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Research Article

Residential mobility and migration of the divorced and separated

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research article

Residential mobility and migration of the divorced and separated

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Abstract

Separation is known to have a disruptive effect on the housing careers of those involved, mainly because a decrease in resources causes (temporary) downward moves on the housing ladder. Little is known about the geographies of the residential mobility behaviour of the separated. Applying a hazard analysis to retrospective life-course data for the Netherlands, we investigate three hypotheses: individuals who experienced separation move more often than do steady singles and people in intact couple relationships, they are less likely to move over long distances, and they move more often to cities than people in intact couple relationships. The results show that separation leads to an increase in mobility, to moves over short distance for men with children, and to a prevalence of the city as a destination of moves.

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1. Introduction

In his classical work *Why Families Move* Rossi (1955) showed that there is a close relationship between household careers and housing careers in the life course. Life events such as leaving the parental home, getting married, and having children often coincide with upward moves on the housing ladder. Rossi developed his analytical framework in the 1950s, i.e., in the 'golden age of the family' when household careers where relatively standard, with little tolerance of deviant household behaviour (Clark and Dieleman 1996). Nowadays there is much more variation in household careers, with a wider variety in life events and their ordering and timing. These changes made household careers less stable and they thus also had an effect on the differentiation in housing careers (Mulder 1993, Clark and Dieleman 1996). In response, the theoretical paradigm within which households and their housing career are studied has shifted from the family-life cycle (Glick 1947) via the 'expanded life cycle' (Stapleton 1980, Glick 1989) to the life course (Elder 1985, Willekens 1999).

One of the main causes of a wider variation in life courses is the rise in separation[3]. In most Western countries, divorce rates increased strongly after Rossi wrote his influential book, especially during the 1970s. In the Netherlands, for example, of all marriages in 1971, about one marriage in every eight was estimated to end in divorce, against approximately one in every three in 2001[4] (CBS 2006a). For a considerable part of the population, separation has become a relatively common life event, especially when we also take the dissolution of non-marital consensual unions into account. Although exact figures are hard to find, we know that consensual unions are dissolved at a much higher rate than marriages (Liefbroer and Dykstra 2000, Latten 2004).

The rise in separation has brought more instability to household careers, and this has its effects on housing careers. Most of what is known about housing careers after separation concerns the type, tenure, and quality of housing. Research shows that separation has a disruptive effect on the housing careers of those involved. Because of a

[3] In this study, we use the term 'separation' to indicate the break up of both marital and non-marital unions. To define the moment of break up of marital unions, we use the moment of *de facto* separation, i.e., not *de jure* dissolution.

[4] Calculated as the percentage of marriages that will end in divorce if the duration-specific divorce rates and death rates in a certain year would continue.
Divorce rates decreased slightly after 2001, but this decrease masks a juridical 'escape route' to divorce that has been an alternative to regular divorce since 2002. Marriages can be converted into 'registered partnerships' and subsequently, a registered partnership can be dissolved through a civil procedure; this trajectory is a lot faster than a traditional divorce, and it is therefore often called a 'flash divorce'. If 'flash divorces' were included in the divorce rates, we would see that divorce rates remained fairly stable and even slightly increased in 2005 (Van Huis 2005, De Graaf 2006).

drop in resources, the separated more often experience downward moves on the housing ladder: moves from large to smaller and lower-quality dwellings, moves from owner-occupation into rented housing and from single-family dwellings into multi-family dwellings (Sullivan 1986, Schouw and Dieleman 1987, McCarthy and Simpson 1991, Van Noortwijk *et al.* 1992, Feijten 2005). Especially the housing careers of women and one-parent families are negatively affected (Sullivan 1986, Spain 1990, McCarthy and Simpson 1991, Poortman 2000, Feijten 2005). Both separated men and women are likely to move to (temporarily) shared housing following a divorce. For example, they move back to their parents or move in with friends. This is considered a serious disruption in their housing careers. In Great Britain, 61% of women separated in 1976 ended up in shared housing after separation while only 14% lived in shared housing before this event (Sullivan 1986). For the Netherlands of 1981, Schouw and Dieleman (1987) showed that 37% of men and women moved into shared housing after a separation. The downward move may impair the well-being of the individuals involved (Anthony 1997, South *et al.* 1998, Bratt 2002, Gram-Hanssen 2005) and the impact on peoples' lives may be long lasting when people are not able to 'repair' their housing career in the years after the divorce.

Part of the existing research on divorce and housing is inspired by a concern about increasing housing demand and affordability problems in the housing market (Dieleman and Schouw 1989, Van Noortwijk *et al.* 1992, Gober 1992, Böheim and Taylor 2000, Buzar *et al.* 2005). Separation and divorce lead to an increased demand for housing. For the early 1990s, it was estimated that every separation leads to a demand for 0.4 extra dwelling compared to a couple that has not separated/divorced (Van Noortwijk *et al.* 1992). The majority of the separated look for affordable, rented housing, a type of housing that is also sought after by (young) starters on the housing market. This increases pressure on this submarket, so that it has become increasingly difficult to satisfy demand (Schouw and Dieleman 1987, McCarthy and Simpson, 1991).

Although we know a lot about the effects of separation on housing careers, little is known about the effect of separation on the *spatial* career of those involved (a recent exception is Flowerdew and Al-Hamad 2004). The spatial career refers to the geographical aspects of the housing career in terms of the occurrence, distance, and direction of moves over the life course. Separation has an effect on the occurrence of the moves of the separated because the event of becoming separated involves at least a move of one of the ex-partners. But even if this event-related move is not considered, the separated can be expected to be more likely to move in the years following the separation. One of the reasons is that moving out of the joint home often constitutes a leap downwards on the housing ladder, which necessitates at least one 'adjustment' move in order to recover to the old level of housing quality (McCarthy and Simpson 1991, Dieleman and Schouw 1989). The separated can also be expected to show

different behaviour in terms of the distance and direction of their moves because of their specific household history, a drop in financial resources, their ties to children and other members of their social network, and the new living arrangement as a one-person or one-parent household.

