
CHAPTER 4

“Being housed” : a state with no status

Valérie GOLAZ, Catherine BONVALET, Daniel DELAUNAY,
Alioune DIAGNE, Françoise DUREAU, Éva LELIÈVRE

In French statistics the term *hébergement* (from *héberger*: to harbour, host, lodge, shelter) may refer to many kinds of accommodation in another person's household, an institution or a collective lodging. In this chapter the terms *housing* and *being housed* are used to refer to situations of *hébergement* limited to private households, that is to “living with” parents, friends or relatives – already a fuzzy concept in itself.

As with pregnancy, which was discussed in the previous chapter, *being housed* (in this restricted sense) is not an event but a state. Between Northern and Southern countries, research on this subject covers a particularly wide range of considerations. This *being housed* is an important concept in connection with housing, households and social solidarity, but is often side-stepped or glossed over. Although a widespread phenomenon, it is a particularly difficult concept to pin down precisely. It raises questions of time and transition in many ways. Is it always a temporary, unstable situation? What events mark the start and end of this situation, or entry into and exit from the state? Can there be a change of state without any event occurring? What features of the life course can be used to measure this situation?

Being housed is often a transitory phase, expected to last only a short time. But it can drag on and become a housing status in itself, in institutional households particularly. Generally speaking, the expression carries negative connotations, especially in Western societies where residential independence is the norm and being housed is regarded as an anomaly, even though widespread (Lévy-Vroeland, 2000). In today's fast-changing African families being housed is a very common practice, both in the least Westernised rural settings and in towns, where the cost and scarcity of housing lead many people to live for long periods with friends or relatives.

So the term *being housed* covers a very wide range of situations. It may happen at various stages in a person's life. It often marks a period of dependency, as during the passage from childhood to "independence", or at a time of personal insecurity or sudden change such as divorce, unemployment, a new job etc. It is also relevant to the care of the elderly. Although it is sometimes seen as a burden by host and guest alike, this is not always the case. It can be a residential and financial choice that suits the parties concerned, children and parents, brothers or friends, etc. (see Chapter 1 on factual data and perceptions).

Along with this wide range of situations there are numerous definitions, depending on the perspective adopted to measure states designated by the expression *being housed*. It may be considered from any of the following angles:

- family solidarity and sociability;
- as a housing occupancy status, alternating with or in a sequence with tenancy and home ownership;
- insecurity and vulnerability, particularly where the public authorities have to identify and assess needs.

It can also be considered from the standpoint of individuals' independence, in which case being housed suggests dependency and constraint rather than strong ties and solidarity.

The time aspect is fuzzy. When does this state begin? (At what age do young persons living with their parents enter the category of being housed? When does a young man living part of the time with his lover become their partner?) When does it end? (At what point does someone cease to be housed if he or she is living with elderly parents who are gradually becoming dependent?) And from what length or frequency of stay should a guest be regarded as being housed? Clearly this state has entry and exit thresholds, but they are often hard to measure. Being housed is a complex notion connected with residential practices and norms that vary according to time and place. The purpose of this chapter is to address this diversity and the underlying trends.

Measuring this phenomenon mainly concerns two stages of a research study: data collection and the formulation of hypotheses and definitions to process the data. No major study of being housed as such has been done in any of the countries discussed in this chapter. In this regard, most existing analyses have been produced as part of academic research into family ties and solidarity or household composition and housing. So studying the periods of time when a person is being housed is usually done based on indirect criteria to do with the person's housing occupancy status, the composition of his or her household, what contribution he or she makes to housing costs and his or her kinship relation to the principal occupant.

This chapter first introduces a variety of defining criteria proposed by different teams or in different studies, and draws out their common principles. It then shows how much the dynamics of being housed, the transition from one

status to another, is blurred by the very nature of this state, which cannot be identified by a single criterion. Ways of improving identification and analysis are suggested, largely based on combining different criteria and addressing the issue of gradual transitions.

1. IDENTIFYING PERIODS WHEN A PERSON IS BEING HOUSED DURING DATA COLLECTION

The contexts considered here (France, Colombia and Africa) present such a wide range of residential situations that a specific definition of being housed is required in each case. The criteria used will depend on the nature of the data gathered and the information they provide.

In France, the subject was addressed in the 1990s in the work of Yves Grafmeyer (1997), the seminar by Claire Lévy-Vroelant (1998, published in 2000) and the *Villes et hospitalité* programme by Anne Gotman (2001).

Grafmeyer suggested identifying a person as being housed (*hébergé*) if the following criteria were met:

- he/she is not the principal occupant of the dwelling;
- he/she must actually be living with the principal occupant;
- he/she is an adult;
- the period concerned is of at least three consecutive months;
- housing by the employer or in an institution is not counted;
- the accommodation is the main residence of both host and guest.

To apply these criteria one must know the composition of the household, the relationships between its various members, the principal occupant and his or her occupancy status (owner-occupier, lessee, tenant, etc.), and each person's main place of residence. The minimum duration and the adulthood threshold may vary from study to study. The advantage of this definition is that dependency is not a criterion, so nothing needs to be known about any financial arrangements.

