Carlo F. Dondena Centre for Research on Social Dynamics

DONDENA WORKING PAPERS

The Role of Parental Social Class in the Transition to Adulthood: A Sequence Analysis Approach in Italy and the United States

Maria Sironi, Nicola Barban, and Roberto Impiacciatore

Working Paper No. 59
July 2013

Carlo F. Dondena Centre for Research on Social Dynamics
Università Bocconi
Via Guglielmo Röntgen 1, 20136 Milan, Italy
http://www.dondena.unibocconi.it

ISSN-2235-2234

The Role of Parental Social Class in the Transition to Adulthood: A Sequence Analysis Approach in Italy and the United States

Maria Sironi
University of Oxford

Nicola Barban
University of Groningen

Roberto Impicciatore
Università di Milano

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 events is social class. This characteristic can influence the sequence of events in terms of socioeconomic inequalities through a different availability of 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 effect of parental background is different across countries. In the United States, we find that a 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 effect of social class is gender-specific. Among men, a higher social class tends to delay transitions more than lead towards modern behaviors. Among women, a higher social class either tends to facilitate the experience of a more modern and independent transition, or it generates a higher probability of postponing exit from the parental home, and then family formation, among those who completed their education and found a job.

Keywords: transition to adulthood; social class; parental background; sequence analysis

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 and have become 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 Elzinga and Liefbroer (Bruckner and Mayer 2005) Bruckner and Mayer 2005)} pointed 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, resulting 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 stemming from disadvantaged family background. Indeed, 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.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

The Second Demographic Transition Theory 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 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 more diverse sequence patterns, 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 be considered probably the primary examples of countries at a different stage of the transition, with the United States being the leader and Italy lagging. Consequently, the role of parental social class in the transition to adulthood might be different in such different contexts, and the differences across countries might become smaller as social class increases.

As suggested by Furstenberg (2008), 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. Youth from affluent and well-educated families marry and have children later in life because of a longer education, a much more extended search for a permanent partner in life, and a lower incidence of unintended pregnancy (Furstenberg 2008). In other words, the family background is crucial in determining the individual resources that may lead to good decisions in the early phases of adulthood. 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. As a matter of fact, young adults from disadvantaged families, even if they go to college, do it with fewer resources and therefore face more difficulties in completing a degree. Moreover, they do not want and cannot afford to remain unemployed for too long, and consider education as a way to get a job, so they are more likely to drop out of school if they are able to find an occupation. Finally, the economic difficulties linked to housing costs may hinder independent living before family

formation. As far as cultural resources are concerned, Kohn et al. (1986) noticed that in raising their children, middle-class parents tend to give more importance to autonomy whereas working class parents are more focused on conformity (Kohn, Slomczynski and Schoenbach 1986). Upper-class parents tend to talk to their children more than working-class parents do. Therefore, favouring analytical thinking, higher-status parents prepare their children for higher education and higher-status jobs (Nisbett 2009). However, De Jong-Gierveld et al. (De Jong-Gierveld, Liefbroer and Beekink 1991) found that in the process leading to autonomy and independence, the relevant distinction is that between transferrable and non-transferrable resources rather than that 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).

In any case, 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 traditional or innovative patterns. For example, it has been underlined that children from a higher family social status on the one hand tend to postpone their first union (Wiik 2009) and their first child birth (Rijken and Liefbroer 2009); on the other hand, they tend to reach housing autonomy earlier, without directly making the transition to living with a partner (Blaauboer and Mulder 2010). A specific interest may be also devoted to the order of events related to family formation (first union, first marriage, first child), identifying innovative patterns such as cohabitation, pre-marital pregnancies, and childbirth out-of-wedlock.

The effect of familial status on the propensity to experience more complex or innovative patterns of transition to adulthood may be context-specific. 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 compared to southern European countries, where welfare support is very weak and we observe a reliance on the family as the locus of support (Ferrera 1996; Mayer 2001; Trifiletti 1999). 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). They are not less likely to cohabit, but 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, and so it can result in greater family instability later in life (Furstenberg 2008).

In Southern Europe, and Italy in particular, in a context characterized by a higher persistence of "traditional" sequencing of events (also due to the still-strong influence of the Catholic Church), innovative and more complex patterns, mainly living alone, non-marital cohabitation, and children out-of-wedlock, are more widespread among children of upper social classes. Thus, the "bourgeois" model is characterized by the postponement of events and the non-linear nature of the pattern leading to adulthood, whereas lower-class young people would continue to follow traditional and safer trajectories as protection against an uncertain economic situation (Cavalli, Buzzi and De Lillo 1997; Galland 1995; Galland 1997).

Finally, the role of parental background may be different across genders in specific contexts. Usually women face the transition to family formation earlier than men (mainly marriage and parenthood), although this trend is reducing over time due to the expansion of female education together with the increase in female labor force participation. However, big differences still remain between countries (see Table 1). 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.

Generally speaking, the current literature, for the most part, focuses on single events in a single context. 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; 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 want to 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, to be tested separately for men and women:

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;

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

H3: The effect of parental background on life course trajectories is context-specific. In particular we expect that in the United States, children of upper social status tend to follow more normative and standardized sequences of states than children of lower status, whereas the opposite occurs in Italy.

Table 1. Labor Market, Education, and Homeownership in Italy and the United States.

	Unemployment Rate				Youth Unemployment Rate				Female Labor Force Participation Rate		Tertiary Education Enrollment Rate		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

3. Data and Methods

In this paper we use two different data sets, one for each country, containing 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 since 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. 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, instead we select the same birth

cohorts included in the NLSY79 to make the samples more homogeneous and comparable. 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 so 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 effect of family background on the entire life course rather than on single events of the transition to adulthood (Barban 2011; Barban and Billari 2012; Billari 2005).

The events we take into account are the following: end of education, entry into the labour force, leaving 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, a medium level if at least one attained lower secondary education, and a high level if at least one attained upper secondary education. In the United States, a low level corresponds to both parents with primary or lower secondary education (9 or fewer years of education), a medium level corresponds to at least one parent with upper secondary education (12 or fewer years of education), and a high level corresponds to at least one parent with tertiary education (more than 12 years of school)[1].

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

[1] We also used another measure of parental social class—parents' occupation instead of education level. We consider the father's job unless the mother's job is at a higher level, or father's job is missing and mother's job is not missing (Erickson, Frederick. 1984. "School Literacy, Reasoning, and Civility: An Anthropologist's Perspective." *Review of Educational Research* 54(4):525-46.. Also in this case we have three different levels of social class, low (e.g., workers, farm laborers), medium (e.g., clericals, craftsmen, military soldiers), and high (e.g., professionals, managers, entrepreneurs), based on the type of occupation that parents had when the respondent was 14. Results do not change significantly when using occupation, and are more consistent with education. Education defines socioeconomic status more clearly, hence we only report results obtained with education level in the sequence analysis.

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)$^{(\#\text{ years each individual is observed})}$. Moreover, a sequence can differ along three dimensions:

- Timing, i.e., the age at which different events occur in peoples lives;
- Quantum, i.e., the number of events in a trajectory;
- Sequencing, i.e., the order in which different transitions happen.

We describe trajectories along these dimensions. In fact, we investigate the median age at each event (*timing*), we look at the proportion of individuals who experienced each event by age 35 (*quantum*), and finally we report the frequencies of the five most common independence and family trajectories showing the sequence of events (*sequencing*). All these dimensions are explored by gender and parental social class.

After defining the different sequences and describing them in terms of *timing*, *quantum*, and *sequencing*, we exploit a sequence analysis to identify specific typologies of life trajectories—dealing simultaneously with timing, quantum, and sequencing—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 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. To take into account multiple domains, we adopted a *multichannel sequence analysis* approach (Pollock 2007), which allows us to specify multiple domains in order to construct a single matrix of dissimilarities. In the multichannel sequence analysis, we distinguish between transitions in the family domain (i.e., marriage, cohabitation, and childbearing) and transitions in the independence domain (i.e., school, leaving the parental home, and entering the labor market). 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). 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).

As a robustness check, on top of the sequence and the cluster analysis we also perform a latent class analysis 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, while the findings of the latent class analysis are included in the Appendix.

The entire analysis is made separately for men and women.

4. Descriptive findings

4.1. Timing

Looking at Table 2, 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, which is higher in the United States because of the higher schooling rates in this country, all the other events in the independence and family transitions occur at an older age in Italy. 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, meaning that coming from an advantaged family background induces a delay in the transition. This is also true in the United States, but the gradient is weaker and not observable for "starting a job" (the median age is constant at 19) and for "leaving the parental home" (the median age is lower [23] among those with a lower parental status than among those from a higher social class [24]). The same result can be observed among women. Median age at all the events is generally lower than for men, but differences across countries and parental social class persist.

