DANISH CONTEXT

Currently, non-Western immigrants and descendants constitute 5% and 2% respectively of the population of Denmark. Turks are by far the largest group with just over 60,000 of Turkish origin living in Denmark. Approx. 36,000 of these live in the Copenhagen region; 47% of which are descendants. The early Turkish migrants came as guest workers during the labour shortage of the late 1960s and early 1970s, followed by reunified family members. Some Turkish Kurds came as refugees. Family reunification still takes place with descendants marrying native Turks residing in Turkey. Almost 18,000 individuals of Somali origin live in Denmark. Approx. 6,500 live in Copenhagen, of which 41% are descendants. Few Somali descendants are of

- 
3. *While the oldest public estates in Copenhagen are from the early part of the 20th century, a large part of the stock was built during the 1950s and 1960s. The stock is of a relatively high standard as the older estates have been and still are subject to renovation. Deprived public housing areas in a Danish context thus primarily relates to the social composition of the residents in the areas and not the physical conditions.*



adult age yet. Some Somalis came as guest workers, but the majority came as refugees during the 1990s following the civil war in Somalia. Subsequently, this also led to family reunification. The return perspectives of Somalis and Turks are likely to differ as one group came voluntarily, while war forced the other migrate. Turks have been in Denmark longer and have not been hindered by war in returning. The current socio-economic situations of the two groups differ: the employment rate of Turks is markedly higher than that of Somalis<sup>4</sup>, while divorces and single-provider families are much more common amongst Somalis (Statistics Denmark 2010).

The tenure distribution in Table 1 shows big differences between Somalis, Turks and all residents in Copenhagen. 75% of Somalis and 68% of Turks live in public housing, while only 25% of all Copenhageners do so. The latter on the other hand are much more frequently found in owner-occupied housing and co-ops. Comparing Turks and Somalis, Turks are more often found in owner-occupation while Somalis are found in private rental. More than 90% of Somalis live in some form of rental housing.

*Table 1: Tenure distribution in Copenhagen, 2008, %*

| Housing tenure         | Somalis | Turks | All |
|------------------------|---------|-------|-----|
| Owner-occupied housing | 1       | 19    | 42  |
| Co-operative           | 2       | 5     | 16  |
| Private rental         | 17      | 7     | 16  |
| Public housing         | 75      | 68    | 25  |
| Other                  | 4       | 1     | 1   |

*Figures cover all immigrants and descendants of Somali/Turkish origin, aged 16 and above. Source: database based on data from Danish registers.*

## PREFERENCES, RESOURCES, POSSIBILITIES AND RESTRAINTS

A housing career is defined by Pickles and Davies as “the sequence of dwellings that a household occupies during its history” (Pickles & Davies 1991). It is through making a housing career that it is possible for the household to improve its housing situation and to adjust its housing situation to the changing needs of the household (Magnusson & Özüekren 2002; Abramsson 2008). The concept does not presuppose that all moves are upwards and constitute an improvement; downwards and sideways moves also take place (Murdie 2002; Clark & Huang 2003).

Preferences are based on the goals that individuals or households have in life more generally; transformed into actual and more specific preferences (Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). Preferences are closely linked to housing needs as needs are

---

4. In 2009, the employment frequency of Somalis was 39% while it was 57% for Turks.

subjectively defined. Major determinants for housing needs are household characteristics, societal housing norms and the perceived needs of a household of a given size (i.e. number of rooms) (Murdie 2002; Bolt & van Kempen 2002). In the case of housing, preferences relate both to the housing unit and to the housing area. Differences in preferences of ethnic groups arise through differences in factors such as a wish for return-migration, housing situation of country of origin, perception of housing sectors, preference for living with co-ethnics and preference hierarchies (Bolt & van Kempen 2003, Abramsson et al. 2002, Dhalmann 2013).

Resources, possibilities and restraints of the household in relation to housing form a choice set which determines whether preferences and needs can be met (Abramsson 2008; Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). On an individual level, it relates to the cognitive, financial and social resources of the household (Skifter Andersen 2010; Özüekren & van Kempen 2003). Financial resources determine the strength of the household in the housing market and the choices available. Knowledge of the housing market is a key resource as the possibility for attaining a housing unit within a given sector requires knowledge of how to do so. Education can lead to a better understanding of how the housing market works (Özüekren & van Kempen 2003). Social resources in terms of networks can create housing opportunities and offer further knowledge, thus supporting the housing search (Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). However, through the social ties within local housing areas, networks may also potentially bind the household to specific areas and thus the opportunities within them (Dhalmann 2013). On a structural level, possibilities and restraints relate to the situation on the housing market, the financial situation, the availability of housing (supply), the amount of competition in a given housing sector (demand), access rules of the different sectors, changes in the welfare system and legislation in relation to housing to name some of the most important aspects (Murdie 2002). Furthermore, discrimination can play a major role. Within all the different housing sectors, key gatekeepers function as a restraint in the housing careers of minorities if they exert discriminatory practices (Dhalmann 2013, Skifter Andersen 2010). Mixing policies aiming to lower the share of minorities in given areas limit the choices of ethnic minority groups as well (Özüekren & van Kempen 2003).

Some studies analyse housing situations and housing careers through a constraint-oriented approach, others through a choice-oriented approach primarily (Magnusson & Özüekren 2002; Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). The former approach is based on the notion of housing being a scarce resource making the resources of the household the determining factor in relation to housing attainment. The latter emphasises how the decision to move is based on the preferences of the household, thus making choice the determining factor. This study aims to include both sides to the extent that the interviews make it relevant. As securing good housing at affordable prices is part of the Nordic welfare state model, the constraint-oriented approach should not be able to stand alone as the welfare state compensates the financially weak households thus giving them greater choices.

## THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

Empirically, the paper is based on 28 in-depth interviews. The interviewees were recruited through as many channels as possible including networks, associations, projects for unemployed migrant women and job centres. Snowballing was used to some extent but limited to finding two or three interviewees through the same source in order to prevent that interviewees were all from within the same networks; a risk one runs with snow-balling (Small 2008). The interviews were conducted based on a semi-structured interview guide focusing on the housing careers of the interviewees, their perception of their housing options and of the housing market in general. The interviews were conducted primarily in Danish but supplemented with English, when necessary and possible. In one case, a friend of the interviewee functioned as an interpreter.

The interviews were conducted by researchers belonging to the majority. Some researchers claim that being an outsider the researcher will produce less accurate research (Shah 2004). However, as Tinker & Armstrong (2008) writes, ethnic belonging is only one of many characteristics of both researcher and research subjects thus making them both insiders and outsiders to each other. Furthermore, there can be advantages of the researcher having an outsider-status: less fear of judgement when touching on sensitive issues; more detailed responses necessitated by the researcher's lack of cultural knowledge; and the possibility of the interviewee to be the expert thus adjusting the power relation of the interview situation.

Small (2008) employs Yin's work on case-studies on in-depth qualitative interviewing in order to highlight the distinctive logic of qualitative work and to avoid a misguided quest for representativeness. Small suggests understanding in-depth interview studies as multiple-case studies as opposed to small-sample studies. Each interview represents a single case that can be explored in-depth and according to the specificity of that case. This logic is suitable when trying to answer how and why questions. By this logic, it becomes crucial to cover a diversity of experiences in an in-depth study as the study at hand does. The interviewees' diverse situations led to a greater variance of experience as a basis for answering the research questions. The recruitment process in the study focused on achieving such diversity.

## THE INTERVIEWEES

A total of 15 Turks and 13 Somalis residing within the Copenhagen capital housing market were interviewed. Of the Turks, three were descendants. Of the Somalis, two came during childhood and have thus grown up in Denmark. The Turks all came as

migrant workers or as the result of family reunification<sup>5</sup> with a migrant worker while all the Somalis came as refugees or as a result of family reunification with a refugee. One interviewee had been in Denmark for three years, the rest at least ten years and several more than 20 years. This was the case for both Somalis and Turks.

The interviewees constitute a diverse group and the data material thus covers a wide range of life situations as table 2 shows<sup>6</sup>. Some of the interviewees were at a later stage of their housing career, making the interviews primarily retrospective, while others are in the early stages of their career, thus primarily focusing on their expectations for their future career. The diversity facilitated greatly varying answers as to how change was experienced by the Somalis and Turks making a housing career in the Copenhagen housing market and to look for similarities despite differences both within and between the two groups.

Table 2: Characteristics of interviewees

| Family situation  | Turks |        | Somalis |        |
|---|-------|--------|---------|--------|
|   | Male  | Female | Male    | Female |
| Single, no children, living in parental home                          | 1     | 1      | -       | -      |
| Single, no children, living with peers                                | -     | -      | -       | 2      |
| Married, no children, living with spouse                              | 1     | -      | -       | -      |
| Married, children, living with spouse                                 | 3     | 4      | 2       | 3      |
| Married, children, living with spouse and with parents/parents-in-law | 1     | -      | -       | -      |
| Married, children, living with children but without spouse            | -     | -      | -       | 1      |
| Married, children, but living without spouse or children              | -     | -      | 3       | -      |
| Married, children, living with spouse, children have left home        | 1     | -      | -       | -      |
| Divorced, living with children  | -     | 2      | -       | 2      |
| Widowed, living with children   | -     | 1      | -       | -      |
| <b>Age group</b>  |       |        |         |        |
| Aged 19-34  | 2     | 2      | -       | 2      |
| Aged 35-50  | 2     | 3      | 4       | 6      |
| Aged 51-  | 3     | 3      | 1       | -      |
| <b>Employment</b>   |       |        |         |        |
| In employment   | 5     | 2      | 3       | 3      |
| Studying  | -     | 1      | -       | 3      |
| Unemployed  | 1     | 5      | 2       | 2      |
| Pensioner   | 1     | -      | -       | -      |
| <b>Housing type and tenure</b>  |       |        |         |        |
| Owner-occupied house  | -     | -      | -       | 1      |
| Owner-occupied flat   | 3     | 2      | -       | -      |
| Co-operative flat   | 2     | 1      | -       | -      |
| Private rental flat   | -     | -      | -       | -      |
| Public housing flat   | 2     | 5      | 3       | 4      |
| Room in flat  | -     | -      | 1       | 2      |
| Others (Open prison and women's home)                                 | -     | -      | 1       | 1      |

5. Turkish refugees were not included in the study.
6. Some of the Somalis had been placed outside Copenhagen initially and had later relocated to the capital region. Such relocation could be considered an outcome of strong motivation which in turn could affect their housing preferences and choice sets. However, relocation has been common for the group in general and is thus a key characteristic of Somalis as a group.

Of the 28 interviewees, 13 lived with their spouse and one or more of their children. Two Somali women were divorced and lived with their children on their own. Three Somalis had been married before current marriage. Two have children from previous marriage. Three Somali men were married but lived without their wives and children. For one of them, it was temporary while he searched for suitable housing in Copenhagen. For the other two, their wives and children had moved to England and the separated household was a more permanent situation. One Somali woman's husband lived in Sweden. Of the Turkish interviewees, two women were divorced and lived alone with their children. Only one interviewee, a Turkish man, lived in an extended household. This was only temporary while he was establishing himself in Denmark as he had migrated only three years previously. Two of the young Turkish descendants lived at home. One of them was engaged and got married a few months later; afterwards moving together with spouse. The young Somalis had both left home and lived with peers.

Seven of the Turks and six of the Somalis were in employment. One Turkish descendant was studying, while three of the Somalis did so. They were all working concurrently with their studies. Six Turks and four Somalis were unemployed. One Turk was retired.

Of the Somali interviewees, only one lived in owner-occupied housing and none in co-operatives. In contrast, five of the Turkish interviewees lived in owner-occupation and three in co-operatives. This mirrors the general situation of the two groups in Denmark. The vast majority of the housing units that had been part of the housing careers of the interviewed Somalis were public housing. This goes for half of the Turks as well. Five of the Somali interviewees were in temporary housing situations, but for very different reasons. Two students rented a room on a temporary contract, as many other students in Copenhagen. The other three were on waiting lists for public housing. Three of the Somali men had previously experienced being homeless.