1.1. Sources identifying *hébergement* in France

1.1.1. Identifying *hébergement* from national surveys

It is not easy to identify those being housed from censuses or INSEE's national surveys. The occupancy status recorded in these surveys is by definition that of the household reference person. Only from the composition of the household and the ages and occupations of its members can one identify the reference persons and those who are being housed. Bessièrè and Laferrère (2002) distinguish three classes of people in a household:

- the principal occupants are the household reference person and his or her partner or joint tenant if any. If there are several principal occupants, they are assumed to be in a relation of equality, whether due to union (formal or informal) or joint tenancy;

- co-residents include dependent children, who are not on an equal footing with their parents. They may be minors or students who have not yet left home for more than six months at a time. The ascendants of the reference person and these ascendants' partners are also classed as co-residents (because it is often hard to tell who is really living in whose home);
- those classed as being housed include any children who have previously left home for a period of at least six months and have come back, and nephews, nieces and any other person, related or not, other than co-residents as defined above.

So according to INSEE in this study, there are two important dimensions to being housed: the family aspect (blood ties or marriage ties) and the economic aspect, through financial or domestic arrangements. But Bessièrè and Laferrère (2002) rightly point out that reciprocity over time is not taken into account (e.g. a mother may take in her divorced son for a while, and later he may act as her host in turn). No reference is made to the time dimension, except in connection with a young person's stay away from the parental home, which changes their status.

But this criterion seems very problematic. What counts as a stay away from home? Temporary placement at the age of 5? A year's convalescence with the grandparents at the age of 12? A prison term at the age of 18? Nine months as a boarder?

Further, from what age should a person be regarded as independent? Lelièvre *et al.* (2005) report that a quarter of Île-de-France residents born between 1930 and 1950 had left home for at least a year before the age of 14.

Bessièrè and Laferrère implicitly regard this first stay of over six months away from the parental home as marking the age of maturity, i.e. an "age" from which any individual can be regarded as capable of living independently. But if the young person has never moved away, from what age should he or she be considered to change from the status of co-resident to that of lodger?

Banturiki and Duchêne (2005), studying one-parent families in Europe, reveal that conventions concerning the age at which children are no longer dependent on their parents varies widely from country to country and even from one census to the next in the same country. In some cases there is no limit, in others it is officially declared at the age of 16.

1.1.2. Identifying those being housed from the Biographies et entourage survey

The *Biographies et entourage* life course survey, for which the data were collected in 2000-2001, was designed to trace the family, residential and occupational histories of the members of a group, based on a survey of individuals aged 50 to 70 (see Box 1 at the end of Chapter 1).

Cases of being housed, of relatives providing someone with a (separate) dwelling, and of several related households living nearby, are all good indicators for analysing family ties. This survey gathered the factual elements to reveal such situations, which are usually masked in quantitative data gathering exercises.

The questionnaire in the *Biographies et entourage* survey was so designed as to record precisely, and for the respondent's entire residential history, any periods of cohabitation (in the broad sense) and the occupancy status of the respondent or their host. For each dwelling the respondent had lived in, the data covered the composition of the household, the respondent's relationship with the principal occupant of the dwelling, and that person's occupancy status (Bonvalet and Lelièvre, 2000) (See Box 4).

BOX 4. BIOGRAPHIES ET ENTOURAGE SURVEY
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS RESIDENTIAL SITUATION
THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFE

- L6. Who were the people living in this dwelling?
- L7. Which of the people living there was the principal occupant at the time you moved in?
- L7b. (if L7 = employer, friend, Ego and other co-tenants, other cases) Did you have the use of the entire dwelling or only part of it?
- L8. Was the person referred to in L7 (a) owner-occupier (if so give details), (b) tenant (details), (c) other (details)?
- Instruction:* For L7, if Ego is the principal occupant, then L7 = 1. Otherwise, the relationship between Ego and the household member who had the (formal or informal) status of principal occupant is described. If the dwelling is tied to the partner's employment, enter 2. If Ego is living with their parents in their home, enter 2P. If Ego is living with a brother, enter F.

The purpose was to determine which member of the household (i.e. the inhabitants of the dwelling) was the reference person as regards occupation of the dwelling. Following the instruction here, principal occupant status does not necessarily mean that the person has a formal title or contract. These questions distinguish between people who are living in their host's household and those to whom a separate dwelling has been lent. On the other hand, no criterion of economic activity is applied here. Strictly applied, the criterion for attributing "principal occupant" status means that a person is being housed if they are living with their partner in a dwelling occupied by virtue of the partner's job. They do not jointly hold their partner's tenure status, and their access to the dwelling depends entirely on the conjugal relationship.

Respondents in the *Biographies et entourage* survey were also invited to supply information about transitory periods of whatever length. Short stays are not always covered by conventional quantitative surveys. Below we give example descriptions of transitory periods reported in the questionnaires:

- living with friends free of charge;
- Ego stayed with parents in Belgium for two months, to have her baby;
- spouse transferred to Rhine from 1981 to 1986, the children were born there;
- six months with parents-in-law, six months in a hotel;

- no fixed address (Paris/Argenteuil);
- stayed with friends in the Oise, Seine-et-Marne, Hauts-de-Seine and Val-d'Oise *départements*;
- period 4 consisted mainly of bedsits in the Seine *département*;
- seven months in a hostel in 1968, a few months in a hotel and six months living in building site in early 1969.