Table 2. 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

4.2 Quantum

Table 3 contains the proportion of people who have experienced each event by age 35 according to gender, country, and parental social status. Generally speaking, percentages tend to be higher in the United States, demonstrating that in this country the path to adulthood is more likely to be completed by age 35 (Table 3). Focusing on the acquisition of independence, we see in Italy a stronger gender gap for "starting a job" (only 75.2% of Italian women enter the job market by age 35 compared to 95.6% of men, whereas in the United States the proportions are 97.9% and 98.7% respectively) and a higher proportion of men that still live with their parents by age 35 (15.7% compared to 10.6% in the United States). For the events just mentioned, the gradient across social class is not very strong, except for leaving home among American men (92.7% in high SES vs. 84.3% in low SES) and for starting a first job among Italian women, of which only 71.4% enter the job market if they come from a lower social class, while 89.8% start working by age 35 if from a higher social class.

Family transition, instead, shows big differences both across countries and across social classes. As a matter of fact, in Italy men and women who experience cohabitation are, respectively, at most 11.1% and 13.9% among higher classes and percentages decrease considerably among medium and low social classes. In the United States, these proportions are around 35% and do not

vary by social class and gender. Interesting and contrasting characteristics in the two countries emerge for marriage: The proportion of people married by age 35 in the United States tends to increase among higher social classes while the opposite trend is observed in Italy. Moreover, differences between classes are stronger in Italy where the proportion of those married by age 35 drops from 77.8% to 67% for men and from 87.1% to 75.9% for women going from higher to lower social class. It is possible that for these individuals marriage is substituted by cohabitation, or it is delayed.

Finally, people experiencing parenthood are more widespread in the United States than in Italy (as expected by the lower TFR in Italy) and, in both countries, the trend is decreasing as social class goes up, possibly due to a delay in all the events preceding childbearing, which lead to a postponement of parenthood as well.

Table 3. Proportion of people who experienced each event by age 35, by gender, country, and parental social class.

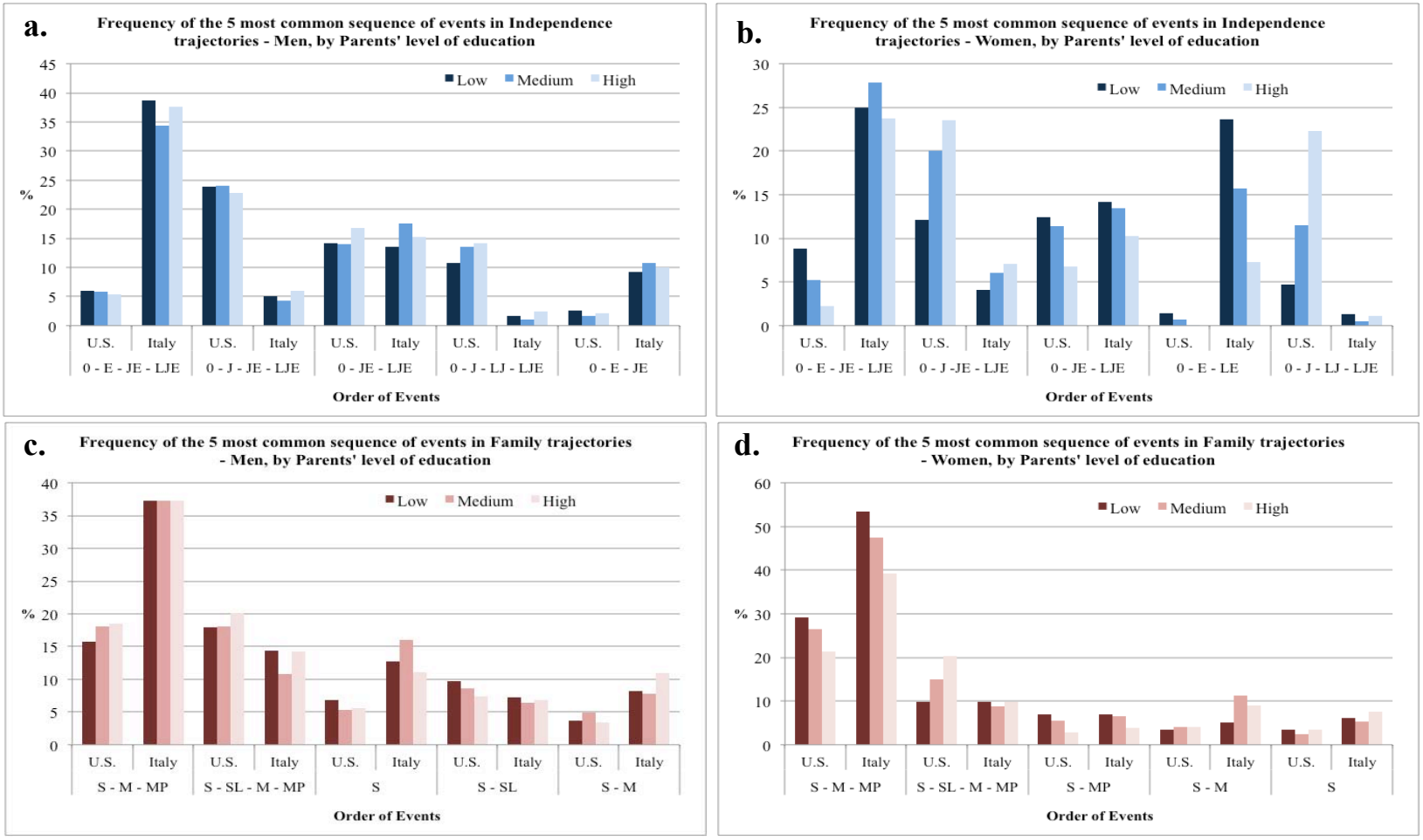
	Weighted Proportion of People Experiencing the Event											
	Completing Education		Starting 1st Job		Leaving Parental Home		Starting a Cohabitation		Marriage		Parenthood	
	U.S.	Italy	U.S.	Italy	U.S.	Italy	U.S.	Italy	U.S.	Italy	U.S.	Italy
Parents' Social Class	**Men**											
Low	99.2	96.3	97.7	95.8	84.3	84.5	35.3	3.7	78.3	77.8	76.5	67.7
Medium	97.3	98.8	98.9	96.0	88.7	82.6	35.7	7.1	82.1	73.2	73.2	57.1
High	95.3	98.0	99.1	94.2	92.7	85.0	34.7	11.1	81.3	67.0	67.5	49.4
Total	96.9	97.0	98.7	95.6	89.4	84.3	35.2	5.4	81.1	75.3	71.8	63.3
Parents' Social Class	**Women**											
Low	96.3	96.8	95.2	71.4	91.9	91.7	33.7	7.4	83.8	87.1	88.3	82.6
Medium	94.9	96.9	98.0	78.9	93.1	92.5	36.0	9.7	87.6	85.7	82.5	71.5
High	94.0	96.8	99.2	89.8	94.5	92.1	35.9	13.9	87.2	75.9	74.3	62.2
Total	94.8	96.7	97.9	75.2	93.5	92.1	35.8	8.7	86.7	85.2	80.7	77.3

4.3 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 effect of social class is more relevant among women than men. In particular, among the former group, the more frequent sequence (in Italy: exiting education, starting a job, leaving home; in the United States: starting a job, exiting education, leaving home) tends to be reinforced within the higher SES 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 more common one as well but a higher heterogeneity of patterns emerges. For example, in America, 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. One 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. 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;

5. Holistic Perspective on the Transition to Adulthood

Descriptive findings show that social class emerges as a relevant aspect shaping the paths to adulthood, especially among women, and sometimes its effect in the two countries is different. We now want to assume a more comprehensive perspective, taking into account at the same time all three aspects we have seen separately in the previous section: timing, quantum, and order of events. In order to facilitate the interpretation, we will show on separate graphs the process called "Independence" (characterized by the states: being a student, having entered the labour market, and living with parents) and the process called "Family formation" (characterized by the states: living with parents, single or cohabiting or married, and having a child), estimated simultaneously considering multiple domains.

The first step considers the descriptive analysis of the distribution of states according to various ages (Figures 2 and 3) in order to highlight general differences between the two countries in the transition to adulthood. In a second step, we come back to the effect of parents' background on the transition to adulthood in the United States and Italy with the identification of typical patterns through a cluster analysis, and then try to evaluate the propensity to follow a specific pattern according to a specific population subgroup.

