Rona Geffen

The Timing of Lives: The Role of Standard Employment in Income Mobility and Co-residential Unions in Early Adulthood

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how young adults make their transition into adulthood and how social policies shape this transitional process. Utilizing an innovative methodology of sequence analysis, cluster analysis and growth curve multilevel models, I investigate the role of standard work and its timing in determining income mobility and co-residential unions in early adulthood in Germany and the UK. The results show that non-standard and late standard careers delay income mobility, compared to beginning standard jobs early. Moreover, delayed entry into standard work is associated with the delayed formation of co-residential unions. Although this process is more prominent in the UK than in Germany, it is similarly strong in the two societies when economic insecurity is on the rise. Furthermore, while in Germany entering into standard employment occurs later than in the UK, in the latter, career marginalization is more pronounced. Gendered life courses exist in both countries and are discussed.

1 INTRODUCTION[1][2]

In recent decades, liberal societies have experienced dramatic changes in the three areas that affect people's economic well-being – the state, the market, and the family (Esping-Andersen 1999). Economic insecurity has increased with the rise in unemployment and non-standard work arrangements (Kalleberg 2009; OECD 2020d, 2020e). In addition, in some countries, the welfare state has been retrenched (Esping-Andersen 1999; OECD 2020f; Seeleib-Kaiser 2002), and family policies have become more gender-egalitarian (Finch 2008; OECD 2020c). At the same time, family life has been characterized by greater volatility and diversity, with more people remaining single or dissolving their unions (Dorbritz 2008; Lesthaeghe 2010).

These changes challenge the way young adults transition into adulthood (Biemann et al. 2011; Bruckner/Mayer 2005; Shanahan 2000). Inspired by the "timing of lives" perspective (Elder 1994), I examine the role of career mobility,[3] especially with respect to standard work, which is a full-time, permanent position (Kalleberg 2009), and its association with income mobility and the formation of co-residential unions. Focusing on standard employment rather than on a single non-standard position is important because it reflects the independence and autonomy one may need to settle into adult life. Therefore, examining differences between liberal societies in this specific transition allows us to investigate to what extent core liberal ideals, namely individual autonomy, are realized for new generations of young adults. In addition, because institutions shape people's economic and family trajectories, I will compare the evolution of the transition to standard employment among young adults ages 19-32 in two societies that have different manifestations of liberalism – Germany and the UK during 1991-2016.

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[1] I would like to thank the Cluster of Excellence "Contestations of the Liberal Script (SCRIPTS)" for supporting this work. This study has been developed as part of my PhD project at the chair of Social Stratification and Social Policy at Goethe University and benefited from helpful comments from Markus Gangl, Anette Fasang, Haya Stier, Birgit Becker, Julian Garritzmann, Jan Brülle, Anna Gerlach, Agnes Jäger, Simon Bienstman, Carlotta Giustozzi, Svenja Hense, Timo Lepper, Kristina Lindemann, Eleonora Vlach, Carolin Deuflhard, Abiola Oyebanjo, Asaf Levanon, Vered Kraus, and Evgeny Saburov.
The paper also has been presented at the Transitions in Youth Conference 2018, Mannheim, RC28 conference at Princeton University 2019 (awarded the Dronkers Travel Award), DGS online conference 2021, Berlin, InFER-Mittelbaucolloquium at Goethe University as well as the Research Unit Temporality and The Berlin International College of Research and Graduate Training (BIRT) at "SCRIPTS" at the Free University. Comments and suggestions from participants are greatly appreciated.

[2] This work was supported by the Cluster of Excellence "Contestations of the Liberal Script (SCRIPTS)" (EXC 2055, Project-ID: 390715649), funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) under Germany's Excellence Strategy."

[3] Career mobility is also referred to in the literature as work trajectories (Aisenbrey/Fasang 2017).

Against this background, the study aims to answer the following questions: 1) Whether and when do young adults obtain standard work?, 2) How is the timing of obtaining standard work associated with income mobility?, 3) How is the timing of obtaining standard work associated with the formation of co-residential unions?, 4) Is the timing of obtaining standard work and its associations with income mobility and co-residential unions systematically related to mobility regimes? If so, do they change over time? I will explore these questions in Germany and the UK.

