Leaving home in Europe: 
a first look at Eastern Europe

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Part of ALICE project

• Analysis of Life Chances in Europe
• Multidisciplinary project based at ISER
• Four strands
  – Incomes, deprivation and poverty
  – Families, households and work
  – Two methodological strands

http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/tags/alice
Motivation

• Leaving home is one of the key factors in the transition to adulthood
• Huge variations in Western Europe
• Concern that late home-leaving in Southern Europe hinders independence, family formation, etc.
• Large literature on home-leaving in Western Europe; very little (yet) on Eastern Europe
• Two questions:
  – How do home-leaving patterns differ across Europe?
  – To what extent can cross-national differences in home-leaving be explained by observable factors?
What we know - descriptive

• Home-leaving patterns:
  – Southern Europe: late home-leaving, linked to marriage
  – Nordic: early, linked to single living
  – Northern Europe: intermediate, somewhat heterogeneous
  – Eastern Europe: later than N, earlier than S (Billari and Liefbroer 2010)

• Reasons for these differences:
  – Income sufficiency, employment, wages, job security (Aassve et al 2002)
  – Mortgage markets (Martins & Villanueva 2006)
  – Social/Cultural norms
  – Strength of family ties, religion (Reher 1998, Iacovou 2010)
Median age at leaving home - men

- < 3% Catholic
- 75% Catholic
- > 90% Catholic

Countries: DK, SE, FI, FR, NL, DE, UK, BE, AT, IE, LU, ES, CY, PT, IT, EL
Median age at leaving home – men
What about Eastern Europe?
Median age at leaving home - men

Again, religion fits reasonably well.....
Living with partner and parents (men aged 18-28 years)
Median age at home-leaving for women

Bulgarian women leave to live with their in-laws!
Briefly….

- Age at home-leaving in Eastern Europe very heterogeneous
  - Estonia looks similar to North-west Europe
  - Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and Bulgaria more like Southern Europe
- Late home-leaving correlated (but not exactly) with high incidence of Catholicism
Multivariate analysis

• Use EU-SILC
  – Analysis based on 2008 data, 2007 for Denmark and Greece

• Advantages
  – First opportunity to look at home-leaving across [virtually] all countries of Eastern Europe

• Problems
  – No household grid!
  – Many young people not followed on leaving home (so can’t distinguish between different destinations)
  – Some countries have not provided longitudinal data files (DE; FR; MT)
Multivariate analysis

• Sample: young people (aged between 18 and 35 years) living in parental home in year \( t \)

• Dependent variable:
  – Binary variable, coded one if the young person left home at \( t+1 \), zero otherwise

• Countries grouped into regions
  – Nordic [SE, DK, FI, NL]
  – North-Western [UK, (FR), (DE), AT, BE, LU]
  – Southern [IT, ES, PT, GR, CY, IE]
  – Eastern (I) [Baltic states, CZ, HU]
  – Eastern (II) [PL, SI, SK, BG (RO)]

• Logit regressions separately by sex and country group
  – Report marginal effects
Explanatory variables

- Young person’s age
- Young person’s own income
  - Expect this to be positively related with exits from family home
- Parents’ income
  - Direction of relationship may vary according to cultural factors
- Parents’ income interacted with age group
- Employment
  - Reference category is working
  - student/unemployed/inactive
- Home environment
  - mum has a job?
  - Number of siblings
  - Lone parent/step family
- Country dummies
Results – own income

![Bar chart showing results for own income across different regions for men and women. The chart indicates significant differences in income between men and women in the Nordic region, with a smaller gap in the North and South regions. There are also significant differences in the East regions, with men generally having higher income compared to women.]
Results – parental income
Parental income – interacting with age

Basic effect (18-25 age group)

With 25-29 interaction

With 30-35 interaction
Family variables - stepfamily
Family variables: number of siblings

- Nordic
- North
- South
- East (1)
- East (2)

Men: **
Women: **
Conclusions

– This really is just a first look!
– Would prefer data which included destinations on leaving home
– However, we have some interesting results
  • Eastern Europe is rather heterogeneous in relation to home-leaving
  • Early in Baltic states, particularly EE - also CZ and HU
  • Very late in BG, SK and SI
  • When we come to model different destinations, will have to model living with in-laws as a separate state across BG, RO and elsewhere
  • Own income is related to exits from parental home everywhere – but far more so in Nordic and Northern countries
  • Parental income is more strongly related to exits in Nordic and Northern countries than in Southern and Eastern Europe
  • Mixed evidence on “family ties”
% of young people living alone - men
Median age at entering partnership - men
Median age at entering partnership - women
Fenger 2007 typology

1. Conservative-corporatist type (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands and Spain
2. Social democratic Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden
3. New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States
4. Former-USSR type (Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Ukraine)
5. Post-communist European type Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia
6. Developing welfare states type (Georgia, Romania and Moldova).
Notes

• Median ages calculated as follows:
  – Calculate the % of young people in the state in question for each age group (eg, for leaving home, calculate the % of young people who have left home at age 18, 19, 20 etc)
  – Plot this on a smoothed curve (like a kernel regression)
  – Read off the curve the age at which 50% of young people are living away from home
  – This is NOT exactly a median, but it acts like one
  – And in particular, you don’t have to worry about repeated exits and re-entries.