

## 4 New moving patterns among middle-aged and elderly people in Norway

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### **Ageing settlement, population and migration**

Ageing the growing and changing elderly populations, better health conditions among younger people and increased mobility generally have raised the question of whether elderly people are getting more mobile. How will this increased mobility influence their life quality and the society? This chapter improves the knowledge base of elderly people's inter-municipal mobility.

Life quality among elders is strongly related to where they live and the proximity to their family and relatives (Aboderin, 2004). The distance to family and relatives seems to influence the provision of help they may receive from relatives as well as their ability to assist other family members (Fransson, 2004; Malmberg and Pettersson, 2007). The ability and wish to assist elder family members is often posed as a question of intergenerational solidarity, as Daatland, Slagsvold and Lima (2009) do when reporting the results from a Norwegian large-scale study (N = 9,591, aged 18–79) on life course, ageing and generations. Much of this research focuses on the “family-in-crisis” hypothesis addressing the perception that contact and supportive behaviour within the family and between generations are declining. For the most part, research does not support this notion of a “crisis” (Bengtson, 2001; Fransson, 2004; Hank, 2007; Steinbach, 2012). Our study focuses on how changing migration patterns may influence this issue and lays the foundation for further analyses of the aforementioned questions. We ask if elderly people have a different mobility pattern than do other age groups. This requires a description and analysis of the current pattern of inter-municipal mobility among middle-aged and elderly people and a comparison of their motives and the motives of other age groups. Do middle-aged and elderly people state certain moving or settlement motives and is it likely that they are aiming to get closer to their children? Is the current elderly generation more mobile than previous elderly generations were? The chapter draws a picture of elderly people in Norway and their living and moving patterns.

A high proportion of the peripheral areas in Norway are located in the Arctic, an area mostly remote and sparsely populated. According to Prince (2011), authorities ask for more knowledge of demographic changes in peripheral areas than in other areas. Nordregio sums up the situation in the Arctic by defining two megatrends (Hansen et al. 2012) which deal with the geographical distribution of

demographic changes: The Arctic faces an increased urbanisation, a global trend resulting in fewer and bigger settlements and, consequently, small communities become even more peripheral as they are declining. The Arctic is also facing an ageing and a growing elderly population resulting from a declining number of births, longer life expectancy (Brunborg, 2012) and out-migration, especially by the youth. Many peripheral Arctic communities thus experience decline and ageing in combination. While the out-migration used to be female dominated (Rasmussen, 2009), current studies from northern Norway indicate that this is changing and that younger women's return migration is increasing (Pedersen and Moilanen, 2012).

Defining middle-aged and elderly people is an increasingly difficult task. More people are getting older and the mean life expectancy is increasing in most countries. The term is thus unclear and the phenomena it denotes are changing. Being elderly is more than a question of age; it is culturally, biologically, socially and economically constructed. It is also a medical term and a question of ability and health. It is an individual experience and related to peer groups, class and the specific combination of situation, place and something we may call personality/approach to life. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), most developed countries have accepted the chronological age of 65 years as a definition of elderly or old, while the UN has agreed on a cut off at 60+. This chapter deals with a category of the middle aged and elderly as people past 50 years old, sometimes distinguishing between younger and older people in this group. It may be argued that this includes people too young and in many cases this is true. We include the middle aged because people 50+ are mainly finished with family, housing and labour market establishment, there are similarities between these groups, and the 50+ will constitute part of the elderly population in a few years. Because of the low frequencies of moving, this wide age span also makes the results more solid.

Explaining why people move is different from presenting the resulting migration pattern. This study draws on registry data presenting the number and frequency of moving and on a survey on motives explaining moving or staying. The registry data (1964–2010, Statistics Norway) have statistics for every person registered, in all ages, in Norway since 1964. The 2008 Norwegian national survey on living and moving motivation shows the four main moving motives: work, family, housing and place and environmental factors which explain more than 93 per cent of the moving decisions. Education and health are minor motives but important because they vary across age and gender.

Understanding middle-aged and elderly people's moving patterns is at the core of understanding current changes in the north. This study's main question is whether the current elderly generations are more mobile than previous elderly generations were and what any changes in mobility may imply. Furthermore, we discuss middle-aged and elderly people's citing of family-related motives and the centralising or decentralising directions these motives are connected to. Do elderly parents and adult children move in order to live closer to each other? Are elderly people's motives and moving patterns related to the mobility of other family members, and if so, in what way(s)?



## Approaching the mobility of the middle aged and elders

The ageing population is often seen as a burden and therefore the focus is often on the challenges ageing implies (Davies, 2011). The negative impacts of ageing and the growing ageing population are said to be particularly apparent in rural areas (Davies, 2011; Burholt and Dobbs, 2012). Such arguments follow this line: As the elders grow older and form a proportionally larger group and as a group require more care, the public health care systems take on a bigger proportion of the care work (Slagsvold et al., 2012). In rural Norway, this will most likely be followed by an increase in public health care needs or as Fransson (2004) suggests, increased burdens for families. Apart from posing longer life expectancies as a problem, this fails to see the increased life quality as an individual gain, elderly people's resources, for instance, in assisting other family members or active roles in civil societies and neighbourhoods. Furthermore, an expanding health care sector creates employment opportunities for younger people in small, peripheral communities.

Many theoretical approaches try to explain why people move or settle in specific areas. They involve structures and agency alike, formulations of push and pull factors related to places of departure and arrival and to material as well as social, political and cultural approaches and symbolic issues (Castles, 2000; Massey, Durand and Malone, 2002). Explaining and understanding migration deals with force and contingencies, choices, intentions and achievements, often implying a search for a better life highlighted in life-style migration (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009). Elderly people and their movement to warmer places are often understood within this frame of reference.