The paper makes two main contributions. Theoretically, I highlight the role of the timing of obtaining standard work and its implications for the divergence in economic and family trajectories in two different opportunity structures. Methodologically, instead of focusing only on the impact of a single career transition on economic or family life, I utilize panel data and an innovative methodological approach that uses sequence analysis, cluster analysis, and multilevel models to track the differences in people's long-term career mobility and its consequences for their economic and family life.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 SOCIAL ROLES AND THE TIMING OF THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

The transition to adulthood is a process in which different social roles and responsibilities in various domains of life evolve. Examples include completing school, becoming economically independent, forming a co-residential union, and parenthood (Billari/Liefbroer 2010). According to human development research, social roles are age-graded, as they develop in a specific order during the stages of life. Social norms regarding the proper age for certain types of behaviours, roles and statuses have a strong effect on age-graded transitions (Elder 1994; Hogan/Astone 1986; Neugarten et al. 1965).

The meaning and normative timetables (also called "social timing") for the appropriate chronological development of social roles are constructed within a specific social context (Buchmann/Kriesi 2011) and generation (Fasang/Raab 2014) as different institutions and social structures foster or inhibit these transitions (Billari/Liefbroer 2010; Hogan/Mochizuki 1988; Van Winkle/Fasang 2017). This social construction of role behaviours allows individuals to interpret social transitions as early, late, or on time (Hogan/Astone 1986; Morgan et al. 1984). In addition, social transitions are supported and reinforced by normative timetables or social timing through a system of social sanctions, which operate when certain role behaviours or statuses deviate from their expected social timing (Neugarten et al. 1965). In this way, age norms shape the timing, sequencing, and synchronizing of social transitions (Hogan/Mochizuki 1988).

Another important element is that social roles and the timing of their development are highly gendered (Eagly et al. 2012). In spite of the increasing gender equality over the last few decades in the labour market, politics, and education (Dorius/

Firebaugh 2010), women and men still play different social roles in work and family life (Aisenbrey/Fasang 2017). Women are usually expected to be responsible for housework and childcare. Therefore, they tend to create co-residential unions and have families relatively early. In contrast, men are typically the main breadwinners and therefore are more likely to delay having families if they feel uncertain about their future career prospects (Chafetz 1991; Oppenheimer 1988).

The transition to adulthood is expected to become longer and more diverse in both Germany and the UK, with the expansion of education (OECD 2020a) and the growing labour market insecurity (OECD 2020d, 2020e). These trends raise the question of whether and when young adults begin standard employment and the consequences of doing so for their economic mobility and co-residential unions.

2.2 ECONOMIC INSECURITY, EARLY CAREER MOBILITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN ECONOMIC AND FAMILY TRAJECTORIES

Prior research that investigated the consequences of economic insecurity has mainly focused on the impact of unemployment or non-standard work on transitions in the economic sphere (C.f. Booth et al. 2002; Gash 2008; Giesecke/Groß 2003; Stier/Lewin-Epstein 2001) and in the family life (Ekert-Jaffea/Solaza 2001; Golsch 2003). However, these studies have not paid enough attention to the role of obtaining standard work, including its timing, for income mobility and co-residential unions, two markers of adults' roles.

Three main mechanisms link the timing of beginning standard work with income development and the formation of co-residential unions. The *individualization* or *independency mechanism* (Becker 1981; Lesthaeghe 2010) assumes that social roles in the economic and family spheres are weakly interrelated. According to this argument, income mobility is not synchronized with the formation of co-residential unions. Living with a partner is less attractive for economically independent people when they are seeking greater autonomy in both the economic and family domains. This argument assumes that sharing a household with a partner acts as an exchange relationship, which becomes more attractive when partners have more to gain from this status than from living apart. The economic benefits of a partnership are based on the contribution of each person to the exchange relationship, thereby creating mutual dependence between the partners. Therefore, according to this approach, early entry into standard employment translates into early income mobility. However, it will not necessarily translate into the early formation of co-residential unions because there is less incentive to live with a partner in this situation. Following the same logic, when *specialization* arrangements develop between partners, those who do not obtain standard employment may form co-residential unions early in their life without having income mobility, as their partner with a standard job is the main breadwinner. These arrangements promote the stability of the co-residential unions but also create the economic dependency of the former on the latter.