This paper studies the *occurrence*, *distance*, and *direction* of the moves of separated people. We use the life-course perspective as an analysing framework. This is because the spatial behaviour of the separated is strongly determined by their past experience and by circumstances in parallel careers. The life-course approach is very suited to answer the question whether or not the effect of separation on the spatial career is lasting, whether it fades as time goes by, or whether one patches up by starting a new relationship. The hypotheses derived from the life-course approach and from the empirical literature on separation and housing are tested on retrospective life-course data for the Netherlands, applying the method of hazard analysis on discrete time data. We estimate several types of regression models, using time-varying covariates to analyse the probability of moving, the moving distance, and the residential environments moved to.

2. Background and hypotheses

2.1 Separation as a manifestation of life-course differentiation

In the past decades, societal phenomena such as individualisation, strong economic prosperity, and increasing institutionalisation have caused a shift towards more differentiated and destandardised life courses (Rindfuss *et al.* 1987, Liefbroer and Dykstra 2000). Demographers developed the theory of the Second Demographic Transition (Van de Kaa 1994, Lesthaeghe 1995), which puts forward structural, social, and cultural developments as causes for the destandardisation of life courses. Among the sociologists, Beck's theory on the Risk Society (1992) and the Modernisation and Postmodernisation theory (Inglehart, 1977, Giddens 1991) use similar elements to explain the changes in 20th century life courses.

The increased variety in life courses is often referred to as 'differentiation'. On the one hand, differentiation has increased because 'cultural scripts' – norms on how, and in which order events should be experienced – have weakened (Buchmann 1989, Settersten and Hägestad 1996). On the other, it has increased because, as Winter and Stone (1999: 42) put it 'individuals respond to socio-structural uncertainties with an individual orientation rather than one derived from a collective consciousness or group norm about what one should be doing at a particular age'. Several studies on the Netherlands have empirically confirmed that the differentiation in life courses has increased in the second half of the 20th century through a wider range of life events and a more scattered pattern

of ages and ordering of life events by subsequent birth cohorts (Liefbroer and De Jong Gierveld 1993, Manting 1994, Liefbroer 1999). One of the most apparent manifestations of this increasing differentiation and life-course disorder is the rise in separation and divorce.

Annual divorce rates in the Netherlands rose from 3 to 10.5 in every 1,000 marriages between 1950 and 2001 (CBS 2006b). European figures on divorce rates show that in North Europe divorce rates have stabilized or even decreased over the last decade. These countries were the early adaptors at the outset of divorce, and now again they are the first in showing a stabilisation in divorce behaviour. In West and East Europe, divorce rates are more heterogeneous and in South Europe, divorce rates are still the lowest in Europe (but relatively speaking, they increased the most between 1990 and 2000). This geographical division reflects the phases through which Western countries progress according to the theory of the Second Demographic Transition, the Nordic countries being the furthest ahead in this development and Southern Europe being the last.

2.2 Discontinuity and disorder in individual life courses

At the individual level, the increased differentiation in life courses means that one event or state in a life course does not necessarily lead to a predefined following state, and that acts involving a commitment no longer guarantee continuity (Winter and Stone 1999). Nevertheless, marriage has apparently not lost its attraction to large numbers of people. Cramer (2003) suggests that, although divorce rates have increased, it is still the intention and promise of security and continuity that draws people to marriage. People try to rule out uncertainty, and one way of doing this is by making commitments (Becker 1964, Feijten *et al.* 2003). Getting married, having a child, and buying a home are among the life events bringing on the strongest commitments to a human life.

Yet, ever fewer people succeed in sticking to the commitments they made, as the increasing divorce rates show. Unmarried cohabitation has become a common alternative for those seeking a less committing alternative to marriage. It is often claimed that socio-cultural norms regarding intimate relationships have slowly shifted from one single monogamous relationship for life to serial monogamy. This implies that the majority of people experience one or more separations in their life, and that separation becomes almost just as common as union formation (Simpson 1994). It also implies that being separated is more often a temporary state from which one exits through a new relationship.

Although separation is more common nowadays, it is a stressful event for those who experience it, and it re-introduces new uncertainties to life (at the same time, it

opens up new options for the future). Separation usually comes at high financial, social, and emotional costs (Holmes and Rahe 1967). Changing house as a result of separation tears people (especially children) away from a place filled with memories of better times (Anthony 1997, South *et al.* 1998). Separation is so stressful because it not only disrupts the relationship career but also strongly affects parallel careers, such as the fertility career, the professional career, and the housing career. Separation can be expected to be most stressful in case of marital dissolution as marriage still is a much larger commitment than a consensual union.

2.3 Consequences of separation for spatial careers

Since spatial and residential mobility are closely related to life events and life-course stages, the increased differentiation and disorder in life courses can also be expected to increase the differentiation and discontinuity in spatial careers. We expect separation to have an effect on the spatial aspects of housing careers (distance and direction) and the occurrence of moves because moves triggered by separation are deviant compared to moves triggered by other life events. They are deviant in three different ways.

First, they are urgent. A couple that has decided to split up usually wants to effectuate that decision as soon as possible. This implicates that they will settle for almost any type of housing, even if it is rather poor compared to the type of housing they leave behind, or even if it is not situated in a preferred location. A recent comparative study has found that especially men suffer from a break-up in terms of housing and access to durable consumer goods immediately following the break up (Aassve *et al.* 2006).