Migration theory engages with structural explanations describing macro patterns of mobility, highlighting economic differences between regions/countries, settlement and labour force offers and demands, explaining general trends of, for instance centralisation. Pedersen and Moilanen (2012) show, for instance that rural youths in northern Scandinavia moving in a centralising direction achieve higher income than those staying put.

Another set of migration theories deals with the decision-making processes and highlight how different migration processes may follow different trajectories and have different or similar causes: there is a turbulence of migration (Papas-tergiadis, 2000). The so-called new mobility approaches include commuting, temporal migration, holidays, traveling to and between second/third homes, treatment travels and non-mobility (Sheller and Urry, 2006).

Qualitative approaches highlights people's explanations on why they move or not. The Norwegian national survey asks for motives and sub-motives based on pre-set categories in order to make people explain why they move or not. The registry data, however, draws on public registers and describe the extension and the correlation between moving and other factors. This chapter combines the qualitatively oriented motive survey with the registry data.

Life-course approaches have proven useful both in migration studies and in studies of ageing and generations (Steinbach, 2012). They pay attention to three

temporalities: how specific life events and periods affect one's life course (establishing a family/career, retirement), the age effects (reproductive issues) and cohort effects (experiences in historical time – experience of WWII) (Frønes and Kjølsvold, 2003). The situation, context and time are thus vital in understanding movements. The life-course approach combines individual and structural conditions, as well as the more individual aims, although socially and culturally formed – throughout the life course.

Much demographic research in Norway has been preoccupied with youngsters and young adults' migration and settlement patterns (for some studies in English, see Villa, 1999; Paulgaard, 2002; Bæck, 2004; Wiborg, 2004; Rye, 2006; Pedersen and Moilanen, 2012). This preoccupation may be explained by planning needs and by the established knowledge of a lower frequency of moving among elders. It may also indicate less political interest in elderly people. While this interest is definitely growing, it is often in negative and in what Davies (2011) calls homogenic terms. Its negative orientation has also produced substantive and theoretical assumptions that have become manifest in legislation and policies, as Harbison et al. (2012) have shown in regard to elder abuse and neglect in Canada.

Studies of the social aspects of ageing in Norway have largely been based on the Life course, Generation and Gender study (LOGG) and increased in scope and quantity with the launch of the Norwegian Life course, Ageing and Generation study (NorLAG) – a multidisciplinary, longitudinal large-scale study of ageing and the life course (Slagsvold et al., 2012). This study deals with four major life domains: work and retirement; family and intergenerational relationships; mental health, quality of life and sense of control; and health, health behaviour and care. Moving is not a main issue of interest in this study. Our study thus adds to this work.

In conclusion, longer life expectancies and better health among elders make elderly people a growing and increasingly important group in terms of numbers. The recent decades' focus on differentiations and varieties in the social sciences also applies to studies of elderly people. Growing and varied mobility and commuting, high frequencies of moving among young people also make it necessary to get more knowledge on the continuity and changes in the moving motives and patterns of elderly people. Pressure and changes in the welfare state services and organisation and the continuation of urbanisation and its outcomes in rural Arctic areas also make the moving and settlement patterns of elders politically important in these regions. These trends ask for discussions on whether elderly people's movement and settlement motives are different from those of other age groups and if there are specific patterns to be explained. Research on elderly people's migration patterns is thus rather timely (Hansen et al., 2012).

## Methods

### *Registry data*

The registry data have yearly statistics for every person registered, in all ages, for people living in Norway since 1964. When drawing on these data, we include

people older than the oldest group in the survey data. We will explicitly state the age groups used in all figures. The data include a multitude of variables regarding residency, work, wage, education and family from 1990–2010.

The registry data does not have information about secondary homes. We thus use a rather simple understanding of moving and mobility. There are also problems with moving not being recorded. While second homes are mainly a source of methodological error concerning the middle-aged and elderly population, lack of notification to the registry is mainly a problem caused by students. This comes into play when analysing the relationship between adult children and their elderly parents. We have accounted for error caused by the merging of municipalities taking place in Norway in the period.

Yearly mobility rates are calculated using the number of domestic relocations and the populations in the relevant years. In figures with age groups, averages of mobility rates for each cohort are used to give each cohort the same weight. This approach does not seem to affect the results compared to summing up the relocations and populations for all cohorts in the group.

Distances are calculated using official map data from the Norwegian Map Authority. Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates of the geographical centre of municipalities (for time series) or basic units (for the 2010 data) were extracted and merged with the settlement data. Geodesic distances (“as the crow flies”) are used; for people living on opposite sides of a fjord, travel distance may be longer than the geodesic distance suggests.

### *Survey data*

The national survey in 2008 asked for people’s motives for moving and staying. About 10,000 people were invited to participate in a phone interview and a postal follow-up survey. About 65 per cent responded. The survey includes data from a seven-year period (1999–2006) and people from cohorts born every seven years (22–64 years old at the beginning of the seven-year period). Those who had moved in the period were asked about their motives for moving the last time they moved across a municipality border, while those staying were asked what motives they had for remaining in the municipality for the last seven years. The study thus focused on the life phases of seven-year lengths in the age range 22–71.

The oldest group in the survey is young in some respects. In this study, the term “middle-aged and elderly people” is used loosely to refer to anyone 50 or over, acknowledging that this dissonant definition is in conflict with the common understanding of the term. There are few movers in the oldest cohorts. This was compensated for in the survey.

To make the survey representative, the selection was stratified by using earlier moving patterns and region of residence from the registry data. Further, the tables and figures based on the survey are weighted by age, gender and whether the respondents have moved in the period to make the resulting sample representative of the population (values are from the registry data). The main motives are also weighed on the number of motives given, with the most important motive

given the greatest weight. The informants could give three motives for moving or staying; under the main motives, there were many sub-motives.

