HETEROGENEITY OF PATHWAYS TO ADULTHOOD IN ITALY

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1. Introduction

Different disciplines studying the human behaviour agree in recognizing that, since the second half of the XXth century, advanced societies experienced an increasing individualization of socio-demographic phenomena which led to a stronger diversification of pathways among individuals.

A prominent stage of the life-course, where most of the events deeply affecting people’s well-being and their life chances occur, is youth. Completing education, being active on the labour market, leaving the parental home, living in couple and becoming parent are only few of the most important steps into adulthood that people may or may not experience during their twenties and thirties (post-adolescence and youth). While most people make these transitions at different ages and following several paths, some never make them (Cavalli and Galland 1993, Corijn and Klijzing 2001).

Many scholars believe that the social conditions of young people are changing rapidly, and that, above all, the ways of transition to adult positions are evolving deeply. Moreover, adulthood as a stage of life, that can be considered a strategic node at which to investigate shifts in the social structuring and the individual organization of the life course.

Major changes in the organization of the work and emerging demographic issues altered the nature of social risks. Today, the de-standardization of individual biographies introduces new forms of vulnerability making the “risk” a structural condition in each area of social life (Beck 2003). For example, early transitions are characterized by early independence and autonomy but, in some case (particularly in case of teen-age childbearing), may also hamper the completion of studies and increase the risk of poverty (Aassve et al. 2007).

The development of a theoretical framework and the introduction of new techniques for the analysis of the intricacies related to the transition to adulthood, have been accompanied by the acknowledgment of the relevance of adequate databases on life courses.
Unfortunately, cross-sectional data represent a limited source to establish if and to what extent the social conditions of today young adults have changed from the past (Lucchini and Schizzerootto 2001). Indeed, the social conditions of young adults cannot be adequately understood by just focusing on their position with respect to education, labour force participation, occupational outcomes and so on. Durations and pathways to those specific positions are even more informative of the occurred change (Baizán et al. 2002, Sironi et al. 2013).

2. Aim and hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to provide an overview of the transition to adulthood in Italy and to shed light on the dynamics of events in order to highlight the main changes related to generations and gender.

We examine non-renewable sequences concerning the following events: the end of study (i.e., if not anymore studying, the last available date between drop-out or attainment of the highest level of education in order to address the time of exposure to the human capital investment), the entry into the labour market (the starting date of the first job, distinguishing between the first permanent job and the first temporary job), the leaving of the parental home, the first union (distinguishing between unmarried and marital union) and the birth of the first child.

In this work the analysis of changes in the biographies adopts an exploratory perspective: timing, quantum and ordering of the main events related to the transition to adulthood by generation and gender are presented. Moreover, by means of the analysis of the trajectories we aim at studying the level of differentiation between cohorts.

We outline some hypotheses on the possible relations between the events of the life course and their change across cohorts:

1. the prolonged education affects the timing to first job. The rise of educational participation makes early teenagers more homogeneous as students and causes the postponement of the entry into the labor market. Afterwards, as increasing proportions of young people opt for the entry in higher, secondary and tertiary, education, then a rise in heterogeneity is expected;

2. the introduction of flexible forms of job (atypical workers) determines increasing differentiation of experiences in the most recent generations (timings of transition and states occurred);

3. the different degree of female participation in the labor market (since some of them follow the breadwinner pattern, some have a limited or precarious participation and some others are more work oriented) determines greater heterogeneity;
4. the existence of cultural factors and normative constraints about timings contrast the diversification of family experiences, thus a limited growth of heterogeneity across cohorts is expected.

3. Method and data

Events are the basic units of the life course; experiencing an event marks the transition between two states. In a first stage, Kaplan-Meier estimates of the median age (timing) at each event under study are shown. These events are considered markers of the transition into adulthood and are analysed separately for men and women and by birth cohort. The aim here is to describe the general trends across cohorts in the chronological ages at which the various steps towards adulthood took place in the individual life courses. Moreover, the proportion of people that has experienced a certain amount of steps (quantum) by a given age (for instance age 30) is informative about the major changes due to the shifts in timings.

As a second stage, we study the overall changes occurred in biographies up to a certain age, regardless of the ordering of the events. In this case the aim is to compare birth cohorts and genders in order to highlight what extent the levels of heterogeneity in two major domains - economic independence and family formation - have grown. Particularly, we refer to the state distributions and we build on the index of heterogeneity at each age.

Finally, the focus is on the chronological order of events to identify the degree of de-standardization from traditional paths and the spread of more innovative behaviours. This requires a joint analysis of the two above-mentioned trajectories.

