Elsevier Editorial System(tm) for Advances in Life Course Research
Manuscript Draft

Manuscript Number:

Title: Parental Social Class and the Transition to Adulthood in Italy and the United States

Article Type: Research Article

Keywords: transition to adulthood; social class; sequence analysis; Italy; United States.

Corresponding Author: Ms. Maria Sironi,

Corresponding Author's Institution:

First Author: Maria Sironi

Order of Authors: Maria Sironi; Nicola Barban; Roberto Impicciatore

Abstract: Compared to older cohorts, young adults in developed societies delay their transition to adulthood. Yet within cohorts, variations in timing and sequencing of events still remain. A major determinant of life course differences is social class. This characteristic can influence the sequence of events in terms of socioeconomic inequalities through differing available opportunities for social mobility. Several studies show that in North America, a higher familial status tends to decrease the complexity of trajectories, while the opposite effect has been found in Southern Europe.
This research examines the sequence of transitions, highlighting in a comparative perspective how life trajectories are influenced by parental social class in the United States and Italy. The main result of the analysis is that the influence of parental status is in fact different across countries; however, this was unforeseen, as it differs from what the literature on the topic demonstrates so far.

Parental Social Class and the Transition to Adulthood in Italy and the United States

Abstract

Compared to older cohorts, young adults in developed societies delay their transition to adulthood. Yet within cohorts, variations in timing and sequencing of events still remain. A major determinant of life course differences is social class. This characteristic can influence the sequence of events in terms of socioeconomic inequalities through differing available opportunities for social mobility. Several studies show that in North America, a higher familial status tends to decrease the complexity of trajectories, while the opposite effect has been found in Southern Europe.

This research examines the sequence of transitions, highlighting in a comparative perspective how life trajectories are influenced by parental social class in the United States and Italy. The main result of the analysis is that the influence of parental status is in fact different across countries; however, this was unforeseen, as it differs from what the literature on the topic demonstrates so far.

Keywords: transition to adulthood; social class; sequence analysis; Italy; United States.

1. Introduction

In the last fifty years, the process that brings adolescents to adulthood has changed greatly in many —if not all—countries in the Western developed world. After World War II, adult roles, such as being employed full-time and financially independent, were achieved by the early 20s. Nowadays, it takes much longer to assume such roles, and the entire transition has been postponed to the late 20s and early 30s. The general delay that has been found in the first steps of the transition to adulthood (Sironi and Furstenberg 2012) is most likely also transferred to the subsequent events in life trajectories, such as leaving the parental home, starting a co-residential union, and having children. As a result, young adults, compared to older cohorts, experience a delay in the transition to adulthood (Aassve et al. 2002; Furstenberg 2010; Settersten, Furstenberg and Rumbaut 2006). However, the patterns leading to adulthood are not simply postponed. Because of profound structural and cultural changes that occurred in the Western world in the last few decades, life trajectories had to adapt, becoming more diverse. The "second demographic transition" theory would use the word *individualization* to characterize changes in the life course (Lesthaeghe 1995; Van de Kaa 1987). But as Bruckner and Mayer (2005) point out, this term includes many different elements, such as de-institutionalization, de-standardization, and differentiation in the life trajectories of young adults.

Within the framework of postponement and individualization of trajectories shaping the life course, timing and sequencing of events in the patterns of transition to adulthood are

still strongly influenced by family background (Elzinga and Liefbroer 2007; Ravanera, Rajulton and Burch 2006). The exact mechanisms by which socioeconomic status affects the transition to adulthood and the ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency are largely unknown, but presumably include factors such as role modeling, labor market connections, neighborhood influences, and parents' ability to make monetary investments in their children.

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of parental social status on the entire transition to adulthood—exiting school, entry into the labor market, leaving the parental home, entry into a co-residential union, and parenthood. These events mutually influence each other in terms of timing, which results in major challenges to lifestyles, responsibilities, and autonomy (Gauthier and Furstenberg 2002). Thus, focusing on single events makes it difficult to understand the interrelationships of these different steps. We address this issue by implementing a sequence analysis, an approach that gives a "holistic" perspective and in which the life course is seen as one meaningful conceptual unit (Billari 2001). Moreover, we compare two different countries—the United States and Italy—in order to understand whether and how the institutional structure and context can fill the gap that stems from disadvantaged family background. Notably, the United States and Italy are located in different stages along the second demographic transition (Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa 1986), showing a different incidence of "individualized" and "secularized" behaviours, such as informal cohabitations, non-marital fertility, and marital dissolution. All our analysis will be carried out separately by gender. This would allow us to take into account possible differences in the impact of family background on

men and women's transition to adulthood, something that, as far as we know, hasn't been considered in previous literature.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

The relevance of family social class for the subsequent life course starts before birth, it continues throughout adolescence, and it is able to shape the course of young adult transitions and psychological development in the third and fourth decades of life. As previous research on developed societies has found, youth from affluent and well-educated families marry and have children later than those from lower social classes because of a longer education, a much more extended search for a permanent partner in life, and a lower incidence of unintended pregnancy. In other words, the family background is crucial in determining the individual resources that may lead to decisions in the early phases of adulthood (Settersten et al., 2005). These resources may be economic and cultural. *Financial resources* may create or facilitate opportunities for a longer education and a delayed entry into the labor market. Previous research shows that disadvantaged youth differ in many aspects of transition to adulthood (Osgood, Foster, Flanagan, & Ruth, 2005). They are more likely to interrupt education earlier and to enter the labour market. Moreover, they do not want to and cannot afford to remain unemployed for too long, and consider education only as a way to get a job; therefore, they are more likely to drop out of school if they are able to find an occupation (Furstenberg 2008). The economic difficulties linked to housing costs may hinder independent living before family formation. On the contrary, youth from affluent and well-educated families expect to remain in educational settings for a longer period of

time and are far likelier to complete their education before entering full-time employment. As far as *cultural resources* are concerned, Kohn et al. (1986) noticed that middle-class parents tend to give more importance to autonomy when raising their children, whereas working class parents are more focused on conformity (Kohn, Slomczynski and Schoenbach 1986). Also, upper-class parents tend to talk to their children more than working-class parents do, which favours analytical thinking; therefore, higher-status parents prepare their children for higher education and higher-status jobs (Nisbett 2009). However, De Jong-Gierveld et al (1991) found that in the process leading to autonomy and independence, the relevant distinction is between *transferrable* and *non-transferrable* resources rather than between material and non-material. Others, following a radically different point of view, posit that the association between parents' socioeconomic status and young adult outcomes may also reflect the intergenerational transmission of genetic traits, such as intelligence or motivation (Guldi, Page and Stevens 2007).

Differences also arise in the family domain. On average, young adults from higher social class postpone family formation and have higher educational homogamy if mating. Cohabitation is generally stable and considered a prelude to marriage. Not surprisingly, marital stability is higher and the risk of divorce is considerably lower for them as compared to low socioeconomic families (Furstenberg, 2008). Less advantaged youth are more likely to cohabit in response to unplanned parenthood and this may create the basis for later family instability. In all these circumstances, family background can influence not only the timing of events in the transition to adulthood, but also the sequencing of these events, thus modifying the propensity to experience peculiar patterns

of transition to adulthood. For example, it has been underlined that children from a higher family social status tend to postpone their first union (Wiik 2009) and their first child birth (Rijken and Liefbroer 2009), but they also tend to reach housing autonomy earlier, without directly making the transition to living with a partner (Blaauboer and Mulder 2010).

However, the relationship between parental social class and transition to adulthood has mainly been investigated in the literature by focusing on single events. Existing literature strongly suggests that family and economic domains are strongly interdependent, and the way in which they interact is a key question in the study of transition to adulthood. Thus, a more consistent approach should take into account the entire development of the trajectory of economic independence and family formation. In other words, rather than focusing on a single event or a couple of events, the analysis of the relations between the family status and the transition to adulthood should consider the type, the number, the duration, and the order of events in the process.

In our analysis, we focus on North America and Southern Europe because the existing literature suggests crucial differences between them. Several studies show that in North America, a higher familial status tends to decrease the complexity of trajectories, or, in other words, to push toward a more "traditional" pattern, i.e., a trajectory in which the end of education and the first job precedes union formation, which, in turn, precedes parenthood (Hogan 1981; Hogan and Astone 1986; Marini 1984a; Marini 1984b; Rajulton and Burch 2010; Rajulton, Ravanera and Beaujot 2007; Ravanera, Rajulton and Burch 2003; Ravanera, Rajulton and Burch 2006). Youth born and raised in high socioeconomic conditions, on average, take longer to find a permanent partner (and to

have children). Although they are not less likely to cohabit, their cohabitation (or their marriage) ends up being much more stable than co-residential unions of young adults coming from low-educated families. For disadvantaged young men and women, cohabitation may be the result of unintended pregnancy, so it can result in greater family instability later in life (Furstenberg 2008).

In Southern Europe, and Italy in particular, where the Roman Catholic Church is still strongly influential, the spread of secularized behaviors has been somewhat hindered in the last decades and a more *normative* (or standardized) sequence of events emerges, i.e. a more rigid sequence of steps in which childbirth usually follows marriage which in turn follows the end of education and the entry into the labour market (see Marini 1984a). Within this framework, more secularized events (e.g. living alone, non-marital cohabitation, and children out-of-wedlock) and more complex patterns leading to adulthood tend to be more widespread among children of upper social classes. Lower-class young people would continue to follow normative trajectories as protection against an uncertain economic situation (Cavalli, Buzzi and De Lillo 1997; Galland 1995; Galland 1997).

