



TALLINN UNIVERSITY

A Cross-national Perspective of the Transition to Adulthood – New Avenues for Research

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Lifecourse Studies Seminar Series

26 Feb 2018

Overview

1. The Transition to Adulthood (T2A) – Recap
2. New Avenues for Research
 1. **Decision-Making Processes**
 2. **Recurrent Life Course Events**
 3. **Consequences of Life Course Events**
3. Data

1

THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD (T2A) - RECAP

What is the Transition to Adulthood?

Transition to Adulthood (T2A) according to Modell, Furstenberg & Herschberg 1976:

- 1. End of education**
- 2. First job**
- 3. Leaving the parental home**
- 4. First marriage*** (*later: cohabitation/ first union)
- 5. Birth of the first child**

How can T2A be measured?

Adopt an **event-based** perspective

- Single events (timing, quantum, and prevalence)

Adopt a **holistic** perspective

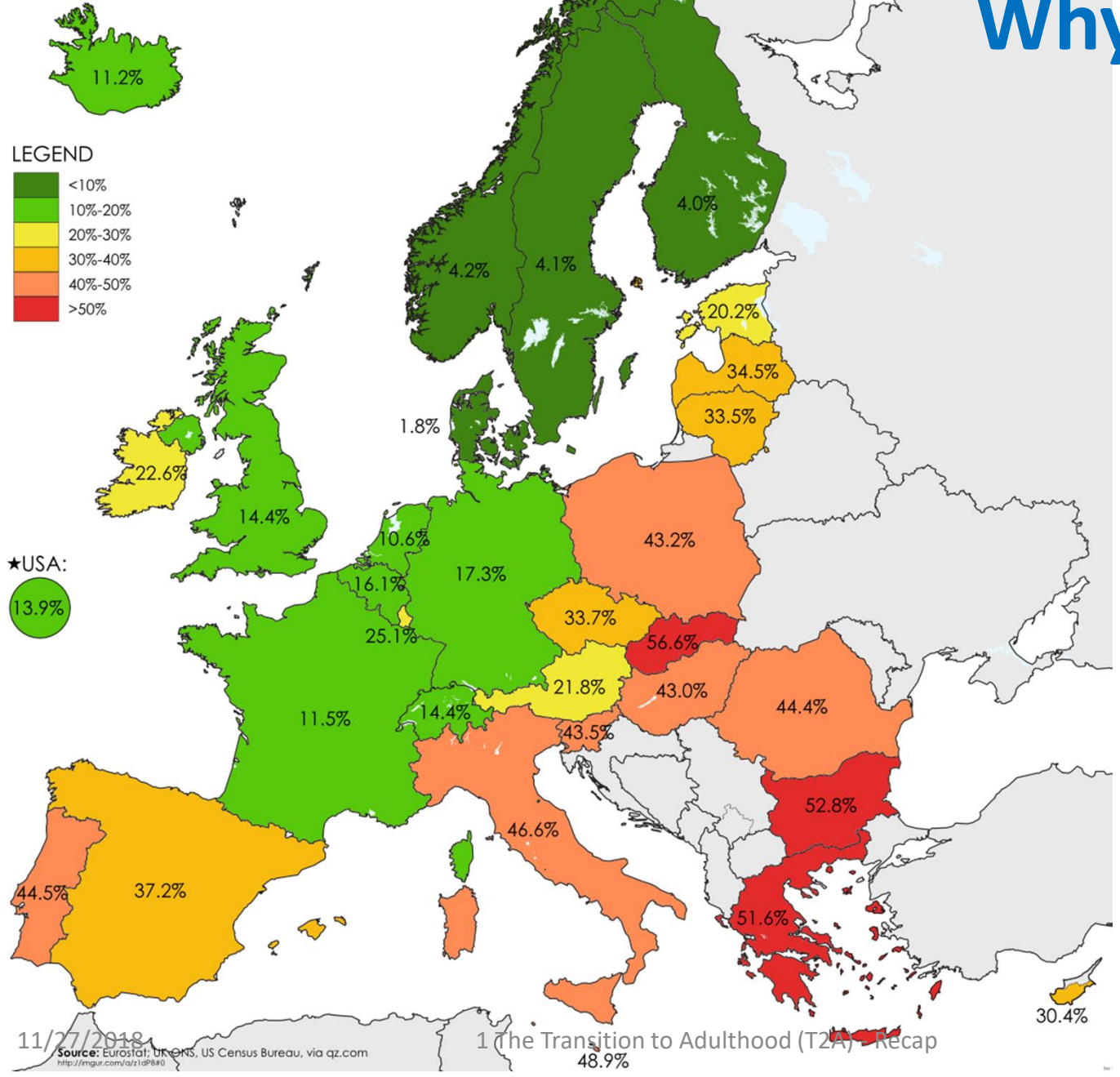
- Pair of events (sequencing and trajectories)

Adopt a **comparative** research perspective

- Discovery and explanation of similarities and differences across societies in Europe

Share of young people aged 25-34 living with parents

Why Europe?