## **LIFE COURSE ANALYSIS OF TURKISH AND SOMALI HOUSING CAREERS**

The corner stones in life course analysis are structure, agency and time. The aim is to bridge the gap between micro- and macro/meso-level analysis by focusing on the dynamic relations over time between societal structures and individual agency. Life courses are not presumed to be uniformly shaped in a fixed pattern of life phase following each other in a systematic way (Wingens et al. 2011). However, systematic patterns of life events and life phases do emerge when looking across individual life courses and these are the focus of life course analysis. An aim of life course analysis is to understand how the individual unfolds his agency within a given societal structure and historical context (Elder et al. 2003). As age sets both real and normative limitations for events in life, the systematic patterns are linked with age but not determined by it (Elder 1975). The life course of immigrants is distinctive in that it is dramatically changed by migration where a substantial social change takes place.

Life course analysis has yet to be developed into an integrated and coherent theoretical framework (Elder et al. 2003). However, Wingens et al. (2011) usefully identify the six life course principles most frequently used for guiding empirical analysis: historical time and place, situational imperatives, linked lives, agency, life stage and accentuation. The principles are usually not all applied simultaneously, and others can be identified as well. Five of the principles identified by Wingens et al. are applied here<sup>7</sup>, along with an additional principle of linked careers.

*The principle of linked careers*, that I have found relevant to add, highlights how the individuals' situation in one career influences preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints in other careers. Especially family and work careers provide motives for moving, thus triggering change and determining the options available within the housing career (Clark & Huang 2003; Magnusson Turner & Hedman 2014; Özüekren & van Kempen 2002). Moreover, housing situations are linked over time in a manner similar to path dependency (Wingens et al. 2011): Previous housing situations influence the ensuing options available to the individual and thus the change between situations. *The principle of linked lives* refers to the linked nature of the lives of individuals: lives are embedded in networks of social relations which means that changes in the life course of an individual affects the lives of others. *The principle of historical time and place* states that to understand the life course and its different careers, one has to consider the context in which it takes place (Elder 1975). *The principle of situational imperatives* refers to the impact of new situations: changed social settings impose new demands on the individuals' behaviour. The possibility for known role-related behaviour becomes limited. Migration constitutes such a major social change and thus affects possibilities for role-related behaviour including in the housing market. *The principle of agency* underscores how an individual shapes his/her life course through actions and choices within the possibilities and restraints that he/she faces. Thus, while one may be restricted as regards housing choices, most individuals do have some choices available to them, as highlighted by Peach in his influential study of the housing choices of South Asian and Caribbean ethnic minorities in Britain (Peach 1998). Finally, *the principle of accentuation* states that social change can accentuate the resources and dispositions that individuals have acquired during their life course. The social change of migration can lead to stronger adherence to cultural norms.

## THE LINKED NATURE OF CAREERS AND LIVES

During the early part of adulthood, many young adults are studying and thus need to live close to educational centres. Often, family formation has not taken place yet,

---

7. *The life-stage principle, which states that the effects of social change depend on the life-stage at which it is experienced, is not applied here. While the life stage at migration is undoubtedly crucial for how it is experienced, it was not touched upon in the interviews and is thus not employed as a guiding principle here.*

meaning that the need for stability is less. For the three young Turkish descendant interviewees, leaving home was for religious reasons closely connected with marriage and the housing options of young single adults were thus irrelevant. In comparison, the young Somali interviewees had both left home prior to marriage. The older interviewees mirrored this: Turks preferred their children to stay at home until marriage, while Somalis did not express this preference. Their cultural interpretation of Islam differed in this respect. Through the linked nature of lives, cultural interpretations at group level influence individuals' actions and are reproduced through them. The two young Somalis had experienced a lot of change in housing during their young adult lives, having moved around on temporary contracts. They perceived this to be the general condition of students in Copenhagen and both felt they had been lucky regarding the options they had had thus far. They perceived the lack of stability as flexibility and mobility, e.g. offering the option of travelling without being tied to a place.

Family formation leads to less flexibility and a greater need for stability. The interviewees preferred to stay in the proximity of their children's school and friends. Some ended up rather coincidentally in a specific neighbourhood in the early part of their housing career and now saw themselves as tied to the neighbourhood until their children left school. By definition, this limits the choices available to the household and thus the options for change. Similarly, the growth and the size of the family influence housing needs in terms of size of dwelling. Many Somali and Turkish families are large, and large public housing flats are sought-after and hard to get. A Somali man living with his wife in a four room flat with six children said: *"It is not the flat that is small, [it is] the family that is too big"*. Needs are not constant within life phases, among other things because children grow older. For the interviewees in public housing, this translated into a wish for a larger flat, as their oldest child wanted his own room. Here timing became crucial and could constitute a problem: you might not get a larger dwelling before your oldest child decided to leave home, due to long waiting lists. This is one respect in which conducting a housing career within the public housing sector can limit your options.

Another way in which the family career provides motives for change in the housing career is the break-up of households. An immediate need for housing arises. A Turkish single mother of two said: *"My dad said to me, Mjølnerparken [a public housing area] is not so good, why do you want to move there? I said, I don't care; I just have to get out [from the flat she shared with her then husband]"*. The break-up of households led to acute housing needs and changed financial situations which in turn affected housing options. Especially within the Somali group of interviewees, broken households were common. For the male Somali interviewees, broken households were related to social or addictive problems which in turn had led to homelessness. All three had been offered new housing by the municipality, initially in temporary housing and later in public housing.



In later life stages, housing needs change again as children leave home. For some of the interviewees, this translated into a wish to move to smaller units with more manageable rent levels. Such a change should be easily achievable within the public housing sector due to the demand for bigger housing units and the possibility of using the internal waiting lists. The interviewees living in owner-occupation did not expect to move again unless it became necessary due to job changes or loss of mobility in old age. As such, owner-occupation led to more permanent settlement.

Employment situation and financial means were decisive for the housing options of the interviewees. The students had to work concurrently with their studies in order to meet the costs of living in Copenhagen. However, financial situation have less extensive impact in Denmark than in less universal and generous welfare states. Housing allowances aided the unemployed and single parents in managing housing costs, making rent levels affordable. An employed Somali single mother of four, living in a four-room public housing flat explains: *“If I didn’t have the housing allowance, I wouldn’t have been able to live like this”*. For one of the unemployed interviewees, a cut in welfare benefits had led to problems with paying rent despite the housing allowance. Apart from the financial aspects, the Danish allocation rules in public housing gives further importance to employment. The options in the housing market are better if you are employed, thus leading to a greater possibility of realising preferences. An unemployed, single, Somali mother explained: *“If I work, I quickly get a flat, I am independent, I can pay myself. But we, who do not work, we always hold the municipality’s hand”*.

Knowledge is crucial for understanding one’s options for change in the housing market. Interviewees explain how a lack of knowledge made it difficult to navigate in the Danish housing market initially. For the Somali home-owner, research on Imams’ perception of paying interest was decisive for the decision to move to home-ownership. The networks of the interviewees had provided needed knowledge by explaining options and rights in the housing market. A Turkish man said: *“I contacted my supervisor[caseworker?]. He found a flat for us. Plus. Our own doctor. She helped a lot as well. (...) She has written lots of letters to different places [for us]. I also have a good network”*. Furthermore, networks can aid financially by providing loans for buying, which one of the Turkish descendants were expecting to rely on for buying a bigger co-op flat in the future.

Another manner in which lives are linked relate to preferences for living close to friends, relatives and/or co-ethnics in general. Several of the interviewees had been recommended specific housing areas by their network when choosing which areas to be on waiting list for or had chosen areas where friends and/or relatives lived. Preferences for living with co-ethnics were present in many of the interviews. One interviewee, a Turkish descendant, expressed a strong preference for living with co-ethnics. He said:



*“Personally, I usually find that they [immigrants] are better neighbours. The reason is that you help each other a lot more, and that you have a social communal spirit. You can talk better with them, and they understand you better. They are easier to talk with”.*

Other interviewees expressed similar preferences for living with co-ethnics, some saying that it made them feel safe. However, the majority had a concurrent wish for living with Danes. Reasons mentioned for this was that Danes knew the rules better, that it made it easier to learn Danish and to avoid the nosiness and gossip of ethnic neighbourhoods. Some said that they themselves preferred to live with co-ethnics but wanted to live with Danes for the sake of their children as they feared ethnic concentration would cause low school quality and a greater risk of their children getting into troubles. Thus, the majority of the interviewees expressed a wish for living in mixed neighbourhoods. There were no apparent differences between Somalis and Turks in this respect.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT AND SOCIAL SETTINGS: SHAPING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR CHANGE

The context on arriving in Denmark is imperative. This was different for Somalis and Turks. As the early Turkish migrants came years before the Somalis, the general conditions were worse and there were many more dwellings without central heating and bathroom. Some of the Turkish interviewees thus lived in poor housing conditions in the early part of their housing career and had limited choices. They had to take the options available. A Turkish woman said: *“We just took what came along first”*. They lived in youth housing initially where children were not allowed. They had thus had to fly their new-born son to Turkey and leave him there until they got a new dwelling when he was a year old. A driving force in the early career of the Turks was thus to acquire suitable housing in a reasonable condition. Many of the Somalis started their Danish housing career in temporary housing e.g. asylum centres or hotels, followed by placement in various parts of Denmark. Thus a reason for a change in their careers was a move to the capital region. When relocating, you are in general not assisted by the municipality in finding suitable housing.

A vital part of the housing-related context is made up of housing policies, the housing market structure, and supply and demand. A Turkish woman said: *“Co-ops were cheaper back then [when they bought their co-op 11 years ago]. Afterwards [it is expensive]. Prices are rising”*. Furthermore, the interviewees explained that the central and sought-after public housing areas have long waiting lists of up to 20 years and the rent levels of Copenhagen are high. Options in the public housing sector were perceived to be better in other parts of Denmark and on the outskirts of Copenhagen where units were accessible within a shorter time frame (as little as three to six months according to one interviewee).

The organisation of the public housing sector constitutes an essential part of the housing context, as the majority, especially of Somalis, conduct their housing career within this sector. The interviewees highlighted that, in order to achieve desired change within public housing, you had to be ready to move when a housing offer was made. A married Somali woman with three children said: *“We waited five years. It takes time you see to get this new flat. We have been saving money so that we can move [when offered a bigger public housing flat]”*. The introduction of flexible allocation rules had made it easier for some and more difficult for others to progress in the housing market. The rent levels of public housing were perceived by some interviewees to be high but not to the extent that it hindered conducting a housing career within the public housing sector. The deposit for public housing and the costs of refurbishment on moving out were mentioned by some interviewees as too high and hard to manage.

The extent to which discrimination limits the choices available is yet another key aspect of the context which immigrants and descendants are navigating in. A Turkish interviewee talking about the early part of his housing career said: *“It was like this back in the 1970s, that there weren’t any Danes who were willing to let a flat to us [in private renting]. The distance was too big”*. Discrimination in the housing market was thus present when the migrant workers came. One Somali woman had a more recent experience of discrimination; having been evicted from her flat due to complaints from a neighbour whom according to the interviewee didn’t like foreigners. However, she had never felt discriminated against by the system: *“The neighbour she removed me, that’s okay. But not the municipality or the caseworker. They help you”*. No other stories of discrimination in the housing market were relayed in the interviews, despite specifically asking about such experiences. The interviewees did not explain the absence of private rental units in their housing careers by discrimination. Rather, as public housing had been the rental sector in focus, private rental became irrelevant. Some of the interviewees had experienced discrimination in other spheres of life and expressed discontent with the negative discourse on immigrants in the media. However, the vast majority had never felt that discrimination had influenced their housing careers. This is contrary to the findings of many other studies (Aalbers 2002, Søholt and Astrup 2009). The flexible allocation rules were not perceived by the interviewees as discriminatory. Both the Somalis and Turks felt that their housing options were the same as those of Danes. A Somali woman explained: *“We [immigrants] are not alone. There are many Danes who also have a hard time finding a flat. [...] It is just the system and the housing shortage that causes it”*.