Thus the information respondents provide about what the questionnaire calls transitory periods are more varied than the situations that would fall under *hébergement* episodes according to Grafmeyer's definition. They include atypical, insecure housing situations such as hotel rooms, hostels and the street; various types of host (friends, family); and living on the site of a building job. So there are points of intersection between *being housed* and transitory situations, *being housed* and family, *being housed* and insecurity.

Even from these two sources and approaches, the difficulty of identifying a single object is evident. The inevitable result is that studies made from different disciplinary perspectives, even using the same data source, will identify those being housed or episodes of being housed in the life course in different ways.

Whether from national surveys or specific surveys, the data available may help identify a situation, more or less precisely, through hindsight. The choice of criteria depends heavily on the information gathered.

1.2. Identifying those being housed in Colombia

1.2.1. Identifying those being housed from national surveys

Censuses and household surveys regularly conducted by DANE (*Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística*) count dwellings, households and the individuals in them. To identify the number of households living in each dwelling, the interviewer first asks "How many groups of people are there cooking separately in the dwelling?". Each household's occupancy status is described by four options: property owned outright, property purchase payments ongoing, renting or sub-renting, other. The official censuses since 1985 have counted as members of a household all persons who usually live in it, whether or not they are present at the time of the census. For each member of the household, their relationship with the household head is recorded (five types of family relationships, domestic employee, other unrelated persons). Domestic employees having no other residence are included as members of the household (DANE, 1996).

As in France, this information from censuses and national household surveys can be used to identify persons who are being housed by considering age, relationship to household head and occupancy status.

1.2.2. Identifying episodes of being housed from life course surveys in Bogota and the Casanare oil towns

Two surveys on spatial mobility were conducted in Colombia. One covered 1,031 households in Bogota and its metropolitan fringe and the other 2,000 households in three small oil towns in the east of the country. The purpose was to gather

the information needed to analyse these populations' mobility practices and their impact on population growth and recomposition in Bogota and the towns of the Casanare area (see Box 5).

BOX 5. **COLOMBIAN SURVEYS (CEDE-IRD, 1993)**
QUESTIONS ON RESIDENTIAL SITUATIONS

• *At the moment of the survey*

Occupancy status: owner-occupier, de facto occupant, tenant (with/without written contract, with/without kinship to landlord), sub-tenant, free of charge, other. Those regarded as members of the household were the usual inhabitants of the dwelling (whether or not present at the time of the survey) and persons who lived elsewhere most of the year but had spent at least thirty nights in the dwelling over the previous twelve months.

For each member of the household: relationship to household head (11 types of kinship, domestic employee, kin of domestic employee, guest, lodger, other).

• *In the twelve months preceding the survey, for each member of the household*

Periods of stay in different dwellings (maximum three including the dwelling in the survey). For each dwelling: durations and pattern of stays, location of dwelling and type of tenure (with/without kin, hotel or house, various types of collective dwelling).

• *Life course module, for each dwelling occupied by Ego*

Precise location of the dwelling (commune and, for towns covered by the surveys, census area).

Relationship to household head (11 types of kinship and 1 category for non-related persons).

Occupancy status for the dwelling (owner-occupier, de facto occupant, tenant, sub-tenant, free of charge, other).

For each dwelling identified in the life course module, the surveys indicate co-residence in the dwelling with members of the respondent's kin (father, mother, partner, ex-partner, children). The life course information on co-residents is thus limited to a restrictively defined family group (ascendants, descendents and partners): pilot studies in Bogota showed that it was not possible to gather the entire make-up of the households throughout the respondent's life, as had been intended initially.

Concerning the twelve months preceding the survey, the attention paid to multiple residences resulted in adopting a particular definition of household members, which also included people for whom the dwelling in the survey was only one of the dwellings in their residential system. A special module was applied to all these individuals, so as to describe complex residential systems based on various patterns of circular mobility (Dureau, 2002). These two options made it

possible to detect short-term periods during which Ego was being housed that would not be identified using more restrictive definitions of residence.

From these data, individuals were considered to be “housed” if they had reached the age of independence (see paragraph 2.1.) and were living free of charge in a household, whether or not they were related to other members of the household.

1.3. Identifying those being housed in African households

As mentioned in the introduction, it is important to distinguish between being housed as applied to youngsters and as applied to people of other ages. Living in an employer’s household must also be separately identified. The category of live-in domestic servant was identified in the Colombian survey, and while it is now rare in the North for domestic staff to live with their employers, it is common in Southern countries. But should this really be counted in the “being housed” category?

Below we take two examples to discuss more generally the diversity, boundaries and thresholds between and other occupation statuses.