5.1 Description of the Process in the two Countries

As we can see in Figure 2, among men there are substantial differences in how they face both the independence and the family transitions. First, looking at the top of the figure, in Italy many young adults go through a phase in which they still live with parents, are not in school, and do not work. This category is almost non-existent in the United States, where young men find their first jobs when they are still in school. Moreover, men who completed education and found a job are more likely to still live with their parents in Italy than in the United States, and this is true also if they are still in school. As a matter of fact, many people in the United States leave the parental home when they go to college, no matter how far the college is from their parents' house. When we look at family transition (bottom of the figure) we can see that cohabitation is very infrequent in Italy, while in the United States it is limited but does happen among young men. Also, some statuses, like being a single parent, do not exist in Italy, and living as a single outside the parental home is more common in the United States than in Italy. Based on Figure 2, we can argue that the transition to independence occurs earlier in the United States, where men start working when they are still in school and leave the parental home earlier than in Italy. Family transition is characterized by a more modern behavior in the United States, where men cohabit more and experience periods of single fatherhood in some cases.

Figure 2. Distribution of independence and family transitions, by country, men.

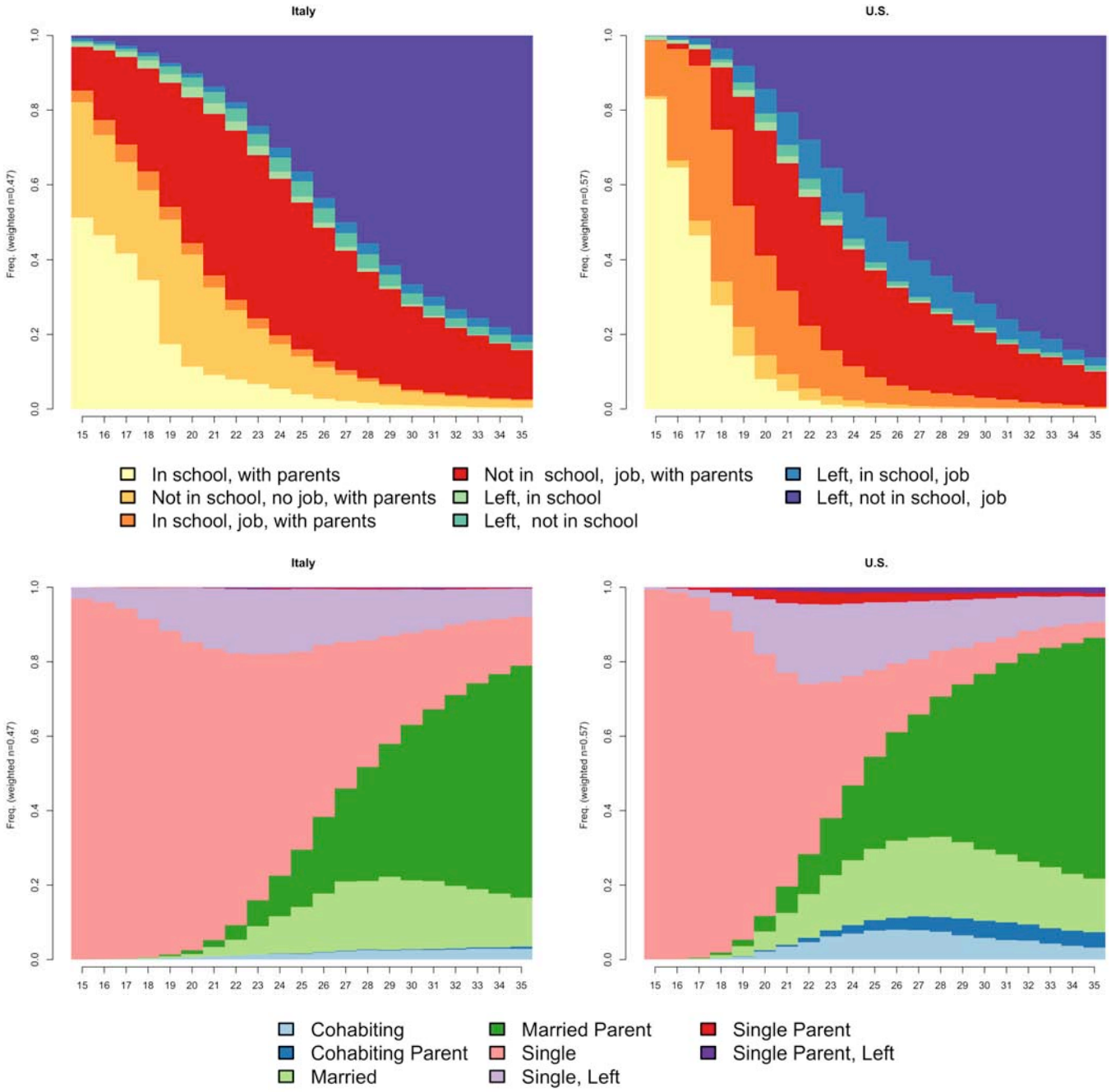
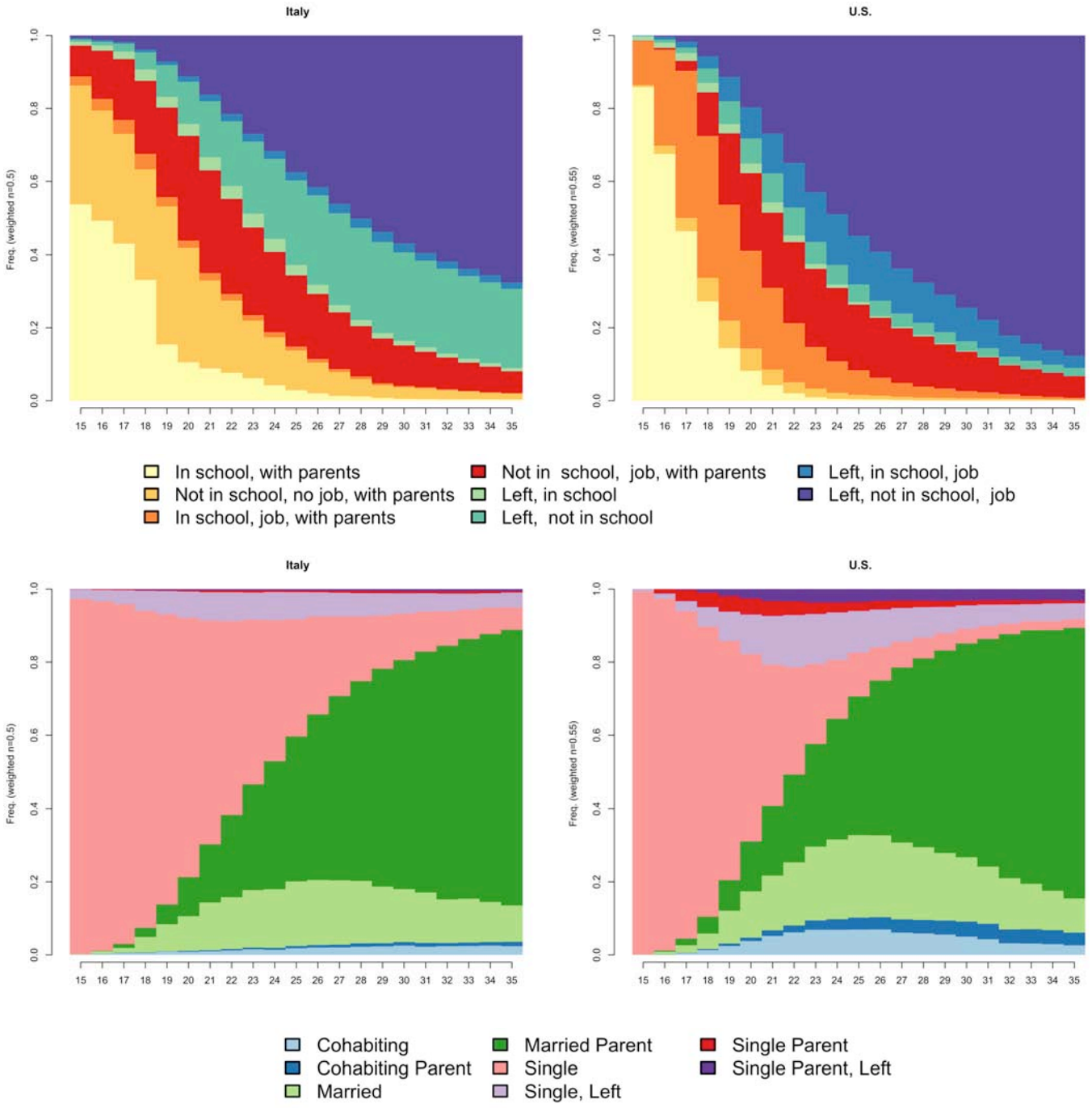


Figure 3. Distribution of independence and family transitions, by country, women.