### **Moving patterns and motives among the middle aged and elderly**

In general, upon turning 40, half of Norway's population lives in the municipality where they grew up. This applies slightly more to men than to women. Two-thirds of these have never moved and one-third are return movers.

During the last 20 years, Norwegians are most mobile in their mid-20s: about 10 per cent of people in their 20s moved across a municipal border in 2005, 13 per cent in the age group 24–27. Of those over 35, only 5 per cent moved and of those in their 40s and 50s, fewer than 3 per cent moved during the year. The mobility rate declines throughout the life course, except for a small bump around the late 60s, probably related to the typical pension ages. Less than 1 per cent of elderly people over 70 moved between municipalities and only about 0.2 per cent moved between regions/parts of the country (Forgaard, 2005, p. 36).

When including intra-municipality data from 2004–2009, however, the decline turns to an increase for people 70 and above. Intra-municipal moving is mostly shorter-distance moving and is often explained by housing motives and elderly people moving to institutions (Forgaard, *op. cit.*) and elderly care is a municipal responsibility. This mobility may also involve moves to a home better fitted to current needs or from a town's outskirts to housing with easier access to services. An ad hoc analysis of the moving patterns between basic units for people older than 75 in 2004 shows an accumulation in municipal centres between 2004 and 2010, continuing and supporting the changes identified by Forgaard (2005). In the following, we will focus on inter-municipal mobility.

The main pattern in the survey data is that moving motives are divided fairly equally between work, housing, place/environment and family. Citing and interpreting moving motives are, however, difficult. What do you state as a motive: the most important issue or the fulfilment of the necessary and pressing conditions for moving? Seemingly, increasing choice in a market (for work or housing) may weaken the need to justify the choices with these specific motives. As shown in the main report from this project, if all kinds of work were to be found in all places, no one would have to cite work as a moving motive (Sørli, Aure and Langset, 2012). However, work is not necessarily less "important": this indicates that the motives cannot be read directly from the rates given; they must be contextualised.

The main trend in moving motives across life phases is the monotone increase in family's relative importance from the youngest to the oldest group (Figure 4.1). Three of the main motives – place/environment, housing and employment – show varied patterns throughout the life course.

Employment motives are generally more prominent in younger life phases (22–29 years [through the seven years period]) than older, and this relates mostly to moving in a centralising direction. In the next phase (29–36 years), housing

and family motives increase. This increase relates to family establishment, and the major cities' surrounding areas attract much of this migration. The third phase (36–43 years old) is characterised by families with school-age children; place and environmental motives are important in this phase, while family motives remain high. The fourth (43–50) and fifth (50–57) phases are characterised by children moving out of their family home. Labour motives increase, while housing and place/environmental motives are less frequent and actually at the lowest among those 50–57 years old.

In the two oldest age phases (57–64 and 64–71), working motives decrease sharply, while housing and place/environmental motives again are increasingly cited. Housing motives are almost as often cited among the elderly as in the youth and family establishment phases, while place and environment motives remain high. The motives most important in the oldest and next to oldest age groups (64–71 and 57–64 years) are nevertheless family motives, reaching 33 per cent in the oldest group. Family motives generally are more frequent outside than in urban regions, among internal movers in the regions and return movers (especially women) to their birth municipalities, in a decentralised direction.

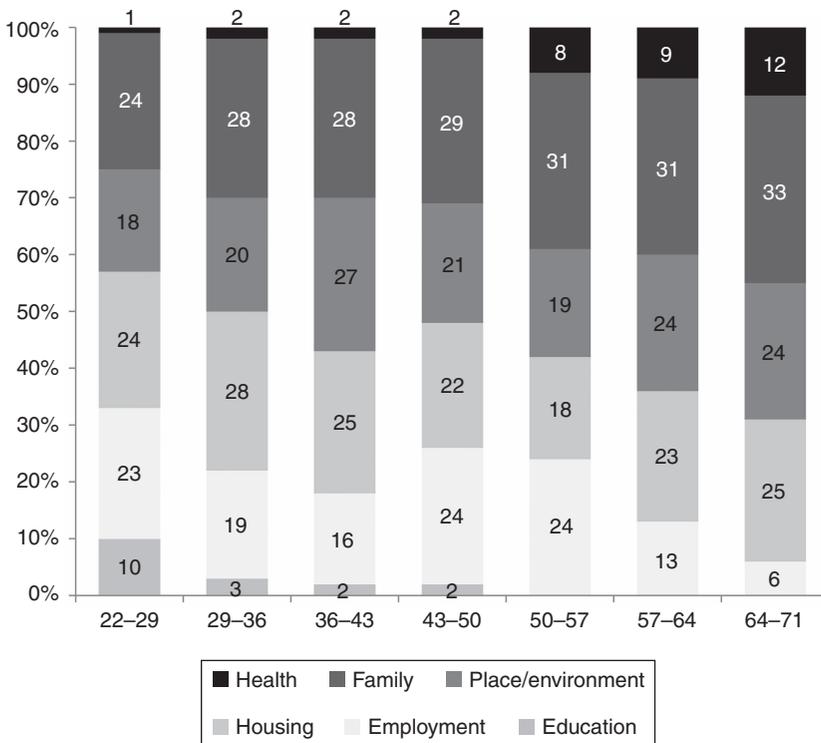


Figure 4.1 Moving motives throughout the life course. Percentages. Ages denoted are the ages at the beginning (1999) and end (2006) of the period, from the survey.

Health becomes a more important motive as age increases: health is cited by nearly no one in the younger groups but passing 50–57 years old this jumps to 8 per cent and is cited by 12 per cent in the oldest group. As physical health declines, health may become more important, and the proximity to health services increases in older ages.