Differences between the two countries may be framed within three different explanations: the Second Demographic Transition (SDT), long-term cultural traits, and welfare regime. The Second Demographic Transition theory (Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa, 1986; Van de Kaa, 1987) predicts a general trend toward heterogeneous experiences in individual life courses. Changes in the economic structure and cultural shifts trigger individualization in demographic behavior, which implies flexibility in life trajectories and longer periods spent in certain states, such as single person or unmarried cohabitation. Furthermore,

these trends have been complicated by short-term economic fluctuation and historical events. Hence, we would expect all countries to converge in their demographic behavior and thus more homogeneity in national experiences, but also more diverse sequence patterns within countries, with familial and non-familial transition markers increasingly overlapping (Shanahan 2000). However, we still observe great heterogeneity across countries, and this is mainly due to the fact that countries can be found in different stages of the transition process. Italy and the United States can probably be considered an example of where countries are at a different phase of the transition, with the United States being at a more advanced stage and Italy lagging behind. Assuming that people from upper social classes are more advanced in their "second demographic" transition, the role of parental social class in the transition to adulthood might be different in such varying contexts, and the differences across countries might become smaller as social class increases.

An alternative explanation considers that differences between countries might be persistent over time, given that they are rooted in the past and based on peculiar long-term cultural traits. In this case, we assume that inter-generational relations based on different cultural models are at play in different countries or areas. These cultural traits are transmitted from parents to their children, generation after generation (Liefbroer and Elzinga, 2012), which is also a part of the process of socialization (Hammel 2001). Generally speaking, even though the relevance of parents' view on the transition to adulthood of their children has been exerted also for U.S. (Axinn and Thornton 1993; Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1993; Manning et al 2009; Thornton 1991; South 2001), in a Mediterranean country like Italy, characterized by strong family ties (Reher 1998)

where kinship ties are more important and diffused than bonds with neighbours and friends (Micheli 2000), the influence of parents' characteristics, also in terms of socio-economic background, on the choices of youth, can be more evident (Impicciatore 2013). More than elsewhere, in a familistic society where children's success means parents' success, parents try to give their children the best opportunities in terms of social mobility and they discourage every behaviour that could represent a risk in this sense (Dalla Zuanna, 2001). For example, since children living outside the parental household have a greater risk of experiencing disadvantages (Aassve et al 2007; Hill and Hill, 1976), familistic parents do not encourage their children to leave the "nest" because they are reluctant to see them suffer in material terms (Dalla Zuanna 2001; Castiglioni and Dalla Zuanna 1994). Moreover, the relatively scarce occurrence of behaviours, such as non-marital cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births in Southern Europe, may be related to children's intention to avoid choices, which openly clashes with the values of parents (Rosina and Fraboni 2004).

Finally, differences between countries may be explained in terms of different welfare regimes and law regulation. The classification and the characteristics of the different welfare states suggest that de-standardization, turbulence, and individualization in life course trajectories are more advanced in countries that can be classified as liberal or social-democratic as compared to southern European countries where welfare support is very weak and where we observe a reliance on the family as the locus of support (Ferrera 1996; Mayer 2001; Trifiletti 1999).

On top of the differences across countries, the role of social class may also be different across genders in specific contexts. Usually, women face the transition to

family formation earlier than men (mainly marriage and parenthood), but this trend is reducing over time due to the expansion of female education and the increase in female labor force participation. However, large macro-level differences still remain between Italy and United States (see Table A1 in Appendix). Thus, we wonder whether in a society characterized by a high female unemployment rate and traditional gender roles within the couple (female caretaker and male breadwinner), like Italy, the effect of parental resources may be different in shaping the transition to adulthood of daughters and sons. The aim of our analysis is threefold: First, we want to evaluate the impact of social origins on the patterns of the transition to adulthood as a whole, i.e. adopting a more "holistic" approach able to take into account the entire trajectories of economic independence and family formation. Second, we apply a cross-national comparative perspective to evaluate the role of a specific context in the relationship between parental social class and the transition to adulthood. Third, we focus on gender differences and, in particular, we want to evaluate whether the role of parental background is gender-specific in the two counties. Background literature enables us to formulate the following hypotheses:

H1: A higher parental socio-economic status (in terms of parents' education and/or better occupation) is associated with a general postponement of the transition to adulthood in both the United States and Italy;

H2: Patterns toward independence and family formation are more rapid and less normative in the United States than in Italy;

H3: The influence of social class on life course trajectories is context-specific. Specifically, we expect that in the United States, children of upper social status tend to

follow more normative sequences of states than children of lower status, whereas the opposite occurs in Italy.

H4: Gender differences are context-specific. We expect a stronger gender gradient in Italy than in the USA.

3. Data and Methods

In this paper, we use two different data sets - one for each country that contains similar information on the life course of young adults. For the United States, we use data collected through the NLSY79. The sample includes 8,636 individuals (4,275 males and 4,361 females) born between 1957 and 1964, interviewed each year from 1979 to 1994, and every other year after 1994. We consider waves from 1979 to 1996 in order to follow young adults starting when they were between 14 and 22 years old (born between 1957 and 1964) until they were between 31 and 39 years old in 1996. We do stop the analysis in 1996 given that thereafter we would have information on life events only every other year. We need the exact date/year of each event we consider in the analysis, and biannual collection of data does not allow us to know that. The NLSY79 collects information on a nationally representative sample of young men and women, and was designed to gather information at multiple points in time on their labor market activities and other significant life events. For Italy, we use the Multipurpose ISTAT survey "Famiglia e soggetti sociali," which includes 40,962 individuals born between 1899 and 1985, who were interviewed at the end of 2003. We do not use the entire sample, and instead we

select the same birth cohorts included in the NLSY79 to make the samples more homogeneous and comparable. Selected cohorts (late baby boomers) were born in a period in which the economy was still growing and expanding. However, by the time they reached adolescence and early adulthood, many of the forces that contributed to the start of second demographic transition and prolongation of adult transitions were in play. Our final sample for Italy includes 6,002 individuals (2,916 males and 3,086 females). The longitudinal structure of the NLSY79 and the retrospective questions in the Multipurpose ISTAT survey enable us to reconstruct the steps, year by year, in the independence and family transitions for each individual in the sample.

The method we intend to use to investigate the relationship between the social class and the life course trajectories is based on *sequence analysis* (Abbott 1995; Abbott and Tsay 2000; Aisenbrey and Fasang 2010). We adopt a life course perspective, looking at the entire development of school, employment, and family history. Parental social status strongly affects the environment in which individuals grow up, and thus can have a significant association with young adults' life trajectories and the sequence of events in their transition to adulthood. Individuals build their future on the basis of the constraints and opportunities they have faced in the past (Elder 1994). The process is iterative and cumulative, so it is important to take a unitary, *holistic* approach and to look at the influence of family background on the entire life course rather than on single events of the transition to adulthood (Barban, forthcoming; Barban and Billari 2012; Billari 2005).

The events we take into account are the following: end of education, entry into the labour force, leave of the parental home, first union (marriage and/or cohabitation), and

parenthood. Parents' social status is defined on the basis of education level when the respondent was 14 years old. More specifically, parental socioeconomic status can be low, medium, or high depending on the level of parents' education. Given the disparity in the distribution of education level between Italy and the United States, we define a low socioeconomic status in Italy if both parents attained just primary education – 68.1% of the Italian sample, a medium level if at least one attained lower secondary education – 20.3%, and a high level if at least one attained upper secondary education – 11.6%. In the United States, a low level corresponds to both parents with primary or lower secondary education (9 or fewer years of education) – 22% of the American sample –, a medium level corresponds to at least one parent with upper secondary education (12 or fewer years of education) – 53.2% –, and a high level corresponds to at least one parent with tertiary education (more than 12 years of school) – 26.8%.[1]

[1] The vast amount of literature depicts several definitions of social class. Despite the fact that social class is something more than income and wealth, the most common way to operationalize this feature is to consider a ranking of class on a "prestige" or "status" scale expressed as some combination of the income, occupation, educational level, or to focus on only one of these specific traits (Svallfors, 2006). With the aim to group positions with common characteristics beyond an artificial scale ranking and given to restriction in our datasets, our strategy is to define social as the parent's position according to educational attainments, a dimension that highlights differences in a clearer way. However, as an alternative strategy we also used parents' occupation. We consider father's job unless mother's job is at a higher level, or father's job is missing (Erickson 1984). Also in this case we have three different levels of social class, low (e.g., workers, farm laborers), medium (e.g., clericals, craftsmen), and high (e.g., professionals, managers), based on the type of occupation that parents had when the respondent was 14. In general, results do not change significantly when using occupation, and are more consistent with education. Throughout this paper we use parental status as synonymous of social class.

In the sequence analysis, each life course trajectory is represented by a string of characters resembling the one used to code DNA molecules in biological sciences. Hence, every trajectory is made up of a number of values that correspond to the number of years each individual is observed. Accordingly, the number of possible combinations is equal to (# possible different states)$^{(\#\text{ years each individual is observed})}$.

We describe trajectories along timing and sequencing, by gender and social class. We investigate the median age at each event (*timing*), and we report the frequencies of the five most common independence and family trajectories, which shows the sequence of events (*sequencing*).

