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*Research Article*

### **The transition to adulthood in Europe at the intersection of gender and parental socioeconomic status**

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# **The transition to adulthood in Europe at the intersection of gender and parental socioeconomic status**

**Valeria Ferraretto<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

### **BACKGROUND**

In Europe, the transition to adulthood has been steadily prolonged. Comparative studies have not addressed in detail the role of parental socioeconomic status (SES) and gender in the postponement of events linked to the transition to adulthood.

### **OBJECTIVE**

Our aim is to evaluate whether the timing and the risk of experiencing home-leaving, labour market entry, first coresidential union, and first birth vary by gender and parental SES, while also considering variation across successive birth cohorts and country groups.

### **METHODS**

We rely on data from two rounds (2006, 2018) of the European Social Survey, including key retrospective questions on the timing of events for individuals born in the 1950s–1990s and living in 31 European countries. Non-parametric techniques and discrete-time event history models are used to model each event separately. Analyses are stratified by country group.

### **RESULTS**

Results indicate that across Europe, high parental SES is positively associated with delayed labour market entry, union formation, and childbearing; the association with leaving the parental home is positive in Western and Northern Europe and negative or null in Eastern and Southern Europe. Women are more likely to experience all transitions before men, except for the first job, and this gap persists among younger generations. Gender differences are, however, substantially reduced among individuals with high-SES parents.

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## **CONTRIBUTION**

The paper contributes to the comparative literature on the transition to adulthood by focusing substantively on the intersection between gender and parental background and on the timing of events.

## **1. Introduction**

From the 1960s onwards, young people's path towards adulthood in Europe has become increasingly long and de-standardized. The timing of events during the transition to adulthood – i.e., end of studies, labour market entry, home-leaving, union formation, and childbearing – has been postponed almost everywhere, and trajectories have become de-standardized and heterogeneous (Billari and Liefbroer 2010; Elzinga and Liefbroer 2007). Despite the abundance of comparative studies on the number and sequencing of events experienced during the transition to adulthood (Elzinga and Liefbroer 2007; Lesnard et al. 2016; Schwanitz 2017; Van den Berg and Verbakel 2021), existing research has left an incomplete understanding of how parental socioeconomic status and gender differences are related to the timing of the single events across different countries.

The role of social stratification in the transition to adulthood has gained prominence in the European demographic literature (see Liefbroer and Zoutewelle-Terovan 2021 for a review), acknowledging that young adults' opportunities do not depend solely on their preferences and abilities but are largely predetermined by their social origin (Billari, Hiekel, and Liefbroer 2019). This line of research interprets demographic outcomes in young adulthood as a result of ascribed (i.e., parental socioeconomic resources) rather than achieved (i.e., own educational attainment) characteristics. However, it is difficult to evaluate whether an advantaged socioeconomic background anticipates or delays events across Europe from previous studies, given the different operationalization of parental resources, the use of diverse analytical methods, and the choice of comparative contexts (Billari, Hiekel, and Liefbroer 2019; Brons et al. 2017; Iacovou 2010; Mooyaart, Liefbroer, and Billari 2022; Schwanitz, Mulder, and Toulemon 2017; Sironi, Barban, and Impicciatore 2015). Similarly, the role of women within families and in society has changed tremendously in the past few decades. Women's increased educational attainment – to the point that it has surpassed men's in all European countries – and labour market participation has contributed to changing gender roles and mating patterns (Esteve et al. 2016; Van Bavel 2013). Nevertheless, gender differences have received little substantive interest in studies on the transition to adulthood<sup>3</sup> (Badolato 2023; Lesnard et

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<sup>3</sup> Considering here only research addressing all the events of the transition to adulthood.

al. 2016; Schwanitz 2017), especially in a cross-country perspective, gender being mostly considered as a control or stratifying variable. Existing comparative research on the transition to adulthood has either analysed women exclusively (Billari and Liefbroer 2010; Elzinga and Liefbroer 2007), referred to past cohorts (Iacovou 2002), or investigated gender differences in trajectories until age 35 (Lesnard et al. 2016; Schwanitz 2017), thereby underemphasizing the postponement of events. Even scarcer are comparative studies that combine gender and parental socioeconomic status and consider various events of the transition to adulthood simultaneously (Sironi, Barban, and Impicciatore 2015).

This knowledge gap is problematic. First, the timing at which events happen is of central interest in the life course perspective, because age reflects implicit norms about the appropriate timing of events (Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe 2003) and postponement to later ages is a main feature of the new pattern of the transition to adulthood (Billari and Liefbroer 2010). Second, gender and socioeconomic background are systematically at the core of some specific transitions, e.g., fertility (Lappegård 2020) and union formation and progression (Perelli-Harris and Gerber 2011; Vignoli, Tocchioni, and Salvini 2016). As proposed by Lappegård (2020:45) and by Billari and Liefbroer (2010:74), the intersection between gender and socioeconomic background is identified as key in shaping one's life course, including the transition to adulthood. In the United States a long scholarly tradition has addressed the composite role of class and gender. According to Furstenberg (2003), while gender differences might reduce over time, class differences might become more prominent in structuring the life course, while Hardie's (2022) findings indicate that social class heavily shapes girls' ability to realize their professional aspirations and align them with family plans. We argue that the extent to which women's timing of events in the transition to adulthood approximates men's indeed depends on social background, as progress towards more gender-equal expectations and behaviours in the public and private spheres of life may be faster among well-educated and wealthier families. Considering both gender and social origin allows us to capture heterogeneity in the transition to adulthood at a fine-grained level.

This paper contributes to the literature on the transition to adulthood in two ways. First, it examines the interplay between parental socioeconomic status (SES) and gender on the timing of four events marking the transition to adulthood – leaving the parental home, labour market entry, union formation, and childbearing – in a comparative European perspective. Second, it updates previous studies on the timing of the events of the transition to adulthood in Europe (Billari and Liefbroer 2010) by including the experiences of younger birth cohorts (born from 1980 onwards). By so doing, this paper investigates whether the trend towards a “late and protracted” transition to adulthood (Billari and Liefbroer 2010) has been shared by both women and men, and how their social background and the country context are related to the age-specific risk of

experiencing events. We use retrospective information on life course transitions collected in 2006 and 2018 in the ‘timing of life’ module of the European Social Survey (ESS). Through event-history analysis, we evaluate whether the timing and the risk of experiencing four key transitions towards adulthood vary by gender and parental socioeconomic status. We further evaluate whether the probability of experiencing each event varies across time by comparing successive cohorts of women and men born between the 1950s and the 1990s, and across space by distinguishing between four country groups (North, West, East, and South).

## **2. Theoretical background**

### **2.1 The timing of the transition to adulthood in Europe**

In the demographic literature, the transition to adulthood was originally conceptualized as a stepwise process characterized by the achievement of the following markers: end of studies, labour market entry, home-leaving, union formation, and parenthood. The process was defined as operating on two tracks: education–employment and family–marriage (Cavalli and Galland 1995). However, in the 1960s, youth in Europe started to experience all markers of the transition to adulthood at later ages than previous generations, the exception being home-leaving, whose timing seems to have changed only slightly across earlier cohorts (Billari and Liefbroer 2010). Furthermore, increasing disconnection between the work and family domains has been observed. Leaving the parental home does not necessarily coincide with the formation of a new family, and singlehood has become an increasingly common life phase among recent cohorts (Van den Berg and Verbakel 2021). Also, first unions are increasingly formed as non-marital cohabitations or living-apart-together arrangements rather than marriages (Levin 2004; Mills and Blossfeld 2005), while parenthood, if it happens at all, increasingly takes place after the age range that conventionally identifies young adulthood, i.e., 18–35 years old (Beaujouan 2020).

The transition to adulthood differs sharply across European countries, with Nordic countries being representative of the ‘earliest-early’ pattern and Mediterranean countries of the ‘latest-late’ (Billari 2004). This variation has been attributed to structural factors such as institutions and policies regulating educational systems, the labour market, the housing market, access to credit, and overall support to young people, and also to cultural factors such as age norms, family relationships, and attitudes (Aassve, Arpino, and Billari 2013; Van den Berg, Kalmijn, and Leopold 2021). Institutional and cultural heterogeneity is commonly captured by country groups, distinguishing between Northern, Eastern, Western, and Southern European countries (Billari and Liefbroer 2010). Differences

between countries are persistent and no sign of convergence towards a unique and shared pattern has been observed to date (Billari and Wilson 2001; Elzinga and Liefbroer 2007).

The observed postponement of the steps of the transition to adulthood to later ages has been attributed to two main factors. The first factor – envisioned by the Second Demographic Transition theory (Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa 1986) – is the individualization of the life course, increasing the emphasis attributed to self-realization, linked to the will to experiment before assuming responsibilities regarding work and family (Arnett 2000). The second consists of worsening economic opportunities, declining wages, and emerging precarity brought about by globalization, de-industrialization, and mechanization (Mills and Blossfeld 2005), and also by the Great Recession and the recent COVID-19 pandemic. These trends have negatively affected young adults, making them more likely than the rest of the population to remain out of the labour force or have low-paid, fixed-term jobs, thereby exposing them to increased risk of poverty (Aassve, Cottini, and Vitali 2013). In turn, uncertainty in the labour market delays family-related commitments (Vignoli, Tocchioni, and Salvini 2016), thereby resulting in a prolonged path towards the achievement of ‘adult’ status.

Following the trend observed until the 1970s cohort (Billari and Liefbroer 2010), we expect that the various transitions towards adult status have been postponed to later ages for the youngest cohorts also, with the exception of the age at home-leaving, which we expect to remain stable. In line with the finding that differences between countries are constant over time (Billari and Wilson 2001), our first hypothesis is:

*H1:* The age at experiencing the various transitions has been postponed across birth cohorts, in every country group.