The housing market constitutes a social scene and as such rewards a specific kind of behaviour. For immigrants, navigating in a new and unfamiliar housing system can require adaptation to a new housing-related behaviour. A young Somali single-parent mother explained that she lost her previous flat, because her neighbour didn’t like foreigners and started complaining about her: *“So in the end she won (...). She won because she knew the rules. But now I know everything”*. Here, the interviewee referred both to actual, written rules and to the unwritten rules and the learned behavioral

patterns of how to navigate successfully in the housing market. Acquiring both is decisive for progress in the housing career.

## REALISING NORMS AND PREFERENCES THROUGH MAKING CHOICES

The importance of agency was very evident in the interviews and thus supported the notion by Peach that the housing career cannot be understood independently of individual choices. In general, the interviewees felt that they had had the possibility of shaping their own housing career. They had choices. All in all, insecurity, instability, poor housing conditions and limited progress were less evident in this study compared with previous research (e.g. Murdie 2002 on Somalis in Canada; Dhalmann 2013 on Somalis in Finland; Søholt 2013 on Somalis in Norway; Bolt & van Kempen 2002 on Turks in the Netherlands; Magnusson & Özüekren 2002 on Turks in Sweden).

Few of the interviewees had experienced forced moves. Within the public housing sector, there were clearly choices to be made in terms of preferred area and size of the flat. A Turkish widow living in a four room flat with one child at home said: *"I am searching [for housing] now and I actually get a lot of offers but I turn them down. Some are too small, others too big, yet others too expensive. It is hard to find exactly what you want"*. It was possible for the interviewees to have specific wishes and to influence their career but the more specific their preferences, the longer it took for the right offer to come along. In general, the interviewees expressed satisfaction with the opportunities available to them within the public housing sector and felt that they had choices to make within the sector. An unemployed, single mother living in a women's home with her son after being evicted said: *"They ask me at the women's home if I want to move to Helsingør [a town 45 km north of the Copenhagen city centre] or something; it is easier to get a flat. But I say no thanks!"*. Thus, even those who were in an immediate need of housing could choose between options and thus act according to their preferences. While the unemployed felt too dependent on the municipality and their caseworker, they did explain that they had choices regarding area and size of flat. One Somali man was the exception. He expressed discontent with his current housing situation and the lack of choices available to him. He seemed resigned to not having any way of improving the situation himself. His situation arose through the combination of a large family, his and his wife's recurrent unemployment and a wish to stay in the very central part of Copenhagen where he had lived since arriving in Denmark. One Turk and four Somalis had an urgent wish to move and were waiting for a public housing offer. Some saw the desired change as possible within a foreseeable future as they had been told so by the municipality or the housing association. Others were unsure. A Turkish single mother of two wanted to move to the area her dad lived in. However, she explained, waiting lists were long for that area and it was hard to get a flat.

The religious interpretation differed between the two interviewed groups when it came to owner-occupation. Most of the interviewed Somalis saw paying interests as being incompatible with Islam. To some, buying was financially possible or had been previously, but for religious reasons they did not see it as an option available to them. The possibilities within public housing made it less necessary to consider violating their religious beliefs. Other studies have found such a violation necessary for obtaining a stable housing situation in other housing markets (Søholt 2013). Furthermore, social control is strong and enforces the unwillingness to buy: if you decide to obtain a loan and pay interest, you could be stigmatised for following religious precepts (Søholt 2013). This is another manner in which lives are linked: the actions of an individual can depend on expectations of the reaction of others. The sole home-owner amongst the Somalis said: *"The first two years, I think, we lost quite a few friends just because we had bought the house"*. In terms of her religion, she was still not sure whether they had made the right choice. However, they had wanted to live (quote) "like ordinary people" and had not felt that they could have the life they wanted, unless they bought a house. The interviewed Turks were markedly different from the Somalis. None mentioned religious concerns in relation to buying and several had indeed chosen to buy. Reasons mentioned were to make an investment for the future for one self and one's children as well as to gain independence from landlords. A Turkish man said: *"I feel better when I have that owner-feeling"*. The three Turkish descendants all saw owner-occupation or co-ops as their future tenure. One said: *"I would like to own something. Both because it then is your own, but also because I think that in the long term I will be able to get the resources for it, and it is just different to have your own. (...). I think it is important to invest in the life you have"*. That home-ownership represented a value in itself was expressed by several of the Turks but only one of the Somalis. Whether the norms were accentuated as such is hard to determine. However, the norms did differ and for the Somalis at least had not changed towards Danish housing norms on owner-occupation. The options of the public housing sector allowed them to adhere to their religious-cultural preferences.

## DISCUSSION

An on-going discussion in the literature relates to whether the differences between natives and immigrants are caused by ethnic-cultural differences in housing preferences or by immigrants being less able to realise their preferences (Abramsson et al. 2002; Skifter Andersen 2010; Dhalmann 2013). In this study, the interviewees by and large have been able to realise their preferences, thus lending support to the former notion. Furthermore, the study highlights that ethnic-cultural differences exist between immigrant groups as well, even groups of the same religious background. They interpret Islam differently, thus leading to different preferences in relation to housing or to different interpretations of the options available to them. This study cautions against presuming similarity between minority groups both when conducting research and in policy measures. A common goal for the settlement of ethnic minorities in a given country cannot be presumed to be reached through uniform measures.

This study has identified some of the reasons for ethnic minorities preferring rental housing. In Denmark, public housing seems to offer stable, affordable housing, the potential for progression through internal waiting lists and the possibility of influencing your own housing career. The system was perceived as understandable and equal for all. For Somalis, renting allowed them to adhere to their religious beliefs. Thus, the possibilities of the Danish public housing sector and, for the Somalis, their reluctance to pay interest hinder their progress into owner-occupation. Furthermore, dependence on housing allowances, which you can only get when living in rental housing, expands the financial difference between buying and renting, providing a potential disincentive for buying a dwelling (Skifter Andersen et al. 2000). In the literature, owner-occupation is often perceived as the highest rung on the housing ladder and as a sign of economic and cultural integration for ethnic minorities (Kauppinen et al. Forthcoming). The analysis in this paper shows that the Danish housing market provides good alternatives to owner-occupation. Thus, home-ownership might not be a suitable measure for integration at least in a Danish context. Furthermore, it becomes irrelevant for Somalis to discuss home-ownership as the dream housing situation, as they consider paying interests as being incompatible with their religion. The good options of the public housing sector allow Somalis to adhere their religious beliefs. In this way, preferences are shaped by resources, possibilities and restraints and adapted to housing stock availability (Søholt 2013). They are contextual. To the Somalis, promotion of home-ownership would have to go hand in hand with the possibility of choosing sharia-compliant mortgages. This is not the case for Turks.

The housing situation of immigrants is often presented as disadvantaged. Objectively, there are good and valid reasons for this. However, the analysis shows that the interviewees in Copenhagen do not perceive themselves as disadvantaged. Hence, the study cautions against mistaking the objectively defined understanding of disadvantagedness for a subjectively perceived experience of it. Likewise, while discriminatory practices might limit minorities' options and mixing policies might have discriminatory outcomes, it does not follow that the immigrants themselves feel discriminated against. To be clear: Systematic, structural, institutional or any other form of discrimination limiting the choices of minorities are not justified by being perceived as fair by the minorities themselves. Moreover, this study does not conclude that discrimination is non-existing. However, the stories of the interviewees have to be taken seriously. The almost complete absence of perceived discrimination within this study calls for further research into the links between real and perceived discrimination.

Previous studies have identified the reluctance of private landlords to let to immigrants to be an obstacle to accessing the rental sector (Skifter Andersen & Skak 2008; Aalbers 2002). Nevertheless, the interviews in this study indicated that the picture is more nuanced: if immigrants do not try to gain access to the private rental sector,

discrimination by landlords is never experienced<sup>8</sup>. One reason for avoiding the rental sector could be that restraints are internalised: the interviewees know their social position and thus do not consider options that are out of reach (Özüekren & van Kempen 2003). Nevertheless, the comparative Nordic study of which this Danish study is a part shows that in the other Nordic countries, Somalis are very aware of the limitations that they face compared with others. There is no good reason why this would differ between the countries, and why immigrants in Denmark should be less able to identify the obstacles they face. An actual difference in perceived obstacles is more plausible. Thus, it seems that if the options of the public housing sector are good, the private rental market becomes irrelevant and potential discrimination within it is not experienced. Again, the point here is not that discrimination does not exist. Rather, the point is that according to the interviewees' perception it does not influence their options.

A potentially problematic development in the possibility for realising preferences in the Danish public housing sector is underscored by this study. The employed interviewees were aided by flexible allocation to gain (quicker) access to housing. However, by deduction, flexible allocation hinders others in progressing in their career. And it does so for a group of people, the unemployed, who have the least possibility of conducting their career within other sectors of the housing market. This broadens the ethnic differences in the possibility for realising preferences as the share in employment differs greatly between ethnic groups. A risk could be further marginalisation of households with few resources. While there might be valid arguments for the advantages of flexible allocation in relation to the socio-economical composition of neighbourhoods, an awareness of the drawbacks is warranted.

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown that while Turkish migrant workers and Somali refugees face constraints in relation to housing, there are still choices available to them in the Copenhagen housing market. It is possible for them to be active in shaping their own housing career by making choices based on their preferences. The diversity of the interviewees emphasises this point: while the choices might be better for the more resourceful interviewees, even the unemployed interviewees living in temporary housing situations have choices available to them. Fewer choices were available to the majority of the interviewed Somalis' compared to the Turks as their interpretation of Islam ruled out co-ops and owner-occupation. However, due to the options of the public sector, the interviewed Somalis still felt that they had choices to make. Waiting for an offer corresponding to your wishes was an inherent condition of the public housing system. However, the interviewees did not feel stuck. Change thus comes about in an intersection between choice and constraint. The analysis showed

---

8. *In a study by Skifter Andersen (2006), only 7% of the interviewed immigrants said that they had tried in vain to get private rental housing.*

how preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints are linked together in an intricate way. Consequently, focusing too narrowly on constraints might lead research to miss fundamental characteristics of housing careers.

Life course analysis provided a lens through which to understand the interviewees' housing careers in the intersection between individual agency and societal structures. The careers were shaped by the structures in which they took place but not determined by them as the interviewees had been able to make choices within these structures based on individual preferences. Life course analysis offers a rewarding framework for migration studies and thus a promising potential for future studies.

The Danish housing market seems on the whole to offer good options for people of diverse backgrounds and in diverse situations. Including both migrant groups in the study made it possible to highlight the similarities despite the differences. The analysis also showed that the interpretation of religion and the weight given to religious beliefs differed between the two groups and that they therefore adapted differently to the Danish housing market. Presuming similarity of preferences between different ethnic groups should thus be avoided.

The study has been conducted within the context of the Copenhagen housing market. Its findings, however, go beyond the boundaries of the Copenhagen region. It highlights the importance of choice within constraints. It brings to light ethnic-cultural differences between and within ethnic groups. It shows how a seemingly disadvantaged situation is perceived differently by the individuals themselves. And it highlights the complexity of a housing career and the interconnectedness of preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints, thus accentuating the need for studying housing careers in the context of the housing markets they take place in. Preferences are shaped by resources, possibilities and restraints and consequently should be studied as such.

**Acknowledgments:** Financial support from NORFACE research programme on "Migration in Europe – Social, Economic, Cultural and Policy Dynamics" is acknowledged.

## REFERENCES

**Aalbers, M. B. 2002**

*"The neglected evidence of housing market discrimination in the Netherlands."*  
*Radical Statistics Journal* 79/80, 161-169.

**Abramsson, M., L.-E. Borgegård & U. Fransson 2002**

*"Housing careers: Immigrants in Local Swedish Housing Markets."* *Housing Studies* 17(3): 445-464.



**Abramsson, M. 2008**

*"Housing Careers in a Changing Welfare State – A Swedish Cohort Study."* *Housing, Theory and Society* 25(4): 231-253.

**Bolt, G. & R. van Kempen. 2002**

*"Moving Up or Moving Down? Housing Careers of Turks and Moroccans in Utrecht, the Netherlands."* *Housing Studies* 17(3): 401-422.

**Bolt, G. & R. van Kempen. 2003**

*"Escaping poverty neighbourhoods in the Netherlands".* *Housing, Theory and Society* 20(4): 209-222.