Then we exploit a sequence analysis to identify specific typologies of life trajectories in order to study how social class is related to the likelihood of ending up in a certain typology. The analytical strategy adopted in this case uses the Longest Common Subsequences metric (LCS) proposed by Elzinga (Elzinga 2006, Elzinga 2010), whose goal is to compute a matrix of dissimilarities between pairs of sequences, and thus of life courses (Billari 2005). The dissimilarity measure is based on the length of common distinct subsequences between life course trajectories. This metric differs from the Optimal Matching Algorithm of Abbott because it does not require a cost definition and can be used with sequences of different length[2]. To take into account multiple domains, we adopted a multichannel sequence analysis approach (Pollock 2007, Gauthier 2010), which allows us to specify multiple domains in order to construct a single matrix of dissimilarities by locally aligning distinct life trajectories simultaneously. In the multichannel sequence analysis, we distinguish between transitions in the family domain (i.e., marriage, cohabitation, and childbearing) and transitions in the independence

[2] LCS-metric is equivalent to the special case of Optimal Matching with unit-cost.

domain (i.e., school, leaving the parental home, and entering the labor market). The algorithm computes a dissimilarity matrix for each of the domains (channels) and computes the final distance matrix by summing up the distances in the family and independence domains. Once the dissimilarity matrix is built, one possibility for identifying a limited number of typologies is to apply a cluster analysis (Aassve, Billari and Piccarreta 2007). Specifically, we apply hierarchical clustering algorithm. The number of cluster solution has been chosen inspecting the dendogram and pseudo-variance explained by different cluster solutions. As a robustness check, on top of the sequence and the cluster analysis we also perform a latent class analysis (McCutcheon 1987) to investigate whether the number of clusters selected (i.e., five clusters) is a plausible one. We indeed find that the choice of five clusters is correct, and that the characteristics of the clusters are very similar using the two methods. Consequently we only report the results concerning the sequence and the cluster analysis[3]. The sequence analysis has been performed using the package TraMineR available in the open source statistical environment R (Gabadinho et al, 2011). The latent class analysis has been preformed using the software Latent GOLD (Vermunt and Magdison 2005). Data for Italy and U.S. are merged in order to get the same clusters and be able to compare countries – separately for men and women. Finally, we perform a multinomial logistic regression analysis to investigate the relationship between parents' socio-economic status and the probability of being part of a specific typology (determined through the cluster analysis).

The entire analysis is made separately for men and women.

[3] Results of the latent class analysis are available upon request.

4. Description of Life Course Trajectories

4.1. Timing

Looking at Table 1, which contains the median age of each event we consider in the analysis by country, gender, and parental social class, the delay in the transition to adulthood among Italian people is apparent compared to the United States. With the exception of the median age at completing school, all the other events in the independence and family transitions occur at an older age in Italy. In this country, the transition between the end of education and the entry into labor market takes an exceptionally long time, which is one of the longest among OECD countries (OECD 1998, 2009; Scherer 2005). This is not surprising if we take into account that in Italy in the last years about one in four young people aged 15-29 years belongs to the category of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training), a proportion that is significantly higher than the EU27 average (Istat 2014).

Accordingly, cohabitation, marriage, and parenthood are postponed by 3 to 4 years. The median age at childbearing is well above 30 among Italian men. Considering differences in parental socioeconomic status, we find that among men in Italy, the median age at each event goes up as social class increases, which means that coming from an advantaged family status induces a delay in the transition. This is also true in the United States, but the gradient is weaker and not observable for both "starting a job" and "leaving the parental home". The same result can be observed among women, even if median age at all the events is generally lower than for men.

Table 1

4.2 Order of events

Figure 1 shows the first five most common sequences of states in the independence and family transitions according to sex, parents' level of education, and country. In the pattern towards independence, in both countries and for both sexes, the exit from the parental home follows the end of education and the entry into the labour market (see Figure 1a and Figure 1b). However, if in the United States starting a job before the completion of education is very common, it is almost non-existent in Italy, where the end of education is strongly characterized as a first step in the transition to adulthood. The influence of social class is more relevant among women than men. In particular, among the former group, the more frequent sequence tends to be reinforced within the higher social class groups (Figure 1b). Moreover, leaving home without a job is very common in Italy, especially among lower classes, while it is almost non-existent in the United States.

Looking at family formation patterns (Figure 1c and Figure 1d), we see a strong concentration of individuals in Italy in the "traditional" sequence of Single-Married-Married Parent, especially among women. In the United States, this sequence is the most common one as well, but a higher heterogeneity of patterns emerges. For example, in the United States, it tends to be more common to live as a single outside the parental home, whereas in Italy, people leave the parental home to marry. Once again, the role of family status is more important for women than for men, with a declining frequency of the "traditional" pattern among higher classes in both countries.

Figure 1

5. Holistic Perspective on the Transition to Adulthood

Findings in section 4 show that social class emerges as a relevant aspect that shapes the paths to adulthood, and sometimes its influence in the two countries is different. We now want to assume a more comprehensive perspective, but one that still takes into account the aspects we have seen separately in the previous section. In order to facilitate the interpretation, we show on separate graphs the process called "Independence" (characterized by the states of being a student, having entered the labour market, and living with parents) and the process called "Family formation" (characterized by the states of living with parents, single or cohabiting or married, and having a child), which we estimated simultaneously considering multiple domains. The first step is to identify typical patterns in the transition to adulthood through a cluster analysis, and then try to evaluate the propensity to follow a specific pattern according to parental social class and country of origin.

5.1 Cluster analysis

Figures 2 and 3 show the graphs concerning the clusters for men and women, respectively. In each figure, we show on the left the clusters for family formation and on the right the clusters for the independence transition.

We start with the discussion of males' clusters. The first cluster—*Modern and Independent Transition* (22.5% of the male sample in Italy and 26.7% in the United States)—can be defined as experiencing modern behavior in the transition to adulthood. Men in this group leave their parents' house when they finish school and find a job, but they do not necessarily move out to marry - they also stay single or cohabit. Moreover,

men in cluster 1 delay childbearing substantially. The second cluster can be defined as traditional—*Traditional and Early Transition* (22.4% of the male sample in Italy and 27.8% in the United States)—given that both their achievement of independence and their family formation occur very early and rather quickly. These young men leave their parents very early, and usually do it to marry. Very few leave and stay single or cohabit, and those who marry become fathers very shortly thereafter. The third cluster—*Slow and Late Independence* (15.1% of the male sample in Italy and 7.5% in the United States)—is very different from the first two. The transition to adulthood is very slow and they gain their independence very late. Most of them, when in their late 20s, are still in school and live with parents, even if they have found a job. Moreover, more than 20% of the men in this group never marry, never cohabit, and do not have children before 35 years of age. There is also cluster 4—*Late Home Leavers (with a job)* (19.3% of the male sample in Italy and 19.8% in the United States)—which is very different from the first two as well, but for different reasons. These individuals finish school and find a job relatively early, but then they do not move out of their parents' home, which results in a significant postponement of family formation: Almost 60% by age 35 still live with parents, they do not marry, or if they do, they do it very late. Thus, their transition to adulthood seems to be incomplete. The fifth cluster—*Single Living with High Education* (20.8% of the male sample in Italy and 18.2% in the United States)—presents very peculiar characteristics. These young men leave their family of origin very soon, even if they are in school and sometimes even before having a job. They leave to stay single at least for a while, and then they marry or cohabit and have children. Presumably, the typical person belonging to this cluster is a young man who goes to college and starts living by himself when still

in school. They enter the "marriage market" with some delay because they wait until they complete education, and they finish later than others. Hence, in cluster 5, we observe a delay in the transition to adulthood, which is due to high education in this case.

Figure 2

As far as women are concerned, the first cluster—*Traditional and Early Transition* (38.3% of the female sample in Italy and 38.8% in the United States)—corresponds to a traditional transition, with an early achievement of independence and a fast family formation through marriage and motherhood (almost no cohabitation or single living). Cluster 2—*Modern and Independent Transition* (11.4% of the female sample in Italy and 20.2% in the United States)—is extremely modern with respect to cluster 1. These women experience a very fast transition to independence, and more than 50% at age 24 have already left the parental home, have completed education, and have found a job. When they leave their parents, they do it to stay single or to cohabit. If they marry, they still delay substantially childbearing or do not have children at all.

Figure 3

The third cluster—*Housewives* (21.8% of the female sample in Italy and 3.9% in the United States)—is a unique typology that we do not find among men. These women exit education and leave their parents early in their lives, but they never enter the job market; therefore, they leave their parents because they find a partner, marry, and have children early. As we observed in the table and figures about quantum and sequencing reported above, most of the women in this cluster are from the Italian sample because the

majority of American women actually enter the labor market. Cluster 4—*Late Home Leavers (with a job)* (24.8% of the female sample in Italy and 20.9% in the United States)—is very similar to Cluster 4 for men where people leave the parental home very late - a long time after the end of education and entry into the labor market. Consequently, they marry late (if they marry), and become mothers even later. In Cluster 5—*Higher Education* (3.6% of the female sample in Italy and 17.3% in the United States)—we find more educated women that stay in school longer, but who also find a job while studying and usually leave their parents early in life. They do not necessarily delay marriage, but to some extent, they delay motherhood. As we also saw in cluster 2, we find a greater number of women cohabiting than in other typologies.

5.2 Multivariate Analysis

Now that we have described the different typologies of life course trajectories for men and women, let us consider again the main research questions of this study: how family class influences the transition to adulthood, and how this association differs in Italy and the United States. To answer these questions, we implement some multinomial logistic regressions, separately by gender, to test the importance of parental class for the probability of belonging to the different clusters in Italy and in the United States. Our typology of reference is the one with a *traditional* life course trajectory, i.e., Cluster 2 for men and Cluster 1 for women. As explanatory variables in the model, we include *birth cohort*, the *number of siblings* in the family of origin (to control for the fact that the influence of parental social class can be different depending on how many children they have had), and the key variables *country* and *parental class*. Moreover, we include an

interaction term between parental class and the country dummies. Figures 4 and 5[4] show the predicted probabilities of being in each cluster derived from the regressions by country and family social class.

Among men (Figure 4), we find that the probability of belonging to the first cluster—*Modern and independent trajectory*—is the same in the two countries for a low-level social class, but it increases by almost 10% in the United States, as we go from low to high social class, while stays the same in Italy. The probability of being in the second cluster—*Traditional and early transition*—decreases as social class increases in both countries, even if the probability is always higher in the United States. The opposite is true when we look at cluster 3—*Slow and late independence*—: The probabilities are quite low in both countries when parental class is low (8% in the United States and 12% in Italy), but they increase substantially in Italy and get to 25% when social class is high, while they remain very low in the United States.