Second, moves following a separation are often restricted in financial terms. People who separate are often financially afflicted in multiple ways: the direct cost of a separation (legal costs); the loss of benefit from economies of scale; and in most cases, a decrease of total household income. Many women are left without any income after a divorce because they do not have any independent source of income. But even if women have their own source of income, the gender wage gap on the labour market causes women on their own to be worse off then men (see Poortman 2000 and Manting and Bouman 2004 for evidence on the Netherlands, and Jarvis and Jenkins 1999 for the UK). The worsened economic position of women can be very persistent and long lasting. Manting and Bouman (2004) showed that in the first five years after marital break up many women are deprived and only slowly patch up. A new relationship helps in regaining a better economic position for women, but not for men (mainly because men do not suffer much economically from divorce in the first place).

Third, moves triggered by separation are spatially restricted, especially when a couple has a child or children. Usually one of the ex-partners gets custody over the child(ren) and a visiting arrangement is made for the other parent. This means that the non-custody parent has to live at such a distance to the child(ren) that it is feasible to see them on a regular basis. Also, their housing has to be suitable to have children around, especially when children stay overnight. In the Netherlands, around 82% of minor children live with the mother and only 11% live with the father. Over the last decades, the frequency of contact between minor children and non-custody fathers has increased (Fokkema *et al.* 2002). Nowadays around 60% of non-custody fathers see their children at least once a week, and around 28% of non-custody fathers have their children sleep over at least once a week.

These above characteristics of moves due to separation lead to a set of hypotheses about the occurrence, distance, and direction of moves by separated people. The first hypothesis is that separated people move considerably more often than do steady singles and people in intact couple relationships. Some older studies have found this to be true for the first years after the dissolution of marital union (McCarthy and Simpson 1991), but we will test this also for cohabitants and for a longer period after the separation. We expect that after the initial move driven by the separation itself (at least one of the partners has to leave the joint home) at least one or more 'adjustment' moves have to be made in order to recover the old level of housing quality. If people moved in with family or friends directly after separation, this is very likely to be a temporary situation. Some people will manage to find decent housing soon afterwards, but for others it may take longer before their housing situation is to their satisfaction.

The second hypothesis is that separated people are less likely to move over long distances than steady singles and people in intact couples, and this applies to the event-triggered move as well as subsequent moves. Most moves resulting from separation are triggered by the fact that people want to leave the joint home, but not necessarily the place where they live. The separated will often have strong ties and a large place utility in the place where they lived preceding the separation and they are likely to be embedded in social and institutional networks (Wolpert 1965, Fischer and Malmberg, 2001, see also Bonney *et al.* 1999). Thus, they are likely to stay close to the previous home, so that they can maintain their location-specific capital. When a separated person has children who stay with their ex-partner and wants to see his or her children regularly, they should not live too far from their children. Because men less often receive custody, they are more likely to be restricted in the distance they move than women.

The third hypothesis is that separated people move more often to (or stay in) cities than people in intact couple relationships. There are several reasons to believe so. A very practical aspect is the greater availability of affordable housing in cities. Spain (1990) found that female headed households with children were strongly overrepresented in

central cities in the U.S., which is likely to result from the cheap housing available there. From a social-emotional point of view, separated people may prefer to live in a place that has more anonymity and a more tolerant moral climate. And finally, but perhaps just as important, cities offer a wide range of jobs, distractions, and a large pool of potential new partners. It is thought that the growth of one-person households in inner cities – such as the inner city of London – is attributed to urban amenities such as these (Hall and Ogden 2003). Suburbs are, by contrast, typically suited for families. Separation may lead to a move out of the suburb into the city, thereby creating discontinuity in the spatial career because most moves of households with children are directed from the city to more child-friendly suburbs or more rural areas. Discontinuity and downward housing moves can be made up for through the start of a new relationship, mainly for women. Sullivan (1986) showed this to be true for housing quality, and South and Crowder (1998) found a multiplication in the probability of moving from a poor to a more affluent neighbourhood for single mothers who (re)marry compared to those who do not (re)marry. This leads us to expect that when the separated start a new relationship, they may have an increased probability of moving (back) to the suburb.

3. Data and method

3.1 Data

We use survey data from three merged retrospective life-course surveys with a large set of overlapping variables. The data of the Stichting Sociaal-culturele Wetenschappen Survey[5] (SSCW) and the Netherlands Family Survey 1993 (NFS 1993) (Ultee and Ganzeboom 1993) was collected in 1993 and the data of the Netherlands Family Survey 2000 (NFS 2000) (Graaf *et al.* 2000) was collected in 2000. For all three data sets, information was collected about respondents' past life concerning family, relationships, work, education, and housing by means of structured face-to-face interviews. Respondents who have not yet left the parental home for the first time were excluded from the analysis. Some respondents for which vital information on their life courses was missing were excluded, too. This resulted in a total of 4102 life courses available for our analysis. We included dummies in our models to control for measurement differences between the surveys. However, because no significant differences showed

[5] The survey was commissioned by the Stichting Sociaal-culturele Wetenschappen (SSCW), Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk onderzoek (NWO). The dataset is available under the title Aspects of life–event history of the Dutch population: part 1: changes in socio-demographic data, social mobility, relationships history, educational career, and work mobility at the Niwi Steinmetz archives (reference number P1107).

up, these dummies were not included in the final models. The dataset contains people from a wide range of birth years. This means that we analyse at the same time the effect of separation on spatial careers for people who separated in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. During this period, separation became an increasingly common phenomenon.

An adequate way of capturing change over time in the life careers of interest is by re-shaping the available respondent-file into a person-period file. For each respondent we created a separate case for each year since leaving the parental home up to the moment of interview. This resulted in a dataset with a total of 103,239 person years. Only person-years after people left the parental home were included as we only want to analyse independent spatial careers. Spells of return to the parental home, for example after a separation, are included, too. All independent variables are time-varying, which means that their score can vary between person years, for example to indicate whether or not people have children. Table 1 contains descriptions of the variables used in the multivariate models.

