

Life Course and Housing Tenure Change in Urban China: A Study of Guangzhou

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Abstract

In the West, homeownership has been seen as the ultimate housing career. Interestingly enough, in “socialist” China, a major objective of the urban housing reform, which began in 1979, is to privatize the housing stock and promote homeownership. The past few years, in particular, has witnessed rapid increases in the homeownership rate. The present work seeks to conduct a longitudinal analysis of China’s road to homeownership, making use of retrospective life history data collected in 2001 in the city of Guangzhou. The event of interest is the transition from rent to own. Analysis using Cox’ proportional hazards models show that age is associated with increasing homeownership; so is higher education attainment. Change in marital status is a more important factor causing the housing tenure switch than is marital status *per se*. The subtle relations among households, work units and the State still affect households’ housing access and tenure choice behaviour. People working in non-State work units tend to be associated with lower tenure change risks. Membership in the Chinese Communist Party, on the other hand, enhances the tenure switch.