## 2.2 The role of parental socioeconomic background

Resources available at the household level – both economic and cultural – affect the timing of events during the transition to adulthood. This happens for different reasons.<sup>4</sup> First, given that parental education is a good proxy for their children’s education, it is expected that young adults with high parental SES will have higher educational and occupational aspirations than those with low parental SES. Youth from advantaged families also have more material and relational resources to fulfil their aspirations and realize their plans (Billari, Hiekel, and Liefbroer 2019; Hardie 2022). According to the idea of ‘role incompatibility’ (Blossfeld and Huinink 1991), being enrolled in a study program is considered incompatible with cohabitation or marriage. Consequently, spending longer periods in education is associated with a postponement of the formation

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<sup>4</sup> For an in-depth discussion on this matter, see Hiekel (2021).

of a stable union and of childbearing. Second, parental norms and values about the ‘right’ timing of events are passed on from one generation to another (socialization hypothesis): as a result, young people’s demographic choices tend to comply with parental norms and expectations, as shown by studies conducted on single countries (see Keijer, Nagel, and Liefbroer 2016 on the Netherlands; Tosi 2017 on Italy). Highly educated parents are likely to encourage their offspring to explore a variety of life directions in both romantic relationships and work careers, thereby delaying non-reversible and binding decisions such as first marriage and parenthood (Arnett 2000) and developing adult identities later than peers from economically disadvantaged families (Benson and Elder 2011).

The positive association between parental SES and postponement of family-related events is consistent with findings from comparative research: Young adults with high-SES parents, measured with composite indexes of education and occupation, are more likely than those with low-SES parents to postpone union formation and childbearing and to follow non-standard family trajectories (Billari, Hiekel, and Liefbroer 2019; Brons, Liefbroer, and Ganzeboom 2017; Mooyaart, Liefbroer, and Billari 2022; Van der Berg 2023). This literature highlights how a high-SES background delays family formation more in the South and East of Europe than in the North and West, attributing the variation to the diffusion of values related to the Second Demographic Transition as well as to institutional differences, e.g., in public childcare provision (Brons, Liefbroer, and Ganzeboom 2017; Mooyaart, Liefbroer, and Billari 2022). Moreover, across European countries educational expansion has been associated with postponed labour market entry, thus also delaying economic independence (Schwanitz 2017). Regarding the association between parental SES and leaving the parental home, findings are mixed. While Angelini, Bertoni, and Weber (2022) show that among older cohorts (1936–1956) living in 28 European countries, individuals growing up in high-SES households leave their parents’ home later than lower-SES individuals, findings from Billari, Hiekel, and Liefbroer (2019) reveal that having high-SES parents is positively associated with early home-leaving in Austria, Bulgaria, and France. Ferraretto and Vitali (2023) observe that women with high-SES parents tend to leave home later than their low-SES counterparts, with this gradient being more pronounced in Southern and Eastern Europe, where state support for young people is lower. Other large comparative studies on the association between parental socioeconomic background – measured by income or educational attainment – and home-leaving decisions underline the relevance of the country context as well as of the destination of such a move (Iacovou 2010; Klimova Chaloupkova 2023; Schwanitz, Mulder, and Toulemon 2017).

Because of the institutional and cultural differences across European countries, we formulate our second hypothesis as follows:



*H2*: Young adults with high-SES parents enter the labour market, start their first coresidential partnership, and become parents later than those with low-SES parents.

We do not formulate any hypothesis on the event of leaving home as previous studies do not provide consistent evidence in favour or against *H2*. Following the existing literature, we expect the association between parental SES and family-related events (union formation and childbearing) to be larger in Southern and Eastern Europe than in Nordic and Western countries.

### **2.3 Gender differences**

In the comparative literature on the transition to adulthood, it is common to examine women's experiences exclusively (Billari and Liefbroer 2010; Elzinga and Liefbroer 2007), or to stratify analyses by gender (e.g., Aassve, Arpino, and Billari 2013; Van der Berg and Verbakel 2021); few comparative studies have substantively focused on gender differences in the likelihood of experiencing various events.<sup>5</sup> This stream of literature has regularly observed that men experience events later than women, that life course trajectories are strongly gendered, and that the behaviours of young women and men born before 1970 show limited signs of convergence (Lesnard et al. 2016; Schwanitz 2017). A possible explanation lies in the fact that during adolescence, girls perceive themselves to be older compared to same-aged male peers, while evidence on differential psychosocial maturation is mixed (Benson and Elder 2011). Gender differences in the timing of events have also been linked to the fact that women tend to partner with slightly older men, thus experiencing home-leaving, union formation, and childbearing before their male counterparts (Iacovou 2002). In the European context, age hypergamy (i.e., men partnering with younger women) persists among different-sex couples, with age differences averaging around two or three years (Ausubel et al. 2022). Among older cohorts, men's life courses were centred around work and were fairly homogeneous, while women's trajectories were more family-oriented and often included inactivity (Schwanitz 2017), indicating that the transition to parenthood affected men's and women's participation in the labour market unequally (Widmer and Ritschard 2009). Divergence between women's and men's trajectories can be further interpreted as a result of the gendered division of labour, implying that men specialise in paid employment and prioritize it over family formation, while women are expected to take charge of unpaid labour and invest earlier in their families.

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<sup>5</sup> The same is true for single-country studies. Notable exceptions are Badolato (2023) on Italy, Widmer and Ritschard (2009) on Switzerland.

Crucially, these studies have either relied on data from older cohorts (Iacovou 2002) or have analysed trajectories up to age 35 (Lesnard et al. 2016; Schwanitz 2017), thereby only partially capturing the postponement of events. One major trend observed in the second half of the 20th century is the increase of women's participation in higher education, witnessed in every European country. Educational expansion stimulates labour market participation and questions the prevalent mating pattern described above (Esteve et al. 2016), with far-reaching consequences for union and family formation. Two groups might face increasing difficulties in finding a partner: low-educated men and high-educated women (Van Bavel 2013). Findings indicate that lifelong singlehood is higher among low-educated men (Bellani, Esping-Andersen and Nedoluzhko 2017), while singlehood after leaving home has become common among high-educated women (Van der Berg 2023). As more women enter the public sphere and more men enter the private sphere of life, values and beliefs about gender roles are expected to become more egalitarian (Goldscheider, Bernhardt, and Lappegård 2015). As a consequence of women's increased education and labour market participation, it can be expected that among younger cohorts, women's and men's life courses will also become increasingly similar in terms of timing of events. It is therefore hypothesized that

*H3*: Across successive cohorts, gender differences in the timing of events reduce in every country group.

## **2.4 Combining gender and parental socioeconomic background**

Even fewer studies have comprehensively addressed differences between women's and men's transition to adulthood by parental socioeconomic characteristics (Sironi, Barban, and Impicciatore 2015 on Italy and the United States, Badolato 2023 on Italy). The majority of studies examining the association between parental SES and specific events have not placed particular emphasis on gender differences (Brons, Liefbroer, and Ganzeboom 2017; Ferraretto and Vitali 2023; Mooyaart, Liefbroer, and Billari 2022) or found no substantial variation in the SES gradient between women and men (Billari, Hiekel, and Liefbroer 2019; Iacovou 2010). Findings show that, in Italy, women from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to follow a family-oriented transition than their counterparts from lower strata (Badolato 2023; Sironi, Barban, and Impicciatore 2015). The socialization hypothesis mentioned above might well explain part of the story: As part of their cultural resources, high-SES parents are assumed to be more gender-egalitarian, and to transfer such attitudes to their children who internalize and reproduce them in their future life courses (Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn 1983). Both daughters and sons of high-SES parents may thus be willing to invest in higher

education and to postpone family formation until economic security is achieved, while in low-SES families young adults cannot rely on their parents as a source of economic support and may thus replicate previous generations' gendered division of labour. This leads to the formulation of the fourth hypothesis (H4):

*H4:* Across all country groups, women and men with high-SES parents are more likely to experience the markers of the transition to adulthood at a similar age, while among youth with low-SES parents, women are more likely to experience them earlier than men.

### **3. Data and methods**

#### **3.1 Data**

The European Social Survey (ESS) collects cross-sectional microdata on a 2-yearly basis and covers a wide range of European countries. ESS Round 3 (2006) and Round 9 (2018) contain a rotating module on the timing of life with retrospective questions about individuals' demographic life courses (Billari et al. 2021). Pooling both rounds and considering countries present in one or both ESS rounds, we obtained a sample of 92,519 individuals from 31 European countries. These countries are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden in the North; Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom in the West; Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, and Spain in the South; and Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Montenegro, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Ukraine in the East. Respondents are aged 15–90; thus their experience of the transition to adulthood is representative of different birth cohorts.

Both ESS rounds provide information on the year when respondents first left the parental home for at least 2 months; when they were, for the first time, in paid employment/apprenticeship for 20 hours or more per week for at least 3 months; when they first coresided with a partner for at least 3 months; and when the first child was born. Following previous work (e.g., Billari and Liefbroer 2010), the first coresidential union is used as a marker of union formation as it includes both non-marital cohabitations and marriages and therefore facilitates comparison across countries. Combined with information on year of birth, the ESS enables us to compute the age the first time each transition was experienced.

### 3.2 Outcome variables and sample

Event-history techniques were used to study whether and when each of the four transitions towards adult status were experienced. The dependent variables measure the hazard of experiencing the first event of leaving home, the first job, the first coresidential union, and the first child, capturing both the occurrence of the events and the time-dependency of the risk. Each transition was analysed separately, constructing one sample for each event. To ensure comparability across the samples, the same selection criteria were used.

Respondents who experienced the considered event outside the age range 15–45 (enlarged compared to that traditionally used to include the experience of different birth cohorts), with missing information on the event or on our covariates, with negative durations, or born before 1950<sup>6</sup> were excluded from the analysis. The criteria causing the largest loss of information were: being born before 1950 (26% of the starting sample); having experienced the event before age 15 (5% for leaving home, 13% for the first job); having experienced the event after age 45 (8% for leaving home, 10% for the first job, 8% for the first union, 9% for the first child); and missing information on parental education (4%). Table 1 reports the sample sizes that were used for modelling each of the four transitions, by country group.

**Table 1: Sample size by event**

Country group	First home-leaving	First job	First coresidential union	First child
Northern Europe (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden)	43,722	41,366	75,720	110,887
Western Europe (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom)	132,576	103,054	191,121	258,296
Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Montenegro, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Ukraine)	157,628	131,223	192,283	230,863
Southern Europe (Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, Spain)	62,025	45,027	75,233	90,115
Total (person-years)	395,951	320,670	534,357	690,161
Total (N)	58,898	54,945	61,218	60,476

<sup>6</sup> Individuals born before 1950 were excluded from the sample because they experienced early adulthood during the Second World War and cannot be compared with the life course of later cohorts.