1.3.1. Who is “being housed” in Dakar?

One purpose of the survey on youth and family trends in Dakar (*Jeunesse et devenir des familles à Dakar*, IRD/IFAN, 2001) was to discover the consequences of the economic crisis in Senegal for the demographic behaviour of the Dakar population, and on the integration of young people in particular.

The survey was conducted among 1,200 persons born between 1942 and 1976. Collecting and analysing residential histories played a large part in the survey. Respondents were asked a set of questions about each place where they had lived for more than six months (Box 6).

BOX 6. JEUNESSE ET DEVENIR DE LA FAMILLE À DAKAR SURVEY (IRD/IFAN, 2001)
QUESTIONS TRACING THE RESPONDENT’S RESIDENTIAL HISTORY

- q202-203. On what date did you move into this dwelling (or on what date did your occupancy status change)?
- q204. What was the environment of this dwelling: Dakar, other town in Senegal, rural Senegal, urban setting in another country, rural setting in another country?
- q205. What was your occupancy status, or your partner’s, at the start of the period? Owner-occupier, tenant, lodger?
- q206. If being housed, who was your host?

In the Dakar survey, in q205 *being housed* (*hébergé*) covered anyone who was neither owner-occupier nor tenant; the responses to question q206 then clarified the issue.

Under question q205, the respondent shared their partner’s occupancy status. This is a doubtful choice in the case of a wife in a polygamous marriage.

Moreover, in Dakar as in many African capital cities, the family home is jointly owned, so no member of the family claims to be the owner and ownership is diluted. As in France, *hébergement* is seen in relation to a household reference person. In Africa, this is usually the family elder. We find paradoxical situations where a civil servant living in the family home may be recorded as *hébergé* even though he, the son, is the one paying for the upkeep of the house. Who is living with whom?

In Africa especially, being housed is a major issue in the cities, where housing costs are high. However, it is also worth looking at a survey conducted in a rural area where population density was particularly high.

1.3.2. *Being housed in Kisii, Kenya*

A survey conducted in 1997/1998 in the south of Gucha District in Kenya, in a very densely populated rural area (pop. over 700 per km²) provides data concerning family, occupational, residential and land tenure histories of more than 600 people aged 15 and over (Golaz, 2002). The aim of this survey was to understand trends and adaptation mechanisms in a context of growing land pressure where out-migration remains at a fairly low level.

To pin down residential and mobility practices as accurately as possible, the survey questionnaire was based on the model of the survey of the Colombian oil towns. The questions that identified periods when ego was a lodger are reproduced in Box 7.

BOX 7. KISII SURVEY (V. GOLAZ, 2000)
QUESTIONS RELATED TO EGO'S RESIDENTIAL STATUS

- *In the household part*, composition of the household at the time of the survey (de facto residents and usual residents).
- *In the residential history part*,
 - a. place of residence
 - b. occupancy status (owner-occupier, tenant, accommodated free of charge)
 - c. relationship to household head
 - d. periods of co-residence when the household head was a direct ascendant or descendent
 - e. periods of schooling
 - f. for men, year of first individual access to land
 - g. for women, year of entry into union.
- *In a specific module*, concerning the preceding 12 months only
 - a. place of residence
 - b. occupancy status in the dwelling.

Thus for each dwelling the respondent has occupied, the survey establishes the household's occupancy status, the respondent's relationship to the

owner of the dwelling and any periods of co-residence with that person if they are a direct ascendant or descendant.

The definition of “household” adopted for the survey is based on access to land as much as on access to an independent dwelling. Thus any group of people who have the use of a specific piece of land, or in the rare cases where land is not involved, who possess an independent dwelling, form a household. This definition is relevant to this particular society where population density is high, individual ownership frequent and farming the main occupation. It is close enough to the French definition to allow comparisons to be made, but would not be at all suitable for rural West Africa, where land use is more often collectively based.

It also sheds light on the variety of *residential* situations where being housed occurs:

- before moving out of the parental home;
- a woman may live with her parents or other relatives until she marries;
- a single man or a couple may be housed in a household, especially when they migrate;
- a separated woman will live with her parents or a sibling (separation used to be strongly disapproved of, but at the time of the survey the interviewers found separated women living with their parents in 20 of the households surveyed in 1998, i.e. 9% of the 219 households where daughters of the household head had married);
- elderly parents live with a grandchild;
- in times of civil strife such as the 1990s in Kenya, whole families may move in with relatives.

Yet this survey does not enable any distinction between living with a person who is not a direct relative and being lent a separate dwelling by that person. It provides all the necessary information for identifying situations where parents are hosts to their children or children to their parents. But, as everywhere, this is heavily dependent on the underlying definitions of “household” and “household head”.

1.4. Conclusion

This first section has examined the available data and the way surveys have gone about identifying a particular state or status. It briefly introduced each of the data sources used and highlights the fact that none of the surveys except the one in Dakar mention *hébergement* or being housed as such, at the time data was collected.

In most of the data sources, this specific residential situation is a subject analysed later, and is identified in terms of what it is not. For example, a person being housed is neither tenant nor owner of the dwelling they live in, nor housed free of charge in an independent dwelling.