Based on these first three clusters, we can generally say that as family socioeconomic status increases, the typologies of life course trajectories in the two countries move in different directions: Among higher classes in Italy, there emerges a delay in both the independence and family formation patterns (the association of parental status is negative in cluster 2 and positive in cluster 3), while in the United States, a higher status pushes towards modern and more heterogeneous trajectories in family formation; however it is not clearly associated with a delay in the independence trajectory

[4] We report the confidence interval (at a 95% level) in order to determine whether differences across countries and social classes are significant. Table A2 and A3 in Appendix report the results of multinomial logistic regressions for men and women, respectively.

(the association of parental background is positive in cluster 1 and negative in cluster 2, where both of these clusters are characterized by early independence).

These indications are confirmed when we look at the last two clusters: in the United States, men with a higher social status show a lower probability of belonging to cluster 4—*Late home leavers*—in which the exit from the parental home and, consequently, family formation, are strongly postponed, but a higher probability of belonging to cluster 5—*Single living with high education*—in which an early departure from the parental home results in a higher proportion of men living as a single. In Italy, for both clusters, differences according to parental background are not supported by an adequate statistical significance.

Figure 4

Figure 5

Among women (Figure 5), the probability of experiencing a traditional and early transition decreases as social class increases in both Italy and the United States, with a slightly larger decrease in Italy (from 37% to 32% in the United States and from 40% to 27% in Italy, even if differences between countries are not significant). In contrast, as parental class goes up, the probability of being in cluster 2—*Modern and independent trajectory*—increases in both countries. In Italy, women that come from a low social class have an 8% probability of being in this cluster, while those from a high social class have a 23% probability. In the United States, the increase goes from 17% to 25%. Predicted probabilities of belonging to cluster 3—*Housewives*—clearly show how the

missed entrance into the labor market is a phenomenon that occurs almost only in the Italian context. The probability is lower than 10% in the United States, and this probability goes to zero when we look at high social class. In Italy, those with a low family social class have almost a 30% probability of being in this group, and this probability drops to 12% for women from a higher social class.

Generally speaking, the analysis of the first three clusters suggests that among women, high social classes push towards a modern and more heterogeneous pattern of transition to adulthood in both countries, although with a different level of the predicted probabilities. In contrast, a clear-cut interaction between country and social class emerges for cluster 4—*Late home leavers*. In fact, if in Italy the predicted probability is 21% for a low social class woman, this probability increases to 30% when social class goes up. This is different in the United States, as the relationship goes in the opposite direction because the probability decreases from 27% to 15% as family status goes up. This is also clear if we look at the predicted probability of ending up in cluster 5—*Higher education*. This kind of life course trajectory (i.e., exit from the parental home and finding a job when still in school, presumably college) is far more likely to happen in the United States. Moreover, this probability increases with social class in the United States (from 12% to 28%), while it stays roughly constant in Italy (between 4% and 5%).

To summarize, among women, we have a clear and unambiguous outcome of parents' status in the United States: high social status increases modern trajectories in family formation, such as cohabitation and single living (positive association in clusters 2 and 5), and decreases early transition due to marriage (negative association in cluster 1), traditional gender roles within the couple (negative association in cluster 3), and a

postponed exit from the parental home (negative association in cluster 4). Among Italian women, the role of parental status is more complex and a dual influence of sorts emerges. Family status increases the propensity to experience modern and more heterogeneous trajectories (positive association in cluster 2), but at the same time, it reduces the probability of experiencing an early family formation (negative association in cluster 1) and being an unemployed married women (negative association in cluster 3). On the other hand, for those Italian woman who did not experience an early departure from the parental home, mainly to form a new union, an advantaged family background "protects" them and keeps them in the family nest for a longer time even if they found a job and completed education (positive association in cluster 4).

6. Discussion

In our analysis, we evaluated the role played by social class in the transition to adulthood in Italy and the United States. The inherent complexity of the phenomenon under analysis—transition to adulthood consists of several events that mutually influence each other—has been captured by looking at the entire adulthood trajectory, i.e., considering the timing, the quantum, and the sequence of events simultaneously. In general, we found large differences between countries that were not always accounted for by differences in family social class. Findings on timing and sequencing show a more significant postponement in the transition to adulthood in Italy and a higher heterogeneity of states and trajectories in the United States. In particular, compared to the United States, Italy is characterized by a lower incidence of women entering the labor market and a reduced occurrence of informal cohabitation. However, the relevance of social class cannot be

ignored. In line with the existing literature, our results confirm that parental background influences the transition to adulthood (Blaauboer and Mulder 2010; Rijken and Liefbroer 2009; Wiik 2009). Our analysis shows that the transition to adulthood is slower among higher classes. However, the most notable results emerge when one looks at the interplay between social class, gender, and country. Multivariate regression estimates add important indications.

Going back to the hypotheses made in Section 2, our analysis confirms that the lower the socio-economic status, the higher the probability of experiencing an early and fast transition to adulthood (H1). This result can be explained by two mechanisms: individuals with lower family resources have more constraints that lead to lower educational attainments and a more rapid entry into the labor market (Furstenberg 2008), and also children of lower classes are more prone to experience standard trajectories (Kohn, Slomczynski and Schoenbach 1986) which results in an early exit from the parental home and corresponds to an early family formation.

Our results also confirmed that the trajectories leading to independence and family formation are more rapid and less standardized in the United States than in Italy (H2). This expected result is totally in line with the different stages held by the two countries in the second demographic transition.

As far as H3 is concerned, the relationship between social class and life course trajectories is context-specific, but not in the expected direction: in the United States, de-standardized and individualized trajectories—having a job before the end of education, an independent period prior to family formation, informal cohabitation, and out-of-wedlock pregnancies—are more widespread among individuals with a higher parental status. This

contrasts with existing literature focusing on single events or without a global view on the transition to adulthood. In Italy, the relation is not as clear as in the United States. In Southern European countries, the reliance on family for fundamental support during the first stages in the life course implies that among the higher classes, de-standardization of trajectories is less evident. This is expressed mainly in terms of a further postponement of family formation, due to a prolonged stay in the parental home, especially among men. Therefore, in Italy, a more affluent family of origin constitutes not only a protection factor in the presence of economic constraints, such as unemployment or an unaffordable housing market, but also a golden cage (Castiglioni and Dalla Zuanna 1994; Dalla Zuanna and Micheli 2004) that children are not encouraged to leave, even if they have already completed education and started a job. This result leads us to the conclusion that in Italy, the familistic viewpoint (Dalla Zuanna and Micheli 2004), characterized by strong affective bonds between parents and children (Micheli 2000; Reher 1998) that are able to hinder the process leading to residential autonomy, reaches its full potential among wealthier families.

Finally, the hypothesis on gender-specific results has also been confirmed (H4). In the United States, we find that the role of social class is strong but similar for both genders: high status favors not only a higher education and an early entry in the labor market, but also a higher heterogeneity of states and the occurrence of new behaviors like single living and cohabitation. In Italy, the influence of social class is strongly gender-specific. Among men, a higher social class tends to delay transitions (both in terms of independence and family formation patterns), more than leading towards less normative behaviors in their living arrangements. Among women, we found two different

associations: the first is the same observed in the United States - a higher social class tends to facilitate the experience of more modern and independent transitions and reduces the propensity to follow more standardized patterns, i.e., exit from the parental home to marry and then parenthood. The second association relates to the higher probability of postponing the exit from the parental home among higher-class women that completed education and found a job, which then also postpones family formation.

In section 2, we tried to frame differences between U.S. and Italy within three different, though not exclusive, explanations: the Second Demographic Transition (SDT), long-term cultural traits, and welfare regime. In the first case, we expected all countries to converge in their demographic behavior. In the second and third cases, we expected the two countries to follow a specific evolution and differences are persistent over time. Even though our data does not allow us to test what one is the best approach, our results – in terms of both specific trajectories and social class impact on children choices – give some hints that may be useful for a discussion. For the most part, evidence suggests that the two countries are not at a different stage of a similar trajectory. Indeed, if Italy had been a laggard of U.S., we would have observed similar behaviors to those experienced in the U.S. decades ago, and in the future, Italy would show the same behaviors observed currently in the U.S. However, this seems to not be the case, as the two countries follow a distinct and peculiar trajectory. Rather, our results suggest that a different system of norms and values, mainly linked to *familism* – also correlated to a different welfare regime – appears as a more relevant factor in shaping patterns of transition to adulthood.

This point leads us to the last consideration. Our analysis is limited to cohorts born between 1957 and 1964. What are the expectations for the younger cohorts? In the United

States, it is more likely that the de-standardization of trajectories and the diffusion of more secularized forms of union formation may extend to youngsters with lower family status, thus reducing differences based on social class. In contrast, social class may be even more relevant in Italy. Indeed, familism, and a welfare based on it (in which a large amount of public resources are directed towards aged people), implies that youth with economic difficulties mainly rely on the help given by their family of origin. This mechanism strengthens the relevance of social class in the patterns of social mobility, in particular during a period in which younger cohorts have been experiencing particular difficulties in the labor market (Livi Bacci 2008). Further research is needed to investigate more recent trends, particularly in the light of the recent economic crisis.

References

Aassve, A., F. C. Billari, and R. Piccarreta. 2007. "Strings of Adulthood: A Sequence Analysis of Young British Women's Work-Family Trajectories." *European Journal of Population/Revue européenne de Démographie* 23(3/4):369-88.