### 3.3 Analytical strategy

We used non-parametric analyses and discrete-time event history models to estimate the hazard of experiencing events conditional on the covariates of interest. Event history models allow dealing with right-censored information, i.e., with the fact that some respondents – especially those belonging to the younger cohorts – may not have experienced the event under study by the time of interview. As a first descriptive step, we used Kaplan-Meier survival estimates to obtain, for each of the four transitions under study, the survival function by combinations of gender, birth cohort, parental SES, and country group. Log-rank tests for ordinal variables were used to check whether survivor functions differed by birth cohort.

In a second step, to control for other confounding factors we performed discrete-time logistic regression models. Logistic regression is equivalent to the proportional hazards model in a continuous-time setting (Allison 1982). Respondents enter the risk set at age 15, and survival time is calculated in years since then. Each event can occur only once. The model is specified as follows:

Equation 1: Discrete-time logistic regression model

$$\ln \frac{h_i}{1 - h_i} = \alpha(t) + \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where  $h_i$  is the discrete-time hazard rate depending on the individual  $i$ ;  $\alpha(t)$  is the baseline hazard, expressed with a polynomial function of age (time-varying in the interval between age 15 and 45);  $\beta_0$  is the intercept; and  $\beta_1 x_i$  is a vector of time-constant covariates. The baseline hazard is expressed as a third-degree polynomial function of age because the hazard of experiencing the event varies in a non-linear way as age increases. For each event, the full model (M1) was estimated with the aim of testing H1 (postponement by birth cohort) and H2 (differences by parental SES). In a second step, a model with two interaction terms was estimated (M2), i.e., between gender and birth cohort, and between gender and parental SES, in order to capture the gender-specific effects envisioned by H3 and H4, respectively. All models were stratified by country group, distinguishing between Northern, Western, Eastern, and Southern Europe (see Table 1). This ensured that the baseline hazard of experiencing each event was specific to the country group. We obtained 16 distinct discrete-time models (4 events by 4 country groups) for both M1 and M2. To illustrate results in a concise way, and to compare them across events and country groups, we present Average Marginal Effects in the main text of the manuscript. Full regression tables can be found in the Appendix.

Although the estimation of several regression models may not be considered a parsimonious modelling strategy, we preferred it over other alternatives (e.g., multilevel logistic regression models with random slopes, logistic models interacting country fixed effects with gender and parental SES) to facilitate the interpretation of results. All analyses were conducted using STATA 18 (StataNow/SE 18.5).

### **3.4 Independent variables and controls**

The two main independent variables are gender and parental socioeconomic status, constant throughout the time window. The latter was constructed from self-reported information, available in both ESS rounds, on the mother's and father's highest educational level. The corresponding variables from the two ESS rounds were harmonized preserving the highest possible level of detail. The resulting variable, measuring the highest educational attainment between the mother and the father, has three categories, corresponding to ISCED–1997 levels: lower secondary or less (ISCED 0–2), upper secondary (ISCED 3–4), and tertiary (ISCED 5–6). Parental educational attainment represents a standard measurement of socioeconomic status, widely adopted in the literature (e.g., Badolato 2023; Klimova Chaloupkova 2023; Mooyaart, Liefbroer, and Billari 2022; Schwanitz, Mulder, and Toulemon 2017).

The dataset does not include other retrospective information that can be used to disentangle the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables. Our control variables are thus limited to age (time-varying), birth cohort, country, and ESS round (time-constant). Age was centred around its mean after each sample selection and included as a third-degree polynomial. Birth cohorts span the 1950s to the 1990s.<sup>7</sup> Country fixed effects were included to account for the heterogeneity inside each country group. Unfortunately, the ESS does not allow reconstructing whether respondents completed education before experiencing the remaining three transitions.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This category includes individuals born up to the year 2004; they are the youngest interviewed in ESS Round 9, as the fieldwork took place in 2018–2020.

<sup>8</sup> Although a variable on years of completed education (in full-time equivalents, included compulsory years of schooling) is present in the dataset, the year in which respondents completed education cannot be retrieved unambiguously, as the age at which individuals enter compulsory education may differ by country as well as by birth cohort.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Non-parametric analysis

Table 2 presents weighted descriptive statistics for each of the four outcome variables (first home-leaving, first job, first coresidential union, first child) and for the independent and control variables. It also shows the proportion of respondents who experienced the events – higher for first home-leaving and first job than for union formation and childbearing – and the time to event since age 15 – substantially longer for the first child (11 years, on average) with respect to the other events. Northern Europe is the smallest country group, followed by Southern Europe.

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics (weighted)**

Variable			First home-leaving (N= 58,898)		First job (N=54,945)		First coresidential union (N=61,218)		First child (N=60,476)	
	Min	Max	Mean/ Prop.	SD	Mean/ Prop.	SD	Mean/ Prop.	SD	Mean/ Prop.	SD
Gender										
<i>Man</i>	0	1	0.473	0.499	0.475	0.499	0.476	0.499	0.473	0.499
<i>Women</i>	0	1	0.527	0.499	0.525	0.499	0.524	0.499	0.527	0.499
Birth cohort										
<i>1950s</i>	0	1	0.213	0.410	0.198	0.399	0.216	0.412	0.209	0.406
<i>1960s</i>	0	1	0.241	0.428	0.236	0.425	0.238	0.426	0.234	0.423
<i>1970s</i>	0	1	0.216	0.411	0.219	0.414	0.213	0.409	0.216	0.412
<i>1980s</i>	0	1	0.209	0.407	0.218	0.413	0.212	0.409	0.218	0.413
<i>1990s +</i>	0	1	0.121	0.327	0.128	0.334	0.121	0.326	0.123	0.329
Event										
<i>Not experienced</i>	0	1	0.180	0.384	0.140	0.347	0.231	0.422	0.335	0.472
<i>Experienced</i>	0	1	0.820	0.384	0.860	0.347	0.769	0.422	0.665	0.472
Time to event (since age 15, in years)	1	30	6.866	4.846	5.496	4.744	8.622	5.264	11.188	6.243
Parental education										
<i>Less than lower secondary (ISCED 0–2)</i>	0	1	0.372	0.483	0.360	0.480	0.375	0.484	0.376	0.484
<i>Upper secondary (ISCED 3–4)</i>	0	1	0.346	0.476	0.348	0.476	0.343	0.475	0.342	0.474
<i>Tertiary (ISCED 5–6)</i>	0	1	0.283	0.450	0.293	0.455	0.282	0.450	0.282	0.450
Country group										
<i>Northern Europe</i>	0	1	0.047	0.212	0.046	0.209	0.047	0.211	0.045	0.208
<i>Western Europe</i>	0	1	0.473	0.499	0.473	0.499	0.470	0.499	0.460	0.498
<i>Eastern Europe</i>	0	1	0.309	0.462	0.325	0.468	0.318	0.466	0.330	0.470
<i>Southern Europe</i>	0	1	0.170	0.376	0.157	0.364	0.166	0.372	0.166	0.372

Figure 1 reports, for each of the four transitions, Kaplan–Meier survival estimates by gender and birth cohort.

**Figure 1: Kaplan–Meier survival estimates of each event of the transition to adulthood, by gender and birth cohort, all European countries**

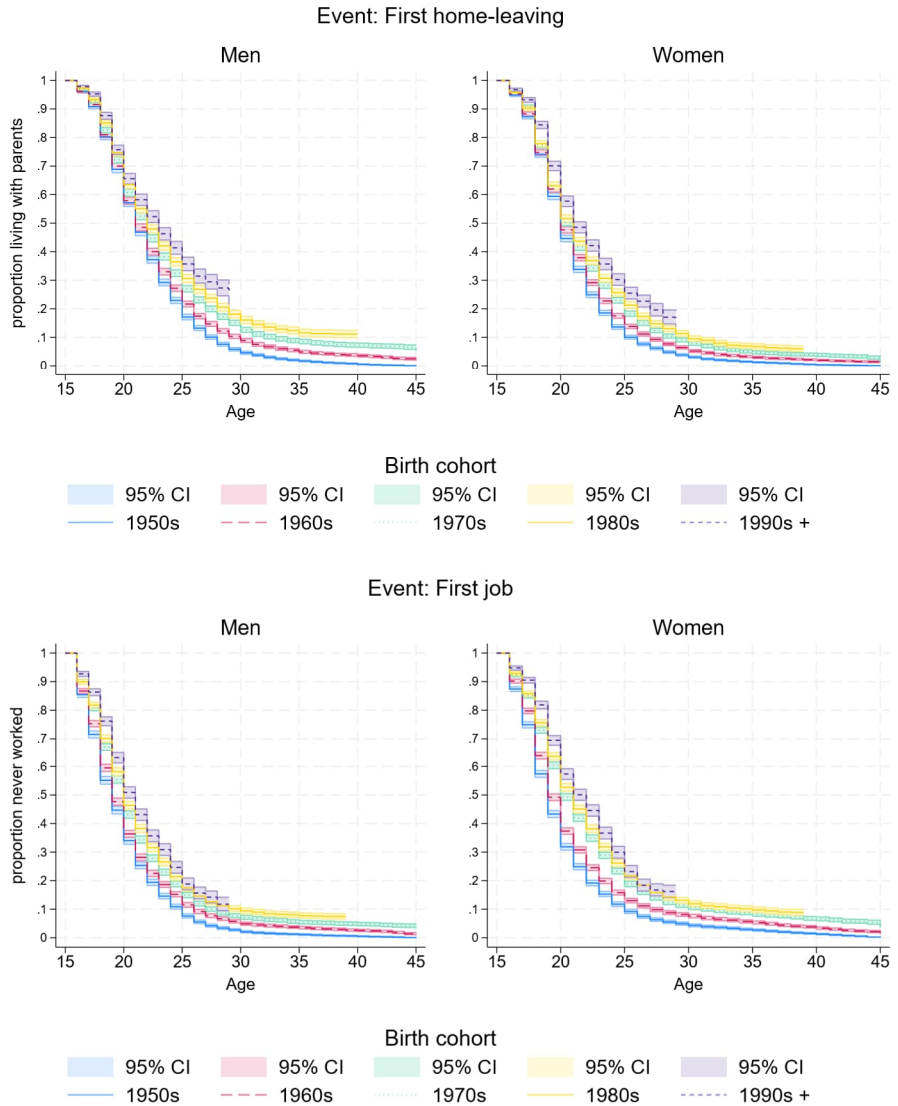
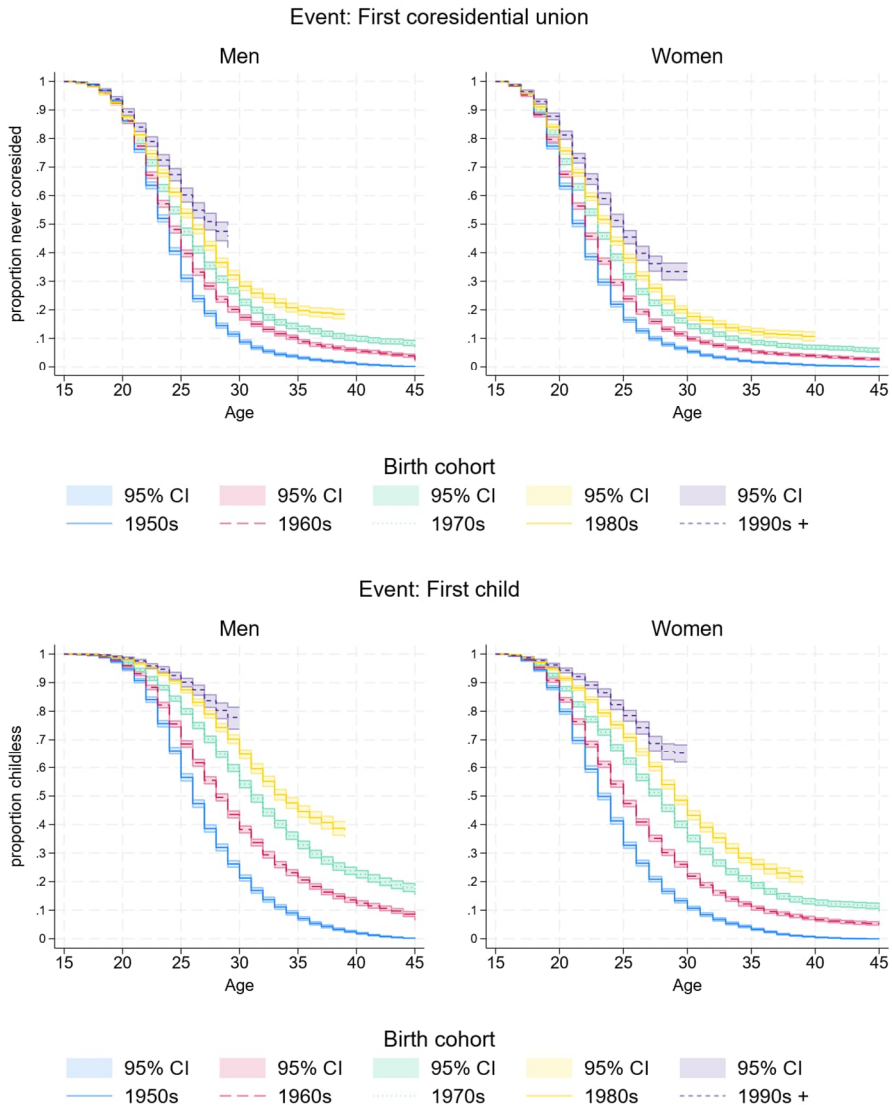




