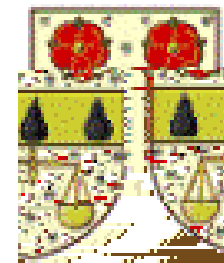


# Young people and the transition to adulthood in low fertility countries

Francesco C. Billari

Department of Sociology and Nuffield College

University of Oxford



# Outline

Who are the young people?

Patterns in the transition to adulthood

Does the transition to adulthood matter?

Challenges and policy prospects

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# Who are the young people?

Population aged 15-29 in selected regions (1950=100). Source: UN WPP 2012





# Patterns in the transition to adulthood

Traditional definition (Modell et al. 1976):  
**leaving home, first marriage, first birth**, leaving education, first job as  
*marker events*

The new pattern of transition to adulthood is (Billari & Liefbroer, 2010):

*late* (postponement of events)

*protracted* (larger distance between first and last event)

*complex* (more diversity in trajectories)

# 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 **first birth** by cohort, women: European regions. Source: Billari & Liefbroer (2010), ESS data.



# Does it matter? *Human capital and economic prospects*

Contrary to high fertility countries a key issue is whether postponement matter. Is it an issue?

Under-researched topic. Billari & Tabellini (2011) on Italy: it does! Leaving home one year earlier has the same effect of having 5 months of additional education on salary in the mid-thirties

Impairment of human capital if transition is too delayed?

## Does it matter? *Fertility*

In low fertility societies, final fertility levels are determined by what goes on after age 30+

Individual effect of postponing the transition to parenthood, but a) country specific (Kohler et al., 2002) and b) relatively small

Very interesting cross-national association patterns

# Does it matter? *Fertility*



# Does it matter? *Fertility*



# Does it matter? *Fertility*

Total Fertility Rate in 2008 and Median Age at Leaving Home (women) of the 1970-79 birth cohort.  $Rho=-0.57$



# Does it matter?

NEET

Employed and no longer in education  NEET (unemployed)

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# Challenges and policy prospects

1. The late, protracted and complex pattern of transition to adulthood is here to stay

Consequence of broad transformations  
(First and Second Demographic  
Transitions)

Unlikely that policies will reverse these changes (e.g. policies lowering the age at which youth leave education, with the same educational level—Germany)

# Challenges and policy prospects

2. Youth hardship (as signaled by high youth unemployment, late age at leaving home) has become correlated with family hardship (as signaled by comparatively lower fertility)

Youth friendly societies are also women and family friendly

Issues with Southern and Eastern Europe. Added problem—ageing of the electorate

# Challenges and policy prospects

3. Also as a consequence of low fertility, the composition of youth by migrant origin has shifted substantially

E.g. Spain: in 2011 census one out of

# Challenges and policy prospects

## 4. Gender

Gender reversal in the educational system—young women *are* increasingly more educated than young men

What are the consequences on marriage markets, family

Gender equality increasingly more likely to shape policies