In contrast, the *insecurity mechanism* (Blossfeld et al. 2006; Sander 1992) suggests that economic security extends people's time horizon and their ability to make long-term career and family life plans, which translate into progression in these two domains. Furthermore, when we add the dimension of timing to this mechanism, we can argue that economic security promotes the synchronization of the progression in family and economic life. Thus, delayed entrance into standard work leads to late growth in income and the late formation of co-residential unions. One explanation for this effect is that economic insecurity delays the creation of co-residential unions because people are less willing to make long-term commitments when they feel unsettled

(Oppenheimer 1988). The literature often refers to this phenomenon as the “marriage bar”, meaning the economic level that couples want to reach before they get married (Gibson-Davis et al. 2018).

Both the independence and insecurity mechanisms might better describe the trajectories of individuals who are expected to obtain standard positions at some point in their lives. However, the trajectories of those who have meagre economic prospects and non-standard positions during their entire career may be different. The *economic necessity mechanism* maintains that these individuals are more likely to share a household with their partner at an early stage of the relationship before settling into their careers and achieving income mobility because living apart is costlier. In other words, there is a strong interrelationship between income mobility and the creation of co-residential unions. However, it is economic necessity that drives the formation of co-residential unions. Given that for these individuals, this transition happens early due to economic pressure, these partners are likely to be relatively poorly matched, leading to instability and the possible dissolution of their relationship later on (Oppenheimer 1988; Sassler/Miller 2011).[4]

While the *economic necessity mechanism* might be relevant for both men and women with limited economic prospects, the independence mechanism might represent the path for women, and the insecurity mechanism might be more relevant for men (this argument is also referred to as the *gender hypothesis*) (Blossfeld et al. 2006**)**. These assumptions stem from the gender specialization mechanism (Becker 1981), which assumes that men are the main breadwinners and women are the main homemakers. Thus, in households where gender specialization prevails, the man’s stable work is a prerequisite before couples make long-term decisions. However, with the increasing economic activity of women, women are more likely to develop an economic career, which provides them with greater economic independence and delays their formation of families (Becker 1981; Groat et al. 1976; Mortimer et al. 2005). The next question is how mobility regimes also shape transitions in work and family life.

2.3 CROSS-NATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AND EARLY CAREER TRAJECTORIES

Based on DiPrete’s (2002) theoretical framework, the institutions of mobility regimes can support or impede transitions in work and family life. Thus, they shape the forms and prevalence of these careers as well as their economic and family consequences. These institutions are quite different in Germany and the UK, which provide two examples of mobility regimes that represent different manifestations of the liberal order (see Table 1 for a summary of the differences between the countries in their institutions).

Germany is a mobility regime characterized by a high degree of market coordination and strong state intervention in the economic and family realms (Trzcinski 2000) via social policies (Gangl 2004; Scherer 2001). In this coordinated market economy, there is coordination between the development of people’s skills and workplace demands through a standardized educational and training system and strong employment protection. These mechanisms improve the match between jobs and the skills prospective employees bring to them and ensure a smoother (c.f. Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Müller/Gangl 2003; Scherer 2001; Shavit/Müller 1998), but relatively late education-to-work transition (Mayer 2004a; Scherer 2001). In coordinated markets, more people have long training periods and, therefore, long periods of economic dependence. However, once they complete this training, they have good prospects for finding jobs that match their skills. Furthermore, continued investment in workers during their careers eventually leads to strong and stable economic prospects for skilled workers (Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Gallie 2007).

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[4] While the “economic necessity” and “economic insecurity” mechanisms may predict the dissolution of co-residential unions, the description of the mechanisms suggest a different process for family formation.

The career trajectories of less-skilled individuals are likely to be much more precarious (Brauns et al. 2001). Nevertheless, the employment protection, generosity of welfare programs (Gangl 2004), and centralized wage agreements that characterize this system create a more equal distribution of income (Rueda/Pontusson 2000) and stable economic trajectories (Gallie 2007), even for peripheral segments of the labour market (Gangl 2006).