**Clark, W.A.V. & Y. Huang 2003**

*"The life course and residential mobility in British housing markets."* *Environment and Planning A* 35: 323-339.

**Damm, A.P., M.L. Schultz-Nielsen & T. Tranæs. 2006**

*En befolkning deler sig op? Copenhagen: Gyldendal.*

**Dhalmann, H. 2013**

*"Explaining Ethnic Residential Preferences – The Case of Somalis and Russians in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area."* *Housing Studies* 28(3): 389-408.

**Elder, G.H. Jr. 1975**

*"Age Differentiation and the Life Course."* *Annual Review of Sociology* 1: 165-190.

**Elder, G.H. Jr., M. Kirkpatrick Johnsen & R. Crosnoe. 2003**

*"The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory".* In *Handbook of the life course*, edited by J.T. Mortimer & M.J. Shanahan, 3-19. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

**Fridberg, T. & M. Lausten. 2004**

*Fleksibel udlejning af almene familieboliger. Copenhagen: Erhvervs- og Boligstyrelsen.*

**Gram-Hanssen, K. & C. Bech-Danielsen. 2012**

*"Creating a new home. Somali, Iraqi and Turkish immigrants and their homes in Danish social housing."* *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* 27: 89-103.

**Kauppinen, T. C., H. Skifter Andersen & L. Hedman Forthcoming:**

*"Determinants of Immigrants' Housing Careers. Comparison of Immigrants' Moves into Homeownership in Three Nordic countries."*



**Kleist, N. 2007**

*"Ambivalent encounters: negotiating boundaries of Danishness, Somaliness, and belonging."* In *From Mogadishu to Dixon. The Somali Diaspora in a Global Perspective*, edited by A.M. Kusow & S. Björk, 159-179. New Jersey: Red Sea Press.

**Magnusson, L. & A.S. Özüekren. 2002**

*"The Housing Careers of Turkish Households in Middlesized Swedish Municipalities."* *Housing Studies* 17(3): 465-486.

**Magnusson Turner, L. & L. Hedman. 2014**

*"Linking Integration and Housing Career: A Longitudinal Analysis of Immigrant Groups in Sweden."* *Housing Studies* 29(2): 270-290.

**Murdie, R.A. 2002**

*"The Housing Careers of Polish and Somali Newcomers in Toronto's Rental Market."* *Housing Studies* 17(3): 423-443.

**Peach, C. 1998**

*"South Asian and Caribbean Ethnic Minority Housing Choice in Britain."* *Urban Studies* 35(10): 1657-1680.

**Pickles, A.R. & R.B. Davies. 1991**

*"The empirical analysis of housing careers – a review and a general statistical modelling framework."* *Environment and Planning A* 23: 465-484.

**Shah, S. 2004**

*"The Researcher/Interviewer in Intercultural Context: A Social Intruder!"* *British Educational Research Journal* 304: 549-575.

**Skifter Andersen, H., H.T. Andersen & T. Ærø. 2000**

*"Social polarisation in a segmented housing market: social segregation in Greater Copenhagen."* *Danish Journal of Geography* 100: 71-83.

**Skifter Andersen, H. 2004**

*Virkninger af oprykningsretten i almene boliger. København: Erhvervs- og Boligstyrelsen.*

**Skifter Andersen, H. 2006**

*Bo sammen eller spredt? Etniske minoriteters boligønsker og motiver for bosætning. Hørsholm: Danish Building Research Institute.*

**Skifter Andersen, H. 2010**

*"Spatial Assimilation in Denmark? Why do Immigrants Move to and from Multi-ethnic Neighbourhoods?"* *Housing Studies* 25(3): 281-300.

**Skifter Andersen, H. & M. Skak. 2008**

*Privat boligudlejning. Motiver, strategier og økonomi. Hørsholm: Danish Building Research Institute.*

**Small, M.L. 2008**

*"Lost in Translation: How Not to Make Qualitative Research More Scientific." In Workshop on Interdisciplinary Standards for Systematic Qualitative Research, edited by M. Lamont & P. White, 165-71. Washington, DC: National Science Foundation.*

**Statistics Denmark 2010**

*Indvandrere i Danmark. Copenhagen: Statistics Denmark.*

**Søholt, S. & K. Astrup. 2009**

*Etniske minoriteter og forskjellsbehandling i leiemarkedet. NIBR Report No. 2009:2. Oslo: Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research.*

**Søholt S. 2013**

*"Pathways to Integration: Cross-cultural Adaptations to the Housing Market in Oslo." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2013.859069.*

**Tinker, C & N. Armstrong. 2008**

*"From the Outside Looking in: How an awareness of Difference Can Benefit the Qualitative Research Process." The Qualitative Report 13(1): 53-60.*

**Wingens, M., M. Windzio, H. de Valk & C. Aybek. 2011**

*"The Sociological Life Course Approach and Research on Migration and Integration". In A life-Course Perspective on Migration and Integration, edited by M. Wingens, M. Windzio, H. de Valk & C. Aybek, 1-26. Dordrecht: Springer.*

**Özüekren, A.S. & R. van Kempen. 2002**

*"Housing Careers of Minority Ethnic Groups: Experiences, Explanations and Prospects." Housing Studies 17(3): 365-379.*

**Özüekren, A.S. & R. van Kempen. 2003**

*"Special issue editors' introduction: dynamics and diversity: housing careers and segregation of minority ethnic groups." Housing, Theory and Society 20(4): 162-171.*

## **PAPER IV**



# COMPARING SOMALIS' PERCEIVED POSSIBILITIES IN THE NORDIC CAPITAL HOUSING MARKETS: LOCAL CONTEXT AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

**Rikke Skovgaard Nielsen**, Danish Building Research Institute, Aalborg University, [rsn@sbi.aau.dk](mailto:rsn@sbi.aau.dk)

**Emma Holmqvist**, Institute for Housing and Urban Research (IBF), Uppsala University, [emma.holmqvist@ibf.uu.se](mailto:emma.holmqvist@ibf.uu.se)

**Hanna Dhalmann**, Department of Geosciences and Geography, University of Helsinki, [hanna.dhalmann@ara.fi](mailto:hanna.dhalmann@ara.fi)

**Susanne Søholt**, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, [susanne.soholt@nibr.no](mailto:susanne.soholt@nibr.no)

**ABSTRACT** Immigrants' housing position is often explained by (lack of) resources or differences in cultural backgrounds. Later studies have included the importance of local context. The aim of this paper is to examine Somalis' perceptions of their possibilities in the Nordic capitals housing markets: Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo and Stockholm. The approach is based on immigrants' own explanations, through an interview study, for what they strive for and how they assess the impact of local conditions and cultural background for their possibilities. We found that local context and cultural background intertwine and sometimes conflict with each other, but that the negotiation between cultural background and local context was individual. The conclusion is that the local context is an important factor for understanding differences between Somalis on different housing markets, thus emphasising that local context and cultural background have to be studied together to understand perceived housing possibilities.

**Keywords:** Somalis, Nordic capitals, Housing possibilities, Local context, Cultural background.

## INTRODUCTION

Immigrants' ability to access affordable, stable and safe housing is a central dimension of their integration process (Murdie, 2002; Phillips, 2006; Özüekren & van Kempen,

2002). To be structurally integrated in the housing market implies that the minority population can strive for similar conditions and possibilities as the majority. They should have access to common rights, memberships and positions in the settlement country (Heckmann & Schnapper, 2003). These rights include, for example, possibilities to buy and rent dwellings including public housing, to take out housing mortgages and to get housing allowance on the same terms as the natives. Acculturation of housing preferences is closely linked to socialisation, which means that individuals internalise the dominant values, norms and role expectations (Egeberg, 2004). In housing, acculturation would ease structural integration and adjust immigrants to the perceived housing preferences and ordinary housing arrangements of the majority population.

In many countries, differences in housing outcomes of natives and immigrants are evident. Independent of location, former studies conclude that immigrants of Somali background<sup>1</sup> fare worse than other immigrant groups (Blom & Henriksen, 2008; Cole & Robinson, 2003; Dhalmann, 2013; Murdie, 2002). Somalis is a large immigrant group in Scandinavia. They primarily came as refugees in the 1990s. They have a weak attachment to the labour market and their housing outcomes are considerably weaker than those of the rest of the population in the Nordic countries. This is striking in the light of Nordic countries being famous for extensive welfare policies based on universalism, extensive wealth distribution and intended equality of opportunity. The intention is to assist the structural integration of vulnerable groups. The rental sector and especially public housing<sup>2</sup> plays an important role in housing immigrants. Refugees are assigned a dwelling by a municipality when they get a residence permit; often in the public housing sector. Following their initial settlement, refugees are however under the same structural conditions as everyone else in the Nordic countries. Still, Somalis are overrepresented in the rental sector also after a long time of residence.

The aim of this paper is to examine Somalis' own perceptions of possibilities in the housing market, to be able to learn more about the importance of local context and cultural background. Three research questions guide the analysis: What do Somalis strive for concerning housing in the Nordic capitals? How do Somalis perceive their possibilities for improving their housing situation? And, how are Somalis' experiences and perceptions of their housing situation affected by local context and cultural background?

- 
1. *In this paper immigrants of Somali background are named Somalis, even though they might have become nationals, are descendants or identify differently themselves.*
  2. *The Nordic welfare states each have a housing sector providing housing through non-market based allocation. As the sectors vary between the countries, so too does the term used to describe it (<http://www.housingeurope.eu/publication/social-housing-country-profiles/social-housing-in>). For simplification, the term public housing is used here.*

Repeated explanations for Somalis' housing situation are limited socio-economic resources and culturally oriented explanations such as different preferences and individual choices or limited previous experience of living in flats (Alba & Logan, 1992; Constant, Roberts & Zimmermann, 2009; Magnusson & Özüekren, 2002; Tomlins, 1997; Vono-de-Vilhena & Bayona-Carrasco, 2012). Moreover, their difficult position is explained by personally experienced limited access to the private and public rental markets i.e. discrimination-oriented explanations (Dhalmann & Vilka, 2009; Sørholt & Astrup, 2009). More recently, studies have emphasised how local context interplays with cultural background in explaining Somalis' coping behaviour. Simich et al. (2004) found that in Canada, Somalis' coping behaviour is defined by a combination of their cultural belonging and the context of the receiving societies. Somalis draw on their transnational networks, norms, knowledge and experiences at the same time as they learn to navigate a new system. Studies focusing on housing issues have found similar results. Migrants may hang on to or develop housing preferences based on cultural values, practices or lifestyles and find ways to adjust these to the existing housing stock (Sørholt, 2013). According to Dhalmann (2013), Finnish Somalis' residential preferences are rooted in their cultural background, but are also reshaped by the social relations and racial attitudes in the ethnically mixed neighbourhoods. When comparing different ethnic groups in Oslo, Sørholt (2013) found that Somalis experienced most difficulties in adjusting to local housing conditions. At the same time, their tight situation pushed them to be creative at spontaneous problem-solving and to seize the opportunities as they appear

## STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

First, the framework of the paper is presented, followed by a description of the housing markets in the Nordic capitals. Subsequently, the comparative approach is described. This leads to the analysis which is organised in three parts, relating to each of the research questions. The paper closes with a conclusion and implications of the findings.

## ACCESS STRUCTURE AND PERCEPTIONS OF POSSIBILITIES

To capture how Somalis in the Nordic capitals experience their housing possibilities, the analyses are framed by the interplay between individual perceptions of possibilities and access structures in the housing market. Access theory focuses on the relationship between applicants and suppliers in the process of allocation of goods through the market, through public systems or through combinations of these (Schaffer & Huang, 1975). Housing improvement implies that the success of house hunters depends not only on vacancy rates, but on how they manage to cope with the actual structures and mechanisms for accessing possibly vacant dwellings.

Three factors are important for explaining allocation procedures and results: Characteristics of those demanding goods, features of the allocation system and the bargaining situation between applicants and those with power to allocate the goods in question (Bleiklie, 1997). Leaning on life course analysis, our approach *'refers to individuals constructing their life courses [...] as self-monitored actors within the particular opportunities and constraints they face'* (Wingens et al., 2011:12). By including the life course perspective to the access theory approach we acknowledge that housing preferences and options is formed by socioeconomic resources alongside other factors. In this paper however, we focus on examining local context and cultural background.

