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## Nest-leaving patterns in Sweden

To leave the parental home is a big step toward becoming an adult and is often a condition for further education or starting a family. Earlier studies have shed light on problems young people face when ready to leave the parental home, such as difficulties in finding affordable apartments (Ungdomsstyrelsen 2011, Hyresgästföreningen 2011). The focus of this study is to examine when youths in Sweden leave the parental home and how this has changed over the last 20 years. Ongoing studies are focusing on where the young home leavers move and what they do for a living once they have left the family home.

### Data material and method

The study is based on register data containing information on women and men that left the parental home for the first time during the period 1990–2012. The preliminary results presented here are limited to women and men who lived in Sweden at age 15 and at the time of the move was between 15 and 35 years old. For each year during the period the median age at the time of nest-leaving has been calculated. The results are age-standardized.

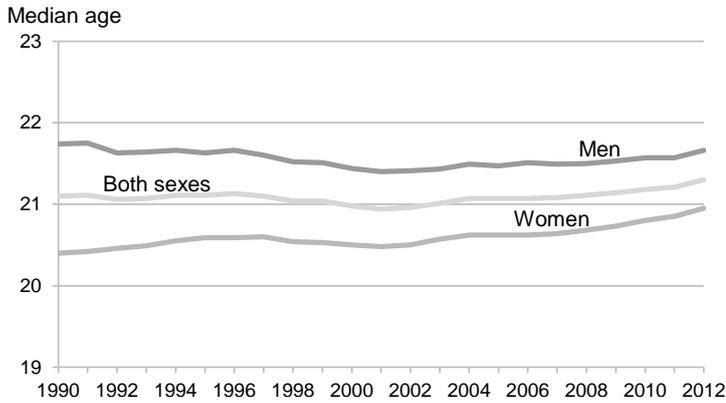
One disadvantage register data brings is that the information in the registers are limited to the first *registered* move away from the family home and not necessarily the first *actual* move away from home. This means that overestimation of the nest-leaving ages exists in this study. Although, register data is a very useful source of information since statistics can be made for rather small groups. This enables us to study changes in nest-leaving over time for men and women that for example are living in metropolitan areas versus sparsely populated areas.

### Results

An earlier study on home leaving patterns in Sweden show that sex, regional residence, Swedish or foreign background and family type have an impact on when women and men leave the family home (Statistics Sweden, 2008). Therefore these specific variables are followed up in this study.

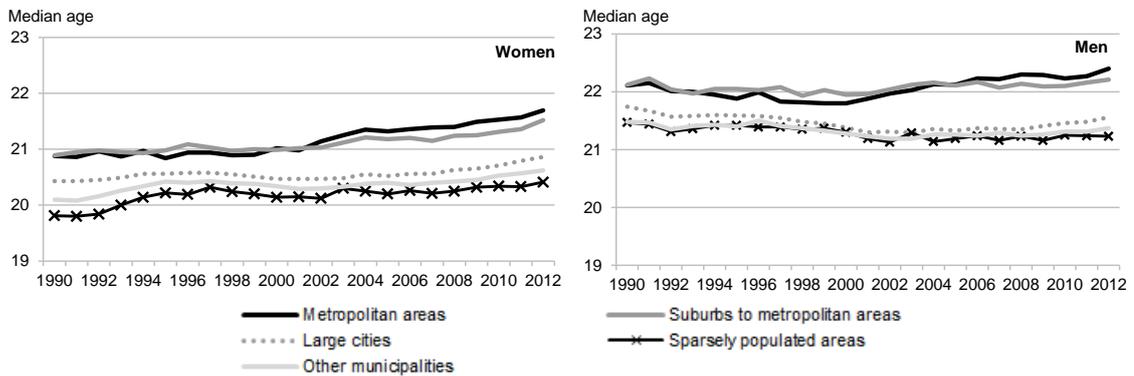
The results show that women today leave home more than half a year earlier than men. About 20 years ago the median age at home leaving differed with more than a year between women and men. Over time women's age at home leaving has slowly increased and today they leave the parental home at the age of 21. This is slightly later than women did in the beginning of the 1990s. The development of the median age when leaving home among men is less pronounced and during 2012 the median age was at the same level as it was in 1990, almost 22 years.