Among women (Figure 3), the differences between the two countries are even more stark. As with men, young women start working when they are still in school in the United States, while in Italy a fraction of them are not in school, live with their parents, and do not work. When women in Italy exit school and find a job, the moving-out process is less common and slower. Moreover, more than 20% of Italian women finish school and leave their parents but do not enter the labor market. Presumably they end up as housewives and possibly mothers. This group cannot be found in the United States, where most of women enter the labor market, many while still in school. Country differences concerning family transitions are very similar to those found among men. In the United States more women cohabit and have children during cohabitation, and more experience periods of single motherhood. With respect to men, there are fewer women who are single and leave their parents, and on average they experience a faster transition.

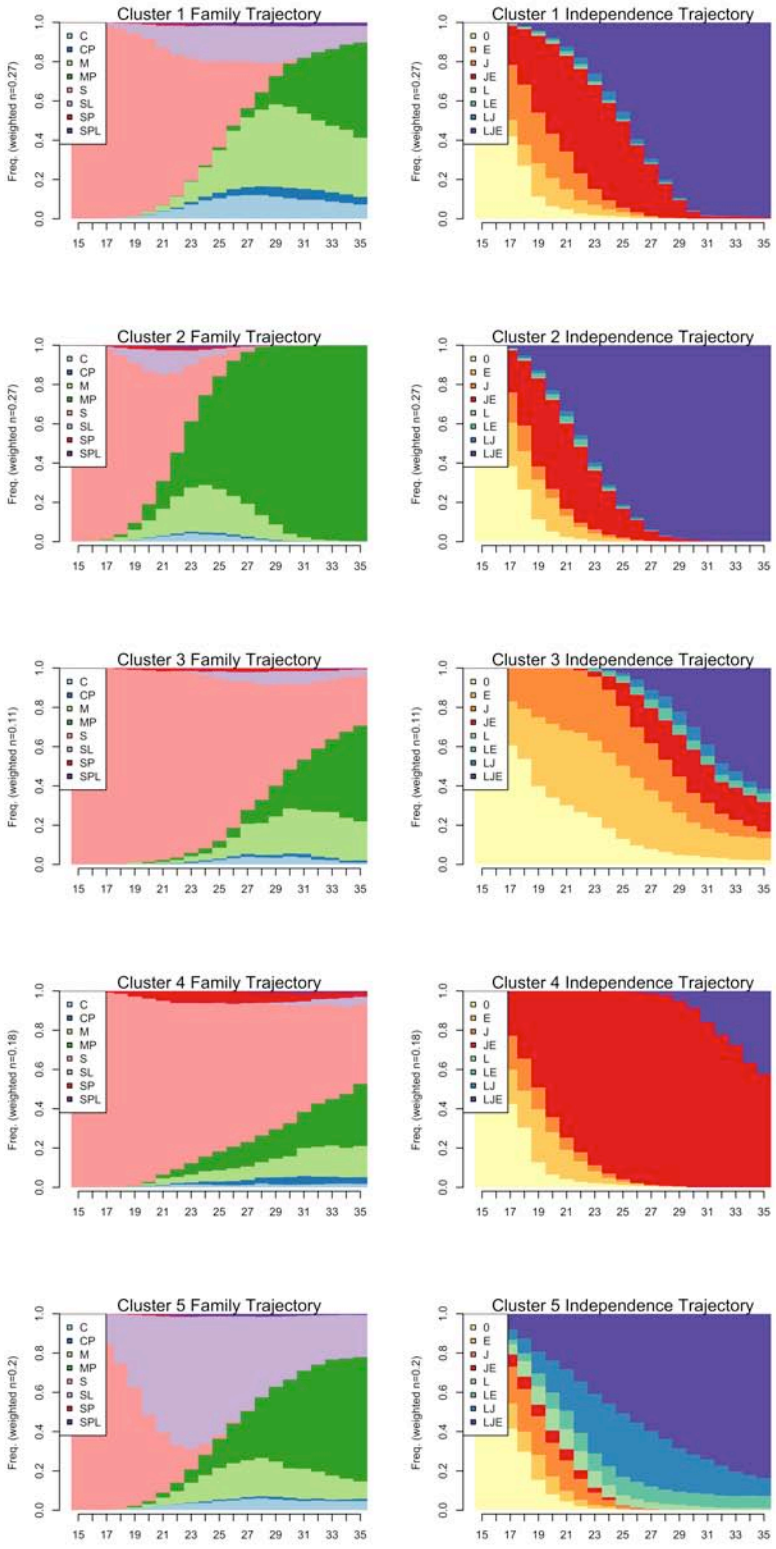
5.2 Cluster analysis

Figures 4 and 5 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 move out necessarily to marry. They also stay single or cohabit. Moreover, men in cluster 1 delay childbearing substantially. The second cluster instead 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 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. Also, cluster 4—*Late Home Leavers (with a job)* (19.3% of the male sample in Italy and 19.8% in the United States)—is very different from the first two, 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, resulting 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, 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 do observe a delay in the transition to adulthood, in this case due to high education.

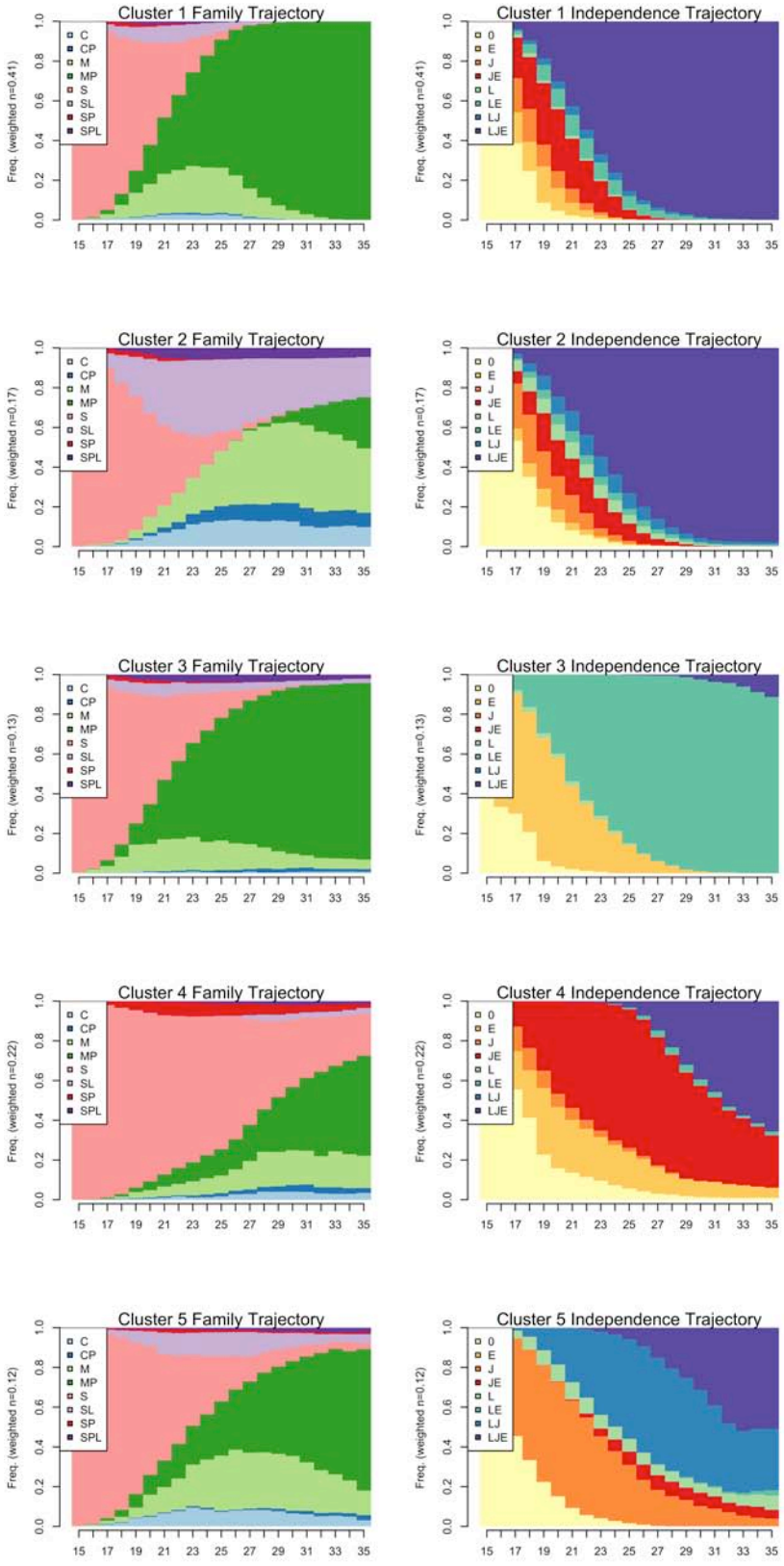
Figure 4. Clusters derived from cluster analysis, men.