Aassve, Arnstein, Simon Burgess, Andrew Chesher, and Carol Propper. 2002. "Transitions from home to marriage of young Americans." *Journal of Applied Econometrics* 17(1):1-23.

Aassve A., Davia M.A., Iacovou M., Mazzuco S. 2007. "Does leaving home make you poor? Evidence from 13 European countries" *European Journal of Population*, 23:315-338.

Abbott, Andrew. 1995. "Sequence Analysis: New Methods for Old Ideas." *Annual Review of Sociology* 21(1):93-113.

Abbott, Andrew, and Angela Tsay. 2000. "Sequence Analysis and Optimal Matching Methods in Sociology." *Sociological Methods & Research* 29(1):3-33.

Aisenbrey, Silke, and Anette E. Fasang. 2010. "New Life for Old Ideas: The "Second Wave" of Sequence Analysis Bringing the "Course" Back Into the Life Course." *Sociological Methods & Research* 38(3):420-62.

Axinn W.G., Thornton A. 1993. "Mothers, children and cohabitation: the intergenerational effects of attitudes and behaviors" *American Sociological Review*, 58(2):233-246.

Barban, Nicola. 2013. "Family trajectories and health. A life course perspective." *European Journal of Populatio*n, 29(3):357-385.

Barban, Nicola, and Francesco C. Billari. 2012. "Classifying life course trajectories: a comparison of latent class and sequence analysis." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series C (Applied Statistics)* 61(5):765-84.

Billari, F. C. 2005. "Life Course Analysis: Two (Complementary) Cultures? Some Reflections with Examples from the Analysis of the Transition to Adulthood." *Towards an Interdisciplinary Perspective on the Life Course. Advances in Life Course Research* 10:261-81.

Billari, Francesco C. 2001. "Sequence Analysis in Demographic Research." *Canadian Studies in Population, Special Issue on Longitudinal Methodology* 28(2):439-58.

Blaauboer, Marjolein, and Clara H. Mulder. 2010. "Gender differences in the impact of family background on leaving the parental home." *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* 25(1):53-71.

Bruckner, Hannah, and Karl Ulrich Mayer. 2005. "De-Standardization of the Life Course: What it Might Mean? And if it Means Anything, Whether it Actually Took Place?" *Advances in Life Course Research* 9(0):27-53.

Castiglioni, Maria, and Gianpiero Dalla Zuanna. 1994. "Innovation and tradition: Reproductive and marital behaviour in Italy in the 1970s and 1980s." *European Journal of Population/Revue européenne de Demographie* 10(2):107-41.

Cavalli, Alessandro, Carlo Buzzi, and Antonio De Lillo. 1997. *Giovani verso il Duemila. Quarto rapporto Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Dalla Zuanna G. 2001. “The banquet of Aeolus: A familistic interpretation of Italy’s lowest low fertility” *Demographic Research* 4(5): 133-162.

Dalla Zuanna, Gianpiero, and Giuseppe A. Micheli. 2004. *Strong family and low fertility: a paradox?: new perspectives in interpreting contemporary family and reproductive behaviour*: Springer.

De Jong-Gierveld, Jenny, Aart Liefbroer, and Erik Beekink. 1991. "The effect of parental resources on patterns of leaving home among young adults in the Netherlands." *European Sociological Review* 7(1):55-71.

Elder, G. H. 1994. "Time, Human Agency, and Social Change: Perspectives on the Life Course." *Social psychology quarterly* 57(1):4-15.

Elzinga, Cees H. 2006. "Sequence Analysis: Metric Representation of Categorical Time Series". *Unpublished manuscript (http://home.fsw.vu.nl/ch.elzinga/).*

Elzinga, Cees H. 2010. "Complexity of Categorical Time Series." *Sociological Methods & Research* 38(3):463-81.

Elzinga, Cees, and Aart Liefbroer. 2007. "De-standardization of Family-Life Trajectories of Young Adults: A Cross-National Comparison Using Sequence Analysis." *European Journal of Population/Revue européenne de Démographie* 23(3):225-50.

Erickson, Frederick. 1984. "School Literacy, Reasoning, and Civility: An Anthropologist's Perspective." *Review of Educational Research* 54(4):525-46.

Ferrera, Maurizio. 1996. "The 'Southern Model' of Welfare in Social Europe." *Journal of European social policy* 6(1):17-37.

Furstenberg, Frank F. 2008. "The intersections of social class and the transition to adulthood." Pp. 1-10 in *Social class and transitions to adulthood. New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, edited by J. T. Mortimer (Ed.). Wiley.

—. 2010. "On a new schedule: transitions to adulthood and family change." *The Future of children / Center for the Future of Children, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation* 20(1):67-87.

Gabadinho, A., G. Ritschard, N. S. Müller and M. Studer (2011). "Analyzing and Visualizing State Sequences in R with TraMineR." *Journal of Statistical Software* 40(4): 1-37.

Galland, Olivier. 1995. "Une entree de plus tardive dans la vie adulte." *Economie et Statistique*:283-84.

—. 1997. "Leaving home and family relations in France." *Journal of Family Issues* 18(1).

Gauthier, Anne, and Frank F. Furstenberg. 2002. "The transition to adulthood: A time use perspective." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 580:153-71.

Gauthier, Jaques-Antoine. 2010. "Multichannel Sequence Analysis Applied to Social Science Data." *Sociological Methodology* 40(1): 1-38..

Goldscheider, F. and Goldscheider, C. 1993. "Whose nest? A two-generational view of leaving home during the 1980s" *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 55(4):851–862.

Hammel E.A. 1990. "A theory of culture for demography" *Population and Development Review* 16(3): 455-485.

Hill D., Hill. M., 1976. *Older Children and Splitting Off*. Pp. 117–154 in G. Duncan and J. M. Morgan (eds.), *Five Thousand Families-Patterns of Economic Progress*, Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

Hogan, Dennis P. 1981. *Transitions and Social Change: The Early Lives of American Men*. New York: Academic.

Hogan, Dennis P., and Nan Marie Astone. 1986. "The Transition to Adulthood." *Annual Review of Sociology* 12:109-30.

Impicciatore Roberto, 2013, Out of context? The effect of deep-rooted cultural traits on the transition to adulthood among second generations in France, Paper presented at EPC 2012, Stockholm, 13-16 June 2012, http://epc2012.princeton.edu/abstracts/120535

Istat 2014, Noi Italia. 100 statistiche per capire il Paese in cui viviamo. Edizione 2014, http://noi-italia2014.istat.it/

Kohn, Melvin L., Kazimierz M. Slomczynski, and Carrie Schoenbach. 1986. "Social stratification and the transmission of values in the family:A cross-national assessment." *Sociological Forum* 1:73-102.

Lesthaeghe, R., and D. J. Van de Kaa. 1986. "Twee Demografische Transities." in *Bevolking: Groei en Krim*. Deventer: Van Loghum Slaterus.

Lesthaeghe, Ron J. 1995. *The second demographic transition in Western countries: an interpretation*. Oxford: Clarendon: ed. KO Mason, A-M Jensen.

Liefbroer, A. C., & Elzinga, C. H. (2012). Intergenerational transmission of behavioural patterns: How similar are parents' and children's demographic trajectories? Advances in Life Course Research, 17(1), 1–10. doi:10.1016/j.alcr.2012.01.002Livi Bacci, Massimo. 2008. "Avanti giovani, alla riscossa," il Mulino, Bologna.

Manning W.D., Cohen J.A. Smock P.J., Ostgaard G. 2009. "Dating couples' views about cohabitation: the role of social context, Bowling Green State University" *Working*

Paper Series WP-09-13, October 2009, National Center for Family and Marriage Research.

Marini, Margaret Mooney. 1984a. "Age and Sequencing Norms in the Transition to Adulthood." *Social Forces* 63(1):229-44.

—. 1984b. "The Order of Events in the Transition to Adulthood." *Sociology of Education* Vol. 57(No. 2):63-84.

Mayer, Karl Ulrich. 2001. "The paradox of global social change and national path dependencies : Life course patterns in advanced societies." Routledge.

McCutcheon A. L. 1987. *Latent class analysis.*. Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences Series No. 64. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Micheli, Giuseppe A. 2000. "Kinship, Family and Social Network: The anthropological embedment of fertility change in Southern Europe." *Demographic Research* 3(13):3-13.

Nisbett, Richard E. 2009. *Intelligence and how to get it: Why schools and cultures count*: WW Norton & Company.

OECD 1998. Getting Started, Settling In: The Transition from Education to the Labour Market. In: Employment Outlook. Paris: OECD, pp. 81-120.

—. 2009. Education at a glance 2009. Oecd indicators.

Pollock, Gary. 2007. "Holistic trajectories: a study of combined employment, housing and family careers by using multiple-sequence analysis." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)* 170(1):167-83.

Rajulton, F., and T. K. Burch. 2010. "The Influence of Social Class on Trajectories to Adulthood in Canada: A Multistate Analysis of Longitudinal Panel Data." in *IUSSP*

Seminar on Intergenerational Ties and Transitions to Adulthood. Bocconi University, Milan, Italy.

Rajulton, F., Z. R. Ravanera, and R. Beaujot. 2007. "Measuring Social Cohesion: An Experiment using the Canadian National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating." *Social Indicators Research* 80(3):461-92.

Ravanera, Z. R., F. Rajulton, and T. K. Burch. 2003. "Early life transitions of Canadian youth: effects of family transformation and community characteristics." Canadian Population Society.

—. 2006. "Inequality and the Life Course: Differentials in Trajectories and Timing of Transitions of Canadian Women." *PSC Discussion Papers Series* Vol. 20(Iss. 3, Article 1).

Reher, D. S. 1998. "Family ties in Western Europe: persistent contrasts." *Population and Development Review*, 24(2):203-34.