The dependent variables of interest are the occurrence of moves, the distance of moves, and the direction of moves. The occurrence variable indicates whether people have moved in a person-year or not. The distance-variable is measured in kilometers. The direction-variable has three categories: moves to a city (municipalities of more than 100,000 inhabitants), moves to a suburb (the immediate area around cities), and moves to rural areas (the rest of the Netherlands). The categorisation is displayed in a map of the Netherlands in Appendix 1.

For the purpose of the analysis, several categories of living arrangement were defined: 'steady single' (= always lived alone), 'in first relationship' (either married or unmarried cohabitation), 'separated single' (having lived previously with a partner but now living alone), and 'in new relationship' (now living with a partner but experienced at least one union dissolution either through divorce, separation, or widowhood). We left out of the analysis single widowed people (now living alone following the death of a spouse) because their numbers were too small (see Table 1). We initially considered splitting the category of 'separated' singles into two groups: singles after the break up of marital union and singles after the break up of a non-marital union. However, we have then decided to not to do so for several reasons: We do not necessarily expect differences between the two groups in terms of occurrence of moves, distance, or destination. There may only be a difference with regard to moving distance. Those who were previously married may move over even shorter distances compared to those previously in cohabitation. This is not so much because marriage is considered to be a greater commitment, but because those who where married are more likely to have settled down and they may, therefore, be more attached to a place. Unfortunately, such a

distinction
would lead to some very small numbers in some categories under study.[6]

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Variable	All person-years		Last person-year only	
	N	Share in %	N	Share in %
Living arrangement				
Single	32,785	31.8	686	16.7
In first relationship	64,929	62.9	2928	71.4
Separated/divorced	2839	2.7	226	5.5
In higher-order relationship	2085	2.0	194	4.7
Widowed	601	0.6	68	1.7
Duration of living arrangement		Mean 11.1		Mean 17.7
Gender				
Male	55,008	53.3	2157	52.6
Female	48,231	46.7	1945	47.4
Birth cohort				
Before 1935	25,106	24.3	570	13.9
1935–1944	24,865	24.1	676	16.5
1945–1954	27,497	26.6	1023	24.9
1955–1964	20,255	19.6	1173	28.6
>1964	5516	5.3	660	16.1
Age		Mean 33.1		Mean 42.2
Work situation				
Working	63,581	61.6	2574	62.7
In education	11,912	11.5	229	5.6
Otherwise not working	27,274	26.4	1279	31.2
Unknown	472	0.5	20	0.5
Educational level				
Low	41,836	40.5	1504	36.7
Middle	38,065	36.9	1676	40.9
High	22,295	21.6	888	21.6
Socio-economic status (ISEI/10)		Mean 4.52		Mean 4.47
Children aged 12 or younger				
No children aged 12 or younger	75,222	72.9	3235	78.9
Child(ren) aged 12 or younger	28,017	27.1	867	21.1
Tenure of previous home				
Owner-occupied	71,636	69.4	2063	50.3
Other	31,603	30.6	2039	49.7
Total	103,239		4102	

[6] Using these small numbers, we ran some test analyses separately for people who were divorced and people who were separated from a consensual-union partner. The results of the test analyses showed similar effects for the two groups, but on the whole the effects were slightly stronger for those who divorced. This at least suggests that there are no opposite effects for these groups.

Table 1: (Continued)

Variable	All person-years		Last person- year only	
	N	Share in %	N	Share in %
Address density (1000 addresses per km^2)		Mean 1.89		Mean 1.77
Move[a]				
No move	91,663	88.8	3986	97.2
Move	11,576	11.2	116	2.8
Distance moved[b]			Mean 26.4 (moves only)	
Move to city[c]				
Not at risk (=already living in the city)	50,582	49.0	1415	34.5
No move	47,952	46.4	2627	64.0
Move outside city	4190	4.1	55	1.3
Move to city	515	0.5	5	0.1
Move out of city[d]				
Not at risk (=not living in the city)	80,135	77.6	3164	77.1
No move	19,879	19.3	896	21.8
Move within city	2301	2.2	34	0.8
Move out of city	924	0.9	8	0.2

Source: Calculations based on SSCW 1993, NFS 1993, NFS 2000.
[a]–Regressor in analysis of occurrence of moves.
[b]–Regressor in distance analysis.
[c]–Regressor in direction analysis.
[d]–Regressor in direction analysis

For the occurrence hypothesis, we were especially interested in the duration effect of separation. Therefore, we included an interaction term between living arrangement and duration of living arrangement. For the distance hypothesis, we were especially interested in hypothesised spatial restrictions for non-custodial fathers, so we included an interaction between living arrangement, gender, and presence of children (either or not having children aged 12 or younger). For the direction hypothesis, we discerned people living in cities and people living outside cities by running separate models for these groups.

Several control variables were included in the models: gender, ten-year birth cohort, age, work situation, educational level (low, middle and high), socio-economic status (measured on the International Socio-Economic Index, see Ganzeboom *et al.* 1992), tenure of the home of origin (owner-occupied or other), and address density of the previous place of residence (1000 addresses per km^2).

3.2 Method

Our analyses are divided into three parts. In the first part we analyse the occurrence of moving, in the second part we look at the moving distance, and in the third we examine the direction of moves. Each part consists of a regression model containing only the main variable of interest plus age (to adjust for the uneven age composition of our sample), followed by a multivariate regression analysis including the above listed control variables. We expressed our first and third hypotheses as the probability of experiencing a certain event or not, indicated by a categorical response variable, whereas the dependent variable in the second analysis is a continuous measure of distance moved. In short, we analyse:

1. The occurrence: whether (1) or not (0) people moved;
2. The distance moved in kilometers (only for those who moved);
3. The direction: (a) if people moved within the city (1), or moved out of the city (0) and (b) if people moved to the city (1) or within the suburban/rural area (0).