Figure 1: (Continued)



Source: ESS 3 (2006) and ESS 9 (2018).

Note: The sample size for each event is reported in Table 1 (total row).

Figure 1 shows that across cohorts, the timing of the first home-leaving event, first job, first coresidential union, and first child has been postponed for men and women alike: The survival curve of the oldest cohort lies below the survival curves of successive cohorts, indicating that the probability of not experiencing each event increases as birth cohorts get younger. Log-rank tests conducted for each event by gender confirm that hazard functions differ by birth cohort (not shown). Concerning the events of leaving home and entering the labour market, survival curves of individuals born in the 1950s until the 1970s are very close to each other, unlike those observed for family-related events. To illustrate the extent of such postponement, we retrieve from Kaplan-Meier estimates the probability of experiencing at 'later' ages each event for men and women born in the 1960s and in the 1980s, respectively, on average across Europe. The probability of not having left the parental home by age 30 more than doubled between individuals born in the 1960s (6.5% for men, 4% for women) and those born in the 1980s (16% and 9.5% respectively). A similar pattern can be observed for the probability of not having entered the labour market by age 30. People seem instead to be postponing the first coresidential union and the birth of the first child considerably – or even not experiencing them at all. This phenomenon is remarkable among men: among those born in the 1960s, the probability of not entering the first coresidential union by age 35 is 7.7% (5.3% for women), and the probability of not becoming parent by the same age is 20.6% (10.6% for women). Among the 1980s cohort the same probabilities amount to 19% (12% for women) for the first coresidential union, and to 44.5% (vs. 26% for women) for the first child.

Next, we retrieve median ages at each event by gender, parental education, and country group from Kaplan-Meier survival estimates. To descriptively explore change across cohorts, median ages are computed on the 1980s cohort (Table 3) and on the 1960s (Table A-1).

Table 3 shows that individuals born in the 1980s with tertiary-educated parents do not experience all events later than their counterparts with lower-educated parents: while parenthood is postponed among women and men in all country groups, more heterogeneity is observed for the remaining events. Leaving home tends to occur earlier among women and men with a high-SES background, except for men in Southern Europe. The first job occurs slightly later among high-SES individuals, whereas no differences along SES lines are observed in Northern Europe and among women in Eastern Europe. Men from high-SES backgrounds enter the first union earlier or at the same age compared to lower SES, while this trend is markedly reversed among women, reflecting changing patterns of union formation. Additionally, Table 3 indicates that women experience all events earlier than men, except for the first job. Leaving home coincides with labour market entry in Northern and Western Europe and among women in Eastern Europe; in Southern and Eastern Europe (for men only), leaving home happens years after the first

job. A clear disconnection between leaving home and the first coresidential union, and between the first union and the first child, is observed in all country groups.

**Table 3: Median ages at each event by gender, parental education, and country group, 1980s cohort**

		First home-leaving		First job		First coresidential union		First child	
		Men 1980s	Women 1980s	Men 1980s	Women 1980s	Men 1980s	Women 1980s	Men 1980s	Women 1980s
North	Lower secondary or less	20	19	20	20	25	20	31	26
	Upper secondary	20	19	19	19	23	22	30	29
	Tertiary	20	19	19	20	24	22	32	31
West	Lower secondary or less	21	21	19	20	26	23	32	27
	Upper secondary	22	21	19	20	25	23	35	30
	Tertiary	21	20	21	21	26	24	35	32
East	Lower secondary or less	28	22	21	22	28	22	30	25
	Upper secondary	25	22	20	21	28	24	34	28
	Tertiary	24	22	22	22	27	25	35	29
South	Lower secondary or less	25	24	20	21	29	26	35	31
	Upper secondary	26	23	22	22	29	27	38	32
	Tertiary	26	23	24	23	29	28	N/A	34

Note: In the cells shaded in grey the median age is greater than the corresponding value for respondents with lower secondary (or less) -educated parents. N/A indicates that the median value could not be calculated because less than 50% of the sample experienced the event in that cell.

When we turn to individuals born in the 1960s, the parental education gradient emerges more uniformly and concerns men's transition to the first union as well (Table A-1). Similar to Table 3, the event of leaving home is not necessarily delayed among high-SES individuals and the timing of events is gender-specific. Nevertheless, individuals born in the 1960s experienced each event earlier, resulting in a 'contracted' transition to adulthood (Billari and Liefbroer 2010). The distance between the two cohorts is largest concerning the birth of the first child, compared to the other three events where it amounts to a few years. The biggest increase in the age at first child is observed in Eastern Europe, together with Southern Europe: while 1960s' women with highly educated parents became parents at a median age of 24 and men at a median age of 26, this value amounts to age 29 among women and age 35 among men born in the 1980s.

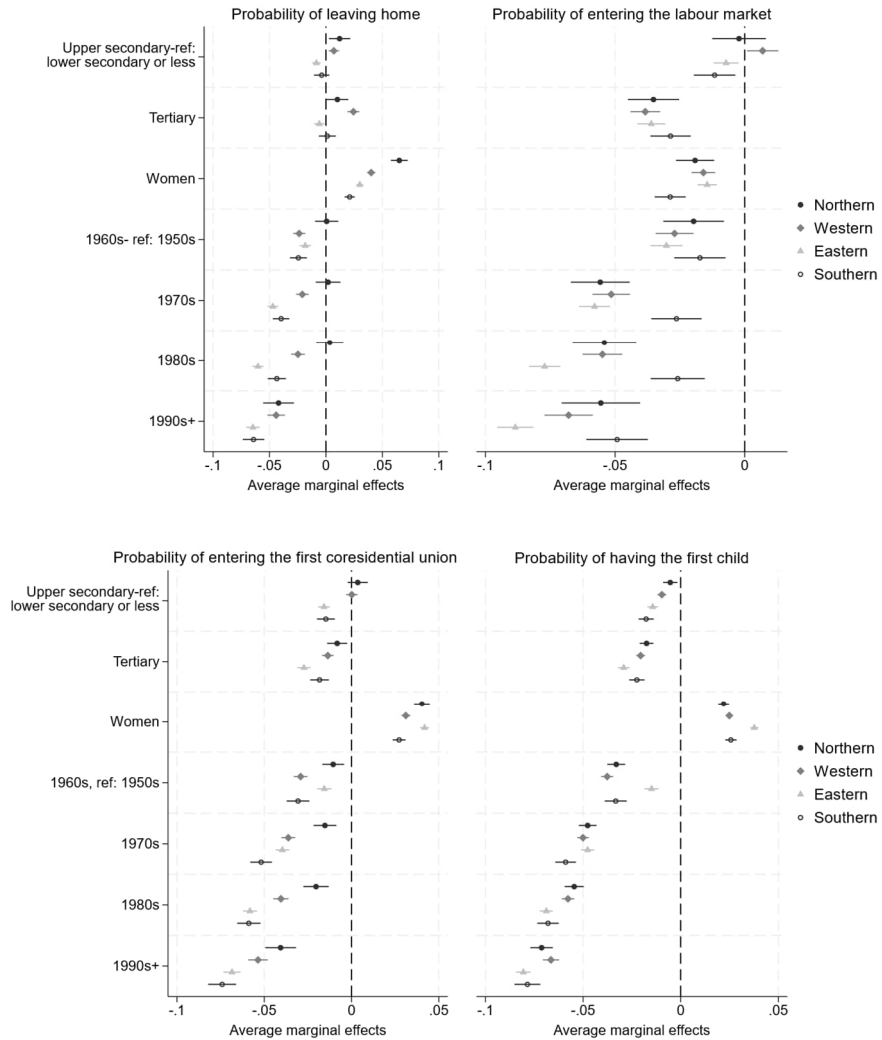
## **4.2 Discrete-time models**

Discrete-time logistic regression models allow controlling for confounding factors, as well as examining the average association between parental SES, gender, birth cohort, and the hazards of experiencing each of the 4 events, across all the considered country groups (Northern, Western, Eastern, and Southern Europe). Results from M1 are reported in Table A-2 and expressed in odds ratios (O.R.). To facilitate the interpretation of results and to allow a comparison across country groups, Average Marginal Effects from M1 are shown in Figure 2. Average Marginal Effects express the average change in the probability of experiencing an event when comparing a category of the independent variable to the reference category.