11/27/2018
 Source: Eurostat, UN, ONS, US Census Bureau, via qz.com
<http://imgur.com/oz10P8d>

Previous research findings

Europe exhibits strong cross-national variations in T2A

- Perceptions of the age of adulthood (Spéder, Murinkó & Settersten 2013) and age-deadlines (Aassve, Arpino & Billari 2013)
- Prevalence and timing of life course events (e.g. Billari & Liefbroer 2010; Iacovou 2002; Sobotka & Toulemon 2008)
- Sequencing of life course events (e.g. Lesnard et al. 2016; Potârca, Mills & Lesnard 2013; Sironi, Barban & Impicciatore 2015)

Explanations of cross-national differences

1. Macro-level explanations

- Economic factors – income sufficiency, job (in)security
- Institutional factors – e.g. welfare state (Esping-Andersen 1990)
- Socio-cultural factors – e.g. social norms, family ties (Reher 1998)

2. Micro-level explanations

- Compositional effects

3. Explanations about macro-micro linkages

Motivation

- Europe – with its striking cross-national differences in T2A – is a particularly interesting object of study
- Demographic research so far still not addressed all questions, e.g. cross-national research is generally rare
- I propose 3* avenues for further research:
 - 1. Decision-Making Processes of Life Course Events**
 - 2. Recurrence of Life Course Events**
 - 3. Consequences of Family Life Course Transitions**

2.1

DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OF LIFE COURSE EVENTS

Background 2.1

- Research on demographic decision-making has recently increased (e.g. fertility)
- Residential decision-making (re. leaving home) still remains something of a black box:
 - Only 2 single-country studies addressed how much intentions (i.e. to leave home) guide actual behavior (cf. Billari & Liefbroer 2007; Ferrari, Rosina & Sironi 2014)

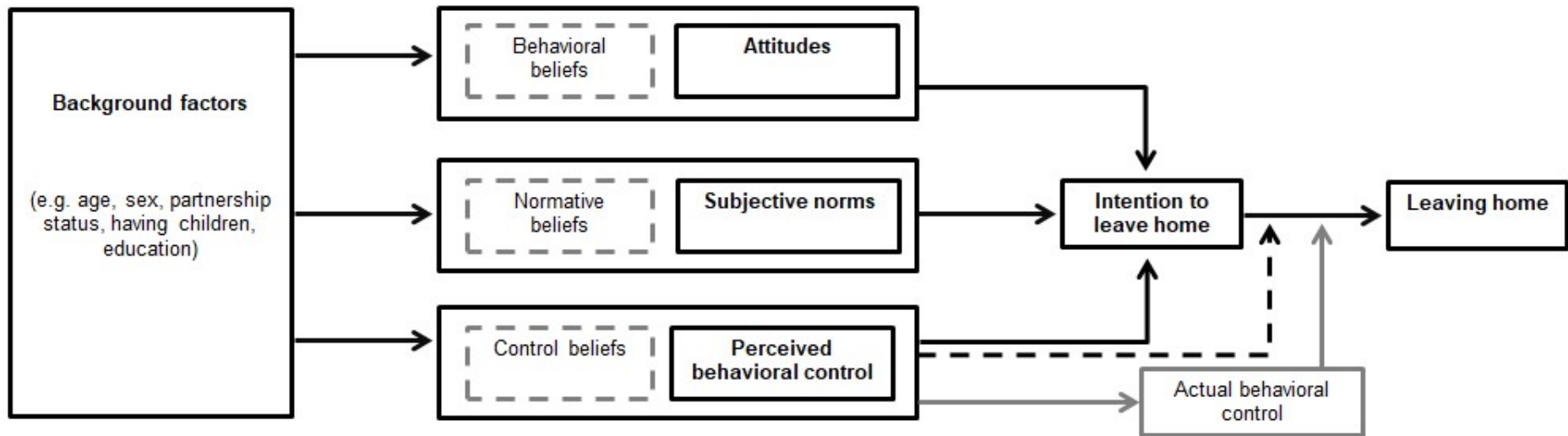
Relevance 2.1

- Knowledge about decision-making can tell us something about young adults' **agency** and **structural obstacles** in different European countries
- Understanding (leaving home) intentions and their realization can help inform policy measures