The frequency and duration of stays in another person's home in the surveys covered here shows that being housed is not merely a rare transition

period, barely perceptible in the respondents' residential histories. This suggests we should regard it as a residential status in its own right.

This theoretical examination should therefore be continued, broadening the field of reference in Southern countries and identifying the different facets of being housed that call for different criteria. A subject of applied research rather than empirical investigation, being housed is a poorly defined state with flexible contours, and a stimulating area for investigation.

One of the first steps is to situate this state with regard to thresholds, in a dynamic perspective. This is the aim of the following section.

2. TIME AND TYPES OF BEING HOUSED DYNAMICS AND CONTOURS

Being housed occurs at different ages, in various circumstances and for varying lengths of time. It is not necessarily a temporary situation.

It seems important to separate the situation of children living with their parents, with their emancipation marked, among other things, by the move to residential independence, from other periods in life when a person is considered as being housed.

For offspring, some thought must be given to the differences between co-residing, being housed in the parental home and providing housing to one or both parents. In adult years, such distinctions are also relevant with regard to partners, for example. There are also considerations that distinguish the occasional guest from a person being housed, especially when dealing with systems of multi-residence.

The choice of events marking transition from one residential status to another must also be addressed.

2.1. The transition from childhood to adulthood

The question of the threshold after which a young person can be regarded as an independent person being housed with his or her parents rather than a co-resident child is implicitly a question of social norms. It is the threshold beyond which the society in question considers that offspring should no longer be living with their parents. There are some societies that do not regard moving out of the parental home as a necessary part of growing up. In others, moving out of the parental home is part of what marks the beginning of maturity.

The methodological difficulty of identifying a possible period when a child is being housed before he or she moves out of the parental home lies in the need to identify the moment from which their parents regard them as being housed.

2.1.1. *Autonomy means different things in France and Colombia*

The criterion of maturity is included in Grafmeyer's definition (the young person must be an adult) and also Bessière and Lafferère's (they must have already lived away from home for a period of over six months). Before that, INED's *Peuplement et dépeuplement de Paris* survey offered some detailed criteria.

The *Peuplement et dépeuplement de Paris* survey tracked the residential histories of persons born in the period 1926-1935 and who in 1986 were living in the Paris region (Bonvalet and Lelièvre, 2000, p. 22). The start of the respondent's independent residential history was set by convention at the first of the following three events:

- his or her departure from the parental home,
- his or her marriage,
- his or her 25th birthday if neither of the former had yet occurred¹.

This amounts to considering three ways of becoming an adult: residential independence, marriage or, failing either of these, reaching the age of 25. This threshold is based on an implicit norm that someone of that age should be autonomous, or else classed as “being housed”. If cohabitation between generations were considered an ideal way of living, whether one is being housed or not would not be relevant.

In the *Biographies et entourage* survey there is no hypothesis as to when the residential history begins: the information gathered starts with childhood, so that the person analysing the data is free to decide on the moment from which a child would be classed as being housed in the parental home. The researcher is free to use the above criteria or change them.

In a study of residential transitions in Bogota (Delaunay and Dureau, 2003), the question of achieving mature autonomy was separated from the question of residential independence in order to study residential mobility and identify what the authors call “residential mobility in a situation of independence”. The study then analysed the mechanisms of entry into and exit from the residential state when one is being housed as one of several possible residential statuses. From the information gathered in the life course module of the survey (see Box 5), three trajectories were analysed in interaction: that of the respondent's relationship to the head of the household in which they lived, that of the household head's occupancy status, and changes of dwelling. The combination of these three trajectories describes a succession of residential periods defined in a more complex way than if occupancy status alone had been used.

That survey covered the respondent's whole residential history from birth. It therefore raised the questions of when they had left the parental home, when they made an independent choice of where to live and with what occupancy status. The aim was to distinguish situations of “natural” co-habitation between members of a nuclear family from co-habitation among relatives, friends or employees who choose that situation independently (Dureau, 2000).

¹ At the time, this birthday was chosen in order to match the data from the 1982 census in which those under 25 years of age were counted as children of the family. Young people of 25 and over were considered lone adults, and the household they were living in changed from “couple with children” to “complex household”.

Autonomy was defined by age and relationship with the household head. Those regarded as autonomous were:

- a. household heads and their partners aged 15 or over;
- b. ascendants, uncles, aunts and collateral kin of the household head and any unrelated persons (such as domestic staff) aged 20 or over;
- c. any person aged 25 or over.

As this example illustrates, deciding on the start date of a residential history is a recurrent problem in life course studies (GRAB, 1999, p. 50). The choice made here is implicitly based on the idea that (i) forming a family and (ii) being a parent are signs of mature autonomy, which it is assumed all young people achieve anyway at the age of 25. Once he or she has achieved mature autonomy in any of these ways, the person may occupy a dwelling as owner-occupier, tenant, sub-tenant, free or charged, or be housed (as an independent person).

2.1.2. Maturity and residential autonomy in Africa: different timings, changing patterns

In Europe, there is generally an age beyond which it is considered that children should no longer be living with their parents. In Colombia too, the idea of a threshold age is relevant, and is used in analyses. The situation is different in many African countries, where there is often no connection between an individual's status and his or her place of residence.