To that aim, individual life-courses are decomposed according to the events under study concerning the transitions of states for the education, work and family.

In this study we observe individuals who may experience $k$ non-renewable events $e_i$, $i=1,...,k$ within an observation window (e.g. first job, first union, first child, etc.). Recurrent sequences allow taking into account the duration of each event and the ordering of events. Time is assumed to be measured in discrete units (in particular, we adopt monthly units in this work).

For a given individual $i$ and event $e_k$, we denote by $y_{ik}(t)$ the state of $i$ at time $t$ for $t=1,...,h$, with $h$ finite representing the observation window. Specifically, $y_{ik}(t)$ takes 2 values, namely 0 and 1, respectively before and after the occurrence of the

1 During the life course it is possible to experience the same event more than once. As an example having a baby, marrying … can be lived more than just once. However, all renewable events can be shifted into non-renewable events when we take into account the order of such events (having the first child is non-renewable, as well as having the first marriage).
event, i.e. if $e_k$ occurs at time $t_0$ then $y_i^{(k)}(t)=0$ for $t<t_0$ and $y_i^{(k)}(t)=1$ for $t\geq t_0$. Furthermore, we denote by

$$y_i^{(k)}: y_i^{(k)}(1) \rightarrow y_i^{(k)}(2) \rightarrow \ldots \rightarrow y_i^{(k)}(h)$$

the complete life course of $i$ with respect to $e_k$. It is also possible to consider the joint sequence\(^2\) as a concatenation of single sequences. Thus, if we study $k$ events, the number of states characterizing each individual at a given time of the life-course equals $2^k$. We finally define a domain as a subset of events all having to do with a specific aspect of the life course. Since the number of states increases exponentially with the number of events under study, we focus on individuals aged 35 or more and observe the occurrence, between age 15 and 35, of the following events on a monthly time scale (240 points in time):

Domain 1: economic independence
- S. end of study (attainment or drop-out)
- L.T. first temporary job
- LP. first permanent job

Domain 2: family formation
- H. leaving of the parent home
- M. first marriage
- U. first consensual union
- C. birth of the first child.

Thus, for each individual we build two vectors describing economic independence and family status, where each element of the vector represents the status occupied under that domain in a specific month and it makes possible studying the degree of differentiation of the states by age and stratification of the population under study by means of the following measures:

a) States distribution at a given age
b) Entropy or degree of heterogeneity: it takes 0, in case of minimum heterogeneity, i.e. all individuals share the same status, while it takes the maximum value ($\log(s)$) if all individuals are equally spread over different states $s$:

\(^2\) It has been argued that sequence data can be studied according to the atomistic or the holistic approach. In the former case, only the state occupied by the individual at a given point in time is of interest, while in the latter the complete history of states up to a given time is considered. Moreover, the time perspective can be static, when it only focuses on one point in time, or dynamic when different points in time are considered (Billari and Piccarreta 2005).
\[ E_t = -\sum_{j=1}^{s} p_{jt} \log p_{jt} \]  

(2)

where \( p_{jt} \) is the proportion of individuals occupying state \( j \) at time \( t \).

These trajectories are then reassembled in a comprehensive analysis of the order of events that aims to highlight the main changes between typical and de-standardized sequences regarding the two paths simultaneously.

We build data on sequences of states using the Multipurpose households survey on “Family and social subjects”, lead by Istat in 2009. This survey collects retrospective information regarding union, fertility, education and job histories on a sample of 24,000 national representative households, for about 60,000 individuals. Data are representative at regional level of analysis (Istat 2006).

The study window starts from the exact age of 15 and ends at the exact age of 35, in a monthly time unit (a length of 240 months). In order to observe the status occupied at the same age by men and women of several generations, we select people aged 35 and more at the time of the interview³.

4. Analysis of results

4.1. Timing

Over the last century, the expansion of the school system and the steady lengthening of the education stage are well witnessed from these data that show a monotonic increase in the age at the end of study (Figure 1). Moreover, since 1960, the female increase in the median age at the end of study has meant a switch from negative to positive age differences between women and men.

The spread of higher education and, consequently, the growth of the age at the study completion, implies a delay of the age at first job experience: the two events are strictly connected as they both shift upward monotonically and the age at first job is systematically higher than the one at end of study. Indirectly, it emerges that social norms and constraints shape the entry into the labour market, once the educational stage is over⁴. The positive age difference between first job and end of study is relatively higher for women than for men (on average 4 versus 2 years respectively). The gap reduction between education and entry into the labour market is mainly due to the increase in the age at end of study.