Note: For a more detailed version of the legend see Figure 2 and Figure 3 above.

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 5. Clusters derived from cluster analysis, women



Note: For a more detailed version of the legend see Figure 2 and Figure 3 above.

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. So they leave their parents because they find a partner, they marry, and have children early. We can define this typology as the one of mothers and housewives. As we observed in the tables and figures reported above about quantum and sequencing, 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, in which 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 can 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 do delay motherhood. Also, in this cluster as in cluster 2, we find a greater number of women cohabiting than in other typologies.

5.3 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 background and parental SES influence the transition to adulthood, and how this effect 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 SES 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, and the key variables *country* and *parental SES*. Moreover, we include an interaction term between parental SES and the country dummies. Figures 6 and 7 show the predicted probabilities of being in each cluster derived from the regressions, by country and family social class (see Tables A3 and A4 in the Appendix for the regression coefficients). The graphs in these figures also report the confidence interval (at a 95% level) in order to determine whether differences across countries and social classes are significant.

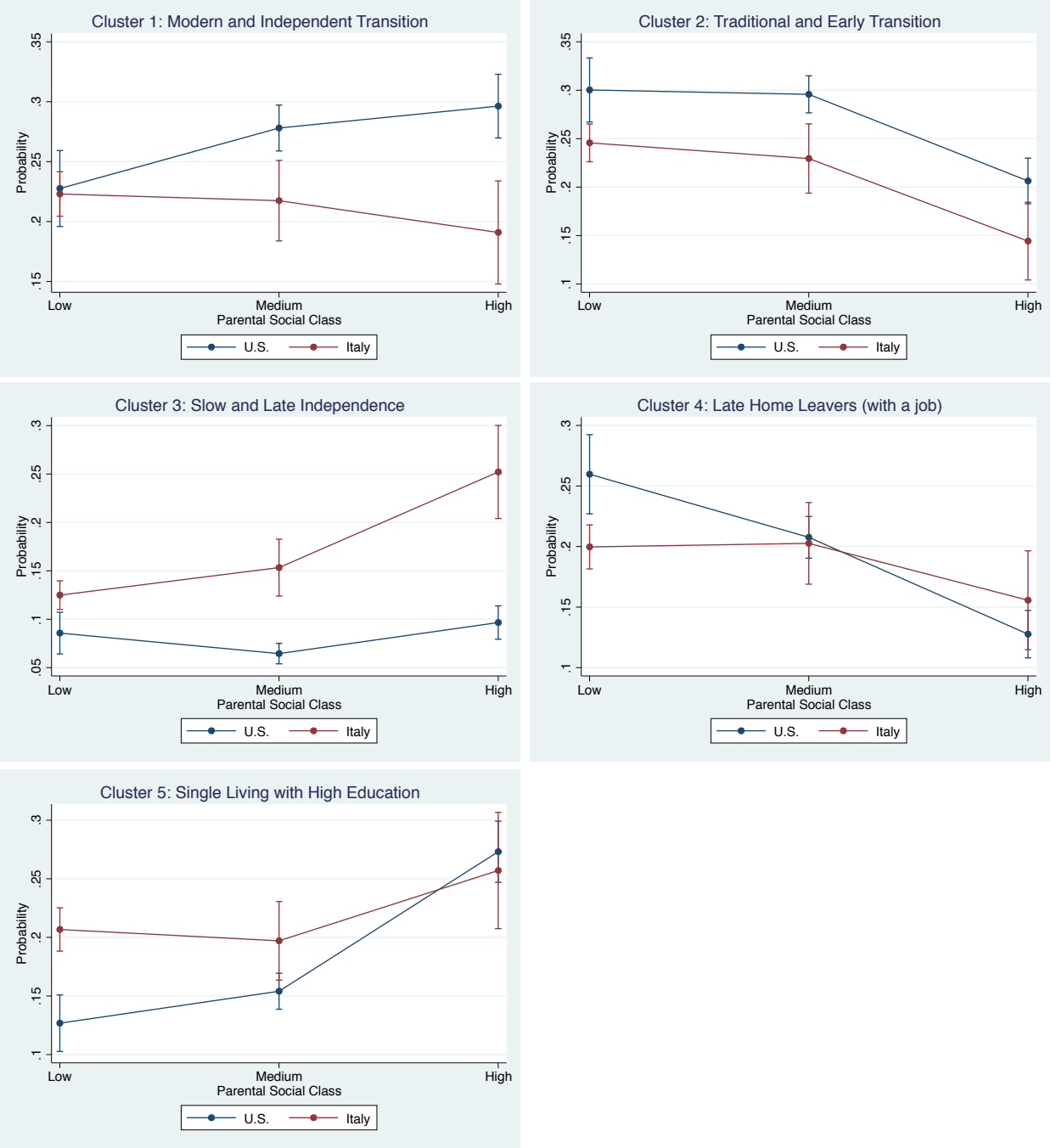
Among men (Figure 6) we find that the probability of belonging to the first cluster—*Modern and independent trajectory*—is the same in the two countries for a low-level parental SES, but it

increases by almost 10% in the United States as we go from low to high social class, and 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*—given that the probabilities are quite low in both countries when parental SES is low (8% in the United States and 12% in Italy); 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 say that generally, as family socioeconomic status increases the typologies of life course trajectories in the two countries move in different directions: In Italy, among higher classes emerges a delay both in the independence and family formation patterns (the effect of parental background is negative in cluster 2 and positive in cluster 3); in the United States, a higher status pushes towards modern and more heterogeneous trajectories in family formation, but it is not clearly associated with a delay in the independence trajectory (the effect of parental background is positive in cluster 1 and negative in cluster 2, where both of these clusters are characterized by early independence).