Rijken, Arieke J., and Aart Liefbroer. 2009. "Influences of the family of origin on the timing and quantum of fertility in the Netherlands." *Population Studies* 63(1):71-85.

Rosina A, Fraboni R. 2004. "Is marriage losing its centrality in Italy?" *Demographic Research* 11: 149-172.

Scherer S., 2005 Patterns of Labour Market Entry: Long Wait or Career Instability? An Empirical Comparison of Italy, Great Britain and West Germany. European Sociological Review, 21 (5):. 427-440

Settersten, Richard A., Frank F. Furstenberg, and Ruben G. Rumbaut. 2006. "On the frontier of adulthood: theory, research, and public policy." University of Chicago Press.

Shanahan, Michael J. 2000. "Pathways to adulthood in changing societies: Variability and mechanisms in life course perspective." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26:667-92.

Sironi, Maria, and Frank F. Furstenberg. 2012. "Trends in Economic Independence of Young Adults in the United States: 1973-2007." *Population and Development Review* 38(4):609-30.

South, S.J. 2001. "The variable effects of family background on the timing of first marriage: United States, 1969-1993". *Social Science Research* 30(4): 606-626.

Svallfors S., 2006, *The Moral Economy of Class*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California.

Thornton, A. 1991. "Influence of the Marital History of Parents on the Marital and Cohabitational Experiences of Children" *American Journal of Sociology* 96: 868-94

Trifiletti, R. 1999. "Southern European Welfare Regimes and the Worsening Position of Women." *Journal of European social policy* 9(1):49-64.

Van de Kaa, D. J. 1987. "Europe's second demographic transition." *Journal of the United Nations fund for population activities* 14:48 - 57.

Vermunt, J. K. and Magidson, J. 2005. *Latent GOLD 4.0 Choice User's Guide*, Belmont Massachussetts: Statistical Innovations Inc.

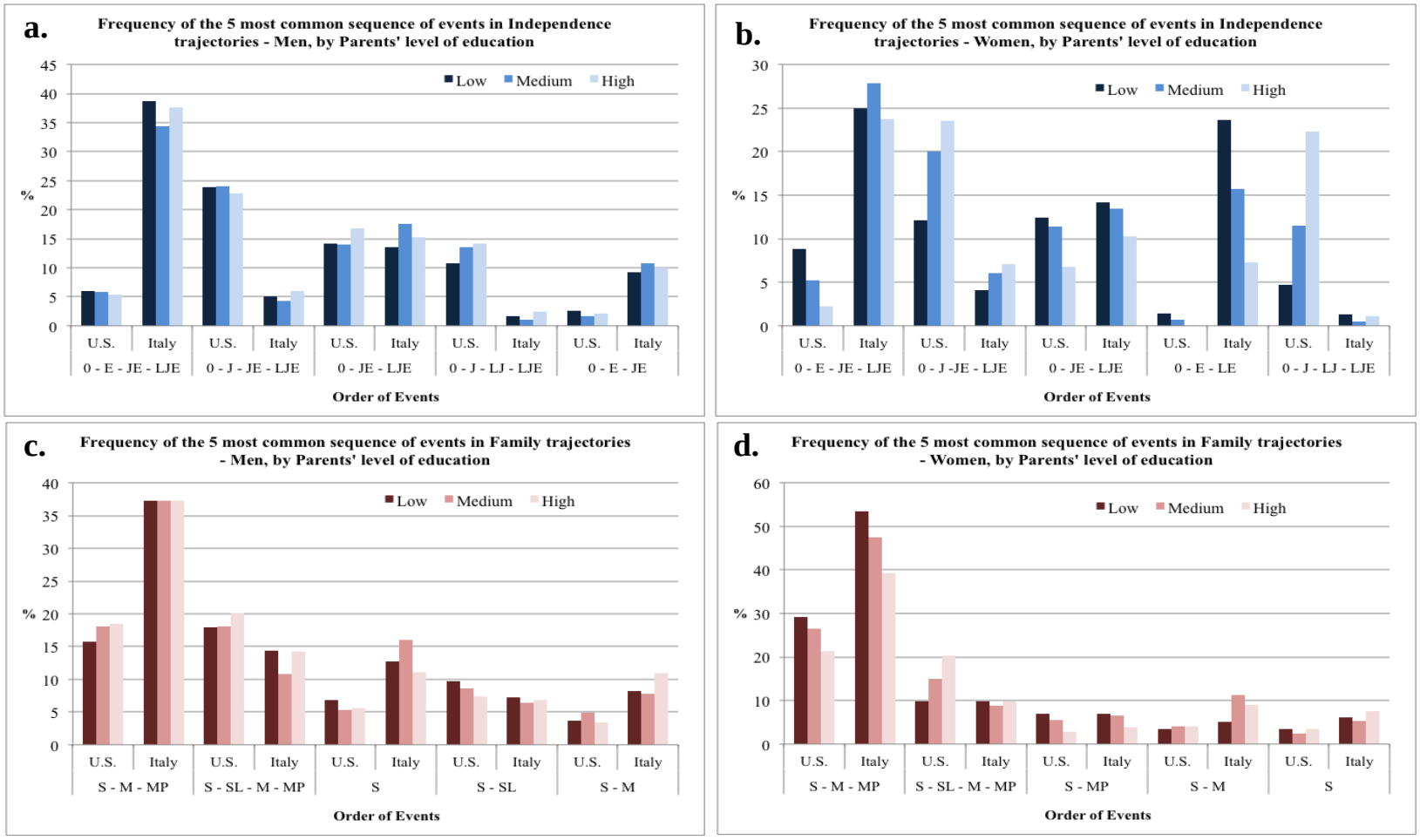
Wiik, Kenneth A. 2009. "You'd Better Wait!' Socio-economic Background and Timing of First Marriage versus First Cohabitation." *European Sociological Review* 25(2):139-53.

Tables and Figures

Table 1. Median age at each event, by gender, country and parental social class.

	Weighted Median Age at…											
	Completing Education		Starting 1st Job		Leaving Parental Home		Starting a Cohabitation		Marriage		Parenthood	
	U.S.	Italy	U.S.	Italy	U.S.	Italy	U.S.	Italy	U.S.	Italy	U.S.	Italy
Parents' Social Class						**Men**						
Low	18.6	14.9	19.0	19.0	24.0	26.0	24.3	27.4	24.8	27.7	25.1	30.8
Medium	19.0	18.8	19.0	20.8	23.0	27.0	25.0	28.6	25.3	29.1	28.1	33.4
High	23.0	19.8	19.0	24.2	23.0	27.7	26.0	30.4	27.3	31.7	31.0	35.6
Parents' Social Class						**Women**						
Low	18.5	14.6	20.0	20.9	21.0	22.7	22.5	23.1	21.9	23.3	21.9	25.8
Medium	19.0	18.7	19.0	22.0	21.0	24.0	23.0	24.7	22.5	24.9	24.3	28.8
High	22.0	19.6	19.0	24.7	22.0	25.2	24.0	26.9	24.7	27.3	29.3	31.8

Figure 1. Frequency of the five most common sequences of events in Independence and Family Transitions, by parents' level of education.



Legend: 0 = still in school, without a job, living with parents; E = out of education; J = working; JE = out of school and working; LE = left parental home, out of school, but without a job; LJE = left parental home, out of school and working. S = single; M = married; SL = single and left parental home; MP = married and parent;

Figure 2. Clusters derived from cluster analysis. Pooled sample men.

