Outline

- A new pattern of transition to adulthood
- Unequal opportunities
- Policy implications?
The transition to adulthood

- In demography, the transition to adulthood is defined as a process marked by a series of life events (in themselves transitions)
  - School-to-work transition (finishing full-time education, beginning to work→economic independence)
  - Household and family formation (leaving the parental home, forming a union-cohabitation or marriage, becoming a parent)
Patterns in the transition to adulthood

- The new pattern of transition to adulthood in Europe is (Billari & Liefbroer, 2010):
  - *late* (postponement of events—events tend to take place later)
  - *protracted* (larger distance between first and last event—the transition to adulthood takes longer)
  - *complex* (more diversity in trajectories—higher heterogeneity between individuals)
Patterns in the transition to adulthood

Median age at **leaving home** by cohort, women: European regions. Source: Billari & Liefbroer (2010), ESS data.
Patterns in the transition to adulthood

Median age at **first union** by cohort, women: European regions. Source: Billari & Liefbroer (2010), ESS data.
Patterns in the transition to adulthood

Median age at first marriage by cohort, women: European regions. Source: Billari & Liefbroer (2010), ESS data.
Patterns in the transition to adulthood

Median age at parenthood by cohort, women: European regions. Source: Billari & Liefbroer (2010), ESS data.
Unequal opportunities

- While also culture is shaping choices, there are inequalities in opportunities to *choose* during the transition to adulthood:
  - Between countries
  - Within countries
Percentage realising the intention to experience events in the transition to adulthood (3-year interval)

A view of inequalities in the transition to adulthood

Effects of parental Socio-Economic Status

Leaving home

Source: Billari, Hiekel & Liefbroer (2017). Own elaborations on GGS Waves 1 & 2, ages 18-35. Low parental SES: one SD below mean, High parental SES: one SD above mean.
Effects of parental Socio-Economic Status

Forming a union

Source: Billari, Hiekel & Liefbroer (2017). Own elaborations on GGS Waves 1 & 2, ages 18-35. Low parental SES: one SD below mean, High parental SES: one SD above mean.
Effects of parental Socio-Economic Status

Becoming a parent

Source: Billari, Hiekel & Liefbroer (2017). Own elaborations on GGS Waves 1 & 2, ages 18-35. Low parental SES: one SD below mean, High parental SES: one SD above mean.
Policy implications?

- Youth policies need to adopt a demographic, life-course perspective
- Importance of housing, work, education, family policy to support achieving independence (i.e. experiencing events in the transition to adulthood)
- But “one size does not fit all”—diversity within and between countries calls for targeted policies
References


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Thank you!

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