### *Geographical distribution, distance and centrality*

Northern regions in Norway are more rural than the southern part. The geographical distribution and directions of movement patterns are thus of great interest to the development of these regions. The registry data show that one in three moves is in a centralising direction, while only one in ten moves against the main rural-urban stream. The rest settle in municipalities with the same centrality as the one they grew up in. The general moving pattern is thus a centralising one. Previous moving patterns lead to further urbanisation. Increasingly, more children are born in urban centres and eventually will settle in the towns and cities they grew up in, if these trends continue. The eldest generations present a counterweight; they more often move out of the large cities and to surrounding areas, smaller towns or even to the periphery. They also move less frequently in a centralising direction. However, since young people are more mobile, this is not enough to stop the overall centralisation.

The survey shows that work is a strong motive for mobility in the centralising direction. This motive is less important for people passing 57 years old than for the younger groups. The more decentralised living patterns of elderly individuals and the decrease in work motives partly explain why elderly people maintain the most decentralised settlement pattern. Family, health, place and environment and housing are all increasingly important after passing 57. In general, family and health motives are more cited for people living outside the urban regions. Health may nevertheless be a centralising moving motive, as we saw for intra-municipality movement (due to the location of health care/elderly institutions). Family is the most cited motive among people past 57. This tends to be decentralising for younger age groups (as the parents have a more decentralised settlement pattern than the youngster), and centralising for the elderly people. This is an example of how the “same” motive may imply different kinds of movements dependent on life phase, cohort, age, context and geographical distribution.

Some decentralising moves have been explained by counter urbanisation: migration from urban to rural areas (Berry, 1980). The counter urbanisation literature has been strongly influenced by and based on studies from Great Britain and the United States, focusing on middle-class people searching for the tranquil and charming rural life. Grimsrud (2011) has discussed how well the concept transfers to Norway. While counter urbanisation certainly exists, Grimsrud concludes that it is very limited. Younger people moving back to the place they lived at age 15 and other types of mobility from urban to rural areas still exist. Both younger return movers and people older than 57 years mostly cite family motives in these

situations. This does not fit the counter urban profile. Giving place/environment and housing motives, however, it is in line with theories of counter urbanisation.

A somewhat big fraction of the relocations for people 50–79 is to a municipality within a reasonable driving distance from their old home. About 70 per cent of inter-municipal migration in this age group is between municipalities with geographical centres less than 100 km apart. This indicates that even if the 50–79 age groups move more than before, they do not move very far.

### *The Arctic north*

The moving motives given by people moving in or to the northern part of Norway is hallmarked by a high share of work motives. Work is also a more frequently cited reason to stay in the (rural) north. The overrepresentation of the work motive may reflect the region's lack of adequate working possibilities, long distances that make it harder to commute and the less diverse labour markets in small communities.

We used registry data over a 15-year period<sup>1</sup> to discover settlement patterns of people, ages 65 and up, leaving the labour market during the period. This analysis shows that many elders move out of the northern region when their careers are at an end. Especially among the retirees not born in the north, there is a distinct migration out of the region. Sixteen per cent of this group moved from northern Norway to the south during the period: 22 per cent of the individuals with a university degree. For people originally from northern Norway, the out-migration is much smaller: 2.5 per cent moved south, 5 per cent of the university graduates. These numbers are larger than the moves in the opposite direction, leaving northern Norway with a net loss also in this age group. This shows that work motives are important for moving to and staying in the north and also that people born and bred in the region are much more likely to stay.

### *Changes in the past 20 years*

Although the general pattern of mobility across the last 20 years has not radically changed, there have been some changes. (The lower movement in 2008 is probably due to the recession). In this period, yearly mobility rates (between municipalities) have increased more for people 50–79 than for the general population. Elders' mobility has increased. The overall impressions that middle-aged and elderly people move more than previous generations are thus supported.

While a larger proportion of people 50–79 moved each year in 2009 than in 1990, the eldest show a declining moving pattern, as Figure 4.2 shows. The rate is still lower in absolute numbers, because the increase is measured from a lower level.

The real mobility among elders may, however, be higher than the data suggest. "Snowbirds" to international destinations (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009; Davies, 2011) are, for instance, not visible in these data. Most of them would not register as moving and resettled, since registering as out-migrating may imply leaving

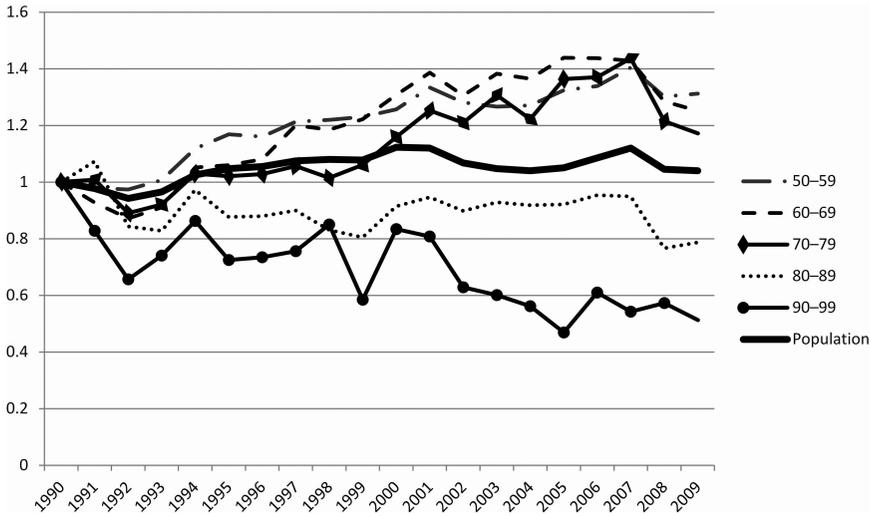


Figure 4.2 Change in yearly mobility rate to another municipality over time by age groups. Index, 1990 = 1.