Considerations of local conditions and their implications for peoples' daily lives are essential when trying to understand issues related to housing and integration (Markkanen & Harrison, 2013). In this paper the local housing context is defined as the local housing stock (tenure, housing type and dwelling sizes), vacancy rates and allocation rules to different tenures, housing prices as well as location and neighbourhood status. The contexts of the Nordic capitals arise from a combination of national and local conditions. Previous studies have found that culture (used in the sense of values, beliefs, norms and customs) influences housing choices and preferences (Coolen & Hoekstra, 2001; Rapoport, 2001; Søholt, 2013). Cultural background is a concept used in many different ways. It has been criticised for being used in stigmatising and simplified ways where ethnic segregation is explained by immigrants' presumed wish to live together, thus neglecting underlying factors of limited resources which make immigrants end up in the cheapest areas, i.e. as a result of lack of choice (Andersson & Molina, 2003). According to Lindberg et al. (1987) values is reflected in an individual's evaluation of options where different options can help or hinder the individual to maintain values. Here we have used culture in the similar way as Mensah and Williams (2013), in the sense that being of Somali background may impact on how housing options is perceived (culture as perception) and on how choices are made, relating to norms, values and experiences formed in Somalian culture (culture as practice). The impact of cultural background is not static; instead it is constantly renegotiated and redefined in actual contexts (Bang Nielsen, 2004).

## **THE LOCAL HOUSING MARKET CONTEXTS OF THE NORDIC CAPITALS**

The housing policies and institutions including stock and access conditions in the different housing segments differ considerably between the Nordic countries (Bengtsson, 2013; Andersson et al., 2010). Thus, Somalis have to adapt to different access structures for the same tenure depending on where they live. Shortage of housing increases the market competition and allows allocators of housing to increase their demands resulting in increased property and rental prices, increased discretion in private rental and access limits in public housing. The importance of Somalis' economic situation,



household composition and bargaining capacity varies between a predefined access structure in a public housing system, a system of discretion in the private rental market and a system consisting of a combination of membership, seniority and market prices to access co-operative housing and owner-occupancy.

The differences in composition of tenure in the Nordic capitals can partly be explained by policies prioritising different tenure types (Table 1). The most important difference between the countries is in how housing is thought to be ensured for low-income and vulnerable households. Copenhagen currently has the largest share of people living in public housing followed by Helsinki and Stockholm. In Oslo, this housing sector is very small. To compensate, housing means are targeted at supporting vulnerable households both in public and private housing. It is a political ambition that housing means should promote refugees' capacity to buy a dwelling. Owner-occupation has been favoured in Norway, Finland and Denmark while Sweden until recently gave equal status to all tenures (Skifter Andersen et al., 2013). Since the liberal conservative party came to power in 2006, Sweden is moving in the direction of promoting home ownership as well. Thus, the Nordic countries are nations of homeowners.<sup>3</sup> Renting is seen as a temporary solution and owning as the superior tenure and the goal of housing careers (see also Andersson et al., 2007).

*Table 1: Tenure segmentation of Somalis in the four capitals, in per cent*

|                       | Copenhagen  |             | Helsinki    |             | Oslo        |             | Stockholm   |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                       | Somalis     | All         | Somalis     | All         | Somalis     | All         | Somalis     | All         |
| <b>Home-ownership</b> | <b>1.3</b>  | <b>36.3</b> | <b>1,0</b>  | <b>55,2</b> | <b>8.9</b>  | <b>36.1</b> | <b>1.0</b>  | <b>33.3</b> |
| <b>Co-operative</b>   | 2.4         | 12.5        | 0.1         | 3,1         | 16.7        | 33.5        | 6.1         | 33.9        |
| <b>Rental</b>         | <b>91.9</b> | <b>49.3</b> | <b>94,9</b> | <b>39,5</b> | <b>74.3</b> | <b>30.4</b> | <b>92.7</b> | <b>32.4</b> |
| Private or other      | 16.6        | 15.9        | 18          | 20          | 45.3*       | 26.9        | 31.4        | 16.5        |
| Public                | 75.3        | 33.4        | 76,9        | 19,5        | 38.7*       | 3.5         | 61.3        | 15.8        |
| <b>Other</b>          | 4.4         | 1.8         | 4,0         | 2,2         | 0           | 0           | 0.2         | 0.4         |
| <b>Total</b>          | 100         | 100         | 100         | 100         | 100         | 100         | 100         | 100         |
| <i>Year of data</i>   | 2008        |             | 2010        |             | 2011 Census |             | 2010        |             |

*Note: Numbers for Oslo and Helsinki are for households. For Copenhagen and Stockholm, numbers are for individuals aged 16 and above.*

In all four capitals, Somalis are concentrated in the rental sector (see Table 1). The proportion living in public and private rental differs immensely between Somalis and all other residents in the respective cities. Owning a dwelling is more common among Somalis in Oslo than in the other capitals, but the ownership rate is still

3. *In many respects co-operatives are similar to owner-occupation as they are distributed through the market at market prices. Co-operative flats will thus in general be treated as the same as owner-occupation in this paper.*

very low compared to all residents; especially seen in the light of the strong focus of Norwegian housing policy on homeownership. In all four countries, the employment rate for Somalis is low compared to others (Bevelander et al., 2013; Dhalmann, 2011); a factor which no doubt contributes to the low rate of owner-occupation.

## LOCAL ACCESS STRUCTURES

How housing is allocated has importance for all, but especially for vulnerable groups. It is important whether allocation follows open and predefined rules or is subject to discretion. In the Copenhagen region, public dwellings dominate the rental market with allocation based in principle on universal conditions. Public housing is accessible to everyone who enters his name on the waiting lists of the housing associations. The municipality has the right to allocate 25 per cent of vacant dwellings to be used for people in immediate need of housing. Some estates are much more coveted than others resulting in varying waiting times. Internal waiting lists are given preference, thus making it possible to conduct a housing career within public housing. In recent years, a political wish to change the social composition of deprived areas has led to new flexible allocation rules. The municipality and the housing association can give priority to people in employment, attending education or being 55+. The older private rental sector (dwellings built before 1991) is subject to rent control. This has led to prices that are below market value, resulting in a high demand. Thus, landlords can afford to be selective (Skifter Andersen & Skak, 2008). New private rental is expensive. Previously the change of owners of co-operative flats was due to discretion and personal networks, which made it difficult for immigrants to get access (Skifter Andersen, 2010). Within recent years, this segment has changed: prices in many co-operatives are now market-based and flats are sold through real estate agents.

The allocation system in Stockholm resembles that of Copenhagen as public housing is not allocated on a need-basis. Everyone can put his name on a waiting list. However, time is not the only criterion; the landlord can set up specific requirements for a certain dwelling, i.e. type of income accepted (social benefit or not), level of income in relation to rent level and maximum household size. A good track record is also important to access the public sector (no rent arrears or mortgage failures). The private rental sector in the Stockholm region partly uses the municipal waiting list and partly own waiting lists and networks. Rent control was abolished in 2011, but rents still have to be negotiated. The access to the co-operative sector is defined by market terms and allocation is similar to owner-occupation.

In Helsinki, allocation of public housing is based on rules mainly considering the housing needs of the household. However, the allocation process is not transparent, giving the housing officials a strong gate-keeper role (Dhalmann & Vilkkama, 2009). Applicants are ranked according to the urgency of their housing need. However, since 60% of the applicants in Helsinki meet the most urgent criteria and yearly only 6% of

the applicants are offered housing, housing officials have to choose between people in need. Moreover, there is a policy to promote social and ethnic mixing. Consequently, this allows overriding the general allocation criteria in order to create the desired mix. Co-operatives constitute a marginal sector of the Helsinki housing market and have little importance for immigrants. The private rental sector is not subject to rent control and there are no rules for allocation.

The Norwegian housing policy targets the most disadvantaged. In the past a good record was needed to access public housing in Oslo, nowadays applicants have to be in a vulnerable economic and social situation to be accepted. More people meet the criteria than there are vacant dwellings. Allocation of dwellings is a balance between households' needs and actual vacancies. Individual means like housing allowances and guarantee for deposit should compensate shortage of public housing, but is not sufficient to provide people with decent housing. Allocation of private rentals is based on the landlords' own criteria and discretion. The abolition of rent control in 2010 has resulted in high prices. Allocation of co-operative housing follows non-discriminatory rules, opening this segment to immigrants who can afford these dwellings. Seniority is combined with the highest bid. Allocation of co-operative housing and home-ownership are both market-based.

Altogether, different amounts of housing are allocated by predefined, known and mostly non-discriminatory rules in the Nordic capitals. When the allocation is based on personal discretion, the sellers' or landlords' perceptions of and trust in immigrants come into play (Andersson et al., 2010; Søholt & Astrup, 2009). The situation in the Nordic capitals, where demand for housing exceeds supply, is favourable for this type of selective distribution practices. The high demand for affordable housing increases the importance of social networks for the search of a dwelling, which might put immigrants in an inferior position compared to natives.

## STUDY SETUP, AIM AND METHOD

This study is a most similar comparative case study of Somalis' perceptions of housing possibilities across four Nordic capitals: Copenhagen (Denmark), Helsinki (Finland), Oslo (Norway) and Stockholm (Sweden).<sup>4</sup> The four cases are similar regarding the overall universal Nordic welfare system and migrant category. The Somalis are mainly refugees, they arrived in the Nordic countries around the same time, they are at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy and they belong to a highly stigmatised group in all the countries (Fangen, 2006; Jaakkola, 2005; Kleist, 2007; Schmauchs, 2006). However the cases differed with regard to housing policies, housing segments, supply and access conditions (Andersson et. al, 2010). Comparing an immigrant category across

---

4. *For the purpose of this paper, the term 'Nordic capitals' refers only to these four capitals.*

capitals is highly relevant as research has shown that the societies in which immigrants reside have as much or even more influence on their incorporation in society as their individual characteristics (Bloemraad, 2013). The comparative approach provided an opportunity to identify and explain differences and similarities in Somali perceptions of housing possibilities across the Nordic capitals and thus to highlight the significance of the local housing context. Comparing the same population group in four capitals thus serves as an analytical strategy to move beyond theories centred on the resources and motivations of immigrants (*ibid*).

The approach was based on interviews that focused on the immigrants' personal explanations of what they strove for in housing and how they assessed the impact of local conditions and cultural background for their possibilities. The underlying expectation was not that either local context or cultural background would play a role. Instead, it was envisioned as a tension between two different forces playing together or opposing each other. If local context was the dominating factor, we would expect to find that Somalis strive for different housing options and experience different possibilities due to differences in the four housing markets. If cultural background was the dominating factor, we would expect to find similarities across the capitals as the Somali cultural background would be the overriding factor impacting on their perceived possibilities. If both local context and cultural background played a role, we would expect to find both similarities and differences, as the perceptions of possibilities would be affected by local context as well as by cultural background.

The comparative approach allowed us to capture how specific housing markets in Nordic capitals were designed to meet the housing needs, preferences and capabilities of a migrant category at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy. The approach should thus add to the key research issues on mechanisms in ethnic residential segregation/desegregation processes as well as tenure segmentation (Skifter Andersen, Magnusson Turner & Søholt, 2013). In order to handle unwanted ethnic residential segregation, it is imperative to understand how and if immigrants' navigation between options, constraints and perceived possibilities influence such processes.

## INTERVIEW STUDY

This paper builds on 56 interviews with Somalis. The interviewees were found through networks, meeting places, schools, informal recruiters etc. As a result of the many recruitment channels, few of the interviewees were part of the same networks. Assessment of housing situation and perceived housing possibilities included considerations of what was best for the household. Still, persons in households might have different understandings of experience and perceptions of possibilities. Thus, the interviewees were treated as persons and not as households. The interviewees were not statistically representative of the Somali populations in the four capitals instead; they exemplified different experiences with the housing markets.