Our results support the first hypothesis regarding the postponement of events of the transition to adulthood across birth cohorts: Each successive cohort compared to the reference category (1950s) exhibits a decreased probability of experiencing events. The only exception to this pattern is found in Northern Europe for the event of leaving home: Compared to the 1950s the probability of leaving home is stable among individuals born in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. While the decrease tends to be uniform across all country groups, a north-south gradient is visible in the transition to the first coresidential union.

Figure 2 allows evaluating our second hypothesis regarding the association between parental education and the likelihood of experiencing events, across country groups. Having at least one tertiary-educated parent (compared to having low-educated parents) consistently decreases the probability and thus delays entry into the labour market, the first coresidential union, and the birth of the first child, across all country groups. As expected, the event of leaving home does not follow a uniform pattern: Having high-educated parents increases the probability of leaving home by 2.4 p.p. in Western Europe and by 1 p.p. in Northern Europe and decreases the probability of leaving home in Eastern Europe by 0.5 p.p., while no difference according to parental education is observed in Southern Europe. The average change in the probability of entering the labour market, forming the first union, and having the first child when parents are tertiary-educated (vs. lower secondary or less) varies little across country groups. A slight difference between Northern/Western and Eastern/Southern Europe emerges in the family-related events: In Eastern and Southern Europe having tertiary-educated parents is associated with a reduction of 2 p.p. in the probability of forming the first union and having the first child, while this reduction is halved in Northern and Western countries. This gradient is not observed for the event of the first job: in all country groups, young adults' probability of entering the labour market is reduced by about 3 p.p. if they have tertiary-educated parents. The association across the considered levels of parental education and the likelihood of experiencing events tends to be non-linear, except for the transition to the first child, which is also negatively associated with a medium level of parental education (upper secondary).

**Figure 2: Probability of experiencing each event by parental education, gender, birth cohort (M1). Results by country group, average marginal effects**

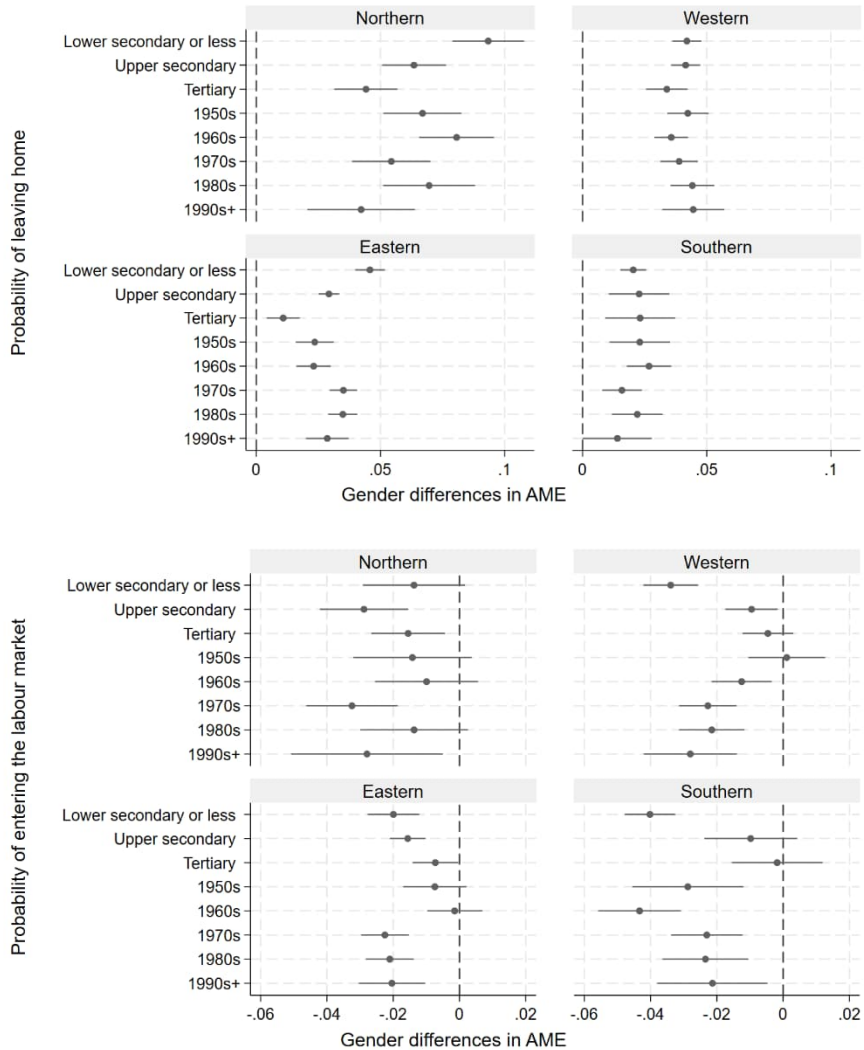


Note: Results from M1, regression tables in the Appendix (Table A-2). Additional controls (not shown): ESS round, age (linear, squared, cubic), country fixed effects.

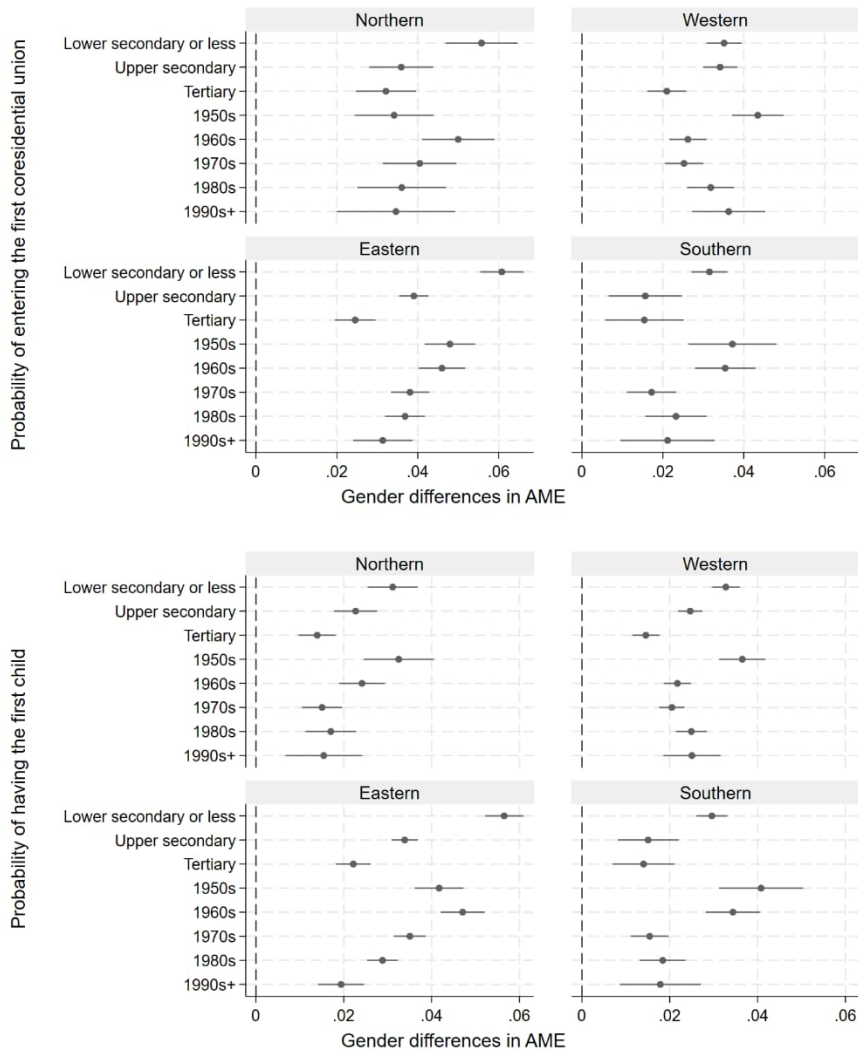
Women display higher hazards of experiencing all events except for the first job, meaning that women are likely to leave the parental home, enter the first cohabiting union, and have their first child earlier than men, but tend to enter the labour market later. Across country groups the greatest gender differences visible in Figure 3 are observed in Northern Europe, concerning the probability of leaving home (6.5 p.p. higher for women than men) and forming a coresidential union (4 p.p.), as well as in Eastern Europe concerning the first union and the first child (4 p.p.).

Interaction terms are introduced in M2 to evaluate how gender differences develop across birth cohorts and levels of parental education. Results from M2 in odds ratios are reported in Table A-3. Gender differences (women – men) across cohorts and levels of parental education expressed in Average Marginal Effects are presented in Figure 3. A positive difference indicates that women belonging to a certain cohort or to a certain parental background exhibit a higher probability of experiencing the event than men with the same characteristics; negative differences indicate that the probability is higher among men. First, we consider the evolution of gender differences across successive birth cohorts. Concerning the events of leaving home, entering the first job, and forming the first union, findings do not provide evidence in support of Hypothesis 3: gender differences in the probability of experiencing events are not smaller among younger cohorts than older ones. In most cases, gender differences show little variation across successive birth cohorts. When considering entry into the labour market, in Western and Eastern Europe the gap increases rather than decreasing: differences between women and men are larger among the younger cohorts than among the older. Gender differences tend to reduce across birth cohorts only in the transition to the first child across all country groups and in the transition to the first union in Eastern Europe.

