Belonging to the Neighbourhood, Residential Mobility, and the Transition to Parenthood

**Motivation**

- We exist in and are influenced by our sociospatial surroundings.
- Our connection to the neighbourhood and the people in it provides several aspects associated with the transition to parenthood: familiarity, security, resource and information exchange, and emotional well-being.
- However, residential mobility is common in young adulthood. But moving has social costs.
- We can proxy the subjective connection to the local area through the sense of belonging to the neighbourhood.
- A stronger sense of belonging to the neighbourhood is positively associated with parenthood.
- The relationship depends on the length of time in the current residence.
- While short-distance moves are more positively associated with parenthood than long-distance moves, the relationship between belonging and parenthood follows a similar trend.

**Questions**

**Research Question 1**

- How is the sense of belonging in the neighbourhood associated with the transition to parenthood?
- H1: A stronger sense of belonging will be positively associated with having a first child.

**Research Question 2**

- How does the relationship differ for those that have recently moved and does it depend on the distance of the last move?
- H2: Belonging to the neighbourhood will be more positively associated with parenthood for recent movers than long-term residents. Long-distance movers will have a more positive association than short-distance movers.

**Data & Analysis**

- **Data:** United Kingdom Household Longitudinal Study (Waves 1, 3, 6, & 9)
- **Sample:** Childless, partnered individuals, ages 18-45; N = 16,798
- **Dependent:** Live first birth
- **Explanatory:** Belong to the neighbourhood (Bruckner’s Neighbourhood Cohesion Index)
- **Interaction:** Time in current residence and distance of the last move
- **Model:** Multilevel Logit Regression clustered at the individual level

**Results**

- A stronger sense of belonging to the neighbourhood is positively associated with parenthood.
- The relationship depends on the length of time in the current residence.
- While short-distance moves are more positively associated with parenthood than long-distance moves, the relationship between belonging and parenthood follows a similar trend.

**Conclusion**

1. **Geographic place** is more than objective characteristics but also a subjective connection to the local area.
   a. If a neighbourhood does not provide security, emotional stability, and healthy social networks, it is suboptimal for parenthood
2. For recent movers, a stronger sense of belonging can ease the transition to parenthood in three key ways:
   a. A sign of integrating into the local networks
   b. A desire to settle down and emotionally invest
   c. The neighbourhood provides a sense of security

**Contact**

1. Vienna Institute of Demography, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Wittgenstein Centre (IIASA, OeAW, University of Vienna)
2. University of Vienna, Wittgenstein Centre (IIASA, OeAW, University of Vienna)
3. University of Southampton, Department for Social Statistics and Demography and Centre for Population Change

**Email:** brian.buh@oeaw.ac.at  **Twitter:** @brian_buh

This work is funded by: Austrian Science Fund (FWF, P31357-G29) and ESRC Connecting Generations Centre Grant (ES/W002116/1)