**Figure 1**  
**Median age when leaving home 1990-2012**



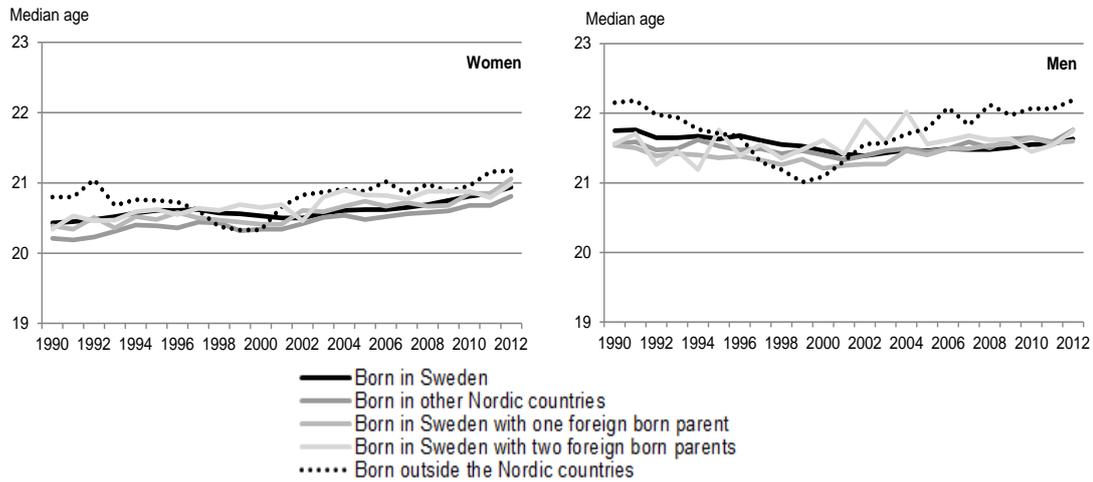
Further, the results show that people in more sparsely populated areas leave the parental home earlier than those in metropolitan areas. The median age at home leaving is closer to 22 years for women in metropolitan areas and the suburbs and over 22 years for men. The increase over time has been more pronounced during the last decade among women while the increase among men has been more modest.

**Figure 2**  
**Median age when leaving home by region 1990-2012**



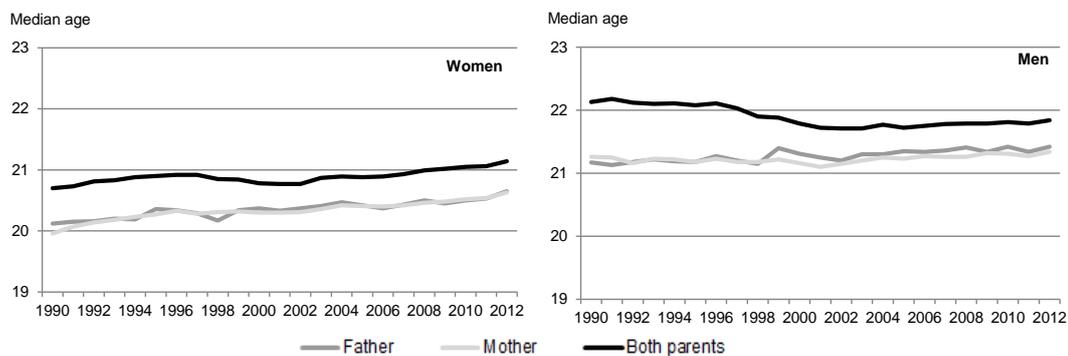
The results show no distinct differences in home leaving between groups of people born in Sweden or the other Nordic countries. The only group that differs in home leaving is the group born outside the Nordic countries, especially so among men. The men born outside the Nordic countries left the family home at the median age of over 22 years, half a year later than the other groups of differing background. The highest median age is found among men born in Europe outside the EU, among them the median age is over 23 years.

**Figure 3**  
**Median age when leaving home by background 1990-2012**



The results also show that women and men who lived with both parents in the family home move away later than the average home leaver while women and men who lived with only one parent moved away earlier.

**Figure 4**  
**Median age when leaving home by family type 1990-2012**



## Discussion

Earlier studies has explained that men move away from the family home later than women because men do military service and don't officially leave the parental home before the military service has ended. Since the middle of the 1990s the share of men doing military service has decreased sharply, thus making it possible for men to move away from the family home earlier than before. So this can, at least partly, explain the decreased difference in the nest-leaving ages between men and women. But men today still move away from the family home later than women. One reason for this can be that women are younger than men when moving in together with a partner. Ongoing studies will analyze if women more often than men move from the family home to live with a partner.

The general findings on the shift toward higher ages at nest-leaving during the last decade can likely to a large extent be explained by increased housing costs as well as the decline in supply of rental apartments. This fact is particularly valid in the metropolitan areas. How the pattern in home leaving changes over time can also be affected by the general economic situation in the country. In the study we use the employment rate for young men and women to show the general economic situation in Sweden. But the shifts in the employment rate does not clearly follow the shifts in the share of young people leaving the family home. One reason for the economic situation to have a rather small impact on when youths leave the parental home is perhaps that a lot of young men and women does not move away from home to work but to study at universities. Ongoing work with this study is focused on where the young home leavers move and what they do for a living once they have left the family home.

### References

- Statistics Sweden (2008) *Leaving home*. Demographic reports 2008:5  
Ungdomsstyrelsen (2011) *Fokus 11 En analys av ungas bostadssituation*. Ungdomsstyrelsens skrifter 2011:4.  
Hyresgästföreningen (2011) *Unga vuxnas boende i Sverige 2011*.