**Figure 3: Gender differences in the probability of experiencing each event by parental education and birth cohort (M2). Results by country group, average marginal effects**



**Figure 3: (Continued)**



Note: Results from M2, regression tables in the Appendix (Table A-3). Additional controls (not shown): ESS round, age (linear, squared, cubic), country fixed effects.



Second, we turn to gender differences along levels of parental education. In line with our fourth hypothesis, gender differences in the probability of leaving home, entering the labour market, forming the first union, and having the first child are substantially smaller among young adults with tertiary-educated parents compared to the lowest level of parental education. Gender differences between women and men with low-educated parents are substantial for the transition to first union. Among the offspring of lower-educated parents in Eastern and Northern Europe, women's probability of entering the first union is about 6 p.p. higher than men's (almost double that of the other country groups). As in Table 3, this result highlights how men with a low-SES background have a reduced chance of forming coresidential partnerships. Also, results suggest that the considerable gender differences observed in Northern Europe for the event of leaving home are driven by women from low-SES backgrounds: their probability of leaving home is 9.3 p.p. (C.I.: 7.9; 10.7) higher than that of men from similar backgrounds. Empirical evidence does not support our hypothesis in Southern Europe, where gender differences vary little along levels of parental education concerning the events of leaving home, first union, and first child; and in Northern Europe, concerning the event of first job. While the result for Southern Europe could be attributed to the reduced prevalence of tertiary education among parents (10% in the overall sample, weighted data), in Northern Europe the groups are more balanced, indicating that labour market participation may be equally accessible to women and men, irrespective of their parental background.

As a robustness check, we included a control for living arrangements at age 14 (two parents vs. single-parent household), retrieved from the variable indicating mother's and father's employment status when the respondent was aged 14. Despite not being the focus of the present paper, living with one vs. both parents could affect young adults' transitions alongside parental resources. While growing up with a single parent is not associated with the events of first job, first coresidential union, and first child (results not shown), it is positively associated with the hazard of leaving home in Northern (O.R. = 1.157,  $p = 0.022$ ) and Western (O.R. = 1.101,  $p = 0.006$ ) Europe. The results are consistent with alternative specifications of parental SES, namely the use of a composite index of parental education and occupation (not shown).

## **5. Discussion**

Motivated by the growing body of research investigating the social stratification of demographic events, and by the relevance of intersecting gender and class inequalities, this paper explores the association between parental socioeconomic background, gender, and the occurrence of events during the transition to adulthood in Europe. We exploit retrospective data on 31 European countries from Rounds 3 and 9 of the ESS to, first,

produce non-parametric survival estimates, allowing us to explore differences by combinations of birth cohort, gender, parental SES, and country group. Second, in multivariate analyses we model the hazard of experiencing each event using discrete-time logistic regression models by country group, distinguishing between Northern, Western, Eastern, and Southern European countries.

Our first finding is that the events marking the transition to adulthood (first home-leaving event, labour market entry, first coresidential union, and first child) have been postponed among the considered cohorts (1950s–1990s). Contrary to our expectations, postponement also affected the event of leaving home. Postponement occurred for women and men alike, and its extent is particularly remarkable for childbearing compared to the other events. Non-parametric analyses also show that the proportion of respondents who have not experienced all the events by age 35 increases among younger birth cohorts, suggesting postponement beyond that age (Beaujouan 2020) or increasing rates of singlehood or childlessness. The postponement hypothesis is further supported by our regression models, showing that the probability of experiencing events decreases across successive birth cohorts in each country group, with the notable exception of the event of leaving home, which has not been postponed in Northern Europe. We thereby confirm previous findings (Billari and Liefbroer 2010) and extend them to the younger cohorts and to both genders, as well as to a vast comparative setting.

The second finding relates to the stratification in the timing of events based on parental SES. Discrete-time models show that across all country groups, young adults with high-SES parents have a higher probability of entering the labour market, first cohabitation, and parenthood later than those with low-SES parents; this does not apply to the first home-leaving event. Differences between young adults with highest- and lowest-educated parents are slightly more pronounced in Eastern and Southern Europe concerning the transition to the first coresidential union and the first child. This result confirms and extends previous evidence on delayed family formation among individuals from advantaged family backgrounds and highlights the crucial role of institutional and cultural factors (Billari, Hiekel, and Liefbroer 2019; Brons, Liefbroer, and Ganzeboom 2017; Mooyaart, Liefbroer, and Billari 2022). Conversely, the association between parental background and the likelihood of leaving home is specific to each country group, as suggested by previous research (Ferraretto and Vitali 2023; Schwanitz, Mulder, and Toulemon 2017). Compared to the other events, parental SES plays a more complex role in the process of leaving home, as young adults can move out of the parental home for diverse reasons (to attend university, form a coresidential partnership, gain independence, etc.) that may or may not depend on parental resources. Isolating single pathways out of the parental home can help disentangle the relationship between parental SES and leaving home behaviours (Klimova Chaloupkova 2023).

The third finding concerns gender differences in the probability of experiencing events across successive birth cohorts. We expected the traditional pattern (i.e., women leaving home, forming the first union, and becoming parents earlier than men) to progressively disappear among younger cohorts, given increased similarity between women and men in participation in higher education and the labour market. On average, across levels of parental education, empirical results do not support this hypothesis: Gender differences in the probability of experiencing events show little variation among young cohorts (1980s–1990s) compared to previous ones (1950s).

When disaggregating results by level of parental education, we find that gender differentials in the probability of experiencing all events are smaller among the offspring of tertiary-educated parents; among young adults with lower-educated parents, women experience all events earlier than men, except for labour market entry. Gender differences are substantial in the transition to first union, pointing to shifting patterns in assortative mating to the disadvantage of low-SES men, at least in terms of timing (Van Bavel 2013; Bellani, Esping-Andersen, and Nedoluzhko 2017). While the gender gap in the timing of family-related events is well-established in the literature, the reduction of such a gap among young adults with a high socioeconomic background envisioned, e.g., by Furstenberg (2003) constitutes a new and important finding. The offspring of high-SES parents may be more likely to experience events at a similar age because they have been socialized to gender-egalitarian attitudes (Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn 1983) but also because, irrespective of gender, they face fewer structural barriers to residential independence, labour market entry, and family formation. While both women and men growing up in high-SES families may prefer to wait for the ‘right’ partner to settle down with (Arnett 2000; Van der Berg 2023) but have more resources to put their plans in motion, such choices are not available to young adults with scarcer parental resources. Thus, women and men with lower-educated parents are more likely to follow gendered trajectories to adulthood (Badolato 2023; Hardie 2022). Empirical evidence does not support the fourth hypothesis in Southern Europe, where gender inequalities also seem to permeate the transition to adulthood among youth with high-SES parents.

A central limitation of our empirical strategy consists in the use of several regression models to estimate the occurrence of single events. Compared to holistic methods commonly used in life course research, our empirical strategy is better suited to studying the postponement of the transition to adulthood and lets the association with the predictors of interest (i.e., parental education and gender) differ across events and country groups, capturing event-specific or country-group-specific trends. This comes at a cost in terms of model specification, which has been kept simple. The association between parental background and the risk of events is assumed to be time-constant, despite previous research showing that the role of parental background can be age-specific (e.g., Iacovou 2010 on leaving home). Young adults’ own level of education has not been

included in the models because it would have required adding, for each event, a mediation analysis, as done by existing studies on single events (e.g., Angelini, Bertoni, and Weber 2022; Brons, Liefbroer, and Ganzeboom 2017). Other limitations stem from the dataset at hand, such as the lack of precise indications of age at the completion of education and of the characteristics of the first partner, potentially affecting gender differences in the timing of events. Also, the ESS asks questions about the first occurrence of each event, not allowing capturing their repeatability over the life course. Future research could address these limitations by using different data sources to dig deeper into the role of contextual factors and shed light on the mechanisms guiding our results.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this paper acknowledges that, in Europe, parental socioeconomic background is a major determinant of young adults' probability of experiencing the events that mark the transition to adulthood and cannot be considered in isolation from gender (Furstenberg 2003; Lappegård 2020). While the sons and daughters of highly educated parents delay family-related events, presumably until they reach a stable position in the labour market, young adults born in lower-SES families experience events earlier. In particular, women with low-SES parents experience all events of the transition to adulthood earlier in life than both their male counterparts and women with higher parental SES. The extent to which individual choices are constrained by structural or cultural factors and the consequences of experiencing events at diverse ages across social strata should be at the centre of a research agenda that could inform policymaking. Further delays in the age at which events are experienced across certain population groups may also fundamentally bring into question the definition and the age range of the transition to adulthood itself.

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## Appendix

**Table A-1: Median ages at each event by gender, parental education, and country group, 1960s cohort**

		First home-leaving		First job		First coresidential union		First child	
		Men 1960s	Women 1960s	Men 1960s	Women 1960s	Men 1960s	Women 1960s	Men 1960s	Women 1960s
North	Lower secondary or less	20	19	18	19	23	21	29	26
	Upper secondary	20	19	18	19	23	21	29	26
	Tertiary	20	19	20	20	24	22	31	28
West	Lower secondary or less	22	20	18	19	25	22	30	26
	Upper secondary	21	20	18	19	24	22	30	27
	Tertiary	21	20	21	20	25	24	32	30
East	Lower secondary or less	22	20	19	19	23	21	25	22
	Upper secondary	22	21	20	19	24	22	26	23
	Tertiary	21	21	21	21	24	23	26	24
South	Lower secondary or less	25	22	20	21	26	23	30	25
	Upper secondary	25	23	23	23	28	26	31	28
	Tertiary	25	22	23	24	30	26	36	30

*Note:* In the cells shaded in grey the median age is greater than the corresponding value for respondents with lower-secondary- (or less) educated parents.