Source: Registry data.

the favourable Norwegian National Insurance Scheme. Neither the register nor the survey includes data on multiple homes, while half the elderly population own or have access to second homes, and they use them more than other groups in the population (Barlindhaug, 2009). Our study excludes the broader understandings of mobility implied in the new mobility paradigm (Sheller and Urry, 2006). International migrants' transnational practices – staying for months in the country of origin or elsewhere – are also excluded from this study, as only permanent migration is registered. A full picture of the complexity of elderly people's migration and mobility thus require better register data.

### *Gender and education*

For the last 25 years, Norwegian men have moved more than women have; before that, women generally moved more (Figure 4.3). Most years men's mobility rate is between 0.1 and 0.2 percentage points above women's. The discrepancy is largest for ages 30–39 but prevails in age groups up to 70–79. For ages 80 and up, there is much variation, due to a small population and little mobility. There is thus not much difference in migration frequencies among women and men. The most significant gender differences generally are that men to a higher degree cite work as a moving motive, while women more often cite family motives. This difference is greatest for people moving back to municipalities in peripheral regions after living in more urban regions for a while. The gender differences in the work and family motives are also most pronounced in the younger age groups.

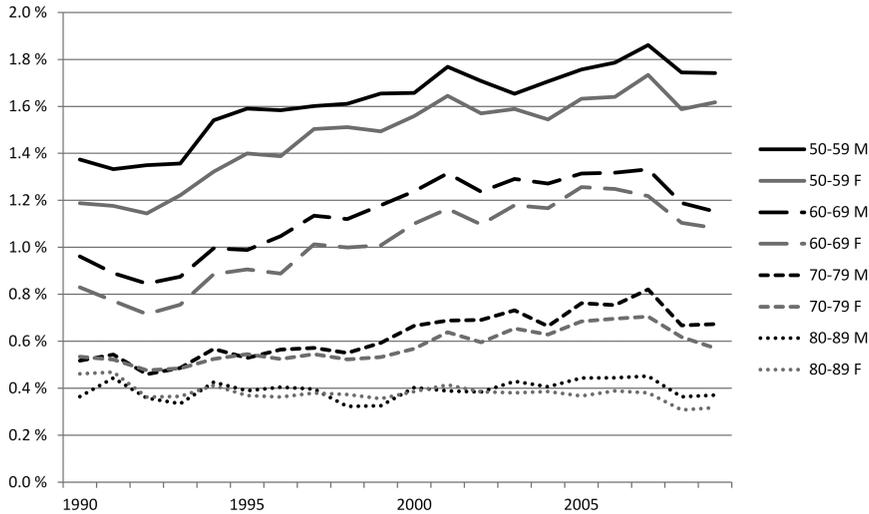


Figure 4.3 Yearly mobility rate across municipality borders by gender and age group.

Source: Registry data.

In the general population, people with higher education move most frequently, while people who completed high school move even less than the group with only a primary school education. This is true throughout the life course, except for people in their 40s and early 50s. In this age group, people with only primary education moved most frequently in the period from 1999–2006. The older age groups with a university degree moved on average about 40 per cent more than people with primary or secondary education.

### *Distance between adult children and parents*

We have asked whether elderly people move in order to get closer to their children, and adult children move to get closer to their parents. This question is based on an assumption that geographical distance between adult children and parents is an indicator of social proximity and the intergenerational provision of help (Fransson, 2004; Malmberg and Pettersen, 2007).

In general, men live closer to their elderly parents than women do. The gender differences are largest at the closest distances. This gender difference persists over all ages and increases from people's early 30s through their 40s. This gender gap has, however, narrowed from 2005–2010.

Figure 4.4 shows the proportion of people living close to their elderly parents by their number of children below ten years of age.

Although some gender differences exist, the patterns for men and women are the same: men and women who in their late 20s and early 30s have two or more young children live closer to their parents than others do. One way of interpreting

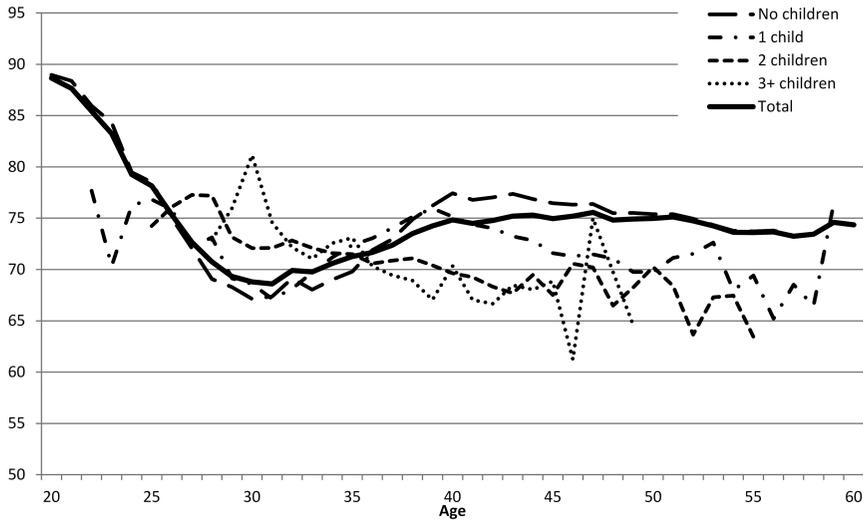


Figure 4.4 Percentage of age group (20 years +) with nearest living parent (65 years +) within a 50 km distance, 1.1.2010. By number of children below ten years of age.

Source: Registry data.

this is that adult children's return mobility is about family ties, place and belonging, a wish for staying closer to one's parents when having more children yourself, perhaps in order to receive help from grandparents, supporting Pettersson and Malmberg (2009). Another interpretation is that adult children living close to their parents have children earlier in life as well as more children.