In addition, traditionally, in Germany, the male breadwinner model has prevailed (Stier/Lewin-Epstein 2006; Stier et al. 2001). This traditional gender division of labour is reinforced through family policies such as the joint tax policy, long parental leave and the lack of full-time public child care (Steiner/Wrohlich 2006; Trzcinski 2000). In addition, German welfare rights are generous and are strongly linked to the family (Esping-Andersen 1990). Thus, in Germany, men are more encouraged to have stable and secure careers, while women are expected to care for the family and have more economic dependency (Orloff 2002). These gendered roles are also reinforced indirectly through employers' discrimination (Gangl/Ziefle 2009).

The United Kingdom represents the liberal mobility regime. In this regime, the unstandardized educational system usually provides general skills, while firm-specific skills are acquired through on the job training. As a result, the education-to-work transition occurs relatively early, but the match between people's skills and their jobs is less clear-cut. Therefore, "hire-and-fire" incidents are more likely to occur (Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Scherer 2001). As a result, career and income mobility tend to be less stable and secure, as employment protection and welfare provision are modest (Esping-Andersen 1990).

Moreover, in the liberal context, the state's family policy plays a minor role in people's work and family life. Childcare and family services are available through expensive services provided by the market or by the family. This fact has a strong effect on the careers of women, who usually earn less than their male spouses and are more likely to be those who combine part-time work with childcare (Golsch 2005). Thus, unlike in Germany, where family policies shape the gendered division of labour, in the UK, market forces in the form of costs and benefits are the major factor in shaping it (Connolly et al. 2016; Becker 1981).

In both countries, there were several structural changes in the institutions of the mobility regimes and economic conditions that affected the opportunity structure during the period I studied. These changes potentially influenced the studied cohorts of young adults. Specifically, the expansion of education created more opportunities for longer training at the tertiary level (Boliver 2011; Ertl 2005). In addition, economic insecurity increased due to growing unemployment and flexible work arrangements. In Germany, the unemployment rate rose significantly after reunification and remained at that level until 2005 (OECD 2020d). After that point, non-standard employment, which had risen already, continued to increase (OECD 2020e). In the UK, however, the prevalence of non-standard work remained essentially the same during the observed period (OECD 2020e). However, unemployment was high in 1991-1993 and rose again after the economic crisis in 2008 (OECD 2020d).

In addition to these changes in the market economies, in Germany, the retrenchment of the welfare state, including the Hartz Reforms, exacerbated people's economic insecurity (Brülle 2018; Kemmerling/Bruttel 2006; OECD 2020c, 2020f). In the UK, the generosity of the welfare state in labour market matters (e. g. training and job creation) was rather limited in the early 1990s and declined even more over the observed period (OECD 2020f). Nevertheless, the generosity of the welfare system increased after 1998 (OECD 2020c). However, it had a limited effect on the general population because it targeted mainly low-income workers and families (Brewer et al. 2006). This approach demonstrates how the British policy compensates people for economic adversary rather than preventing it in the first place. These changes in the welfare policy might be reflected in and associated with the increase in economic insecurity and the divergent financial resources available to young adults to support their transition into standard employment.

In addition, in both countries, there was a move in the direction of the "adult worker model" as a family policy. This move was designed to promote mothers' employment and increase fathers' involvement in childcare (c.f. Atkinson 2017; Bünning 2015; Fagan/Norman 2012; Geisler/Kreyenfeld 2011; Schober 2014; Zoch/Hondralis 2017; Zoch/Schober 2018). Indeed, during the observed period, gender inequality in employment patterns in both countries declined and converged (OECD 2020b). These reforms created a more open opportunity structure for both genders in their work and family life choices.