The first and third hypotheses were analysed using a logistic regression model, and the second hypothesis was tested using an OLS regression model. Because respondents may experience more than one move over their life course, multiple observations of moves may be clustered within respondents and are therefore not independent. Ignoring this in our models would bias the outcomes and cause the standard errors to be too small. By applying a Huber-White estimator in the multivariate analyses, we control for the interdependency of observations within respondents and obtain correct standard errors (Huber 1967).

We distinguish 'event moves' and 'state moves'. Event moves are moves in order to enter into a new living arrangement, either by moving out of the parental home, cohabiting (married or unmarried) or separating. Such moves inherently go together with the transitions from the old to the new living arrangement (see also Fischer and Malmberg 2001). The other type of move we have called 'state move', indicating a move that is made while people are already in a certain living arrangement. We discern between these types because they are essentially different: The aim of event moves is to start a new living arrangement, while state moves are made for other reasons (better/bigger housing, a new job, a different residential environment, etc).

4. Analysis

4.1 The occurrence of moving

Table 2 shows the effects of living arrangement, duration, and personal and household characteristics on the odds of moving compared to not moving (logit model on person years). We only model 'state moves' since 'event moves' are endogenous to the event leading to the new living arrangement. We first estimated a model that only includes the living arrangement (controlled for age). The results are shown in Model 1 of Table 2.

The coefficients show that compared to people in a first relationship, separated people move significantly more often, as we expected. Also people in a new relationship (any relationship other than the first) move more often. The negative effect of being a 'steady single' may be surprising at first sight, but it is attributable to the fact that we control for age. In a model that does not do so (not shown), singles do move more often (positive coefficient of 0.414), meaning that in our sample singles move a lot because they are young and not because they are single. The finding that separated singles and re-partnered singles move more often than people in other living arrangements confirms our expectation. Yet this confirmation is slightly premature, because moving rates may differ in different phases of a living arrangement. In the beginning of any living arrangement, it is likely that people move more often, and then their mobility rate declines as they are longer into that living arrangement (Fischer and Malmberg 2001). But since not all types of living arrangement have equal probabilities of reaching long durations, the effect we found may be biased. More specifically: Many people who are separated find a new partner after a while and therefore separation spells do not reach as long durations, as do relationship spells. We do not only want to control for duration because it potentially biases the main effect of the living arrangement, but we are also particularly interested in duration effects. How long does the higher moving propensity of the separated last? Is their occurrence rate only elevated shortly after the separation, or also longer afterwards?

To address these issues, we estimated a model with the main effects of living arrangement and duration of the living arrangement, and the interaction effects between these two (Model 2). As we expected, the main effect of duration of a living arrangement is negative, indicating that the longer people are in a living arrangement, the lower is their risk of moving. The main effects of types of living arrangement show that the effect of being a separated single on the probability of moving is still significantly positive, compared to people in a first relationship. Thus, at the beginning of the living arrangement, separated singles move significantly more often than people in a first relationship. The interaction effect of separated singles is slightly negative (–0.011) but not significant, indicating that the mobility rate of the separated declines at about the same pace as that of people in a first relationship. The total effect of the main effects and

interaction effects is shown graphically in Figure 1. It shows that, although mobility rates drop for all groups, that of separated singles remains higher than for people in a first relationship. This is also true for separated people who find a new partner. People in a new relationship have a far higher probability to move in the first years of their relationship (the main effect of new relationship: 0.626), and although it decreases at a higher pace than for the other groups (interaction effect: –0.023), their rate remains well above the others' for several years of duration. Finally, steady singles have a low moving probability to start with, which then very gradually drops with duration (because the interaction effect of 'steady single' is smaller than the main effect of duration). Remember, this analysis does not include event moves, so two singles moving in together to cohabit are not counted as moving as a steady single here.

The separated – whether they live alone or with a new partner – thus show a higher moving propensity than steady singles and people in a first relationship. The propensity declines as the duration lengthens, but especially the rate of people in a new relationship remains higher than that of other groups for a long time.

Table 2: Logit regression of moving probability

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Parameter estimate	Standard error	Parameter estimate	Standard error	Parameter estimate	Standard error
Age	–0.067	0.002***	–0.042	0.004***	–0.037	0.005***
Living arrangement (ref.=in first relationship)						
Steady single	–0.131	0.041***	–0.203	0.057***	–0.367	0.065***
Separated single	0.442	0.079***	0.265	0.123**	0.129	0.131
New relationship	0.703	0.081***	0.626	0.131***	0.667	0.132***
Duration of living arrangement			–0.037	0.005***	–0.024	0.005***

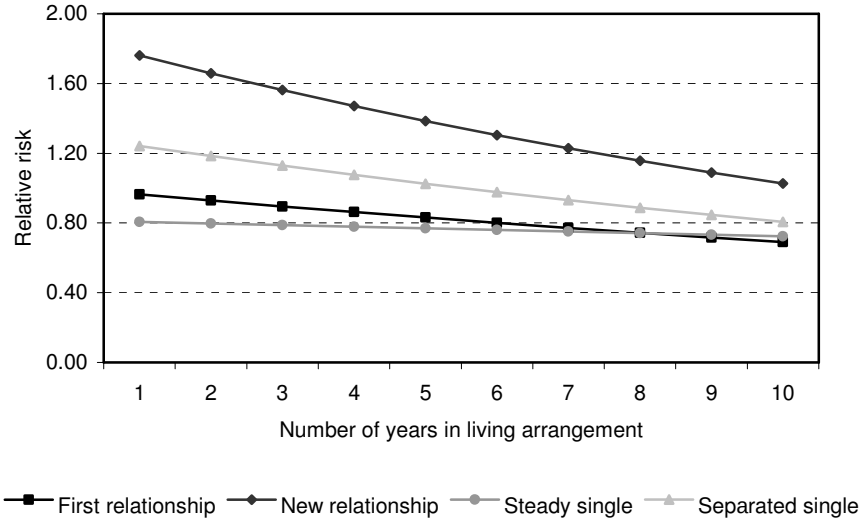
ref.=no move; excluding event moves

Table 2: (Continued)