This pattern is reversed in the next age groups: From their mid-30 years, especially those with more than one child, fewer people with young children live near their parents than do people without young children. People having children later in life may be more established in the housing market and more educated than younger parents and more likely to have moved more and farther away from their parents, following the general pattern that education increases movement. People with young children settled close to their elderly parents are presumably more related to elderly parents providing help for the young family than for receiving help themselves, while this may change during the life course.

People living in Eastern Norway<sup>2</sup> in general live closer to their parents than people in other parts of the country, probably because this is the most densely populated area. Nevertheless, both immigrants from Nordic countries and other immigrants in this area live close to their parents to a larger degree than do people born in Norway. Nordic immigrants living in other parts of Norway live farther from their parents. This difference seems to be because many Norwegians live in their birth municipality and near their parents – about 25 per cent of the population above 30 have never moved. When comparing Norwegians not living in their birth municipality with Nordic immigrants, the immigrant group lives closer to their parents on average, suggesting different patterns of family ties.

People born outside the Nordic countries<sup>3</sup> who have elderly parents living in Norway seem to live even closer to their elderly parents. One reason for this could be that they, to a larger degree, live in the capital area, where people in general live closer to their parents, but the relation remains when controlling for this and for centrality, also suggesting differences in intergenerational relations.

Immigrants from Nordic countries and countries outside Europe show mostly the same gender pattern as do Norwegians, probably in opposition to common beliefs. For Europeans (outside the Nordic region) women in their 30s and 40s live closer to their parents living in Norway than do similarly aged men, indicating yet an intersection between gender and nationality.

### *Explaining the geographical patterns*

A regression was run trying to explain differences in the distance between adult children and elderly parents.<sup>4</sup> The variable with the strongest effect in the regression is the one stating whether people living in their birth municipality live closer to their elderly parents than do others.

The distance seems to increase with the adult child's age, but this is not a linear relationship – the average distance increases sharply as young people move away for education, work or to start a family. Later the average distance decreases somewhat from age 30, when some move back to their “homeplace” and some parents move towards their adult children. Per the survey data, moving closer to parents/children is a significant moving motive. As much as 14 per cent of all movers from the three eldest cohorts (23 per cent of the eldest cohort) state proximity to their children as a moving motive, while 8 per cent of the three youngest cohorts state proximity to parents as a moving motive. Adult children and elderly parents thus move in the direction of each other and state family motives for these moves.

Significant gender differences exist in generational geographical proximity. Males live closer to their parents than do females. This is partly because men to a lesser degree have moved away from their birth communities and also because families more often settle near the male's parents (Løken, Lommerud and Lundberg, 2013). Rye (2006) also shows that ownership of business or land increase the chances for young men to move back home. If distance is the major factor explaining the frequencies of receiving help or providing help, these findings may indicate that male adult children may both provide more assistance to their older parents and receive more assistance from their older parents than do women. On the other hand, gender norms in care and labour may indicate a variety of processes.

Average distance increases with the adult child's number of young children and with being married. Having children increases the probability of having a partner, and partners often consider each other's preferences. The largest motive for moving to a place in the survey data is to establish a family. Moving in with a partner is an important moving motive in all Nordic countries (Lundholm et al., 2004).

Education, and especially higher education, translates as we have seen to larger distances between adult children and parents. The survey data show that respondents with higher education cite work as a moving motive more often than do others and they move more frequently. The level of income also increases with increasing geographical distance to parents. This may imply that the person weighs a high-paying job more, that specialised labour markets are more centralised and that educated people would be more willing to move to a job suiting their education than, for instance, to be closer to parents. The same relationships were found between education, distance, employment and proximity in the Swedish data by Malmberg and Pettersson (2007) and in the Netherlands by Michielin and Mulder (2007). This indicates generational shifts in education, population pattern, labour markets, etc.

While people living in the capital area of Norway on average live closer to their parents than do others, the same is not true for people living in other urban centres. They live, on average, a greater distance from their nearest parent. This corresponds well to the results from the survey where people justify centralising migration with finding work rather than family motives.

The NorLAG study (Slagsvold et al., 2012, p. 98f.) shows that family responsibility norms and intergenerational contact rates and support exchanges are strong in Norway, although weaker than in the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe. It also shows that 70 per cent of older parents see their children at least once weekly, although we expect this to vary in rural and urban regions. This raises the question of what kind of help requires what kind of geographical proximity. The data also suggest that the family and welfare state balance in elder care is around 50–50 (Slagsvold et al. 2012, p. 100). Every day or weekly help requires some kind of geographical closeness. The distance and lower possibilities to obtain help from family members are sources of concern and of lower subjective wellbeing among elders (Slagsvold et al. 2012, p. 101). We find that the proximity between adult children and parents is a result of older parents moving towards adult children but also because children in their 20–30s return to their birth municipality and eventually their parents.

Malmberg and Pettersson (2007) have analysed Swedish register data and find that “85 per cent of older parents have adult children within a radius of 50 km, of which 10 per cent live ‘just around the corner’; corresponding figures for adult children are 72 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively” (p. 679). There is no indication of any increase in intergenerational distances. They find that “Adult children who are well educated, female, older, born in Sweden, who are not parents, who live in densely populated areas and who have siblings are less likely to stay in the same region as their parents.” (p. 679). According to the authors, this is nevertheless partly contradicted by the next result – that it is more likely that someone will live close to their parents if they are the only child (Malmberg and Pettersson, 2009).

Our results show the same pattern but include the motives given for moving, for both adult children and their elderly parents, giving access to some subjective moving motives.