**Table A-2: Discrete-time logistic regression models of the likelihood of experiencing each event by country group. Model 1, odds ratios**

	Home leaving, M1 North	Home leaving, M1 West	Home leaving, M1 East	Home leaving, M1 South
Parental education, ref: Lower secondary or less (ISCED 0–2)				
<i>Upper secondary (ISCED 3–4)</i>	1.086 (0.035) (0.012)	1.064 (0.021) (0.002)	0.913 (0.019) (0.000)	0.955 (0.041) (0.285)
<i>Tertiary (ISCED 5–6)</i>	1.072 (0.036) (0.041)	1.229 (0.027) (0.000)	0.939 (0.024) (0.016)	1.015 (0.047) (0.750)
Women	1.547 (0.039) (0.000)	1.413 (0.023) (0.000)	1.393 (0.023) (0.000)	1.294 (0.036) (0.000)
ESS round 9	1.048 (0.028) (0.083)	1.015 (0.017) (0.389)	1.142 (0.026) (0.000)	1.280 (0.042) (0.000)
Birth cohort, ref: 1950s				
<i>1960s</i>	1.004 (0.035) (0.904)	0.822 (0.018) (0.000)	0.846 (0.019) (0.000)	0.774 (0.030) (0.000)
<i>1970s</i>	1.013 (0.038) (0.727)	0.842 (0.019) (0.000)	0.622 (0.015) (0.000)	0.641 (0.026) (0.000)
<i>1980s</i>	1.023 (0.041) (0.578)	0.814 (0.021) (0.000)	0.526 (0.014) (0.000)	0.609 (0.028) (0.000)
<i>1990s+</i>	0.736 (0.038) (0.000)	0.678 (0.025) (0.000)	0.494 (0.018) (0.000)	0.440 (0.031) (0.000)
Age (centred)	1.190 (0.006) (0.000)	1.223 (0.003) (0.000)	1.183 (0.003) (0.000)	1.222 (0.006) (0.000)
Age <sup>2</sup>	0.953 (0.001) (0.000)	0.966 (0.0006) (0.000)	0.968 (0.0006) (0.000)	0.981 (0.001) (0.000)
Age <sup>3</sup>	1.002 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Person years	43,722	132,576	157,628	62,025

**Table A-2: (Continued)**

	First job, M1 North	First job, M1 West	First job, M1 East	First job, M1 South
Parental education, ref: Lower secondary or less (ISCED 0–2)				
<i>Upper secondary (ISCED 3–4)</i>	0.986 (0.034) (0.678)	1.049 (0.022) (0.025)	0.941 (0.019) (0.003)	0.887 (0.038) (0.006)
<i>Tertiary (ISCED 5–6)</i>	0.782 (0.027) (0.000)	0.743 (0.017) (0.000)	0.716 (0.018) (0.000)	0.727 (0.034) (0.000)
Women	0.876 (0.022) (0.000)	0.890 (0.015) (0.000)	0.879 (0.014) (0.000)	0.745 (0.023) (0.000)
ESS round 9	0.937 (0.026) (0.019)	1.034 (0.018) (0.059)	1.180 (0.027) (0.000)	0.880 (0.032) (0.000)
Birth cohort, ref: 1950s				
1960s	0.884 (0.032) (0.001)	0.836 (0.020) (0.000)	0.797 (0.019) (0.000)	0.850 (0.039) (0.001)
1970s	0.688 (0.026) (0.000)	0.698 (0.017) (0.000)	0.626 (0.015) (0.000)	0.774 (0.036) (0.000)
1980s	0.696 (0.029) (0.000)	0.680 (0.018) (0.000)	0.516 (0.013) (0.000)	0.778 (0.039) (0.000)
1990s+	0.689 (0.037) (0.000)	0.610 (0.022) (0.000)	0.454 (0.016) (0.000)	0.590 (0.040) (0.000)
Age (centred)	1.083 (0.004) (0.000)	1.022 (0.002) (0.000)	1.181 (0.003) (0.000)	1.102 (0.005) (0.000)
Age^2	0.972 (0.001) (0.000)	0.985 (0.0006) (0.000)	0.956 (0.0007) (0.000)	0.978 (0.001) (0.000)
Age^3	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.002 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Person years	41,366	103,054	131,223	45,027

**Table A-2: (Continued)**

	First union, M1 North	First union, M1 West	First union, M1 East	First union, M1 South
Parental education, ref: Lower secondary or less (ISCED 0–2)				
<i>Upper secondary (ISCED 3–4)</i>	1.039 (0.033) (0.228)	1.002 (0.020) (0.919)	0.825 (0.017) (0.000)	0.787 (0.036) (0.000)
<i>Tertiary (ISCED 5–6)</i>	0.912 (0.030) (0.005)	0.836 (0.019) (0.000)	0.703 (0.018) (0.000)	0.736 (0.037) (0.000)
Women	1.544 (0.038) (0.000)	1.486 (0.025) (0.000)	1.715 (0.029) (0.000)	1.530 (0.045) (0.000)
ESS round 9	0.992 (0.026) (0.752)	1.121 (0.019) (0.000)	1.032 (0.024) (0.177)	1.192 (0.041) (0.000)
Birth cohort, ref: 1950s				
<i>1960s</i>	0.897 (0.030) (0.001)	0.718 (0.016) (0.000)	0.847 (0.019) (0.000)	0.689 (0.027) (0.000)
<i>1970s</i>	0.851 (0.030) (0.000)	0.654 (0.015) (0.000)	0.629 (0.015) (0.000)	0.492 (0.020) (0.000)
<i>1980s</i>	0.803 (0.033) (0.000)	0.616 (0.017) (0.000)	0.472 (0.013) (0.000)	0.429 (0.021) (0.000)
<i>1990s+</i>	0.619 (0.036) (0.000)	0.502 (0.022) (0.000)	0.389 (0.016) (0.000)	0.299 (0.026) (0.000)
Age (centred)	1.243 (0.005) (0.000)	1.275 (0.004) (0.000)	1.278 (0.004) (0.000)	1.297 (0.008) (0.000)
Age <sup>2</sup>	0.964 (0.001) (0.000)	0.967 (0.001) (0.000)	0.962 (0.001) (0.000)	0.976 (0.001) (0.000)
Age <sup>3</sup>	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Person years	75,720	191,121	192,283	75,233

**Table A-2: (Continued)**

	First child, M1 North	First child, M1 West	First child, M1 East	First child, M1 South
Parental education, ref: Lower secondary or less (ISCED 0–2)				
<i>Upper secondary (ISCED 3–4)</i>	0.907 (0.030) (0.004)	0.830 (0.018) (0.000)	0.803 (0.016) (0.000)	0.665 (0.034) (0.000)
<i>Tertiary (ISCED 5–6)</i>	0.703 (0.025) (0.000)	0.645 (0.016) (0.000)	0.612 (0.016) (0.000)	0.579 (0.033) (0.000)
Women	1.535 (0.041) (0.000)	1.670 (0.030) (0.000)	1.857 (0.032) (0.000)	1.727 (0.054) (0.000)
ESS round 9, ref: 3	1.189 (0.034) (0.000)	1.260 (0.024) (0.000)	1.118 (0.026) (0.000)	1.290 (0.047) (0.000)
Birth cohort, ref: 1950s				
1960s	0.602 (0.020) (0.000)	0.554 (0.012) (0.000)	0.836 (0.018) (0.000)	0.616 (0.024) (0.000)
1970s	0.441 (0.016) (0.000)	0.420 (0.010) (0.000)	0.506 (0.012) (0.000)	0.351 (0.015) (0.000)
1980s	0.369 (0.018) (0.000)	0.340 (0.011) (0.000)	0.312 (0.009) (0.000)	0.264 (0.015) (0.000)
1990s+	0.202 (0.021) (0.000)	0.252 (0.017) (0.000)	0.210 (0.011) (0.000)	0.165 (0.021) (0.000)
Age (centred)	1.301 (0.006) (0.000)	1.264 (0.004) (0.000)	1.234 (0.003) (0.000)	1.252 (0.006) (0.000)
Age <sup>2</sup>	0.982 (0.0009) (0.000)	0.984 (0.0005) (0.000)	0.970 (0.0005) (0.000)	0.986 (0.0009) (0.000)
Age <sup>3</sup>	1.000 (0.000) (0.000)	1.000 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.000 (0.000) (0.000)
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Person years	110,887	258,296	230,863	90,115

Note: Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses, second row; P-values in parentheses, third row.

**Table A-3: Discrete-time logistic regression models of the likelihood of experiencing each event by country group, including interactions by gender. Model 2, odds ratios**

	Home leaving, M2 North	Home leaving, M2 West	Home leaving, M2 East	Home leaving, M2 South
Parental education, ref: Lower secondary or less (ISCED 0–2)				
<i>Upper secondary (ISCED 3–4)</i>	1.195 (0.053) (0.000)	1.077 (0.030) (0.010)	1.002 (0.032) (0.944)	0.935 (0.058) (0.279)
<i>Tertiary (ISCED 5–6)</i>	1.258 (0.058) (0.000)	1.304 (0.042) (0.000)	1.165 (0.045) (0.000)	0.998 (0.068) (0.974)
Women	1.905 (0.112) (0.000)	1.440 (0.053) (0.000)	1.440 (0.055) (0.000)	1.235 (0.073) (0.000)
Parental education # Gender				
<i>Upper secondary # Women</i>	0.803 (0.052) (0.001)	0.980 (0.036) (0.598)	0.855 (0.035) (0.000)	1.040 (0.089) (0.647)
<i>Tertiary # Women</i>	0.708 (0.047) (0.000)	0.895 (0.039) (0.011)	0.692 (0.035) (0.000)	1.031 (0.096) (0.740)
ESS round 9 (ref: 3)	1.054 (0.028) (0.051)	1.014 (0.017) (0.396)	1.146 (0.026) (0.000)	1.281 (0.042) (0.000)
Birth cohort, ref: 1950s				
<i>1960s</i>	0.964 (0.046) (0.446)	0.829 (0.027) (0.000)	0.837 (0.030) (0.000)	0.738 (0.043) (0.000)
<i>1970s</i>	1.055 (0.053) (0.293)	0.839 (0.028) (0.000)	0.547 (0.020) (0.000)	0.644 (0.038) (0.000)
<i>1980s</i>	1.023 (0.056) (0.684)	0.788 (0.030) (0.000)	0.446 (0.018) (0.000)	0.581 (0.040) (0.000)
<i>1990s+</i>	0.786 (0.056) (0.001)	0.636 (0.034) (0.000)	0.435 (0.024) (0.000)	0.432 (0.045) (0.000)
Birth cohort # Gender				
<i>1960s # Women</i>	1.093 (0.077) (0.210)	0.984 (0.044) (0.722)	1.020 (0.048) (0.668)	1.092 (0.086) (0.265)
<i>1970s # Women</i>	0.918 (0.069) (0.257)	1.007 (0.047) (0.882)	1.252 (0.060) (0.000)	0.990 (0.079) (0.901)
<i>1980s # Women</i>	1.011 (0.082) (0.890)	1.064 (0.055) (0.236)	1.327 (0.072) (0.000)	1.089 (0.103) (0.370)
<i>1990s+ # Women</i>	0.892 (0.091) (0.262)	1.125 (0.081) (0.105)	1.241 (0.091) (0.004)	1.033 (0.148) (0.819)
Age (centred)	1.192 (0.006) (0.000)	1.223 (0.003) (0.000)	1.183 (0.003) (0.000)	1.222 (0.006) (0.000)
Age^2	0.953 (0.001) (0.000)	0.966 (0.000) (0.000)	0.968 (0.000) (0.000)	0.981 (0.001) (0.000)
Age^3	1.002 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Person years	43,722	132,576	157,628	62,025