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³ Individuals belonging to the youngest ten-years cohort have been censored at the age at the interview of the youngest individuals of that cohort. Therefore, as an example, in the 1970-79 birth cohort the trajectories are observed up to age 30.

⁴ It should be noticed that the exceptionally high age at first job for women of older birth cohorts is due to the very low proportion of working women.
Changes across generations are also due to a different regulation of the labour market. As for the type of contract at first job, recent labour market reforms have implied rising proportions of atypical workers (short-term employees, consultants, collaborations). Therefore, especially the youngest cohorts have been involved in atypical jobs: 44.6% of people who ever worked born in the ‘80s had an atypical job at entry into the labor market; the same condition was shared by 31.1% of workers born in the ‘70s, by 23.2% of those born in the ‘60s and by about 16% of those born in the ‘40s. Remarkable gender differences show that atypical workers are more spread among women and people with tertiary education.

As for the process of leaving the parental home, it emerges a U-shaped trend across birth cohorts. Strictly following the overall trend of marriage timing, the median age at leaving the family of origin has decreased first and increased afterwards. The time lag between leaving the parental home and first marriage is increasing across cohorts especially for men (a set of different reasons for leaving emerges: cohabitation, work, autonomy).

The median age at first union is systematically higher than the age at first job and lower than that at first child. Thus, at least at an aggregate level, people get married only once they find a job and become parents after a stable relation. In a sense, people act respecting already existing social norms. A relevant change among generations emerges as well. Indeed, the family formation process is characterized by U-shaped changes in the timings of major events: older cohorts married and had a baby later than people born during the ‘40s and ‘50s. The youngest cohorts are increasingly postponing the occurrence of these events, especially the birth of the first child. There, the gap between age at first union and at first birth is increasing. This is extremely important for men where the age at
first child reached about 33 years for the generation born at the beginning of the ‘60s; moreover, data suggest an upward trend of the survival functions. Again, the trend shows a U-shaped shift in the timing of first child with increasing postponement for younger birth cohorts. Women have similar pattern but at lower levels. As shown in the previous steps to adulthood, where the cohorts born during the ‘40s and ‘50s had lower ages at leaving the parental home and at first union, also timing to first child is lower for these same cohorts than the other ones. Overall, these cohorts were able to take advantage of favourable economic conditions, i.e. characterized by rising employment rates while, afterwards, a prolonged postponement of parental roles emerges clearly for the youngest cohorts.

The most recent cohorts are characterized by increasing school leaving age, delayed entry into the labour market, together with the increasing flexibility (and insecurity) of job, and these factors, together with the persistence of social norms regarding the right sequence among events of transition to adulthood, result in a shift onwards in the timing of first union and first child, especially for men.

In sum, timings of the process to adulthood have changed deeply across cohorts according to two different patterns. On one hand, the process of economic independence where education and first job are both characterized by monotonic increases in the median ages; on the other hand, the steps towards family formation reflect the delay in education and work and show the U-shaped pattern of the median ages. At the aggregate level, timing of transitions reflect the contextual conditions and show that individuals respect social norms.

4.2. Quantum

As a consequence of the shifts in the observed timings, the proportion of people experiencing a certain amount of steps in the transition to adulthood by a given age has deeply changed. Considering the proportion of individuals with at least one family event (such as leaving the family of origin, entering the first consensual union, having the first marriage or the first child) by a given age, a change in the path across cohorts emerges, especially concerning those ages where typically the majority of the events took place. Indeed, a very small proportion of young men experienced a family event before their 20th birthday: less than half of them experienced it before age 25; on the contrary most of them had a family event between their 25th and 30th birthday. However, this proportion reached a maximum among men born in the ‘40s (about 80% of them had at least one family event by age 30) and it declined steadily afterwards (almost 60% for men born in the ‘70s). In the same way, but with a certain time lag, an increasing proportion of women experienced a family event before age 25 until cohorts born in the ‘50s
(about 75%), while, afterwards, a decline started (less than 50% for women born in the ‘70s). The shifts in the proportion of people following a certain trajectory have changed also in relation to each different event of the transition to adulthood. As an example comparing two birth cohorts of women (table 1) - those born in the ‘40s - the post world war II ones - and those born in the ‘70s - approximately daughters of the first group -: it emerges clearly the increase in the proportion still at home, or unmarried or, even more, without children by the 30th birthday both among men and among women. On the contrary the proportion of women with a consensual union by age 30 has risen up to 18% and 16% for women and men born in the ‘70s respectively.