**Family sub-motives and ageing**

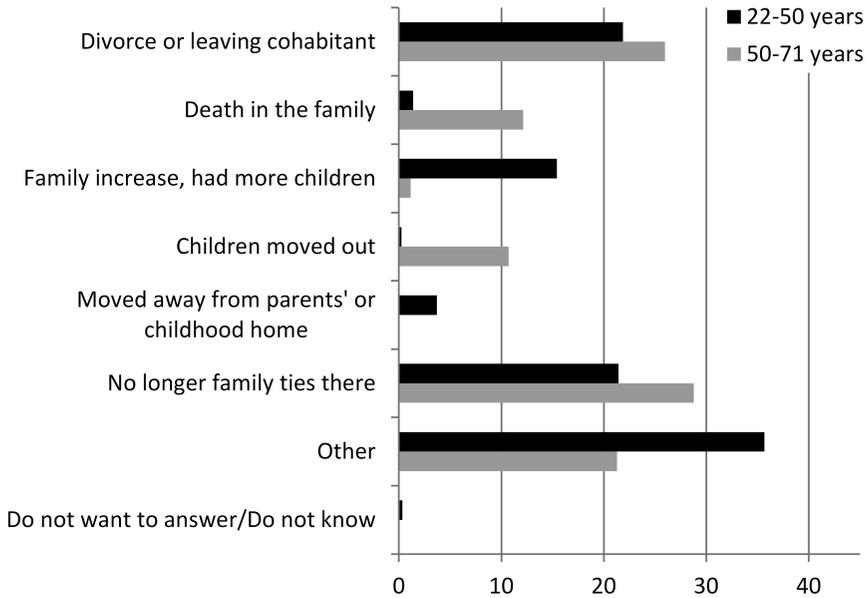


Figure 4.5 Family sub-motives related to the place moved from. Percentages. Ages denotes the minimum age at the beginning of the period and the maximum age at the end of the period.

Source: Survey data.

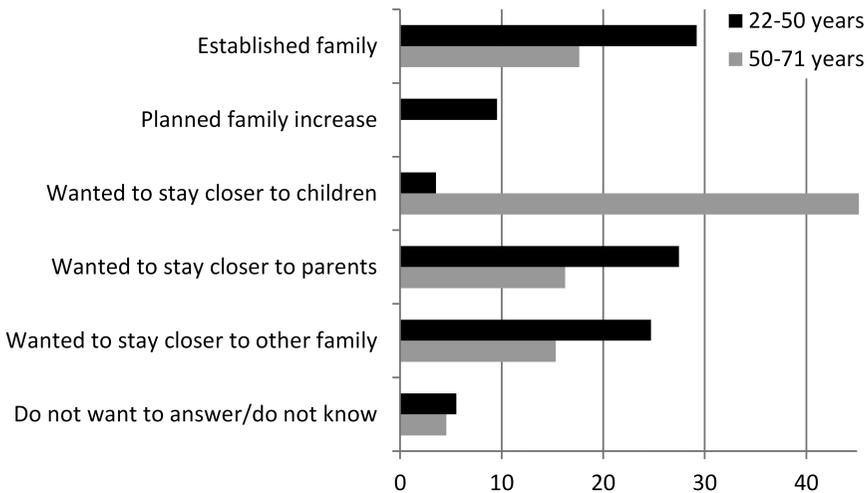


Figure 4.6 Family sub-motives related to the place moved to. Percentages. Ages denotes the minimum age at the beginning of the period and the maximum age at the end of the period.

Source: Survey data.

Family is a strong motive for moving among all age groups and strongest among elderly people. In the oldest age group (64–71), *two-thirds* of the family pull motives cited consist of a wish to move closer to their children. Elderly people actually move towards their adult children. Additionally, 20 per cent of them move closer to other family. The push motives are more unclear, since people seemingly have other reasons than those in the survey (high proportion of “other”) to move *from* somewhere. This indicates the limited value of such methods for this type of question – and the complexity of categorising diverse moving motives. Of the push motives, no longer having family ties at the place is the most prominent among the oldest age groups. Death (presumably of a partner) is also a main sub-motive in the oldest group (64–71), while in the groups 50–57 and 57–64, divorce dominates.

Lima (no date) shows, based on the NorLAG study, that people in the 35–54 age group rely heavily on help from family (25–30 per cent). Elderly people get less help from family (20 per cent) but rely more on help from neighbours (up to 15 per cent) than do people in earlier life phases (up to 5 per cent among the 35–54 group). Daatland et al. (2009) show how elderly parents, especially women, prefer public help rather than moving in with adult children. Combining the findings from our study with those of these ageing studies indicates that elderly people move towards their adult children and their children move towards their elderly parents when they themselves are in family establishment phases. Both processes seem to lead to the middle aged and elderly *providing* help to younger generations as much or more than *receiving* help.

## Discussion and conclusion

Middle-aged and elderly people are increasingly mobile. They are more mobile than the previous elderly generations, although commuting, “snowbirds” and movement between second homes are not accounted for in this study. If we include intra-municipality moving, elderly people have the same high frequencies of moving as do people in their 30s. The oldest show a declining moving pattern. Their intra-municipal movements involve shorter distances and are in a local centralising direction, indicating movement to institutions or more appropriate housing in their municipality centre. The middle aged and younger elders (50–70) move in a decentralising direction: often from the largest cities to the surrounding areas. They tend to cite family and place/environmental motives for moving. There are thus differences among younger and older elderly people.

In the Arctic north distinguished by many small peripheral communities and long distances, the population changes taking place are being amplified. Both young people, middle-aged and elderly people are more inclined to move out of these communities. This is especially true for people originating outside the Arctic with a higher education, while people born and raised in the region leave to a lesser degree.

Middle-aged and elderly people’s moving patterns are not much differentiated regarding gender, but there are still gender differences with regard to moving

motives. Men generally live closer to their elderly parents than do women and this spurs questions of the intersection of gender, assistance, care and geographical proximity in different life phases.