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Parameter estimate	Standard error	Parameter estimate	Standard error	Parameter estimate	Standard error
Type of living arrangement						
Duration of living arrangement						
Steady single			0.025	0.004***	0.017	0.005***
Separated single			–0.011	0.018	–0.030	0.021
New relationship			–0.023	0.017	–0.028	0.017*
Female (ref.= male)					0.033	0.035
Birth cohort (ref= before 1935)						
1935–1944					0.072	0.051
1945–1954					0.165	0.049***
1955–1964					0.101	0.051**
>1964					0.005	0.074
Work situation (ref.= working)						
In education					0.020	0.063
Otherwise not working					0.036	0.053
Unknown					–0.234	0.198
Educational level (ref.= low)						
Middle					0.279	0.040***
High					0.515	0.048***
Unknown					0.031	0.199
Socio-economic status (ISEI/10)					0.054	0.011***
Children under age 12					0.069	0.031**
Owner-occupied home					–1.089	0.037***
Address density					0.032	0.008***
Intercept					–1.252	0.142***
N	82,400		82,400		82,408	
Wald Chi-Square	1536.17		1506.76		2400.34	
Pseudo R^2	0.047		0.049		0.080	

Source: Calculations based on SSCW 1993, NFS 1993, NFS 2000.
Note: Widowers excluded due to lack of observations.
Significance: '*' = 10%; '**' = 5%; '***' = 1%.

Figure 1: Relative risk of moving in 1 to 10 years of living-arrangement duration (based on the main effects and interaction effects of 'living arrangement' and 'duration of living arrangement' in Model 2 of Table 2)



Source: Calculations based on SSCW 1993, NFS 1993, NFS 2000.

In Model 3 we control for the effects of other characteristics on the moving propensity. This weakens the effects of the living arrangement and duration variable, but it does not alter the direction of the effects; thus their interpretation remains the same. The effects of the control variables in Table 3 correspond largely to findings from existing studies. The moving probability decreases with age (we also controlled for the quadratic term of age but this had no significant effect) and it is lower for homeowners. The moving probability increases with socio-economic status, educational level, and address density. It is higher for people with children aged 12 or younger. While it is known that people with school-aged children generally move *less* often than others, the effect found here must be attributed to people with pre-school aged children (who are known to be more mobile than average; Clark and Dieleman 1996, Fischer and Malmberg 2001).

4.2 The moving distance

To explore if the separated move over shorter distances than people in other living arrangements, we ran an OLS regression of moving distance (this is an analysis of moves only; N=8399). To test our hypothesis about the spatial restrictions of separated men with children, we included a categorical main variable indicating the sex, the living arrangement, and the 'child status' (whether or not one has children aged 12 or younger). As noted before, we do not know from the data which parent the children live with after the separation, but usually the mother receives custody. The results of our analysis are shown in Table 3. Model 1 includes only the main variables of interest, Model 2 also includes the control variables.

Model 1 shows that the living arrangement has a considerable effect on the estimated moving distance. The group that moves over the shortest distance are separated men with children. This confirms our hypothesis and supports the argument that these men are strongly tied to their previous place of residence, because in most cases their children still live there. Considering the other categories of separated people, the estimated moving distance of women with children (i.e., lone-mother families) does not differ from that of women with children in a first family. Separated men and women who do not have children move over significantly shorter distances (although they are not tied to the previous matrimonial home, they may yet prefer to stay close to their previous address because of other social ties or location-specific capital). Looking at the other categories, we see that steady-single women move over shorter distances than their counterparts in first families. Single men do not differ from the reference category. Over the whole, the categories of couples with children (either first or new relationship) move over the longest distances.

Controlling for background variables affects the magnitude but not the direction of the effects of the core variable's categories. The negative effect of being a separated man with children is still large (the largest) and significant. The effects of control variables are mostly in the expected direction. Younger birth cohorts move over shorter distances (except for the very youngest cohort). This confirms the general historical trend towards fewer migrations over long distances in the period under study (Van der Erf 1984, CBS 2006c). With age, the average moving distance decreases. A high socio-economic position (educational level and ISEI score) increases the moving distance. The tenure does not affect the moving distance. Living in a densely populated area decreases the moving distance. This is probably attributable to the wider choice in dwellings in the near vicinity.

Table 3: OLS regression of moving distance

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Parameter estimate	Standard error	Parameter estimate	Standard error
Age	–0.13	0.07*	–0.41	0.07***
Living arrangement/child status/gender (ref.= first relationship, with children, female)				
Steady single, female	–6.72	2.09***	–7.19	2.22***
First relationship, no children, female	–3.66	1.74**	–1.51	1.72
Single separated, no children, female	–11.74	3.02***	–7.95	3.02***
Single separated, with child(ren), female	–3.94	5.54	0.07	5.43
New relationship, no children, female	–3.18	4.75	1.07	4.88
New relationship, with child(ren), female	3.23	9.49	8.85	9.50
Steady single, male	0.34	2.29	–0.80	2.33
First relationship, no children, male	–4.49	1.92***	–1.83	1.94
First relationship, with children, male	–1.68	2.01	0.00	1.99
Single separated, no children, male	–8.74	3.57***	–3.87	3.61
Single separated, with child(ren), male	–16.22	2.56***	–10.52	2.54***
New relationship, no children, male	–9.55	3.35***	–5.06	2.30**
New relationship, with child(ren), male	0.29	6.62	4.36	6.52
Transition to this living arrangement (ref.= no)	3.80	1.29***	3.03	1.28***
Birth cohort (ref.= before 1935)				
1935–1944			–6.09	2.07***
1945–1954			–10.26	2.02***
1955–1964			–14.00	2.05***
>1964			–10.64	2.77***
Work situation (ref.= working)				
In education			1.34	2.22
Otherwise not working			–5.74	1.75***
Unknown			–7.84	4.77