**Table A-3: (Continued)**

	First job, M2 North	First job, M2 West	First job, M2 East	First job, M2 South
Parental education, ref: Lower secondary or less (ISCED 0–2)				
<i>Upper secondary (ISCED 3–4)</i>	1.035 (0.050) (0.479)	0.954 (0.029) (0.121)	0.923 (0.028) (0.009)	0.766 (0.047) (0.000)
<i>Tertiary (ISCED 5–6)</i>	0.793 (0.038) (0.000)	0.668 (0.022) (0.000)	0.680 (0.026) (0.000)	0.605 (0.042) (0.000)
Women	0.960 (0.060) (0.518)	0.894 (0.038) (0.008)	0.916 (0.036) (0.024)	0.707 (0.052) (0.000)
Parental education # Gender				
<i>Upper secondary # Women</i>	0.905 (0.061) (0.142)	1.187 (0.047) (0.000)	1.031 (0.042) (0.459)	1.331 (0.114) (0.001)
<i>Tertiary # Women</i>	0.972 (0.066) (0.678)	1.216 (0.054) (0.000)	1.092 (0.054) (0.076)	1.445 (0.137) (0.000)
ESS round 9 (ref: 3)	0.938 (0.026) (0.022)	1.034 (0.018) (0.062)	1.181 (0.028) (0.000)	0.875 (0.032) (0.000)
Birth cohort, ref: 1950s				
1960s	0.874 (0.046) (0.011)	0.879 (0.031) (0.000)	0.781 (0.028) (0.000)	0.931 (0.065) (0.309)
1970s	0.745 (0.041) (0.000)	0.771 (0.028) (0.000)	0.685 (0.025) (0.000)	0.767 (0.053) (0.000)
1980s	0.701 (0.042) (0.000)	0.747 (0.030) (0.000)	0.568 (0.022) (0.000)	0.775 (0.058) (0.001)
1990s+	0.731 (0.055) (0.000)	0.694 (0.036) (0.000)	0.504 (0.026) (0.000)	0.601 (0.058) (0.000)
Birth cohort # Gender				
1960s # Women	1.022 (0.771) (0.210)	0.910 (0.054) (0.722)	1.042 (0.393) (0.668)	0.843 (0.069) (0.265)
1970s # Women	0.853 (0.066) (0.039)	0.832 (0.042) (0.000)	0.855 (0.042) (0.001)	1.009 (0.094) (0.927)
1980s # Women	0.984 (0.083) (0.843)	0.837 (0.046) (0.001)	0.843 (0.044) (0.001)	1.006 (0.102) (0.952)
1990s+ # Women	0.883 (0.093) (0.237)	0.782 (0.056) (0.001)	0.831 (0.057) (0.007)	0.977 (0.129) (0.862)
Age (centred)	1.083 (0.005) (0.000)	1.022 (0.003) (0.000)	1.181 (0.004) (0.000)	1.103 (0.006) (0.000)
Age <sup>2</sup>	0.972 (0.001) (0.000)	0.985 (0.001) (0.000)	0.956 (0.001) (0.000)	0.978 (0.001) (0.000)
Age <sup>3</sup>	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.002 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Person years	41,366	103,054	131,223	45,027



**Table A-3: (Continued)**

	First union, M2 North	First union, M2 West	First union, M2 East	First union, M2 South
Parental education, ref: Lower secondary or less (ISCED 0–2)				
<i>Upper secondary (ISCED 3–4)</i>	1.146 (0.049) (0.001)	1.010 (0.029) (0.729)	0.913 (0.027) (0.002)	0.869 (0.056) (0.030)
<i>Tertiary (ISCED 5–6)</i>	1.010 (0.045) (0.824)	0.901 (0.030) (0.002)	0.852 (0.032) (0.000)	0.811 (0.060) (0.004)
Women	1.632 (0.088) (0.000)	1.613 (0.060) (0.000)	1.901 (0.068) (0.000)	1.557 (0.092) (0.000)
Parental education # Gender				
<i>Upper secondary # Women</i>	0.806 (0.050) (0.001)	0.987 (0.037) (0.727)	0.831 (0.033) (0.000)	0.829 (0.074) (0.035)
<i>Tertiary # Women</i>	0.800 (0.052) (0.001)	0.871 (0.039) (0.002)	0.713 (0.035) (0.000)	0.837 (0.083) (0.074)
ESS round 9 (ref: 3)	0.997 (0.026) (0.898)	1.122 (0.019) (0.000)	1.033 (0.024) (0.159)	1.194 (0.041) (0.000)
Birth cohort, ref: 1950s				
<i>1960s</i>	0.821 (0.037) (0.000)	0.759 (0.024) (0.000)	0.833 (0.028) (0.000)	0.653 (0.038) (0.000)
<i>1970s</i>	0.812 (0.039) (0.000)	0.687 (0.023) (0.000)	0.613 (0.022) (0.000)	0.514 (0.031) (0.000)
<i>1980s</i>	0.782 (0.044) (0.000)	0.609 (0.024) (0.000)	0.430 (0.018) (0.000)	0.413 (0.030) (0.000)
<i>1990s+</i>	0.581 (0.048) (0.000)	0.451 (0.030) (0.000)	0.354 (0.024) (0.000)	0.268 (0.037) (0.000)
Birth cohort # Gender				
<i>1960s # Women</i>	1.209 (0.004) (0.210)	0.900 (0.017) (0.722)	1.034 (0.451) (0.668)	1.102 (0.216) (0.265)
<i>1970s # Women</i>	1.112 (0.078) (0.131)	0.910 (0.042) (0.043)	1.049 (0.049) (0.305)	0.919 (0.075) (0.298)
<i>1980s # Women</i>	1.076 (0.087) (0.367)	1.017 (0.055) (0.751)	1.176 (0.065) (0.003)	1.078 (0.106) (0.446)
<i>1990s+ # Women</i>	1.150 (0.131) (0.220)	1.194 (0.103) (0.039)	1.175 (0.100) (0.059)	1.212 (0.215) (0.277)
Age (centred)	1.243 (0.005) (0.000)	1.275 (0.004) (0.000)	1.278 (0.004) (0.000)	1.297 (0.008) (0.000)
Age^2	0.964 (0.001) (0.000)	0.967 (0.001) (0.000)	0.962 (0.001) (0.000)	0.976 (0.001) (0.000)
Age^3	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Person years	75,720	191,121	192,283	75,233

**Table A-3: (Continued)**

	First child, M2 North	First child, M2 West	First child, M2 East	First child, M2 South
Parental education, ref: Lower secondary or less (ISCED 0–2)				
<i>Upper secondary (ISCED 3–4)</i>	0.956 (0.045) (0.334)	0.866 (0.028) (0.000)	0.918 (0.028) (0.005)	0.729 (0.055) (0.000)
<i>Tertiary (ISCED 5–6)</i>	0.783 (0.039) (0.000)	0.729 (0.028) (0.000)	0.751 (0.031) (0.000)	0.631 (0.056) (0.000)
Women	1.696 (0.097) (0.000)	1.717 (0.066) (0.000)	1.932 (0.068) (0.000)	1.707 (0.101) (0.000)
Parental education # Gender				
<i>Upper secondary # Women</i>	0.893 (0.059) (0.090)	0.928 (0.038) (0.066)	0.788 (0.032) (0.000)	0.846 (0.086) (0.101)
<i>Tertiary # Women</i>	0.804 (0.057) (0.002)	0.806 (0.040) (0.000)	0.707 (0.037) (0.000)	0.862 (0.100) (0.200)
ESS round 9 (ref: 3)	1.193 (0.035) (0.000)	1.260 (0.024) (0.000)	1.119 (0.026) (0.000)	1.292 (0.048) (0.000)
Birth cohort, ref: 1950s				
1960s	0.593 (0.028) (0.000)	0.565 (0.019) (0.000)	0.777 (0.026) (0.000)	0.581 (0.035) (0.000)
1970s	0.456 (0.024) (0.000)	0.409 (0.015) (0.000)	0.453 (0.016) (0.000)	0.366 (0.023) (0.000)
1980s	0.360 (0.025) (0.000)	0.287 (0.014) (0.000)	0.252 (0.012) (0.000)	0.240 (0.021) (0.000)
1990s+	0.167 (0.029) (0.000)	0.172 (0.022) (0.000)	0.173 (0.017) (0.000)	0.117 (0.028) (0.000)
Birth cohort # Gender				
1960s # Women	1.032 (0.071) (0.650)	0.969 (0.044) (0.489)	1.141 (0.051) (0.003)	1.110 (0.088) (0.190)
1970s # Women	0.944 (0.071) (0.448)	1.051 (0.053) (0.318)	1.209 (0.057) (0.000)	0.932 (0.079) (0.411)
1980s # Women	1.056 (0.101) (0.569)	1.343 (0.087) (0.000)	1.427 (0.087) (0.000)	1.180 (0.133) (0.143)
1990s+ # Women	1.380 (0.302) (0.142)	1.783 (0.266) (0.000)	1.379 (0.163) (0.006)	1.702 (0.490) (0.065)
Age (centred)	1.301 (0.007) (0.000)	1.264 (0.004) (0.000)	1.234 (0.003) (0.000)	1.253 (0.007) (0.000)
Age <sup>2</sup>	0.982 (0.001) (0.000)	0.984 (0.001) (0.000)	0.970 (0.001) (0.000)	0.986 (0.001) (0.000)
Age <sup>3</sup>	1.000 (0.000) (0.000)	1.000 (0.000) (0.000)	1.001 (0.000) (0.000)	1.000 (0.000) (0.000)
Country fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Person years	110887	258296	230863	90115

Note: Exponentiated coefficients; standard errors in parentheses, second row; p-values in third row.