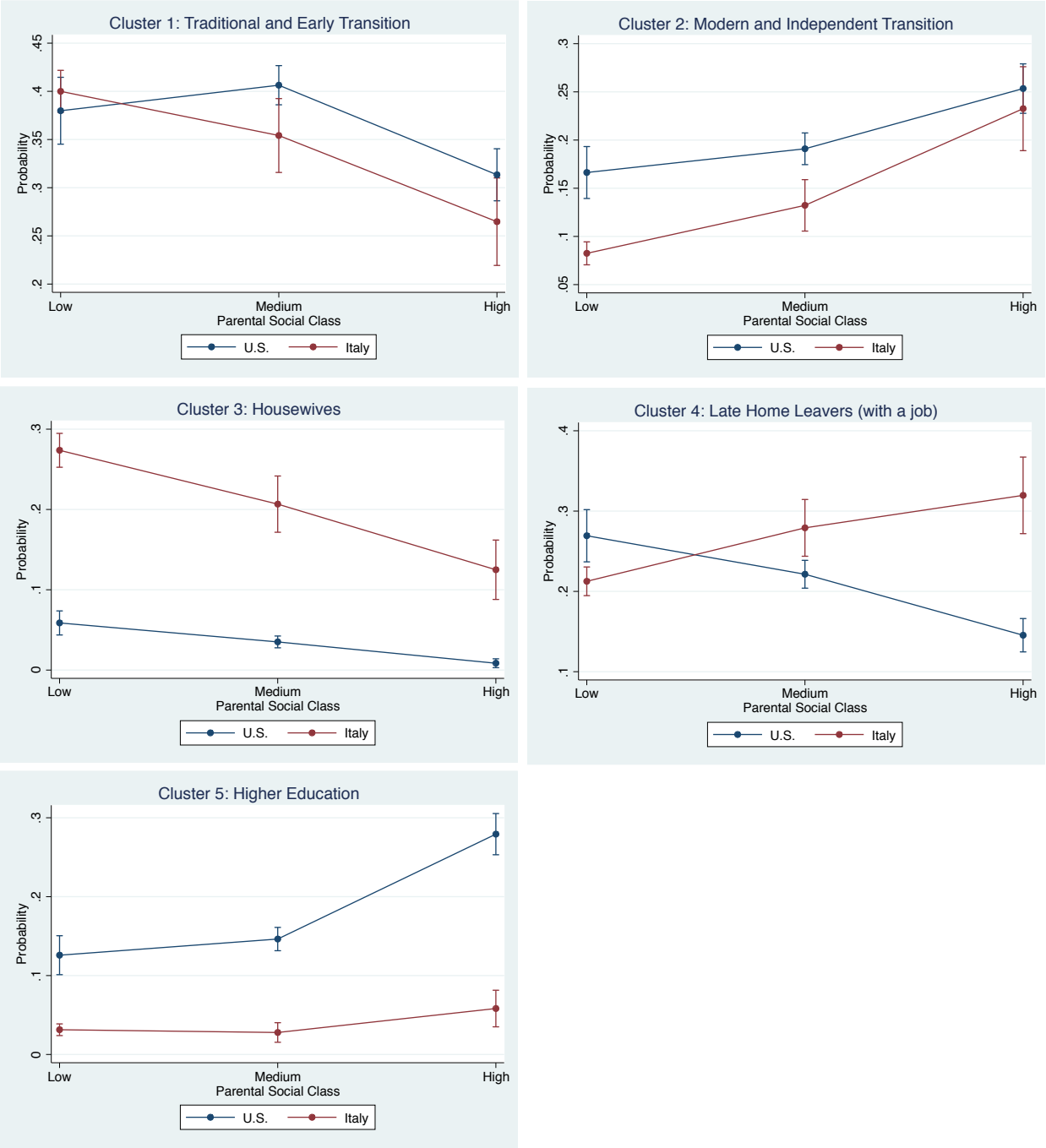
These indications are confirmed looking at the last two clusters: in the United States, men with a higher social status show a lower probability of belonging to cluster 4—*Late home leavers*—in which exit from the parental home and consequently family formation are strongly postponed, but a higher probability 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 6. Predicted Probability of being in each cluster, by country and parental social class, men.



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

Figure 7. Predicted probability of being in each cluster, by country and parental social class, women.



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

Among women (Figure 7), 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 SES goes up the probability of being in cluster 2—*Modern and independent trajectory*—increases in both countries. In Italy, women coming 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 parental SES. 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 family background 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. In the United States, instead the relationship goes in the opposite direction because the probability decreases from 27% to 15% as family SES goes up. This is clear also 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 effect of parents' status in the United States: High social status increases modern trajectories in family formation, such as cohabitation and single living (positive effect in clusters 2 and 5), decreases early transition due to marriage (negative effect in cluster 1), decreases traditional gender roles within the couple (negative effect in cluster 3), and decreases a postponed exit from the parental home (negative effect in cluster 4). Among Italian women, the role of parental status is more complex and a sort of dual effect emerges. Family status increases the propensity to experience modern and more heterogeneous trajectories (positive effect in cluster 2), but at the same time it reduces the probability of experiencing an early family formation (negative effect in cluster 1) and of being a

not-working married women (negative effect in cluster 3). On the other hand, among those woman who did not experience an early departure from the parental home, mainly to form a new union, coming from an advantaged family background "protects" Italian women and keeps them in the family nest for a longer time even if they found a job and completed education (positive effect in cluster 4).

6. Discussion

In our analysis we evaluated the role played by parental background in the transition to adulthood. 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 at the same time the timing, the quantum, and the sequence of events. In general, we found large differences between countries that were not always accounted for by differences in family social class. Descriptive findings show a more relevant 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). In general, our analysis shows that the transition to adulthood is slower among higher classes. However, the more interesting results emerge when looking at the interplay between social class, gender, and country. Multivariate regression estimates, in fact, add important indications. 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 effect 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 modern behaviors in their living arrangements. Among women, we found two different effects. 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 to reduce the propensity to follow more standardized patterns, i.e., exit from the parental home to marry and then parenthood. The second effect relates to the higher probability of postponing the exit from the parental home, and then family formation, among higher class women that completed education and found a job.

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: On the one hand, 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), on the other hand, children of lower classes are more prone to experience standard trajectories (Kohn, Slomczynski and Schoenbach 1986) with the result that the early exit from the parental home corresponds to an early family formation.

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

As far as H3 is concerned, the relationship between family background and life course trajectories is context-specific, but not in the expected direction. Actually, in the United States de-standardized and individualized trajectories—involving 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 the family for fundamental support during the first stages in the life course implies that among the higher classes the 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, reached its full potential among wealthier families.

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, more likely 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, in Italy, social class may be even more relevant. 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.

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.

Barban, Nicola. 2011. "Family trajectories and health. A life course perspective." *Dondena Working Paper* No. 39.

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 europ√©enne de D√©mographie* 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, 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. 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.).
—. 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.
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.
Hogan, Dennis P. 1981. *Transitionsand Social Change:TheEarlyLivesofAmericanMen*. New York: Academic.
Hogan, Dennis P., and Nan Marie Astone. 1986. "The Transition to Adulthood." *Annual Review of Sociology* 12(ArticleType: research-article / Full publication date: 1986 / Copyright © 1986 Annual Reviews):109-30.
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.
Livi Bacci, Massimo. 2008. "Avanti giovani, alla riscossa, il Mulino." Bologna.
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.
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.
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 communitycharacteristics." 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* (598751742521610149 6related:eJx3AGDvF1MJ):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.
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*: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.
Trifiletti, Rossana. 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.
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.

APPENDIX

Figure A1. Survival curves for each event, by gender and family status, Italy.

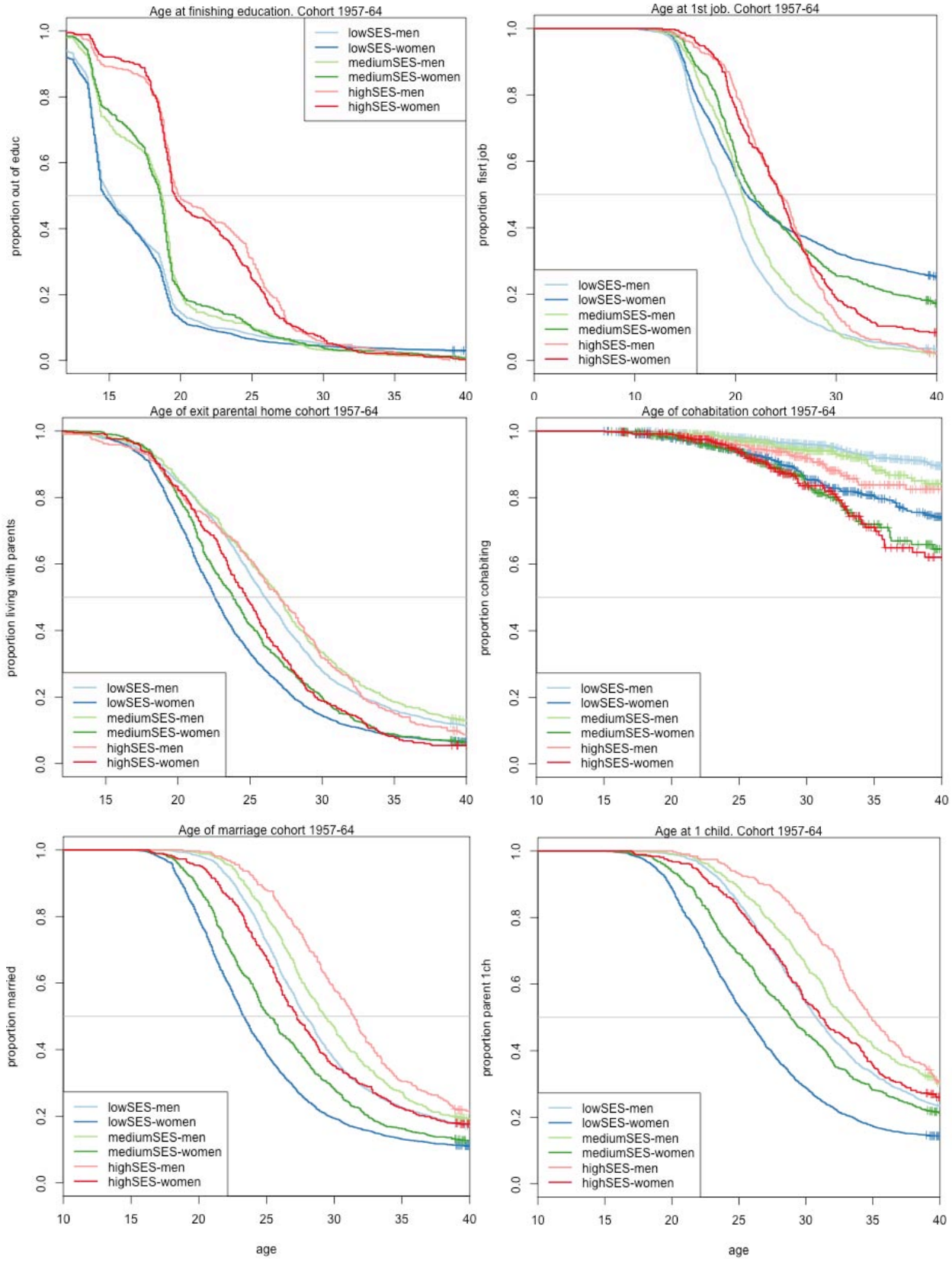


Figure A2. Survival curves for each event, by gender and family status, United States.