Data re Decision-Making Processes

The Generations and Gender Survey (GGS)

- Internationally comparable and harmonized set of survey data
- Sample size \approx 10,000 individuals aged from 18 to 79 years of the non-institutionalized and resident population per country
- Questions on intentions of demographic behavior (i.e. moving, having a child, getting married, starting cohabitation, leaving the parental home)
- Observation of the realization of demographic behavior (panel structure: 2 Waves available)



Theoretical Framework: A Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Source: Fishbein & Ajzen, 2005

Expected output 2.1

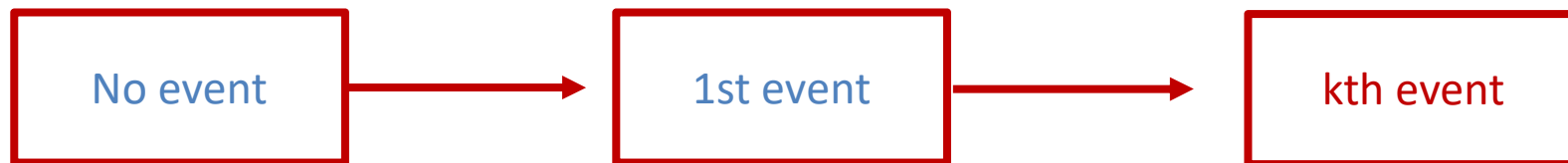
- **D1** Publication describing how the decision-making process of home-leaving is prevalent and different among European countries
- **D2** Publication on a comparative framework for the comparison of the decision-making processes of home-leaving across European countries

2.2

RECURRENT LIFE COURSE EVENTS

Background 2.2

- A life course perspective acknowledges transition reversals (e.g. leaving and returning home)!
- Recurrent life course events (i.e. leaving home) have been studied for the US, CA, UK, and NL (e.g. Mitchell et al. 2004, Lei and South 2016)
- Moreover: Most studies do not even differentiate between leaving and leaving again



Relevance 2.2

- Knowledge about recurrent life course events is important because of the **interdependency with (other) demographic behavior**
- It also tells us more about intergenerational co-residence
 - Launched, boomeranging, never left

Data re Recurrent Events

Prerequisites

- Longitudinal data recording the exact dates of moves from and back to the parental home
- Recording also other turning points
- Potential problems: missing events, re-call error or bias, ...
- GGS; EU-SILC; NLS79
- Population register (1 country vs 1+ countries)

Expected output 2.2

- **D1** Publication describing the prevalence of returning home across selected European countries
- **D2** Publication on the comparative study of returning home (*vis-à-vis* trajectories?)

2.3

CONSEQUENCES OF LIFE COURSE EVENTS

Background 2.3

- Life course transitions may have consequences , both short- and long-term
 - + Financial, social, and emotional support (intergenerational assistance); different by leaving trajectory (Leopold 2012)!
 - lower well-being, loss of contact with family members; poverty; lack of independence for offspring (and parents)
- But do consequences also differ across social groups?
 - **Higher vs. Lower Educated**
 - **Natives vs. Migrants**
- Also, what is the role of family and personal networks? („linked lives“, Elder 1994)

Relevance 2.3

- Knowledge about the consequences tells us more about **interdependencies in the life courses of household and multiple family members**
- It also answers the question **“(For whom) does it matter?”**

Data re Consequences of Life Course Events

Prerequisites

- Cross-sectional data possible
- Longitudinal data ideal (causality)
- Inclusion of social network members
- Inclusion of migrant status (large national sample size)

Expected output 2.3

- **D1** Publication on the consequences* of family life course transitions across Europe
- **D2** Publication investigating to what extent social networks and demographic choices jointly determine these consequences* in (later phases of) the life course across Europe

3

DATA

Data I



GGG

- Cross-sectional data pertaining to a given time or a certain time period
- Life-history calendar
- Longitudinal data pertaining to individual-level changes over time, observed for 2 Waves
- W1: N = 17; W2: N = 15

ESS

- Cross-sectional data pertaining to a given time or a certain time period
- Rd. 3 (2006) includes a *Timing of Life Module*
- Rd3: N = 25

Data II

EU-SILC

Register data

EU-SILC

- Cross-sectional data pertaining to a given time or a certain time period
- Longitudinal data pertaining to individual-level changes over time, observed periodically over a four-year period
- $N = 32$

Population register

- Large number of registers of individuals established for administrative or statistical purposes
- Comprehensive information
- Unique event history data bases, updated annually
- $N = 1^*$

Thank you for your interest!

Do you have any questions?

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