

Factors associated with self-initiated moves during the formal eviction process

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Background

Each year, housing evictions affect many vulnerable Europeans. However, past research has mainly been based on enforced removals registered in official statistics, overlooking outcomes where the formal eviction process is not initiated or disrupted. Recent Swedish data reveals that for every enforced removal, four times as many individuals self-initiate a move during the formal eviction process. This study of over 60,000 cases uncovers hidden factors—economic hardship, sociodemographic inequalities, family dynamics, and urban-rural divides—that drive these moves, providing insights for more inclusive social work interventions and policy reforms.

The formal eviction process



Research Questions

The study addresses two key questions: (1) Which factors can be identified as being associated with individuals who initiate the move themselves during the formal eviction process? (2) Do the associations between these factors for self-initiated moves differ between men and women, or is there a gendered pattern?

Methods

Data and Study Population: This study used comprehensive data from the Swedish national database Dynamics of Evictions (DEVS). The database contains a unique dataset provided by the Swedish Enforcement Authority, which covers all stages of the judicial eviction process from application to summary proceedings to executed eviction for the period 2009-2012. Additionally, the database includes linked administrative register data from providers such as Statistics Sweden and the National Board of Health and Welfare for the years 1990-2014.

Analytical sample: All individuals who had registered applications for eviction (summary proceedings and/or execution) during the years 2009–2011 ($n = 60,771$). Attrition ~2.9%. Women ($n = 26,658$), Men ($n = 34,113$).

Variables The dependent variable for this study was the outcome of the formal eviction process: self-initiated move, lease regain, and enforced removal. The independent variables selected were potential

demographic, socioeconomic, and mental health factors associated with an increased risk of self-initiated moves during the formal eviction process. These factors were identified based on previous research on characteristics of the group (Nilsson, 2024).

Analytical strategy: Estimation of the relationship between the factors and the three outcomes of the formal eviction process, using multinomial logistic regression analyses with clustered standard errors. Base outcome 'regained the lease'. Karlson-Holm-Breen method (Karlson et al., 2012).

Results

Table 2. Predictors of the formal eviction process outcomes. Results from multinomial logistic regression analyses based on the KHB method.

Variables		Women (n=26,658)				Men (n=34,113)			
		Self-initiated move OR	95% CI	Enforced removal OR	95% CI	Self-initiated move OR	95% CI	Enforced removal OR	95% CI
Demographic factors									
Age									
18-25	Univariable	2.96***	2.77-3.16	1.88***	1.64-2.16	2.43***	2.27-2.60	1.40***	1.27-1.55
	Multivariable	2.71***	2.52-2.91	1.41***	1.22-1.63	2.24***	2.09-2.40	1.16**	1.05-1.29
Family type									
Married/cohabit with children	Univariable	1.11	0.98-1.26	0.75*	0.59-0.96	1.12*	1.02-1.24	0.85	0.69-1.04
	Multivariable	0.99	0.86-1.14	0.81	0.60-1.10	1.18**	1.04-1.33	1.02	0.76-1.37
Single parent with children	Univariable	1.19*	1.03-1.36	0.94	0.74-1.20	1.17	1.07-1.37	1.42	1.10-1.83
	Multivariable	1.08	0.95-1.23	0.92	0.71-1.19	1.13	0.97-1.31	1.45*	1.09-1.93
Single without children	Univariable	1.33***	1.18-1.50	1.80***	1.46-2.23	1.19***	1.09-1.30	1.99***	1.68-2.37
	Multivariable	1.20*	1.07-1.35	1.67***	1.36-2.08	1.15**	1.05-1.26	1.85***	1.55-2.20
No. of children in the household	Univariable	0.95***	0.92-0.98	0.77***	0.73-0.82	0.97	0.95-1.00	0.74***	0.70-0.79
	Multivariable	1.03	0.99-1.08	0.92	0.84-1.00	0.99	0.95-1.03	0.89*	0.80-0.98
Type of municipality									
Metropolitan	Univariable	0.44***	0.40-0.49	0.62***	0.53-0.72	0.56***	0.51-0.60	0.73**	0.58-0.91
	Multivariable	0.51***	0.45-0.57	0.67***	0.57-0.77	0.63***	0.58-0.69	0.75*	0.60-0.94
Country of birth									
Sweden	Univariable	1.79***	1.66-1.92	1.66***	1.48-1.86	1.36***	1.29-1.45	1.38***	1.26-1.52
	Multivariable	1.56***	1.44-1.70	1.59***	1.40-1.79	1.23***	1.15-1.32	1.30***	1.19-1.42
Socioeconomic factors									
Level of education									
No post-compulsory education	Univariable	1.15***	1.06-1.24	1.47***	1.33-1.61	1.12***	1.05-1.20	1.34***	1.29-1.46
	Multivariable	1.06	0.99-1.14	1.26***	1.14-1.40	1.04	0.97-1.11	1.19***	1.09-1.29
Income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold	Univariable	1.21***	1.14-1.28	1.34***	1.19-1.50	1.11**	1.04-1.18	1.44***	1.32-1.57
	Multivariable	1.17***	1.09-1.24	1.45***	1.30-1.63	1.10**	1.04-1.17	1.39***	1.27-1.52
No labour income	Univariable	1.10*	1.02-1.18	0.65***	0.59-0.72	1.20***	1.14-1.27	0.71***	0.65-0.76
	Multivariable	1.08*	1.00-1.16	0.77***	0.70-0.86	1.23***	1.17-1.30	0.89**	0.82-0.97
Social assistance	Univariable	1.11*	1.02-1.22	1.62***	1.45-1.82	1.19***	1.12-1.28	1.58***	1.46-1.73
	Multivariable	1.06	0.99-1.14	1.49***	1.33-1.66	1.19***	1.12-1.27	1.42***	1.30-1.55
Health factor									
Mental health problems	Univariable	0.94	0.88-1.00	1.15*	1.03-1.28	0.95	0.90-1.00	1.18***	1.03-1.28
	Multivariable	1.01	0.95-1.07	0.97	0.87-1.09	1.04	0.98-1.10	0.99	0.89-1.09

Notes: Base category = Regained lease. OR=Odds ratio. CI=Confidence interval. KHB=Karlson/Holm/Breen. *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.

Conclusion

This study contributes to increasing understanding of eviction dynamics by exploring the complex relationship between potential factors associated with self-initiated moves during the formal eviction process. These findings highlight crucial insights for future research, social policy, and social work interventions, enabling the development of targeted interventions to reduce eviction risks and safeguard housing security. To prevent self-initiated moves, it is especially important to include those under 25, couples with children, individuals residing in non-metropolitan areas, and individuals with native backgrounds - particularly young women and women with native backgrounds.

References

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- Nilsson, I. (2024). Self-initiated Moves During the Formal Eviction Process: Findings from Swedish Register Data. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 1-15.