**Table 1 – Proportion of people having experienced one of the family event at exact age 25, 30, 35 by birth cohort and sex. (Kaplan-Meyer survivor functions)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Left the parental home</th>
<th>Had the first union</th>
<th>Had the first marriage</th>
<th>Had the first child</th>
<th>Left the parental home</th>
<th>Had the first union</th>
<th>Had the first marriage</th>
<th>Had the first child</th>
<th>MEN</th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;=1939</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1940-49</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 25</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>by age 30</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 25</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by age 25</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 30</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 35</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 25</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 30</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 35</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 25</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 30</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 35</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 25</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.81</td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 30</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>by age 35</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.34</td>
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<tr>
<td>by age 25</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.85</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Multipurpose household survey on Family and social subjects (Istat, 2009).*

The postponement effect is even clearer when considering the level of education. If age 35 is taken as a threshold, only 50% of tertiary educated women were mothers against 70% of low educated ones. Moreover, the fertility gap at age 35 between highly educated women and low educated ones has increased: from about 20% for women born in the ‘40s, to more than 30% for the youngest
generations, especially due to the decrease in fertility among more educated women. Thus, *ceteris paribus*, the increase in the average age of education has pushed women to stay at the parental home longer, postponing their entry into a couple relationship and the reproductive life (Guarneri et al. 2013).

4.3. Changes in the trajectories

The monthly distribution of the states, regardless of the ordering among events in the transition to adulthood between ages 15 and 35, is presented here according to two major trajectories.

*a) economic independence trajectory*

The analysis of this trajectory aims to provide an overview of the changes occurring on the educational and work domain across cohorts (Figure 2). First of all, the proportion of people at school and with no job experience up to age 20 increases by cohort (blue area): from 17% to 21% to 27% of men born in the ‘40s, ‘60s and ‘70s respectively, and from 13%, to 22% to 33% of women. As a consequence, the proportion of women that ended education and never had worked before age 30 (green area) declines from 37% to 29% to 24% for the same cohort respectively; this proportion is only around 8% for men, regardless of their birth cohort.

The traditional pattern - where a standard job starts when education ends - declined too (orange area), whereas the experience of atypical jobs increases (yellow area). Indeed, at their 30th birthday, 75% of men born in the ‘40s has had a permanent job while this is true for 65% of men born in the ‘60s and for 59% of those born in the ‘70s. At the same time, those experiencing precariousness before age 30 rise from 4 to 9 % of men born in the ‘40s and ‘70s.

A much lower proportion of women has experienced a job by age 30, yet in atypical positions. Permanent jobs among women declined from 49% to 40% of the birth cohorts of the ‘40s and ‘70s respectively and, at the same time, atypical jobs were spread among 5% to 11% of women.
Figures 2 – People aged 35 years and more by economic independence states distribution, sex, age and birth cohort.

Heterogeneity in economic independence

The increasing individualization of trajectories implies a rise in the level of heterogeneity too, and vice versa, the standardization of life courses implies a decline in the level of heterogeneity (Figure 3). From the analysis of the monthly distributions of states concerning the end of study and the first job it emerges that the overall age pattern of the heterogeneity index is pretty similar among cohorts, especially for men, while women underwent a process of increasing diversification of trajectories.

More specifically, more recent birth cohorts show higher levels of standardization of their life courses between age 15 and age 20, mainly as a consequence of prolonged school attendance. Afterwards, a gradual change by cohorts of the heterogeneity index appears: it highlights the increase in the ages at which the highest level of dissimilarity is reached and the age span where this keeps persistently high.
Figure 3 – Entropy in economic independence by sex and birth cohorts.

b) family formation trajectory

The analysis of this trajectory aims to provide an overview of the diversification of the life courses in terms of home leaving, forming a union and childbearing, regardless of the ordering among events (Figure 4).

First of all, the proportion of people with no transition (dark blue area) at a given age increases across cohorts and, due to the usual age gap in the timing of marriage and fertility, is higher for men. At age 30, 37% of men born in the ‘70s lives in the family of origin, has not had a union or a child (it was only about 15% among their fathers’ generation, born in the ‘40s); at the same age, 23% of women born in the ’70s share the same situation (against 9% of their mothers at the same age, too).

One of the more traditional states - represented by people that left their parents, married and had a child (orange area) - underwent the largest contraction: at age 30 it represented more than half of the states for men born in the ‘40s and it declined to just 14% for those born in the ‘70s. Also for women this reduction is very important: from 2 third of the states to one third for the youngest female birth cohorts. At the same time, the diversification of states distribution is shown by less traditional events such as independent living (green) and consensual union (yellow). Indeed, leaving the parental home by age 30 concerns 18% of men and 10% of women born in the ’70s while this was the case for just half of their parents (born in the ‘40s). In the same way, leaving the parental home and having a cohabitation more uxorio is shared by about 8% of young people born in the ’70s.