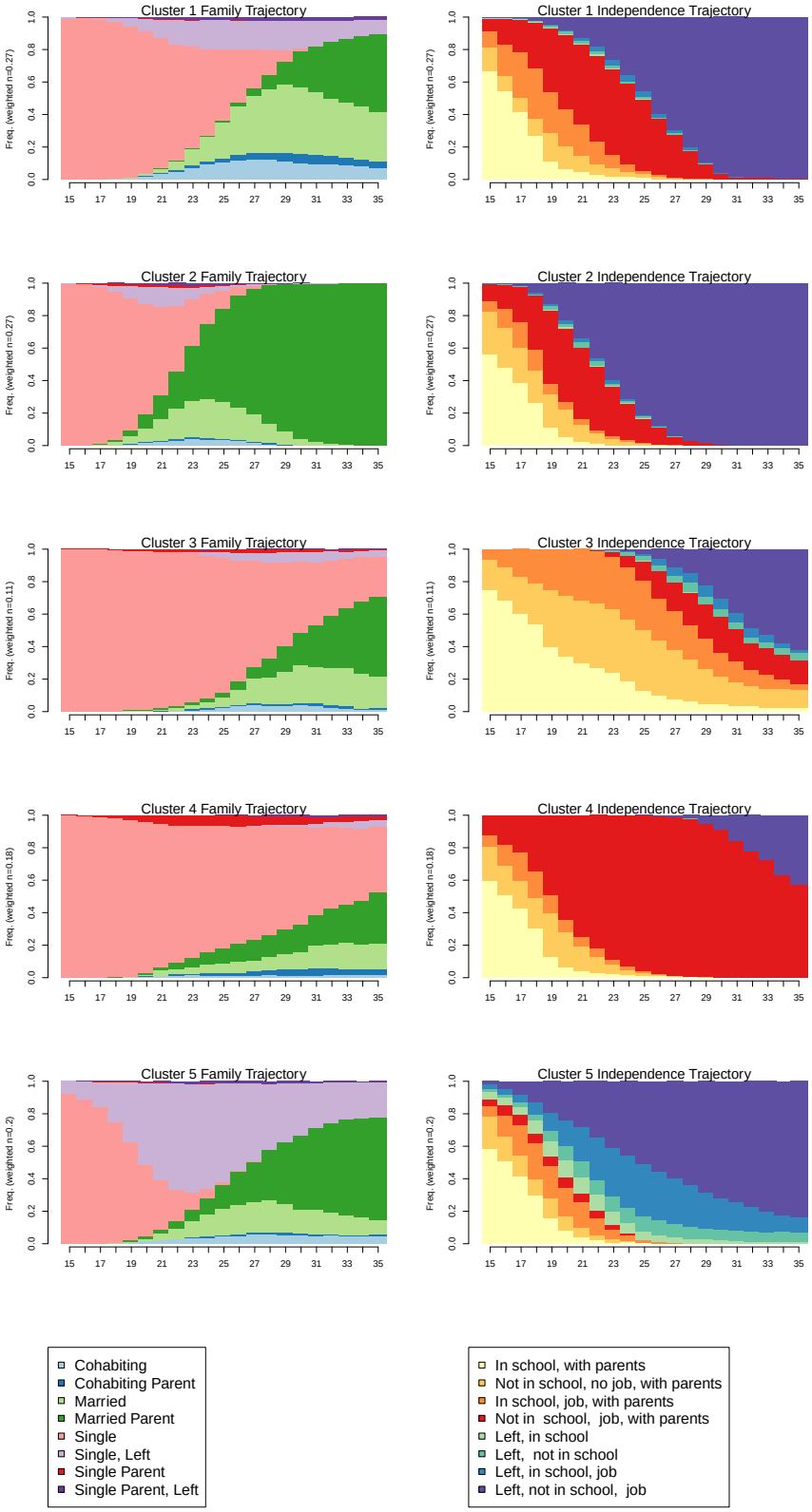


Figure 3. Clusters derived from cluster analysis. Pooled sample, women.

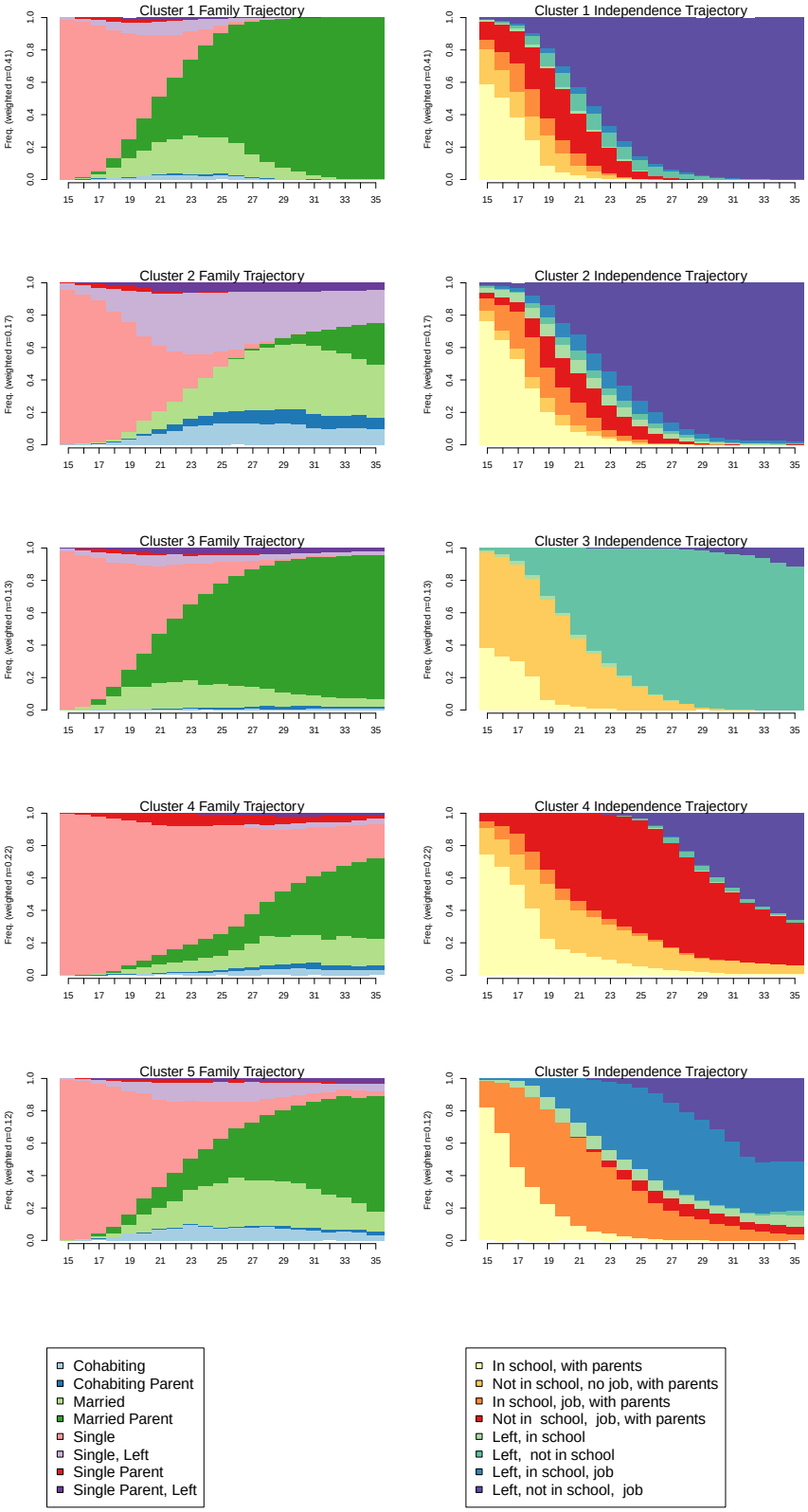
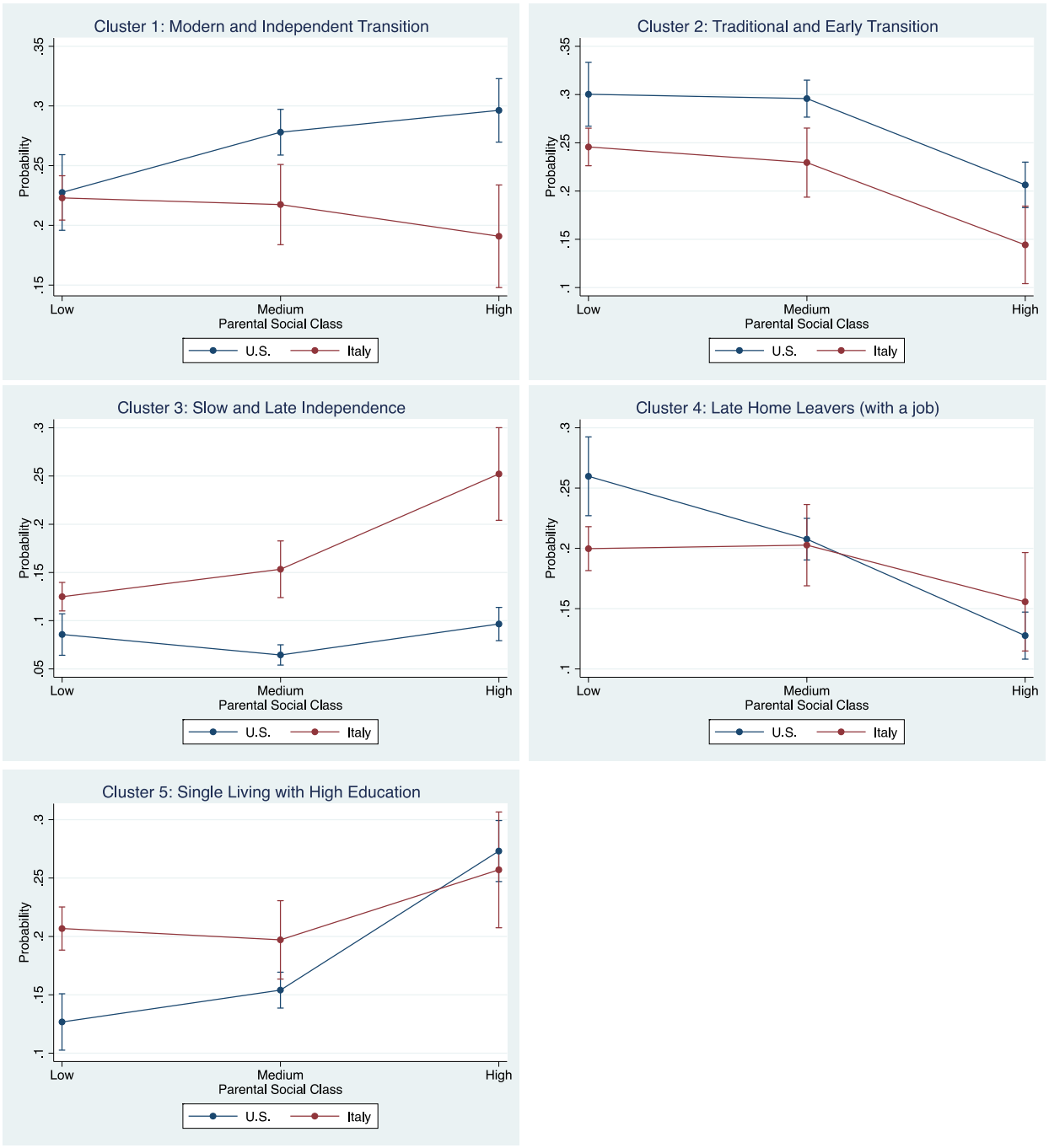
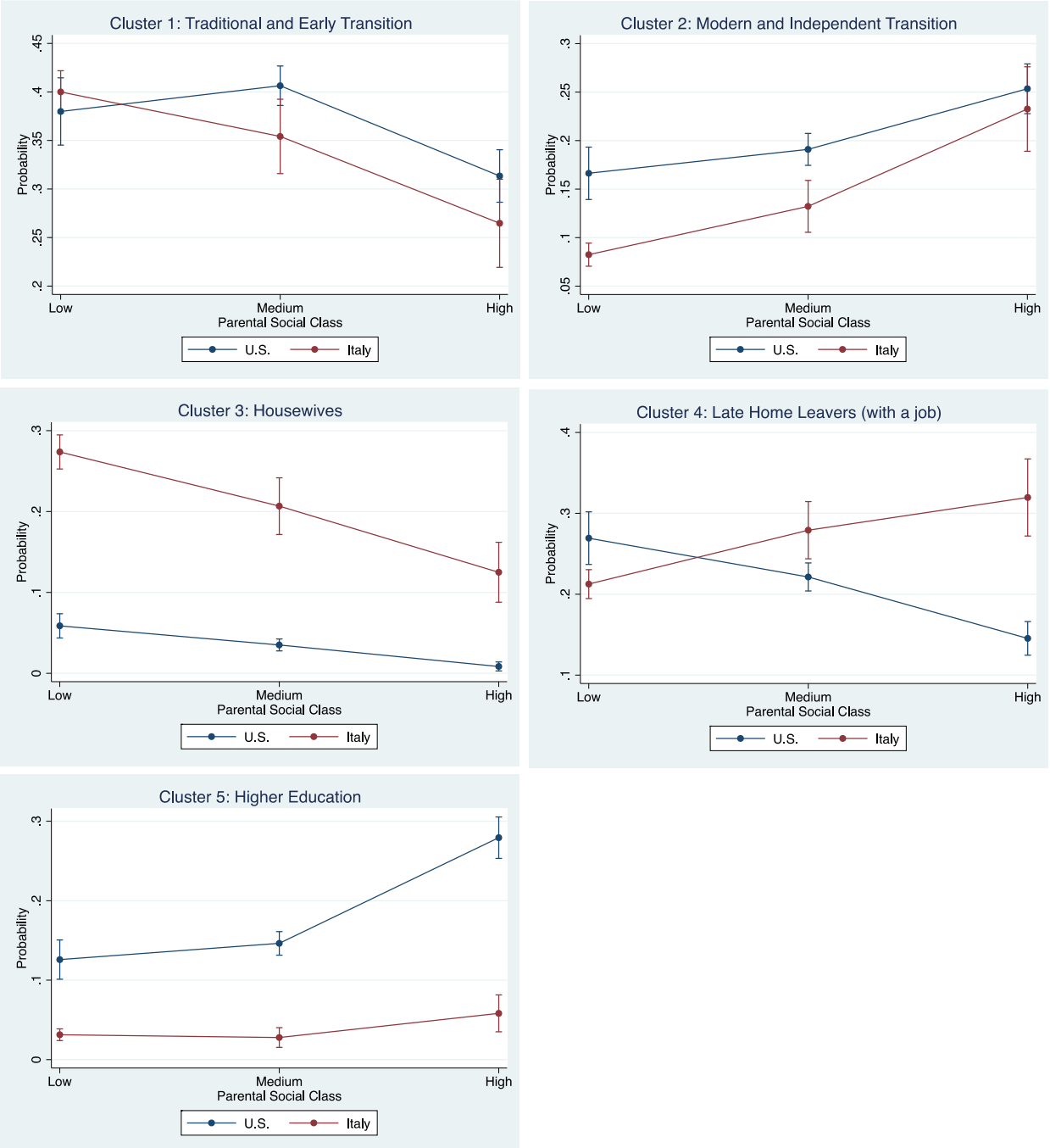