In traditional Senegalese society, families generally live in large compounds shared by several family units who have the same family name and an ancestor in common. Authority is in the hands of the oldest man of the family (Diop, 1985). This form of organisation is still in force in rural Senegal.

In this model, residential independence as defined by departure from the family home and access to one's own dwelling does not exist. As in Kisii in Kenya, a woman generally only leaves her family home to join her partner. Men remain in the family compound, where they set up home with wife and children.

Men and women achieve importance and earn respect by their achievements in terms of reproduction or economic activity rather than residential independence. The link between residential and economic independence is not a simple one, because neither ownership of the family home nor the division of labour on the farm and in the home is entirely defined by norms. The notion of being a lodger may not be relevant in this situation.

However, behaviours are now changing fast, due to the combination of crisis (conflict and violence in Kenya, urbanisation and pauperisation in Dakar) and development. The notion of being housed is meaningful because in some families young people demand and acquire earlier autonomy, while other families continue to function as a domestic unit. But it is not a one-way trend. With schooling and new economic opportunities, many young people aspire to greater individualisation, but economic problems limit the possibilities of achieving it.

In Kisii, the perception of being housed has changed because it is increasingly common for people to mark their independence by migrating or by obtaining individual access to land. Unlike some other rural parts of Africa, West Africa particularly, land in this part of Kenya has been individually owned for some fifty years. The land registry was set up in the 1960s, changing people's relationships to the land, to sharing land, to housing and to individual independence. Although some families still function as communities, others have been functioning as nuclear families for more than a generation. High rates of school attendance among both boys and girls also foster social individualisation. Neither forming a union, nor earning an income, nor customary marriage are stages in life that necessarily involve leaving the family compound. But increasingly, young men demand independence from their parents. In practice, this means provisionally dividing the father's land holding, with the young man moving onto his own share of land.

In Senegal, in urban Dakar where the traditional model is increasingly breaking down owing to small dwelling size and young people's aspiration to be more independent of their parents, young people tend to leave home as soon as they start work and are able to pay their own way. Where the parental home is in a rural area, this too encourages the young to move away.

Now, however, a reverse trend is emerging. In Dakar the economic crisis limits young people's scope for independence, while in Kisii it no longer makes sense economically speaking to divide the family land because plots are becoming smaller and smaller. So practices are returning to the traditional model and being housed is becoming increasingly common again – but now experienced as a constraint. Sometimes, as in Kenya, it is associated with young people's temporary emigration for work.

To measure periods when one is being housed, an entry threshold must be defined: the moment from which an individual can be said to be being housed. The various approaches presented here agree on the fact that this threshold is linked to an age at which young people are assumed to be mature. This depends on culture, so it is a highly variable notion that highlights major differences between different societies and also within a society over timescales of a few decades. So there is no single answer; a specific definition is needed in each case.

2.2. Being housed in adult life

In adult life, being housed is often a response to a transitional period in work, family or health, or a major change such as promotion involving a move to another region, migration to find work, or a conjugal separation. The cases discussed below show the extent to which the dynamics of this situation, the passage from one status to another, are blurred by the very nature of this state. It cannot be simply reduced to a residential status because it closely involves other relational, family and economic factors. Life course data are crucial for identifying entry and exit thresholds, because they make it possible to combine the different spheres of a life history.

2.2.1. A common situation

The analysis of residential histories shows that it is a mistake to ignore periods of being housed by considering only the ordinary tenure situations of owner-occupier and tenant. Although the *Peuplement et dépeuplement de Paris* survey did not enter into detail on these situations, it made it possible to identify such periods from declarations of occupancy status. Although these periods might occur at any time in the residential history, they mainly occurred in the earliest parts of the trajectories (Bonvalet, 1998).

Thus 37% of Parisians born between 1926 and 1935 began their residential trajectory living with their parents or in-laws and nearly 7% started out living in a dwelling owned by their family. The housing shortage of the 1950s was also reflected in insecure housing situations such as sub-renting, hostels, hotels and bedsits – being housed was defined in the broadest sense (Girard and Bastide, 1952).

Nearly 4% of respondents in these generations had lived through difficult situations – indeed 10% if sub-tenancies are included. A significant proportion (11%) started out in housing provided by their employer. This figure is no doubt partly to be explained by practices dating back to the start of the 20th century but still fairly common in 1945. In those days, girls might leave home to become live-in maids while boys might be apprenticed to craftsmen or shopkeepers who provided their board and lodging. These periods of being housed might be brief interludes or might last for years. Although 36% of such cases were recorded as the first phase of the residential history, 4% were the second phase, 2% the third and 1% the fourth. Altogether, 42% of Parisians reported that some member of their family had been housed (*hébergé*) at some point, and 8% of respondents had gone back to live with their parents or moved in with a brother, sister, uncle or aunt.

These figures concern periods that lasted at least a year. They lasted long enough for the respondents to remember them and mention them in the questionnaire. Periods of instability or shorter periods of temporary or insecure accommodation between two stable housing situations are not always mentioned. (At the end of each residential phase lasting at least a year, the respondent was asked whether they had moved directly from there to another stable housing situation lasting a year or more. If yes, the new stage was described; if not, they were asked what kind of transitory housing they had been in).