Table 3: (Continued)

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Parameter estimate	Standard error	Parameter estimate	Standard error
Educational level (ref.= low)				
Middle			4.65	1.34***
High			7.60	1.74***
Unknown			–8.05	4.10**
Socio-economic status (ISEI/10)			1.98	0.37***
Owner-occupied home			2.09	1.34
Address density			–0.73	0.26***
Intercept	31.22	0.07***	37.47	4.06***
N	8399		8399	
R^2	0.007		0.038	

Source: Calculations based on SSCW 1993, NFS 1993, NFS 2000.
Note: Widowers excluded due to lack of observations.
Significance: '*' = 10%; '**' = 5%; '***' =1%.

4.3 The moving direction

The third hypothesis is that the separated move relatively often to the city, or, if they already live in the city, they stay in the city, compared to people in other living arrangements. This hypothesis is tested in two separate models. First, Table 4 shows the results of an analysis on movers who live in the city. The model estimates their probability of moving within the city relative to moving out of the city. Model 1 only includes living arrangement as an explanatory variable. It is broken down by whether a move is an 'event move' or a 'state move'. We see high probabilities of moving within the city for separated singles, at the time of an event move, but even stronger as a state move. The strong effect of 'separated single, state' (1.399) implies that once a separated single lives in the city and (s)he moves again, it is very unlikely that this move is out of the city. The only other group with a significant higher probability of moving within the city compared to moving out of the city are steady singles. This group, as with the single separated, are mostly one-person households. It is not surprising that these groups stay in cities more often than do people in couple-living arrangements as we know from the literature that singles tend to move towards the cities because of the concentration of education, employment, and leisure facilities there, whereas families tend to move to the suburbs or the countryside.

Once we control for other personal characteristics, the effect of living arrangement weakens considerably (Model 2). The effects of becoming and being separated are still positive, but they are no longer significantly different from the effect of starting a first relationship. The effects of other living arrangements lost their significance as well. This suggests that the direction of moves is mainly determined by other characteristics, such as birth cohort, rather than by living arrangement. Especially the effect of address density is strong, which is probably because in more densely populated areas there is a wider choice in housing, which increases the chance that a house is found in the city where one already lives.

The picture is different for movers who live outside the city (that is, in the suburbs or the countryside). Table 5 shows models where the probability of moving to the city is estimated, relative to the probability of moving within the suburbs/countryside. Again, Model 1 only includes living arrangement as an explanatory variable, and Model 2 also includes control variables. Model 1 shows that becoming separated strongly increases the probability of moving to the city. This confirms our hypothesis. Once separated, the probability of moving to the city is higher than for people in a first relationship (state). When separated people start a new relationship, their probability of moving to the city does not differ from the moves made by people in a first relationship (both 'new-relationship' effects insignificant). So, living outside the city is something mainly done by couples and families, while exchanging the suburb/countryside for the city is something mainly done by one-person households. This result fits in with the general patterns of residential environment choice in different phases of the life course/family life-cycle (Michelson 1977, Bootsma 1998).

Table 4: Logit regression of moving probability within the city compared to moving out of the city

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Coef.	S.e.		Coef.	S.e.	
Age	-0.007	0.006		0.008	0.012	
Living arrangement (ref = first relationship, event)						
steady single, event	0.561	0.339	*	-0.118	0.541	
separated single, event	0.802	0.312	***	0.000	0.444	
new relationship, event	0.934	1.091		1.354	0.891	
steady single, state	0.477	0.132	***	-0.147	0.207	
first relationship, state	0.094	0.111		0.110	0.190	
separated single, state	1.399	0.298	***	0.261	0.485	
new relationship, state	0.062	0.230		-0.228	0.457	
Female				-0.096	0.166	
Birth cohort (ref = before 1935)						
1935-1944				0.166	0.263	
1945-1954				0.088	0.252	
1955-1964				0.525	0.267	**
>=1965				0.653	0.321	**
Work situation (ref = working)						
in education				-0.102	0.253	
otherwise not working				-0.459	0.202	**
unknown				-1.908	1.280	
Educational level (ref = low)						
middle				-0.138	0.210	
high				0.011	0.240	
unknown				1.256	0.485	***
Socio-economic status (ISEI/10)				-0.069	0.049	
Children under age 13				-0.105	0.176	
Owner-occupied home				0.320	0.215	
Address density				2.929	0.159	***
Intercept	0.880	0.173	***	-4.851	0.592	***
N	3215			3215		
Wald chi2		45.82 (8)			389.74 (23)	

Source: Calculations based on SSCW 1993, NFS 1993, NFS 2000.
Note: Widowers excluded due to lack of observations.
Significance: '*' = 10%; '**' = 5%; '***' = 1%.