In all the cases, interviews were conducted by researchers of majority background.<sup>5</sup> Some academics would argue that true understanding of the research subjects requires that the researcher is a member of the same social group (Shah, 2004). However, being an 'outsider' can also be an advantage (Tinker & Armstrong, 2008). First, a lack of knowledge on the part of the researcher can lead to more detailed responses as it allows the interviewee to be the expert; opening for follow-up questions from the researcher to get enough information to understand. Second, it can lead to less fear of judgement on issues that are sensitive to the group being researched. Third, in relation to analysis it allows the researcher to keep a critical distance to the data. Thus, being an outsider can be an advantage as long as the researcher is conscious of the pitfall of interpreting the interviews according to personal norms and perceptions. This implies that the researcher has to ask questions not only about what, but also about why and how to understand the interviewees' perceptions and experiences from their perspective.

A common semi-structured interview guide enabled comparison across capitals. The guide addressed experiences connected to current and home country housing situation, moving history in settlement country, possibilities and obstacles for achieving an ideal housing situation, where to live in the future and contacts and networks with Somalia and in country of residence, and finally, multicultural society, segregation and discrimination. The interviews lasted up to three hours.

## THE INTERVIEWED SOMALIS AND THEIR SITUATION

Time of residence is an indicator of the interviewees' opportunities to learn the system in their new country. The interviewees had resided at least five years in the respective capitals and had thus had a chance to settle and consider their housing options. Interviewees in Copenhagen and all but one in Stockholm had stayed longer than 10 years, and five had stayed more than 20 years. In Helsinki and Oslo, there were more interviewees with a shorter stay and few with more than 20 years in the country.

Interviewees in Helsinki were the youngest, followed by Oslo. In all the capitals the majority of the interviewees were between 30 and 59 years' old. Most of these interviewees were living with children, except in Copenhagen. In Oslo, 13 of the 15 interviewees were single parents, mostly women, and five had children living elsewhere. In the other countries there were also some singles/single parents among the interviewees. In all capitals, one type of housing was absolutely dominant: rental flats, whether public or private. Of all the interviewees, one lived in an owner-occupied single-family house (Copenhagen) and one in a co-operative flat (Stockholm).

---

5. *An interpreter participated in the interview where lack of a common language was a problem. This was only necessary in a few cases. The interviews were conducted from spring 2012 to spring 2013.*

The financial opportunities of the interviewees depended on their employment and household situation as well as whether they received benefits. When comparing the interviewees in this respect, the interviewees from Stockholm stood out, as the vast majority had a job and none were studying. There were most students in Oslo, where some former employed wanted to improve their competences. There were also students in Copenhagen and Helsinki. Furthermore, there were most stay-at-home mothers in Helsinki. The unemployed received unemployment allowances in all four capitals. Some also got housing allowance and some child support. In Copenhagen all interviewees except one, managed either because they were employed or because they received enough benefits to cover the expenses. This differed from Oslo, where the unemployed struggled financially. In Helsinki, those living in public housing generally managed, while others often considered the rent to be too high. The poorest were compensated by different social transfers, which helped their situation. In Stockholm, several of the interviewees found the rent quite high. Even for the employed, the rent was to the limit of what they could manage.

Overall, it seemed that the interviewees from Copenhagen and Helsinki were more content with their housing conditions than the interviewees from Stockholm and Oslo. In Copenhagen, one interviewee perceived his housing conditions as poor. Otherwise, obstacles were mentioned, but seemed not to change the interviewees' perception of their own housing situation as being good. In Helsinki, housing conditions were generally perceived to be good except for over-crowding and difficulties in getting a flat. The former was caused by a lack of units of appropriate size for large families and by homeless staying with friends and relatives. Temporary arrangements sometimes became long-lasting (years) due to failure to find a flat. In the Stockholm case, half of the interviewees told of bad housing situations, usually related to over-crowding, poor maintenance of the dwelling or living environment. In Oslo, some experienced satisfactory housing conditions, while others faced over-crowding, and/or lack of maintenance. Others were satisfied with their housing unit, but not with their deteriorated neighbourhood. The main problems in Oslo were shortage of rentals, difficult access to decent housing resulting in living with acquaintances and regular time-limited contracts making it difficult to establish a home. Those in temporary shelter had to renew their contract every second week.

## **WHAT DO SOMALIS STRIVE FOR IN HOUSING ACROSS THE NORDIC CAPITALS?**

The identified preferences of the interviewees can partly be related to Maslow's ([1954] 1987) two main types of needs: deficiency and growth needs. For the interviewees, the deficiency needs principally included access to a home of their own. In Helsinki, a young unemployed man waiting for his family from Somalia had struggled very hard to get a private rental flat. He said: *'I can't answer the questions on my housing preferences since I don't have those choices. I have to just be happy with*

*what I've got since it is all I can have*'. He had even paid a private company to help him. The homeless and those living with others wanted shelter, people in precarious situations looked for security like stable contracts and a safe environment; those living with over-crowding wanted more space. Moreover, those who had difficulties in affording decent housing wanted affordable housing. Growth needs that stemmed not from a lack of something, but rather from a desire for something that would improve the household's overall life situation were combined with deficiency needs. Some expressed the need for better accommodation as well as a specific location to be closer to kindergarten, good schools or where parents go to study. Others wanted to move to better neighbourhoods or to get closer to relatives and acquaintances to make it easier to maintain social relations. Some preferred the fringe parts of the capitals as they offer nature and quiet surroundings, while others preferred the central parts with urban life and activities. In all capitals but Copenhagen, some expressed future desires for detached houses, as this type of housing offers bigger dwellings and gardens. A single mother of three, living in a three room flat in Stockholm said *'I would like to have a row house. I could have a room, to work with my business at evenings. Now it is crowded; it's hard to find some place in the flat to work with the computer'*. This was in contrast to Copenhagen, where dwellings of a suitable size were mostly seen as obtainable in public housing. However, not all the Copenhagen interviewees found it easy. Two of the unemployed interviewees were unsure whether they would be able to realise their need for a bigger dwelling.

Some interviewees experienced more of the unwanted conditions; others were rather satisfied with their situation. Most importantly, the achieved housing situation among the interviewees differed between the Nordic capitals, and thus also the needs and preferences. Due to the different institutional arrangements and local tenure structures in the Nordic capitals the interviewees experienced different housing possibilities.

## PERCEIVED POSSIBILITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

As previously shown, Somalis are in general over-represented in the rental market. For the interviewees, the aim was to get a contract for a decent and affordable dwelling, and in the Oslo case, to get a permanent contract. As could be expected, there was a clear link in all cases between job situation and housing. Nevertheless, it seemed less problematic to find affordable suitable housing when on welfare benefits in Copenhagen compared with the other capitals. The Danish housing allowance makes housing costs manageable. However, two interviewees mentioned that the deposit when moving in and the cost of repairs when moving out were high. Most of the interviewees in Oslo were struggling financially to pay their rents and to afford a suitable dwelling. The dependence on welfare benefits, including housing allowance, or low or modest incomes left little choice: They lived where they lived because that was what they got and could afford (and only barely). One man in Stockholm, employed, in his 60s living in a three bedroom flat with his wife and six children expressed this lack of choice:



*'Unfortunately, when you are in need of housing you can't look after certain things. [...] Proximity to this etc. We are grateful we were offered the flat. [...] You can't choose. To look for a nice view and things, that's a luxury we don't have'.*

In contrast, choices in Copenhagen seemed better, at least on the outskirts, as illustrated by an unemployed interviewee living temporarily with a friend while looking for a flat for his family which was living in another part of Denmark. When asked whether he would have to accept a smaller flat initially he said:

*'Not at all. It depends on the information you give to the housing association office. You say four rooms, three rooms, two rooms, one room outside of [central] Copenhagen and, I think, then it is three to six months then you probably have a flat'.*

In Oslo, not being selected in the allocation procedures for public or private rentals usually left few options but to move in with others. Even those in stable economic positions struggled. A single man with a well-paid job in Oslo said:

*'I feel uncomfortable to admit that I live with others. (...) I chose to move in with somebody to have a place to stay. I am not homeless, but I don't have my own place and stability. And we don't know how long we can stay here'.*

In Stockholm and Helsinki, waiting lists in public housing used to be the solution. But changed allocation criteria and increased mismatch between demand and supply made this less of an option. The biggest problem seemed to be that more factors than the waiting time affected the probability to get a dwelling, making it hard to predict the possibilities and the time frame involved. Thus, the interviewees were constantly waiting for notification concerning an available flat. An example was a young couple in Helsinki. Despite being employed and otherwise well-integrated, their long-lasting unpredictable housing situation meant that they had lost their agency in the housing market. Living with an aunt's family in a small home, the woman described their deadlocked situation:

*'I'm pregnant, the baby will be born soon and I don't even have a flat. [...] There is no privacy, and we can't even buy things for the baby because we don't have anywhere to put it. [...] Five years I have waited for a flat, I have really searched hard for it and renewed applications repeatedly. [...] I have also applied to private market, but my money is no good there. [We have thought of buying], but I don't have a long-term work contract and now when I will be on maternity leave, we can't take on a mortgage'.*



This exemplifies how the lack of options in the housing market impact on Somalis' life projects and engagement. Another interviewee in a similar waiting situation considered leaving Finland and applying for asylum in another country, hoping for better housing opportunities there.

Due to lack of transparency in allocation procedures, several interviewees in Oslo and Helsinki did not know how to balance and manoeuvre the different access conditions to private and public rentals. Thus, their bargaining power was much more critical than in Copenhagen where access criteria were known. Moreover, a mismatch between household composition and available housing as well as a lack of necessary resources made the search for housing difficult. Some of the interviewees from Oslo and Helsinki interpreted their housing situation as beyond their control. The same was the case for one man in Copenhagen. When their different efforts had not succeeded, it was difficult to know how to better the situation with the available means. While housing needs and prospects of improvements made it meaningful to strive for better housing situations, prolonged lack of mastering their situation undermined the engagement to struggle.

## POSSIBILITIES IN PUBLIC HOUSING

In Copenhagen, the public housing sector was viewed as accessible, not only when entering for the first time, but also for conducting a housing career through the internal waiting list. For the employed interviewees, the flexible allocation rules were an aid in acquiring suitable housing as employed individuals are given priority. The interviewees knew their number on the list and had an idea of the time frame for a possible change. In some housing areas, waiting lists are very long and specific needs can be hard to realise. But in many others, they are not, thus making it possible to realise preferences regarding location and size of dwelling. One interviewee was the exception. He was living in an old flat in a bad shape, over-crowded and with an uninvolved housing association. He had already waited a long time and had more or less given up. His precarious situation arose from a combination of living in central Copenhagen, having a large family and unemployment.

In Stockholm and Helsinki, public housing has traditionally been the main tenure for Somalis, thus constituting a central part of their housing strategies. For many of the interviewees who arrived in the 1990s, public housing had indeed offered a stable and progressive housing career. However, the demand for cheap rental housing increased rapidly in the 2000s decreasing the chances of both access to and progress within the sector.

The introduction of social-mixing policies in Helsinki has also made a public housing career less predictable. In Oslo, the low share of public housing and the general lack of affordable rentals decreased the possibilities. Another problem is time-limited

rental contracts. In public renting, people's need is evaluated every fifth year, making it difficult to settle down. Renting from a private person, which is common in Norway, made the situation even more unpredictable to the interviewees, as the tenant could be asked to move at a short notice. The security of tenure is conditional and unpredictable.

## BUYING AS A ROUTE TO STABILITY

Home-ownership in some form is the preferred and most common way of living in the Nordic capitals (Andersson et al. 2007). Not finding stability in the rental sector, buying their own home might be an option for interviewees. In Oslo, this was the only segment that provided stability. But also in Helsinki and Stockholm, home-ownership was considered to offer more independence and better housing opportunities. However, the interviewees had not embraced the cultural values attached to ownership in the Nordic countries. According to interviewees, home-ownership was not a value in itself, but a pragmatic adaptation to approach a wanted housing situation. If the desired housing qualities were obtainable in the rental market, the preference for home-ownership would be more optional and related to the households' overall life situation.