The *Biographies et entourage* survey took a different approach, using a grid that showed the residential situation at each age, whatever its duration. The three questions in the *Biographies et entourage* survey shown in Box 4 identify the situations, and show their diversity, more clearly. Periods when ego was being housed occurred early, before respondents left home, or at the start of their life as a couple, before the partner's situation had stabilised.

TABLE 2. HOUSED BY PARENTS, BY AGE AND GENDER (1930-50 GENERATIONS)

Gender	20 yrs	25 yrs	30 yrs	35 yrs	40 yrs	45 yrs	50 yrs	55 yrs	60 yrs
Man	61.12	19.59	6.47	2.78	1.57	1.27	0.82	0.33	0.35
Woman	52.96	14.46	4.20	2.77	1.28	0.81	0.47	0.31	0.17
Both	55.98	18.80	5.27	2.77	1.42	1.03	0.64	0.30	0.30

Source: *Biographies et entourage* (INED, 2001).

TABLE 3. HOUSED BY A RELATIVE, BY AGE AND GENDER (1930-50 GENERATIONS)

Gender	20 yrs	25 yrs	30 yrs	35 yrs	40 yrs	45 yrs	50 yrs	55 yrs	60 yrs
Man	7.49	2.94	1.22	0.75	0.37	0.22	–	–	–
Woman	6.92	1.57	0.88	0.34	0.40	0.30	–	–	–
Both	6.50	2.19	1.04	0.50	0.40	0.20	0.1	–	–

Source: *Biographies et entourage* (INED, 2001).

At the age of 25, 17% of young people were still living in the parental home (Table 2) and 2% in the home of some other member of their family (Table 3). Nearly 6% were housed free of charge by a relative. But few respondents were housed by parents or relatives after the age of 35. It happened when a couple broke up or the respondent migrated. But analysis of these situations shows that determining the thresholds of a period of being housed involves making a precise distinction between a person being housed, a co-resident and a host.

2.2.2. Fuzziness and flexibility

When does a person cease to be housed and become co-resident?

What is the distinction between a visitor and a person being housed? Or between a person being housed and a co-resident? The boundary between being housed and being co-resident may be hard to define. The question arises particularly with regard to couples: is one partner housed by the other? Or are the two partners in equivalent positions with regard to access to the home (i.e. co-residents) regardless of their respective tenure statuses? This is a particularly delicate issue in the case of African widows, who are sometimes taken in by the family of one of their late husband's brothers. Are they being housed or are they co-residents on the same basis as the brother's wives?

This problem can also arise in the case of people living in their employer's home. This is often the case of maids (in Colombia, censuses and household surveys include a "domestic employee" option) and apprentices, especially if they are very young. A caretaker or a civil servant may also be housed by their employer, but the expression "being housed" is not used in these cases because employer and employee do not share the same dwelling.

It can also be difficult to identify the shift from visitor status to lodger. A person may start out as a visitor or guest, but if the situation persists, the

guest helps out. Being housed (in this sense in this chapter) has been defined as being free of charge, but often there is some exchange (work, as with our earlier example of help with housework, but sometimes money). Where does this situation begin? Where does it end?

There is a continuum of situations between the live-in domestic servant and the person accommodated free of charge, with varying exchanges of work or money between the host and the person living with them. In Kisii, in most cases, people living in a relative's household take part in farm work and domestic work. So it is very difficult to tell whether someone is being housed or housed by their employer.

Here again it is hard to set any rules independently of the situation analysed and the purpose of the research. The thresholds between one state and another are complex and it seems unwise to try to apply all-encompassing rules. The only imperative is to present the options clearly, justify them and assess the possible limits, because none is self-evident.

*From being housed to being a host:
another change of status that requires no mobility*

The relation between the host and the person being housed is also difficult to pin down. It changes over time, and is different in each of the contexts examined here. In some cases it is hard to tell which is which. It is worth examining this shift in some detail.

Being housed implies the existence of a household reference person. In Africa, this is usually the family elder. In Dakar, there are sometimes paradoxical situations where the main provider for the whole household is declared as being housed by their father. In Kisii, the situation gradually changes from one where the parents provide for the child to one where the child provides for the parents, but the son is recorded as being housed by his father throughout. In Dakar, increasingly, there are cases where the man lives with his wife in her parents' home. So it is clearly necessary to go beyond perceptions by understanding the economic and social reality of the often complex situations that are considered as periods when one is being housed.

Similarly, in the African context women's status is more or less like being housed throughout their lives, living first with their parents and then with their partner, even if they are the breadwinner. The reference person in a household or dwelling is usually a man. This also applies in France, though to a lesser extent. According to the *Biographies et entourage* survey data, at 25 years of age, 9% of young people are housed by their partner (Table 4). But the figure is 15% for young women and only 2% for young men. Where a woman is housed by her partner, his situation may not be a stable one, especially if he is young. He may be living in a bedsit, or as a sub-tenant, or in accommodation provided by his employer. But where the man is the housed one the woman more often has a formal occupancy status and is slightly more likely to be a home owner. It is her stable tenure that justifies her status as reference person.

