

"A cross-national perspective of the Transition to Adulthood - New avenues for research"

Summary: This project outlines three different avenues for future research on young adults' family living arrangements and the transition to adulthood from a demographic and comparative perspective in Europe. First, our understanding of young adults' family living arrangements and the transition to adulthood can be significantly improved by focusing on young adults' residential *decision-making*. While the demographic literature has emphasized the impact of various contextual and individual level variables on demographic behavior, it has rarely addressed how much intentions guide actual behavior (cf. Ferrari et al 2014). Knowledge about demographic decision-making can tell us something about young adults' agency in shaping their own life course trajectories and identify more clearly the structural obstacles young adults face. Second, our understanding of young adults' family living arrangements and the transition to adulthood can be significantly improved by focusing on the *recurrence of life course events*. The life course perspective acknowledges transition reversals, such as the phenomenon of young adults returning to live with their parents after having previously moved out and established an independent household (boomeranging; Shanahan 2000). This research topic has garnered some scholarly interest among North American and Western European researchers (e.g. Mitchell et al. 2004, Lei and South 2016), but systemic comparative, European approaches are rare (Buchmann and Kriesi 2011). The gains of a comparative study of young adults' returning home, for example, lie in disentangling the different life course trajectories leading to intergenerational co-residence. Furthermore, exploring interdependencies of returning home with other demographic behavior (e.g., family formation) provides insight into the unique demographic, economic and sociological implications of intergenerational co-residence across European countries. Third, our understanding of young adults' family living arrangements and the transition to adulthood can be significantly improved by focusing on the *consequences of (family) life course transitions*. Family life course transitions may have positive (e.g. intergenerational assistance) or negative consequences (e.g. lower well-being, loss of contact with family members) - both short-term and long-term. A first important question in this respect is, whether or not the impact of family life course transitions differs across social groups (e.g. men vs. women; natives vs. migrants). A second important question is, whether or not the impact of family life course transitions differs with young adults' family and personal networks or not. The concept of linked lives (Elder 1994) from the life course literature is useful here. It emphasizes that the opportunities and constraints faced by individuals are shaped by the needs and resources of family members whose lives run close to their own. Young adults are affected by what happens to others, and when making decisions (e.g., to leave the parental home) they consider the consequences there might be for others. It is also important to recognize that a specific country context vis-à-vis welfare and social policies may reinforce interdependencies among family members.

Short bio: I am a family demographer with a background in longitudinal and life course research and recently completed my PhD in demography (2017), which was conducted at the Institut National d'Études Démographiques, Paris, France and the Population Research Centre, University of Groningen, Netherlands. My work so far has been mainly focused on the transition to adulthood in Europe. Specifically, I used population census and survey data to investigate family living arrangements across several European countries in multiple social contexts, from the perspective of different social groups, and by taking into account variability on an intra-national level.