Elderly parents and adult children move closer to each other and such mobility is influenced by socioeconomic conditions, supporting the findings of Pettersson and Malmberg (2009, p. 354). Elderly people's mobility in this direction is strongest and both they and, to a lesser degree, their adult children cite increased family contact as an important motive for moving closer to each other. People born outside the Nordic countries, whose elderly parents live in Norway, live even closer to their elderly parents. The data show that middle-aged and elderly people assist the younger, maybe even more than they are assisted by their children, supporting and strengthening other findings (Lima, no date, Pettersson and Malmberg, 2009). They seem to be an important resource, doing unpaid work in support of their children's families. It remains to be seen whether the current generation of adult children will assist their parents in later life phases and their adult children in the years to come. Many adult children and parents live close enough for help to be exchanged; welfare state support as well as personal preferences, abilities and intergenerational solidarity are nevertheless important factors to consider in discussing the implication of these results.

Are middle-aged and elderly people's migration processes and patterns different from those of other age groups? A study discussing differences between migration patterns among elderly people in 11 OECD nations concludes that there is no single developmental path for migration in later life (Friedrich and Warnes, 2000). Migration paths are culturally, historically and environmentally constructed. We find that some differences relate to the life course, being out of the labour market and having adult children. The huge variations seem nevertheless to relate to age and severe health problems. We probably see cohort effects in the educational differences among the oldest and these affect moving patterns, but we will also expect them to change for later cohorts. Education (class) and cohort effects intertwine and create a need to contextualise elderly people's movement in their own terms. The existence of second and third homes is also related to cohorts. Geographical factors are strong in Norway and cut across other processes of differentiation, and the regional population patterns are continually changing.

Our study indicates that life course and age have strong explanatory impacts. Cohort effects, especially since the previous migration and settlement pattern influences later movements, further influence the migration patterns. In addition, indications are that there is a class and cohort dimension when higher education produces specific migration patterns among some of the older age groups. Gender is a differentiating dimension in all mobility, although it does not seem to be differentiating in specific ways among elderly people. The pattern indicates a need for more studies of men's and women's roles in assisting and caring for younger and elder family members. In sum, when studying elders' migration, it is important to be aware of differentiating processes, especially since the health situations presumably vary more among older people than they do among other groups. The ability to do so depends strongly on having solid data.

Middle-aged and elderly people have a low inter-municipality moving rate. Designing studies in this specific age group thus requires close consideration if one is to obtain enough data. There were for instance too few informants to fully utilize the data on questions concerning family sub-motives in our survey. The questions of whether elderly parents or adult children moved in order to assist or receive help could, for instance, not be elaborated in this study, because of too few respondents on such specific sub-questions.

Moreover, the current generation of middle-aged and elderly people in Norway has wide access to second and even third homes. We expect that these are important in elders' mobility. The lack of data on this kind of mobility, and on long-term stays in southern Europe, Thailand, etc., may be significant in understanding elderly people's movements.

The overall even distribution of moving motives shows that moving motives are complex and intertwined. In concert with the need for differentiation, such complexity indicate that trying to go beyond the main migration pattern in order to understand and explain mobility among elders also requires in-depth interviews. This conclusion is supported by the somewhat big proportion of "other" answers to some questions in this study. After all, middle-aged and elderly people's migration and their migration motives vary as much as, and maybe more than, the migration and migration motives of other groups. As the elderly life phase becomes longer for a higher proportion of the population, we must include more elderly people and more of their activities in studies like this. This is necessary to make visible their resources and activities, as well as to plan for good care and life quality in older age.

## Notes

- 1 1995–2010
- 2 Akershus, Oslo, Hedmark, Oppland, Østfold, Buskerud, Vestfold and Telemark
- 3 Norway, Sweden, Denmark (incl. territories), Finland and Iceland
- 4 The dependent variable is the logarithm of geodesic distance between the adult child and their nearest parent in 2010. The independent variables are age, gender, education, income (logarithm), number of children under ten, marital status (child and parents), country of birth, population of municipality (logarithm), whether they live in the capital, in their birth municipality or somewhere else.

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# Appendix

Table 4.1 Regression with distance to nearest parents (logarithm) in 2010 as the dependent variable. All variables are significant on a 1 per cent level or less.

	<i>Unstandardised Coefficients</i>	<i>Standardised Coefficients</i>		<i>Collinearity Statistics</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>VIF</i>
(Constant)	-2.12		-34.90	
Age	0.03	0.06	64.86	1.33
Male (ref: Female)	-0.73	-0.09	-99.25	1.06
Education (ref: primary school or less)				
>High school	0.07	0.01	7.03	1.88
>Higher education 3 years or less	0.73	0.08	65.56	1.90
>Higher education 4+ years	1.14	0.08	74.69	1.50
Income (log)	0.25	0.06	62.55	1.10
Number of children under 10 years	0.25	0.05	48.40	1.27
Married (ref: unmarried)	0.24	0.03	31.80	1.12
Parents divorced	0.69	0.06	63.87	1.03
Country of birth (ref: Norway)				
>Nordic	-0.66	-0.01	-13.67	1.00
>European (not Nordic)	-1.72	-0.03	-34.14	1.01
>Outside Europe	-1.71	-0.05	-56.37	1.03
Lives in Oslo (ref: rest of the country)	-0.15	-0.01	-9.96	1.70
Population of municipality (log)	0.58	0.23	193.27	1.82
Lives in municipality of birth	-2.54	-0.28	-311.30	1.07
R <sup>2</sup> = Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.145. N = 1 142 766				

A regression analysis with logarithmic distance between a subject and their nearest parents was conducted to nuance the picture. The regression equation is given by

$$\ln(\text{distance in meters}) = a + \mathbf{bI} + e$$

where  $a$  is a constant,  $e$  is the error term,  $\mathbf{b}$  is a vector with the regression coefficients and  $\mathbf{I}$  is a vector with the independent variables. The variables are age, gender, education, income (ln), number of children under ten, marital status (child and parents), country of birth, population of municipality (ln), whether they live in the capital, in their birth municipality or somewhere else.