TABLE 4. HOUSED BY PARTNER, BY AGE AND GENDER (1930-1950 GENERATIONS)

Gender	20 yrs	25 yrs	30 yrs	35 yrs	40 yrs	45 yrs	50 yrs	55 yrs	60 yrs
Man	0.48	2.04	3.88	4.58	4.95	4.79	5.01	4.45	4.20
Woman	6.06	14.87	16.32	15.32	12.80	12.05	10.03	9.48	8.93
Both	4.00	9.03	10.47	10.23	9.08	8.61	7.65	7.06	6.63
Bedsit	2.30	1.38	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Source: *Biographies et entourage* (INED, 2001).

The difficulty of distinguishing host from person being housed is also a delicate point in life course data from the different surveys. Here too, a person may change from one status to the other without moving house. For example, they may inherit the dwelling on the owner's death, or at some point they may have enough money to buy it. Ambiguity can also arise due to changes over time in the respective economic inputs of the household's adult members, as the family's provider may be provided for in their turn. It is extremely difficult to record such changes.

In short, the roles of person being housed and host are neither immutable nor easily recognisable and many cases present ambiguities that should be examined before any analysis is made.

2.2.3. A further complication: multiple residences

If being housed is defined in relation to the notion of a principal residence, the notion becomes fuzzy in the case of someone who circulates between several dwellings, whether in different regions or just different households. They may be housed in one dwelling, owner-occupier in another and visitor in a third, so having several statuses at the same time.

In Kisii, a young person's temporary migration may be part of the family economy. But even if the young person is not housed in the place they move to (e.g. if their employer provides a separate dwelling or they pay rent), in their home district they are still officially under their parents' authority. As long as they stay with their parents when they go back, they are housed there. Migrant or not, a man does not acquire residential independence from his parents until he has a separate dwelling and household in his home village.

This problem can also arise in Northern countries if a person has more than one residence. Their status will differ depending which residence is being considered. The solution usually adopted is to use rules based on the amount of time spent in each place. This information can be gathered in a quantitative survey, as was done in the survey of the Colombian oil towns. But it is unthinkable to collect such detailed information over a long period or for the distant past. In the Colombian example, the data gathered covered twelve months.

To decide on a person's status (are they being housed?) or the type of period (is it a period when ego is being housed?), we find that in all cases

we need to define a minimum of criteria as to the duration and frequency of periods when a person is a being housed in his or her residential history. These criteria require a higher level of precision than the usual one-year increments of life course studies. This can be achieved in a quantitative survey of a recent, short period, but is not feasible over a whole life course. This sets a limit to the information that can be gathered and analysed.

CONCLUSION: OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS OF A FUZZY STATE

Being housed is a situation long neglected or ignored in demographic research. It emerges as a state in its own right in several life course surveys conducted in widely different contexts. These surveys highlight not only the frequency of this situation, which was already suspected, but also how long these supposedly transitory situations can last – often longer than the people concerned expected. Although there is increasing interest in the phenomenon, this examination as part of a work on dealing with fuzzy states may suggest some avenues for identifying situations of being housed more clearly and for studying their dynamics. A first observation is that they are worth looking at in their own right, not merely perceived in the gaps between other residential states. To remove the fuzziness around this concept, it should be taken into account more satisfactorily in surveys, especially those focusing on housing, solidarity or households.

While being housed is a fuzzy state partly because little is known about it, it is also fuzzy because the few attempts that have been made to observe it have been based on different definitions and so cannot be compared. Part of the fuzziness is also due to the different ways it is perceived, whether by the subjects, welfare authorities or researchers (see Chapter 1 on factual data and perceptions). Cultural norms regarding this situation differ from place to place and also change over time, making it difficult to analyse the phenomenon even in one country.

We have looked at most of the definitions of being housed in private households that have been used in surveys to date, and some defining criteria have emerged, explicitly or implicitly. What are the essential data for identifying periods of being housed in a quantitative survey? It can be viewed in terms of the passage from dependence to maturity, as an expression of solidarity or as an indication of group membership. Such polysemy requires different types of data to be collected. Life course surveys have a major contribution to make in this connection, since identifying periods of being housed requires the respondent's residential, family and occupational histories throughout their life. Combining these three event histories, one can identify the threshold of maturity after which a young person living in their parents' home can be regarded as being housed, and identify situations when he or she actually is a being housed from there on.

But gathering life course data is limited by the time increments used – usually one year. Being housed can last longer than a year, but that does not mean shorter periods are not worth identifying and examining.

Studying periods of being housed requires these shorter periods to be taken into account, and this means combining different time increments. This is a difficult exercise for survey designers and respondents alike. It also seems to be important to refine the quantitative surveys in this field to broaden the scope to perceptions of these situations.

From the analytical standpoint, if the data is available to track trends on a fine scale, analysis of gradual passages between states seems promising (Bry, 2006). Modelling continuous transitions is a necessary requirement for studying periods of being housed.

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