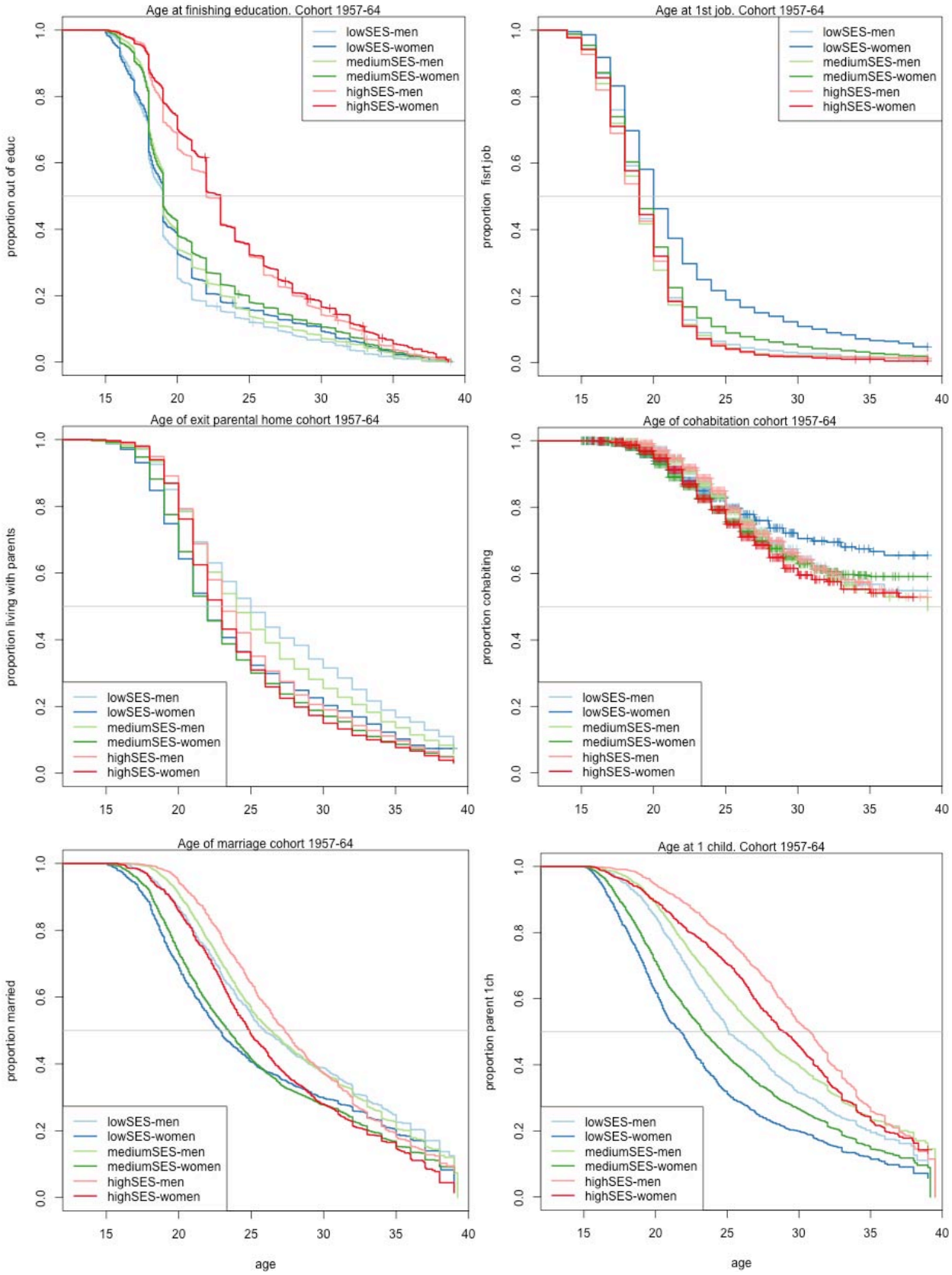


Table A1. Multinomial logistic regression, men, N=6,937.

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 A2. 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

Latent Class Analysis

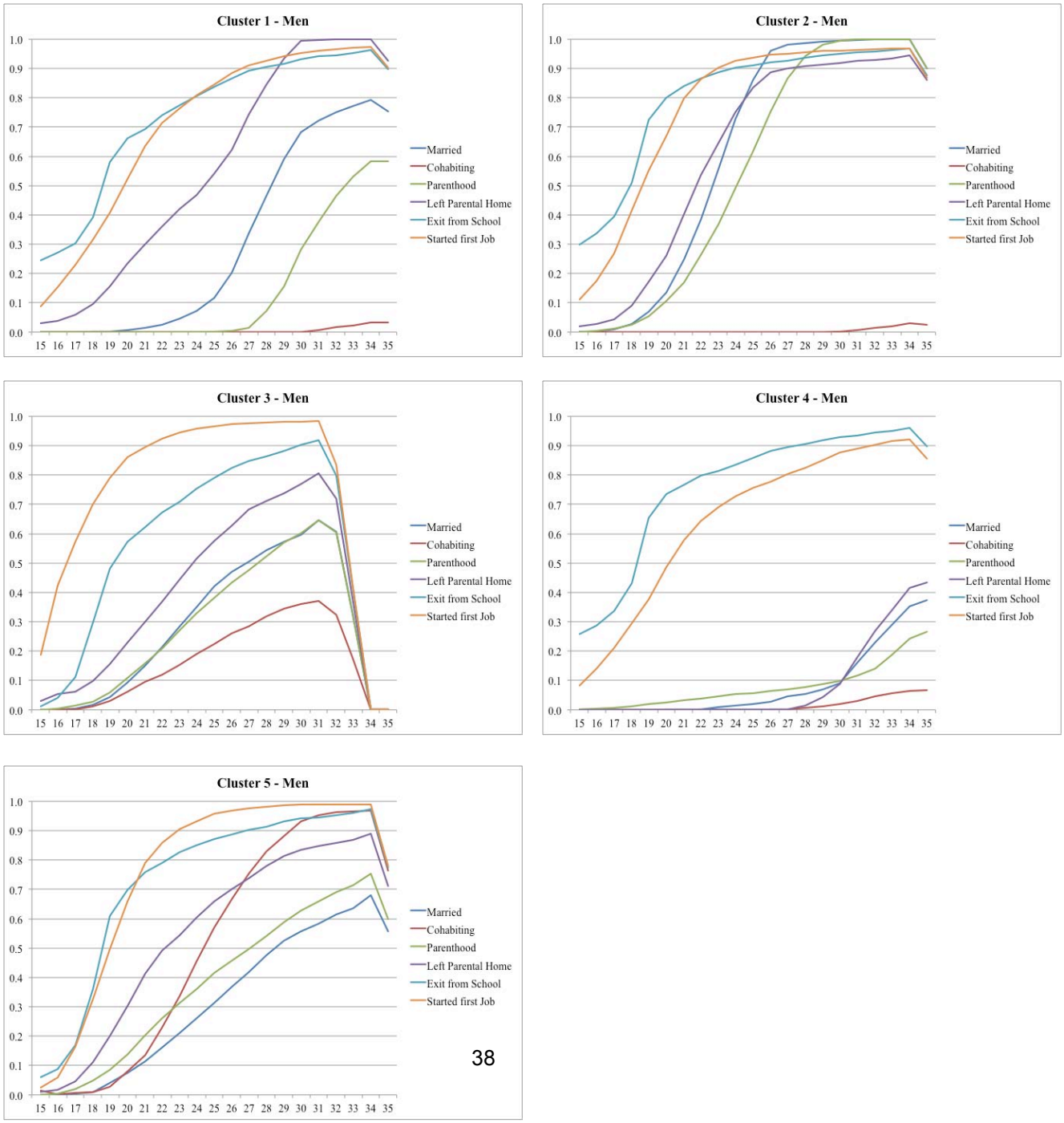
Table A3. Latent class analysis output.