The interviewees faced several obstacles for home-ownership. These were of financial, religious and social character. In all capitals, the price level of owner-occupied housing was at a level where buying a dwelling was difficult for most interviewees. A single mother in Oslo explained: *'If you have a good economy you help your children to buy a home. It's embarrassing for Somalis to stay on with parents when you marry because you can't afford a home of your own'*. In line with previous research (Søholt, 2013), some of the interviewees in Oslo were part of closed saving clubs to improve their economic situation and room of manoeuvre. Money saved in this way could provide for deposit in the rental market or contribute to owner's capital when taking out a mortgage. On the other hand, being part of reciprocal transnational relations means that remittances can limit possibilities to buy a home. In contrast to the other cities, sending remittances was perceived as conflicting with the ability to take care of own housing situation in Oslo. A recent study emphasises this point, showing that Somalis in Oslo exceed their capacity to remit (Carling et al., 2012).

Another factor working against a change to home-ownership was the need for a mortgage. Paying interests was seen as conflicting with the Quran. This was mentioned by interviewees in all the four capitals. Interviewees missed banks offering Sharia-compliant mortgages.<sup>6</sup> In Helsinki, a young Somali man working two part-time jobs said: *'I would have done that [bought an apartment or taken a mortgage] already but*

---

6. During 2012, it became possible in Denmark to borrow money for buying a dwelling without paying interest through a financing institute offering halal financing. This was very new when the interviews were conducted and only two interviewees mentioned this option. None of them considered applying for a loan.

*this bank system, these interests are the problem. Otherwise, the situation would be completely different*'. Interpretations considering the possibilities to take a mortgage with interest differed among the interviewees: some were strictly averse, while others were more pragmatic. A married man with four kids living in public rental in Helsinki said: *'I'm a liberal Muslim, so I would not necessarily see it [taking out a mortgage with interest] as a problem. It is a custom in this country and you can't get a flat without it'*. For others, taking a mortgage was justified as an enforced choice to adjust to the system, because of the lack of alternatives for improving their housing situation. In Oslo, buying was often seen as a necessary step to achieve the highly desired stability in life, despite religious reluctance. A young single mother of two living in private rental in Oslo explained: *'My sister has bought her flat. My brother will probably buy this year. You can't move all the time'*. The homeowner in Copenhagen still did not feel sure that their choice to buy was the right one religiously:

*'We really wanted to live like ordinary people so therefore we have taken the decision based on what we have read and what we have heard. But I still don't know to this day whether it is the right decision we have made or whether it is, what can you say, forbidden for us. That I don't know'*.

The conditionality of preference for home-ownership was especially mirrored in Copenhagen where only two of the 13 interviewees expressed a preference for buying. As noted above, as stability and decent housing was obtainable in public housing, most of the Copenhagen interviewees saw no reason to invest money in housing. Furthermore, several of the interviewees would not want to live in a house due to e.g. maintenance. Thus, the combination of not having a preference for owning or for living in a house and having good options in the public housing sector made it irrelevant to strive for something else.

In addition to financial limitations and religious reluctance, social stigmatisation by other Somalis stood out as an obstacle to becoming home-owners. Thus the home-owner in Copenhagen had lost friends because of taking out mortgages. A former home-owner in Oslo was convinced that ownership was the best option for those who wanted to stay in Oslo. Thus, he supported all his children in becoming home-owners despite expectations of possible stigmatisation by other Somalis. Even for those who could afford buying a unit and had a preference for owning and living in a house, it was a hard choice to make and it was not without social costs.

## EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

There are substantial differences between the countries concerning experienced discrimination. In Copenhagen, only one interview relayed an experience with discrimination: her neighbour had complained about her, causing her to be evicted. Rather,

several said that they were treated on equal terms with Danes. However, their experience was mostly limited to the public sector, where the allocation rules were specified and combined with a system of transparent waiting lists. In Oslo on the contrary, interviewees told stories about believed discrimination and racism. Some landlords refused Somali applicants bluntly by saying that they did not let to immigrants and especially not to Somalis. This is in line with earlier studies (Blom & Henriksen, 2008; Søholt & Astrup, 2009). In Helsinki, interviewees searching for a dwelling in the private market encountered substantial difficulties that they assumed were caused by discrimination. Many had lost faith in finding anything on the private market and had ruled out this option from their housing search. This was illustrated by a single woman in Helsinki, living unofficially with a friend: *'I don't want to go anymore to the showings of private rental flats, since I don't have any chance. Frankly, it is Finns first. That's why I haven't got anything'*. In Stockholm, an employed man explained that buying was not possible because of discrimination. *'People here [in an immigrant dense area] can pay the rent, they could pay for a mortgage, but they will never get a loan from the fine bank that has monopoly here in Sweden'*. For most other interviewees in Stockholm discrimination seemed to be more implicit; interviewees reported vague feelings about not being treated equally or tried to find explanations elsewhere. A divorced mother of three living in public rental in Stockholm said: *'Never [experienced racism or discrimination]. Think mostly it is misunderstandings because of language'*.

It is not an objective of this study to evaluate whether the interviewees were rejected because of actual racism and discrimination or because of other factors important for landlords. However, housing shortage opens up for landlords screening applicants and making high demands on presumptive tenants. The sum of difficulties experienced in accessing the housing market could make it difficult for house hunters to know what to do to get what they wanted, a decent home. Direct and indirect discrimination, as well as lack of transparency contributed to obscure how interviewees might influence their own housing situation.

## THE WELFARE SYSTEM

An interesting finding in Stockholm and Oslo was that the support system of the welfare state was not always perceived as logical by the interviewees. For example, the municipality of Oslo could guarantee the deposit needed for a rental contract, to help people short of finances. However, according to some interviewees, landlords did not always accept the guarantee, as they found it difficult to get the deposit back from the municipality. The availability of subsidised loans from the Norwegian Housing Bank to help people to buy a dwelling was almost unknown to interviewees in Oslo. Moreover, Somalis are not necessarily familiar with the bureaucracy of buying a home or with the tax subsidies favouring homeownership in the Nordic countries. In Stockholm, few of the interviewees had housing allowances, even though they were entitled to it. The amount offered was considered so low that it was easier not to accept

it, as there is an inherent risk of being obliged to pay back housing allowances if the yearly earnings turn out to be higher than anticipated. A female in Stockholm: *'I applied once and got 300 SEK [about 30 euro], then I thought: No. It was when lying in divorce, so I have never applied again'*. Thus, housing means intended to help the households' to master their housing situation instead complicated their situation and the households had to find alternative solutions. In Copenhagen and Helsinki, the welfare system was not experienced as counterproductive in the same way. In all the four cases, the interviewees presented a picture of the welfare system in the Nordic countries as workfare, i.e. that those who were without connection to the job market did not have as good a welfare insurance as the employed. An unemployed, single mother living in a women's centre in Copenhagen said: *'But us who do not work, we always hold the municipality's hand'*.

The aim of the welfare and integration policies in the Nordic countries are for immigrants to become structurally integrated in the main welfare arenas. In housing, this implies that immigrants find ways to act that increase their room of manoeuvre over time in such ways that they can achieve a decent housing situation, in similar ways as the majority. In general, the Somalis endeavoured to become integrated in the rental market, even though home-ownership was the common tenure in the Nordic capitals. In Copenhagen, they succeeded well in being structurally integrated in public housing, but seldom in other housing segments. In Oslo, those staying in rental housing had problems in settling down and establishing a home, because of time-limited contracts. On the other hand, those who endeavoured to become part of the owners' market would join the main-stream as long as they managed the costs and knew how to get public or private support, if needed. One advantage of the Norwegian system was that it pushed people to try to find paid work. The disadvantage was that there were few good housing alternatives for those outside the workforce. In the other Nordic capitals, it was possible to achieve stable housing situations even when unemployed.

## LOCAL CONTEXT AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

As noted previously, earlier research shows that local context and cultural background impact on how Somalis navigate new social systems. Three aspects related to cultural background intertwined with perceived local possibilities in the housing market; nomadism, reciprocity and religious convictions. When explaining Somalis' actions and preferences, a Somali culture of 'nomadism' is often referred to; a culture seen as incorporated in their 'world view' (Farah 2000; Griffiths 2002). If the nomadic lifestyle is the norm, we would expect interviewees to perceive the rental sector as ideal, as it is easy to move on. Indeed, the rental sector was preferred by the interviewees, but only if it offered stability. When, like in Oslo, rental contracts were time-limited and moves were frequent, not being able to attain a stable home was experienced as enforced and unwanted nomadism.

Another cultural aspect which influenced Somalis' housing possibilities was reciprocity. The core of such transactions was the expectations of exchanges of favors when in need (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993). In this study, reciprocity included possibilities to move in with others when in need of a place to stay, thus avoiding sleeping rough in the streets. In contrast, the practice of sending remittances decreased housing possibilities. In all the four capitals remittances were regarded as common and unquestionable if relatives were in need. An employed single mother in Stockholm explained: *'You can't wish for improvement of your dwelling when you know someone in Somalia is starving'*. However, in the Oslo case, the practice of remittances was questioned. Because of the high housing prices, remittances were considered as having a direct impact by reducing economic room for maneuver. As noted by a divorced mother of six: *'When I came to Norway I used to send money. Now I have to prioritize my bills, sometimes I can't pay'*.

The most pronounced cultural aspect impacting on Somalis' housing possibilities seemed to be religious convictions related to paying interests. As mentioned above, stability in housing was highly valued. Especially in Oslo, but also in Stockholm and Helsinki, interviewees found that stability was best obtained through home-ownership. However, as Somalis in general have moderate or low incomes, they need to take a mortgage to buy a dwelling. According to their interpretation of the Quran, it is forbidden to pay interests, thus making it difficult to invest in housing. How to consider this norm was especially relevant for those who could afford to buy. Some found reasons to adapt to the Nordic norms of home-ownership while others were reluctant. Moreover, the religious interpretation that it is prohibited to make profit can be a huge obstacle to having a progressive housing career in housing markets with rapidly increasing property prices. One interpretation was that they could not make use of a potential housing equity, but would have to give the profit away, e.g. to charity. Without the potential of making a profit on the investment, home ownership became less desirable. In this way, cultural belonging and local context together created a situation where navigation in the housing market became difficult and a progressive housing career obstructed.

An important aspect in relation to housing priorities was the interviewees' perceptions of the future i.e. whether they intended to stay, return to Somalia or migrate to a third country. For some, this question appeared to be difficult to answer. Most of the interviewees did not migrate voluntarily and some were hoping to be able to return. A woman in Copenhagen stated: *'In the future [I want to move back]. Yes. Of course. We haven't really unpacked our bags'*. Immigrants' commitments to the home country affect the meaningfulness to invest in housing in the settlement country (Constant, Roberts & Zimmermann, 2009; Dhalmann, 2011; Owusu, 1998). Most of the interviewees had close connections to Somalia through relatives still living there. However, to some interviewees returning had become difficult as their children were established in the migration country. They described a situation of betwixt and between; their feeling of integration varying individually across the Nordic capitals,

as well as their thoughts of fitting into Somali society. A young family man in Oslo explained: *'I feel like a stranger in Somalia. I don't feel like a Norwegian, but I feel being part of the Norwegian society'*.

Uncertainty about the future postponed decisions regarding home-ownership while in the Nordic countries. However, the specific local conditions in Oslo seemed to have influenced the interviewees into being more inclined towards home-ownership.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper has been to compare what Somalis strive for in the housing market across the Nordic capitals analysed in the light of how they perceived their possibilities for improving their housing situation and how this was affected by local context and cultural background. From the interview study we conclude that cultural background intersected with local context. Altogether, these considerations of how local context and cultural background intertwined, underlined that the two had to be studied together in order to understand perceived housing possibilities.