Table 5: Logit regression of probability of moving to the city compared to moving within the suburb/countryside

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Coef.	S.e.		Coef.	S.e.	
Age	-0.022	0.008	***	-0.059	0.015	***
Living arrangement (ref = first relationship, event)						
steady single, event	0.759	0.334	**	-0.019	0.512	
separated single, event	0.636	0.263	***	0.549	0.485	
new relationship, event	0.226	0.763		2.298	0.789	***
steady single, state	0.498	0.151	***	0.557	0.271	**
first relationship, state	-0.599	0.141	***	-0.314	0.259	
separated single, state	-0.107	0.328		0.080	0.505	
new relationship, state	-0.352	0.353		-0.280	0.662	
Female				-0.047	0.183	
Birth cohort (ref = before 1935)						
1935-1944				-0.476	0.293	
1945-1954				-0.864	0.296	***
1955-1964				-1.396	0.310	***
>=1965				-0.865	0.406	**
Work situation (ref = working)				0.268	0.327	
in education				-0.122	0.265	
otherwise not working				-0.131	0.745	
unknown						
Educational level (ref = low)						
middle				0.038	0.226	
high				0.104	0.286	
unknown				2.230	0.517	***
Socio-economic status (ISEI/10)				0.115	0.065	*
Children under age 13				-0.110	0.207	
Owner-occupied home				0.797	0.262	***
Address density				2.590	0.103	***
Intercept	-1.229	0.231	***	-5.302	0.637	***
N	4687			4687		
Wald chi2(N)	131.33 (8)			709.06 (23)		

Source: Calculations based on SSCW 1993, NFS 1993, NFS 2000.
Note: Widowers excluded due to lack of observations.
Significance: '*' = 10%; '**' = 5%; '***' = 1%.

Controlled for other variables (Model 2), the effects of the living arrangement categories change dramatically. Now the event of starting a new relationship and the state of being a steady single increase the likelihood of moving to the city. This is especially surprising for the event of starting a new relationship, since being in a couple relationship is usually associated with moving out of the city instead of into the city. A possible explanation is that the new partners of these people often live in the city and that they move in with them. Concerning the effects of the control variables, we see that younger birth cohorts move less often to the cities. This fits in with historical migration flows in the Netherlands: The 1950s and 1960s witnessed urbanisation whereas the 1970s and early 1980s saw suburbanisation. This means that people born in the 1930s and 1940s have a higher likelihood of moving to cities than those born later.

Focusing on the outcomes for separated people in Tables 4 and 5, we saw that the *event* of becoming separated mainly leads to moves *to* the city, whereas the *state* of being separated leads to moves *within* the city. The city thus really seems to be a place that attracts those who experienced a separation, either just or some time ago.

5. Summary and conclusion

This study showed that, to some extent, separation leads to distinctive spatial behaviour. First, the recently separated move more often than do people in other living arrangements. The effect is long lasting, even though it decreases over time. A possible explanation is that, because separators often move back to much smaller or otherwise less attractive housing, they need several moves to regain the quality of housing they prefer. Those in a new relationship also move considerably more often than people in a first relationship. Second, the mean distance of moves by the separated is shorter compared to that of steady singles and people in a first relationship. In particular separated men with children move over short distances, i.e., they move over the shortest distance of all. We attribute this to the ties they have to their children, who usually stay with the mother after separation. Third, with regard to the type of residential environment people move to, the separated tend to move to cities at the moment they separate, and once they are separated, they tend to stay in cities more than other groups. Overall our hypotheses were confirmed, although in some cases the support weakened when other characteristics were controlled for. This is especially true for the analysis of direction; the residential environment people move to is clearly determined by many other things besides the living arrangement.

In many studies on housing and migration, one-person households and multi-person households are distinguished, but no distinction is made between one-person households who experienced a relationship break-up and those who did not. Neither is a distinction

made between people in a first relationship and people in a new relationship. Our study shows that by enriching the living arrangement variable with information on the relationship *history*, more variation in moving behaviour can be explained than by simply categorising the current household composition. Ties to former household members (especially children) and to places lived in in the former relationship apparently put restrictions on peoples' spatial behaviour. It confirms once again a very consistent finding in life-course studies that *past experiences shape future behaviour*. If one wants to increase the understanding of the spatial behaviour of households, one-person households should not be regarded as a homogeneous group, neither should couples be regarded as a homogeneous group. Within the group of separated singles, an even finer distinction can be made, namely between those formerly married and those formerly living in a consensual union. The two groups may differ in their commitment to each other, in lifestyle, and in the way they decide to separate and in how they experience separation. These factors may also cause a different effect on spatial careers. Studying these effects would only be possible with a larger dataset, where these specific groups are available in numbers large enough.

As the part of the population who ever experienced a separation still increases, this implies an increase in disordered and discontinued spatial careers. On the macro level, this leads to increased differentiation in spatial careers. Housing careers that solely consist of upward moves will become less common. For example, moving to a house in the suburb does not guarantee that one will always stay in the suburb, as separation may lead to a (temporary) stay in the city. Finding a new partner can redirect the spatial career to a new place that has new opportunities. For some of the separated, moves over long distances are less feasible as they are tied to places and people from their past. Increasingly complex family structures, with second spouses, children, and stepchildren are likely to have spatial repercussions on the individual and societal level. When attempting to understand the functioning of housing markets, it is inevitable to acknowledge this increasing complexity and differentiation.

It would be interesting to dig deeper into this shift towards increasing discontinuity and differentiation of spatial careers due to patterns of separation and re-partnering. Analysing the consequences of break up for different birth cohorts provides deeper insights into the mechanisms at play. In this study, the effect of birth cohort was not always a clear one, but an interaction of birth cohort with living arrangement may yield interesting results (however, this would require a larger sample). The meaning of separation and re-partnering may change as these events become more common, thus the way they affect spatial careers may change as well. The emergence of unmarried cohabitation as a lasting alternative to marriage may also play a role here. How spatial policy and macro-level trends interact with these changing life courses should be taken into account, too. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s when divorce was not yet so

common, many councils accorded priority to separated households in the allocation of council housing (Schouw and Dieleman 1987), but this priority status vanished as the number of separations rose. How people cope with separation in their spatial careers depends on wider housing-market circumstances, and the way people cope with their situation in turn influences the development of the housing market.

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Appendix 1

Residential environments in the Netherlands: city, suburb, and rural area