Similarly, as signals of greater diversifications of pathways to adulthood, more complex combinations of events, such as cohabitation and marriage or childbearing (pink, grey and light green) are also arising among the youngest generations.
Figures 4 – People aged 35 years and more by family formation states distribution, sex, age and birth cohort.

Heterogeneity in family formation

This is also confirmed by the analysis of the complexity of the trajectories in this domain. Even if at the beginning of the life courses there is a relevant homogeneity among cohorts, especially for men, in the family formation process - resulting from the increased standardization observed for the prolonged school attendance -, from age 28 onwards the heterogeneity index rises (Figure 5). This is particularly remarkable since the ‘60s, where the shifts in the maximum age of entropy and in the age span during which the members of each birth cohort reached the highest levels of dissimilarities, are shown. These results, in accordance with previous analyses based on the study of the cohorts born until the ’50, provide also an updated picture of the most recent birth cohorts, whose behaviour at a relatively adult age can be observed with these more recent data. Indeed, subsequent
generations show a change of path with the past, a greater diversification of life courses than before.

**Figure 5 – Entropy in family formation by sex and birth cohorts**

4.4. *Does ordering matter?*

The distribution of states at a given time of the life course analyzed above expresses in a synthetic way the sum of the events lived by the individuals up to a given age. However, that analysis does not represent the observed sequence occurred on each individual life course. Many scholars focused on the aspects related to the existence of a normative path in the transition to adulthood. Moreover, it is important to join the economic independence and family formation trajectories.

Considering the whole path followed by individuals up to a given age it is possible to ascertain whether there has been a change in the normative sequence. Let us focus on people at their 30th birthday and let us observe the shift in the proportion of the most prevalent pattern. Considering the whole path followed by individuals up to a given age it is possible to ascertain whether there has been a change in the normative sequence. Let us focus on people at their 30s and observe the shift in the proportion of the most prevalent pattern.

As an example, the traditional path to adulthood, where end of study is followed by entry into the labour market, then independent living and family formation (either union and first child) was once lived by one third of men born in the ‘40s while nowadays it involves 14% of men born in the ‘70s (Figure 6). This pattern, typically known as the traditional model of the male bread-winner, declined; at the same time it has been accompanied by a rise in the incomplete path of end of study and job experience but with no family transition up to age 30, therefore a
postponement beyond age 30: this trajectory involves 11% of men born in the ‘40s and 27% of those born in the ‘70s, respectively. Also, the least traditional path constituted by a period of independent living and family formation has increased too: from 8% to 12%, respectively.

As for women, the traditional patterns (with or without job experience) were once followed by 30% of people born in the ‘40s; they include 18% and 13%, respectively, of the trajectories belonging to those born in the ‘70s. Also among female trajectories it is possible to envisage the postponement of family formation beyond age 30, as outlined by the increase in the process of end of study and labour market participation not followed by family formation. Women, as well as men, are experiencing a rise in the period of independent living followed by the formation of a family.

Figure 6 – People aged 30 and more by transition sequences at age 30, sex and birth cohort - 2009 (per 100 people with same characteristics)

5. Concluding remarks

Changes in timing among generations are relevant and reflect a widespread postponement of the events characterizing the process to adulthood but they still suggest the existence of a relative stability of the rules concerning the sequence of transitions. However, an increasing diversification of the steps towards economic independence emerges from the cohort born in the ‘60s: this diversification of paths is related to the increasing participation of women to the labour market and to the introduction of atypical jobs, mainly affecting younger generations. As regard the family formation domain, an increase in heterogeneity of pathways also emerged: both men and women born in the ‘60s and ‘70s show higher levels of heterogeneity, i.e. traditional patterns are run by a proportion of people lower than
in the past and at the same time, more options of trajectories show up. The rise in heterogeneity can be further investigated by including the analysis of the duration permanence in each status, as well as other relevant dimensions of study (such as status of the family of origin and the geographical area).

References


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SUMMARY

This paper aims at investigating the changes occurred in the pathways to adulthood in Italy. We mainly adopt an exploratory approach to highlight generations and gender differences. First, two major domains of life courses (economic independence and family formation trajectories) are studied in order to highlight the changes in timings regarding the transitions. Second, the shifts in the distribution of states is analyzed. Third, the two trajectories are joined into one, in order to evaluate the persistence of still traditional patterns in the process of transition into adulthood, as well as, the spread of more differentiated ones. Mainly, the prolonged stage of study and the difficulty to obtain stability on the labor market, determine a postponement of the family formation process at a give age, reflected in a rise in incomplete trajectories.

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