Figure 4. Predicted Probability of being in each cluster, by country and parental social class. Pooled sample, men.



Note: The probabilities are obtained controlling for birth cohort and number of siblings.

Figure 5. Predicted probability of being in each cluster, by country and parental social class. Pooled sample women.



Note: The probabilities are obtained controlling for birth cohort and number of siblings.

APPENDIX

Table A1. Labor Market, Education and Homeownership in Italy and the U.S.

	Unemployment Rate (Age 15-64)				Youth Unemployment Rate (Age 15-24)				Female Labor Force Participation Rate		Tertiary Education Enrolment Rate (ISCED 5 and 6)		Housing Homeownership Rate	
	U.S.		Italy		U.S.		Italy		U.S.	Italy	U.S.	Italy	U.S.	Italy
Year	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	%	%	%	%	%	%
1980	6.9	7.4	4.5	11.5	15.4	13.8	18.9	28.7	49.6	32.3	53.0	27.0	64.4	58.9
1985	7	7.4	6.6	14.9	14.1	13	26.8	38.6	54.2	33.6	58.0	26.0	63.9	.
1990	5.7	5.5	6.2	13.7	11.6	10.7	22.6	32.9	57.0	35.4	71.0	29.0	63.9	68
1995	5.6	5.6	8.6	15.4	12.5	11.6	25.6	35.1	58.5	35.8	80.0	41.0	64.7	.
2000	3.9	4.1	10.9	14.9	9.7	8.9	22.2	31	59.5	38	69.0	49.0	67.4	71.4
2005	5.0	5.1	7.7	13.6	12.4	10.1	21.5	27.4	59.6	37.9	82.0	64.0	68.9	72
2010	10.5	8.6	6.2	10.1	20.8	15.8	26.8	29.4	58.6	38.2	95.0	65.0	66.9	72.4
Source	UN Stats, UNECE		ISTAT		UN Stats, UNECE		ISTAT		UNECE	ISTAT	World Bank		Census Bureau	ISTAT

Table A2. Multinomial logistic regression, men, N=6,937.

Base Outcome: Cluster 2 = Traditional and Early Transition	Cl1: Modern Transition	Cl3: Slow and Late Independence	Cl4: Late Home Leavers (with a job)	Cl5: Single Living with High Education
Birth Cohort (Ref: 1957)				
1958	1.334*	1.094	1.203	1.219
	[0.193]	[0.218]	[0.184]	[0.175]
1959	1.486**	1.445	1.420*	1.097
	[0.212]	[0.273]	[0.213]	[0.161]
1960	1.770***	1.321	1.677***	1.169
	[0.242]	[0.249]	[0.240]	[0.166]
1961	2.189***	2.019***	1.961***	1.450*
	[0.308]	[0.375]	[0.290]	[0.211]
1962	2.174***	1.791**	2.050***	1.523**
	[0.302]	[0.335]	[0.299]	[0.218]
1963	2.662***	2.847***	2.154***	1.556**
	[0.375]	[0.514]	[0.323]	[0.230]
1964	3.345***	3.573***	2.961***	2.236***
	[0.490]	[0.658]	[0.454]	[0.337]
Number of Siblings	0.930***	0.926**	0.975	0.978
	[0.015]	[0.022]	[0.016]	[0.017]
Country (Ref: U.S.)				
Italy	1.205	1.795***	0.944	2.001***
	[0.157]	[0.318]	[0.121]	[0.293]
Parental SES (Ref: Low)				
Medium	1.241	0.764	0.811	1.233
	[0.148]	[0.134]	[0.094]	[0.171]
High	1.912***	1.658**	0.720*	3.153***
	[0.264]	[0.319]	[0.107]	[0.480]
Country* Parental SES (Ref: U.S., Low SES)				
Italy, Medium SES	0.844	1.728*	1.342	0.829
	[0.156]	[0.406]	[0.251]	[0.167]
Italy, High SES	0.775	2.115**	1.866*	0.678
	[0.194]	[0.592]	[0.497]	[0.171]
Constant	0.503***	0.206***	0.547***	0.336***
	[0.083]	[0.047]	[0.091]	[0.060]

***: p-value <=0.01; **: 0.01<p-value<=0.05; *: 0.05<p-value<=0.1

Table A3. Multinomial logistic regression, women, N=7,241.

Base Outcome: Cluster 1 = Traditional and Early Transition	Cl2: Modern Transition	Cl3: Housewives	Cl4: Late Home Leavers (with a job)	Cl5: Higher Education
Birth Cohort (Ref: 1957)				
1958	1.025	1.163	1.444**	0.861
	[0.150]	[0.189]	[0.202]	[0.162]
1959	1.08	1.278	1.482**	0.83
	[0.156]	[0.204]	[0.205]	[0.157]
1960	1.142	1.069	1.616***	1.045
	[0.161]	[0.173]	[0.218]	[0.186]
1961	1.193	0.988	1.813***	1.681**
	[0.169]	[0.165]	[0.244]	[0.279]
1962	1.398*	1.033	2.156***	1.947***
	[0.196]	[0.173]	[0.287]	[0.322]
1963	1.589**	1.237	2.501***	2.595***
	[0.228]	[0.208]	[0.339]	[0.429]
1964	2.092***	1.691**	3.192***	2.883***
	[0.310]	[0.286]	[0.447]	[0.502]
Number of Siblings	0.993	1.127***	0.984	0.949**
	[0.016]	[0.024]	[0.015]	[0.018]
Country (Ref: U.S.)				
Italy	0.464***	4.553***	0.734**	0.228***
	[0.066]	[0.783]	[0.086]	[0.042]
Parental SES (Ref: Low)				
Medium	1.073	0.556**	0.768*	1.088
	[0.129]	[0.101]	[0.082]	[0.150]
High	1.865***	0.174***	0.663**	2.762***
	[0.253]	[0.064]	[0.090]	[0.410]
Country* Parental SES (Ref: U.S., Low SES)				
Italy, Medium SES	1.698**	1.525	1.948***	0.935
	[0.329]	[0.338]	[0.307]	[0.284]
Italy, High SES	2.320***	3.913**	3.503***	1.053
	[0.502]	[1.638]	[0.701]	[0.319]
Constant	0.355***	0.088***	0.414***	0.259***
	[0.060]	[0.020]	[0.065]	[0.051]

***: p-value <=0.01; **: 0.01<p-value<=0.05; *: 0.05<p-value<=0.1