In all the cities, the interviewees wanted a stable and permanent housing situation. Stability was highlighted most among Somalis in Oslo where many felt like nomads in the rental market without being able to choose themselves when and where to move. However, interviewees in all the cities wanted the possibility to influence and improve their housing situation. The extremes were found between perceived possibilities in Copenhagen and Oslo. While a desired housing career was experienced as possible inside the public housing sector in Copenhagen, a shift to ownership was believed necessary to obtain a stable housing situation in Oslo. Apart from stability, better and/or bigger dwellings, specific neighbourhood characteristics and specific locations were the main preferences. Across the cities, tenure, and especially ownership, was not regarded as a preference in itself. However, in Stockholm, Helsinki and especially Oslo, home-ownership was perceived as an important, necessary means to obtain a better housing situation. In all four capitals, ownership entailed loans with interests, something that the interviewees were reluctant to obtain because of religious norms and/or negative attitudes in their particular Somali community. Some evaluated that a stable housing situation was more important than religious norms, while others put religion before housing situation. Thus, the prioritising of cultural convictions to local context was individual. Only in Oslo was remittances evaluated as a direct obstacle to improving one's housing situation; leading to a conflict for the interviewees between living up to cultural expectations to remit money to people in need, and being able to work for a stable housing situation.

The analyses showed how local context influenced not only the possibilities of Somalis in the housing market but also their housing preferences. At the same time, cultural background evidently impacted preferences. When local context and cultural



background were at odds, the interviewed Somalis negotiated this conflict individually, inside the frames of the social settings they referred to.

The comparative approach was a key to identifying the importance of context within the seemingly similar Nordic welfare states. The approach highlights the way in which cultural background and local context are at odds to a varying extent in these capitals. This led to different priorities for balancing local context and cultural background in the translation into perceived housing possibilities. In Helsinki and Oslo, interviewees highlighted how lack of transparency and predictability in access to housing could lead to a feeling of powerlessness. As the Danish flexible allocation rules gave priority to those in employment or studying, the waiting list system of public housing became less transparent for the unemployed. If widespread, this could worsen Danish Somalis' perceptions of possibilities to improve their housing situation and thus their agency.

In conclusion, perceived housing possibilities arise in an intersection between individual capacities, cultural background and local context. The suggested implications for future research on ethnic minorities' housing possibilities in specific locations are thus two-fold. One, context-specific patterns cannot automatically be generalised to other contexts. Two, the intersection of individual capacities, cultural background and local context is of an ever-changing nature, thus having an ever-changing impact on individual preferences and possibilities. By allowing for these implications in future studies, the dynamic nature of the housing career is taken seriously.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by the NORFACE research programme on Migration in Europe – Social, Economic, Cultural and Policy Dynamics and is part of the research project '*Nordic welfare states and the dynamics and effects of ethnic residential segregation*'.

## REFERENCES:

**Alba, R. & Logan, J. (1992)**

*Assimilation and stratification in the homeownership patterns of racial and ethnic groups, International Migration Review, 26(4), pp. 1314-1341.*

**Andersson, E., Naumanen, P., Ruonavaara, H. & Turner, B. (2007)**

*Housing, socio-economic security and risks. A qualitative comparison of household attitudes in Finland and Sweden, European Journal of Housing Policy 7(2), pp. 151-172.*



**Andersson, R. & Molina, I. (2003)**

*Racialization and Migration in urban segregation process. Key issues for critical geographers. In: Öhamn, J. and Simonsen, K. (eds.) Voices from the North – New trends in Nordic human geography, Aldershot: Ashgate.*

**Andersson, R., Dhalmann, H., Holmquist, E., Kauppinen, T.M., Magnusson Turner, L., Skifter Andersen, H., Søholt, S., Vaattovaara, M., Vilkkama, K., Wessel, T. & Yousfi, S. (2010)**

*Immigration, Housing and Segregation in the Nordic Welfare States (Helsinki: Helsinki University Print).*

**Bang Nielsen, K. (2004)**

*Next stop Britain: The influence of transnational networks on the secondary movement of Danish Somalis, Sussex Migration network paper no 22.*

**Bengtsson, B. (ed.) (2013)**

*Varför så olika? Nordisk bostadspolitik i jämförande historiskt ljus, Malmö: Égalité.*

**Bevelander, P. Bilde, R.H., Dahlstedt, I., Eskelund, M., Hansen, L.M., Macura, M., Pedersen, K.G., & Østby, L. (2013)**

*Scandinavia's Population Groups Originating from Developing Countries: Change and Integration. TemaNord 2013:561. Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers.*

**Bleiklie, I. (1997)**

*Service Regimes in Public Welfare Administration. Case Studies of Street-Level Bureaucrats and Professionals as Decision Makers (Oslo: Tano Aschehoug).*

**Bloemraad, I. (2013)**

*The promise and pitfalls of comparative research design in the study of migration, Migration Studies, 1 (1), pp. 27-46.*

**Blom, S. & Henriksen, K. (2008)**

*Living Conditions among Immigrants in Norway 2005/2006 Report 2008:5, Oslo: Statistics Norway.*

**Cole, I. & Robinson, D. (2003)**

*Somali housing experiences in England (Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University).*

**Constant, A., Roberts, R. & Zimmermann, K. (2009)**

*Ethnic identity and immigrant homeownership, Urban Studies, 46(9), pp. 1879–1898.*

**Coolen, H. & Hoekstra, J. (2001)**

*Values as determinants of preferences for housing attributes, Journal of Housing and the Built Environment, 16: 285–306.*

**Dhalmann, H. (2011)**

*Yhden uhka, toisen toive? - Somalien ja venäläisten asumistoiveet etnisen segregaatiokehityksen valossa? Doctoral dissertation, University of Helsinki, 2011.*

**Dhalmann, H. (2013)**

*Explaining ethnic residential preferences – The case of Somalis and Russians in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, Housing Studies 28(3), pp. 389-408.*

**Dhalmann, H. & Vilkama, K. (2009)**

*Housing policy and the ethnic mix in Helsinki, Finland: perceptions of city officials and Somali immigrants, Journal of Housing and the Built Environment 24, pp. 423-439.*

**Egeberg, M. (2004)**

*An organisational approach to European integration: Outline of a complementary perspective, European Journal of Political Research, 43(2), pp. 199-219.*

**Fangen, K. (2006)**

*Humiliation as Experienced by Somalis in Norway, Journal of Refugee Studies, 19(1), pp. 69-93.*

**Farah, N. (2000)**

*Yesterday, Tomorrow. Voices from the Somali diaspora (London and New York: Cassel).*

**Griffiths, D. (2002)**

*Somalian and Kurdish refugees in London. New identities in the diaspora (London: Ashgate).*

**Heckmann, F. & Schnapper, D. (2003)**

*The Integration of Immigrants in European Societies. National Differences and Trends of Convergence. Stuttgart: Lucius und Lucius.*

**Jaakkola, M. (2005)**

*Suomalaisten suhtautuminen maahanmuuttajiin vuosina 1987–2003. Työpoliittinen tutkimus 286. (Helsinki: Ministry of Employment).*

**Kleist, N. (2007)**

*Ambivalent encounters: negotiating boundaries of Danishness, Somaliness, and belonging, in: A.M. Kusow & S. Björk (Eds) From Mogadishu to Dixon. The Somali Diaspora in a Global Perspective (New Jersey: Red Sea Press).*

**Lindberg, E., Gärling, T., Montgomery, H. and Waara, R. (1987)**

*People's Evaluation of Housing Attributes. A Study of Underlying Beliefs and Values, Scandinavian Housing and Planning Research, 4, 81–103.*

**Magnusson, L. & Özüekren, A.S. (2002)**

*The housing careers of Turkish households in middle-sized Swedish municipalities, Housing Studies, 17(3), pp. 465-486.*

**Markkanen, S. & Harrison, M. (2013)**

*'Race', deprivation and the research agenda: revisiting housing, ethnicity and neighbourhoods, Housing Studies, 28(3), pp. 409-428.*

**Maslow, A. ([1954] 1987)**

*Motivation and Personality. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.*

**Mensah, J. & Williams, C. J. (2013)**

*Cultural dimensions of African immigrant housing in Toronto: A qualitative insight, Housing Studies, DOI:10.1080/02673037.2014.848266.*

**Murdie, R. (2002)**

*The housing careers of Polish and Somali newcomers in Toronto's rental market, Housing Studies, 17(3), pp. 423-443.*

**Owusu, T.Y. (1998)**

*To buy or not to buy: Determinants of home ownership among Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto, The Canadian Geographer, 42(1), pp. 40-52.*

**Phillips, D. (2006)**

*Moving towards integration: The housing of asylum seekers and refugees in Britain, Housing Studies, 21(4), pp. 539-553.*

**Portes, A. & Sensenbrenner, J. (1993)**

*Embeddedness and immigration: Notes on the social determinants of economic action, American Journal of Sociology, 98:6, pp. 1320-1350.*

**Rapoport, A (2001)**

*Theory, culture and housing, Housing, theory and society, 17:145-165.*

**Schaffer, B. & Huang, W. (1975)**

*Distribution and the Theory of Access, Development and Change*, 6:2, pp. 13-36.

**Schmauchs, U.(2006)**

*Den osynliga vardagsrasismens realitet . Avhandling sociologiska institutionen, nr 43, Umeå: Umeå Universitet.*

**Shah, S. (2004)**

*The Researcher/Interviewer in Intercultural Context: A Social Intruder! British Educational Research Journal*, 30(4), pp. 549-575.

**Simich, L., Mawani, F., Wu, F. & Noor, A. (2004)**

*Meanings of social support, coping, and help-seeking strategies among immigrants and refugees in Toronto. CERIS Working Paper no. 31 (Toronto: CERIS).*

**Skifter Andersen, H. & Skak, M. (2008)**

*Privat boligudlejning. Motiver, strategier og økonomi 2008:1, Hørsholm: Statens Byggeforskningsinstitut.*

**Skifter Andersen, H. (2010)**

*Spatial Assimilation in Denmark? Why do Immigrants Move to and from Multi-ethnic Neighbourhoods? Housing Studies*, 25(3), pp. 281-300.

**Skifter Andersen, H., Magnusson Turner, L. & Søholt, S. (2013)**

*The special importance of housing policy for ethnic minorities: evidence from a comparison of four Nordic countries, International Journal of Housing Policy*, 13(1), pp. 17-36.

**Søholt, S. & Astrup, K. (2009)**

*Etniske minoriteter og forskjellsbehandling i leiemarkedet. NIBR-report 2009:2. Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research.*

**Søholt, S. (2013)**

*Pathways to Integration: Cross-cultural Adaptations to the Housing Market in Oslo, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, DOI:10.1080/1369183X.2013.859069.

**Tinker, C. & Armstrong, N. (2008)**

*From the outside looking in: How an awareness of difference can benefit the qualitative research process, The Qualitative Report*, 13(1), pp. 53-60.

**Tomlins, R. (1997)**

*Officer discretion and minority ethnic housing provision, Netherlands Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 12(2), pp. 179-197.

**Vono-de-Vilhena, D. & Bayona-Carrasco, J. (2012)**

*Transition towards homeownership among foreign-born immigrants in Spain from a life-course approach, Population, Space and Place, 18(1), pp. 100-115.*

**Wingens, M, Windzio, M, de Valk, H & Aybek C (2011)**

*'The Sociological Life Course Approach and Research on Migration and Integration'. In: Wingens, M, Windzio, M, de Valk, H & Aybek C (eds.): A life-Course Perspective on Migration and Integration. Springer.*

**Özüekren, A.S. & van Kempen, R. (2002)**

*Housing Careers of Minority Ethnic Groups: Experiences, Explanations and Prospects, Housing Studies: 17(3), pp. 365-379.*



## SUMMARY

This thesis explores the preconditions of change and the possibilities for change in the housing careers of Somalis and Turks through an application of life course analysis. By directing inquiry to the process by which lives are lived and highlighting the importance of both structure and agency, life course analysis offers a rewarding framework for an analysis of housing careers. The aim of the thesis is pursued through two strands explored in four independent papers. The first strand focuses on one specific transition in the housing career, leaving home, and is based register data analysis. The main findings are that some ethnic differences in home-leaving patterns persist but that they diminish when controlling for key covariates on home-leaving and settlement patterns. An assimilation process, while slow-moving, is taking place. The second strand of the thesis focuses on change more generally in the housing careers of Somalis and Turks through analyses of in-depth interviews. The main finding is that while Turkish migrant workers and Somali refugees face constraints in relation to housing, there are choices available to them in the Copenhagen housing market. Change comes about in the intersection between preferences, resources, possibilities and restraints. All in all, the thesis offers an optimistic evaluation of the housing situation of Somalis and Turks in the Danish housing market.