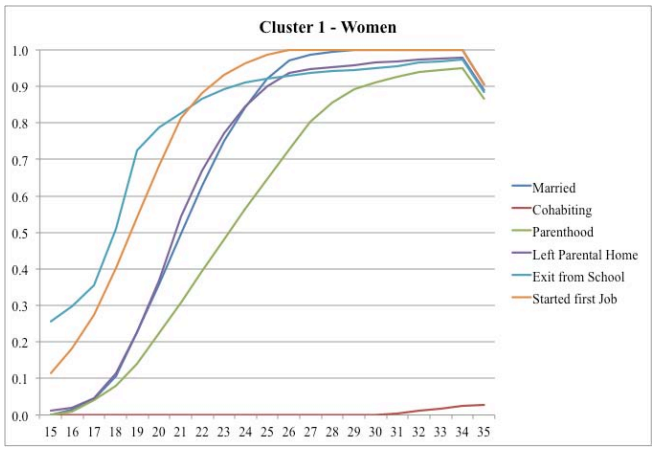
Men	# Clusters	LL	BIC(LL)	Npar	L^2	df	p-value	Class.Err.
Model1	1-Cluster	-464653	930922.5836	182	804022	7009	3.6e-165856	0.00
Model2	2-Cluster	-407929	819098.7083	365	690573	6826	2.1e-141635	0.00
Model3	3-Cluster	-367045	738957.4058	548	608806	6643	8.9e-124246	0.01
Model4	**4-Cluster**	**-347087**	**700666.3207**	**731**	**568890**	**6460**	**2.9e-115853**	**0.00**
Model5	**5-Cluster**	**-333095**	**674306.4928**	**914**	**540905**	**6277**	**1.2e-110023**	**0.01**
Model6	6-Cluster	-322004	653750.9724	1097	518724	6094	2.9e-105440	0.01
Model7	7-Cluster	-312994	637355.1083	1280	500703	5911	1.3e-101749	0.01
Model8	8-Cluster	-304696	622384.0659	1463	484107	5728	9.4e-98365	0.01

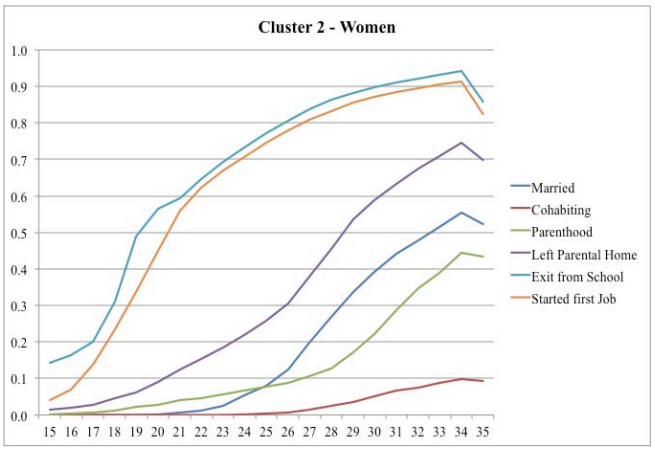
Women	# Clusters	LL	BIC(LL)	Npar	L^2	df	p-value	Class.Err.
Model1	1-Cluster	-518681	1038994	183	907477	7264	1.1e-187868	0.00
Model2	1-Cluster	-518681	1038994	183	907477	7264	1.1e-187868	0.00
Model3	2-Cluster	-458323	919918	367	786761	7080	3.0e-162068	0.01
Model4	3-Cluster	-412661	830234	551	695437	6896	6.0e-142611	0.01
Model5	**4-Cluster**	**-388315**	**783182**	**735**	**646744**	**6712**	**4.6e-132328**	**0.01**
Model6	**5-Cluster**	**-369394**	**746981**	**919**	**608902**	**6528**	**2.3e-124379**	**0.01**
Model7	6-Cluster	-355290	720413	1103	580694	6344	3.5e-118501	0.01
Model8	7-Cluster	-345821	703116	1287	561756	6160	3.0e-114614	0.01
Model9	8-Cluster	-336963	687041	1471	544041	5976	6.1e-110990	0.01
Model10	9-Cluster	-329826	674408	1655	529767	5792	9.7e-108105	0.01
Model11	10-Cluster	-322724	661843	1839	515562	5608	2.9e-105234	0.01

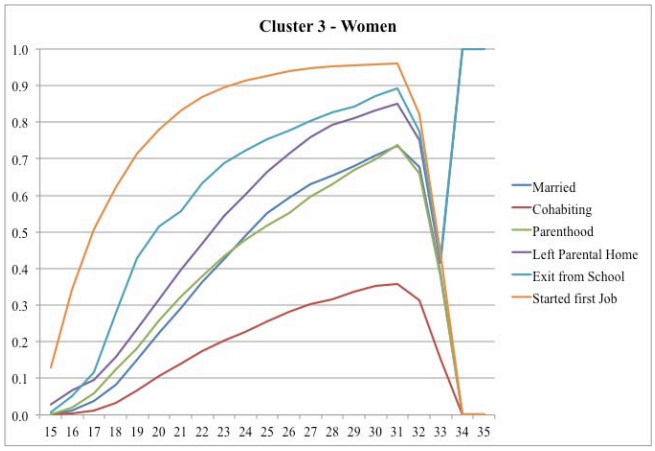
Model12	11-Cluster	-316531	651098	2023	503176	5424	1.1e-102754	0.01
Model13	12-Cluster	-310315	640306	2207	490744	5240	3.2e-100265	0.01
Model14	13-Cluster	-305581	632478	2391	481276	5056	9.8e-98413	0.01
Model15	14-Cluster	-301436	625830	2575	472987	4872	4.3e-96814	0.01
Model16	15-Cluster	-296493	617584	2759	463101	4688	2.3e-94872	0.01

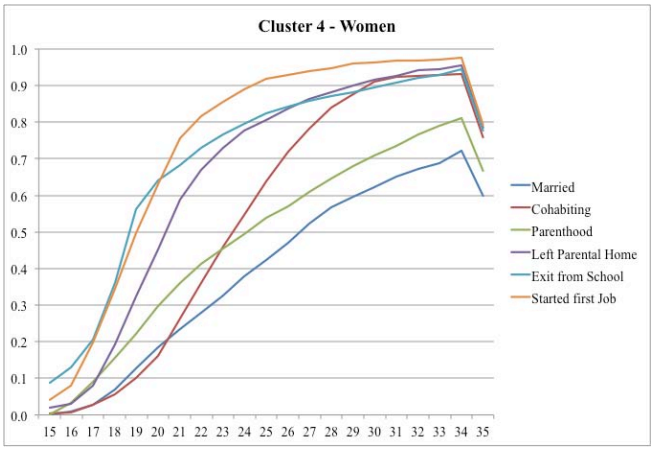
Figure A3. Clusters derived from latent class analysis (5 clusters), men.











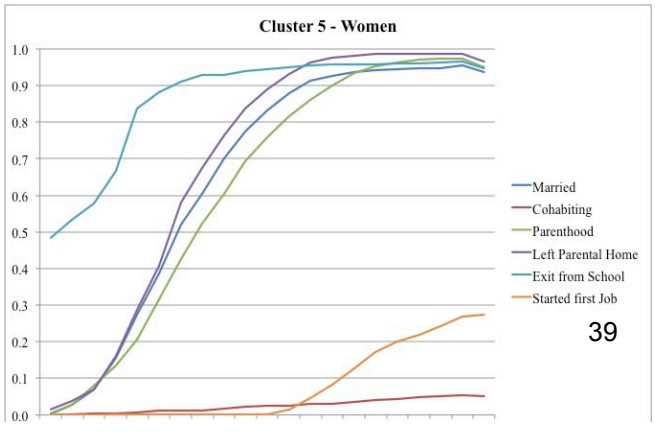


Figure A4. Clusters derived from latent class analysis (5 clusters), women.