In Germany, the 2007 parental leave policy reform replaced parental benefits with an income-related payment and reduced the duration of this payment from 24 to 14 months in total for both partners (Henninger et al. 2008). The family policy changes in the UK were not as profound as in Germany because in the latter, the culture of gender norms was largely rooted in its family policy. However, in Germany, the male breadwinner model was modernized a bit, as mothers began to combine their family care work with part-time jobs (Henninger et al. 2008).[5]

Based on these differences, I formulated several expectations regarding the differences between Germany and the UK in people's early career mobility and their economic and co-residential trajectories. First, I expect that due to the standardized educational system and the coordination market economy that involves lengthier training periods in Germany than in the UK, Germans are more likely to obtain continuous standard employment (called hereafter "standard careers") later than their British counterparts. However, due to the unstandardized educational system and the lack of coordination between the market and the educational system in the UK, I expect more periods without standard employment, which reflects a non-standard career pattern. These trends will be even more profound among recent cohorts of young adults in both countries because of the expansion of education and increases in economic insecurity. Therefore, I posit that:

H1a: Young adults in Germany will be more likely to obtain standard careers later than their British counterparts.

H1b: Non-standard careers will be more common in the UK than in Germany.

H1c: Late entry into standard careers and non-standard careers is expected to be more evident among recent cohorts than older cohorts, regardless of the country.

In addition, because the coordination system and the social safety net in Germany lead to more stable careers and the fact that the relatively extensive family level benefits also encourage marriage, I expect that the adverse effects of career insecurity on people's income mobility and their formation of co-residential unions will be less pronounced than in the UK. Following the same logic, I also expect that career insecurity will trigger a stronger reaction in the economic and co-residential domains in times of growing economic insecurity in the two countries. Thus, my next hypotheses state that:

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[5] While egalitarian family policy affects women's fertility choices (Björklund 2006), it is not expected to meaningfully impact co-residential union behaviour.

H2a: The mechanisms of economic insecurity and economic necessity will be more pronounced in the UK than in Germany.

H2b: These mechanisms of economic insecurity and economic necessity will be especially prominent among older cohorts in both countries and among younger cohorts in the UK, because these cohorts were exposed to growing economic insecurity.

Finally, given the expensive childcare services in the UK and the conservative family policies in Germany, I expect to see gendered life courses develop, but through different mechanisms. I maintain that in the UK, people's assessments about the costs and benefits of work and care of the household will result in gendered specialization. In contrast, in Germany, the conservative family policy and culture of gender norms, reinforced by labour market discrimination, influence the gendered division of labour. However, given that during the observed period, family policies became more gender-egalitarian, and gender inequality declined in both countries, I expect that gendered life courses will be less pronounced for recent cohorts compared to older cohorts in both countries. As a result, I maintain that:

H3a: Gendered specialization will be evident. Men are more likely to have standard careers, which translate into income mobility and the formation of co-residential unions. Women are expected to have non-standard careers, which translate into little income mobility and early and stable co-residential unions.

H3b: Gendered life courses are expected to be less dominant in younger cohorts than older cohorts.

Table 1. Cross-national variations in institutional characteristics and theoretical expectations

	Germany	The UK
	(Corporatist)	(Liberal)
Institutions of mobility regimes		
Educational system	Standardized	Unstandardized
Level of coordination	High	Low
Welfare provision	Generous (less generous for younger cohorts)	Residual (more generous for younger cohorts)
Family policy	High intervention (gender egalitarian among younger cohorts)	Low intervention (gender egalitarian among younger cohorts)
Theoretical expectations		
Timing of standard employment	Late (more pronounced among younger cohorts)	Early (less pronounced among younger cohorts)
Economic and family interrelations (insecurity and economic necessity hypotheses)	High (older cohorts)	High (older and young cohorts)
Gendered life courses (specialization)	High (older cohorts)	High (older cohort)

References: Bünning 2015; Connolly et al. 2016; Esping-Andersen 1990; Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Finch 2008; Gangl 2004; Golsch 2005; Henninger et al. 2008; Scherer 2001; Shavit/Müller 1998; Steiner/Wrohlich 2006; Trzcinski 2000

3 METHOD

To investigate the research questions, I followed the life trajectories of young adults aged 19 to 32 in Germany and the UK during 1991-2016. I chose this time frame because it covers the period from completing high school to the time when family formation usually occurs in both countries (Classbase 2018; Golsch 2005; Weiss/Schindler 2017).

It is important to acknowledge that I might lack information about those who were not (or still not) involved in partnerships during the observed period. There are two main reasons for choosing the age range. First, this time frame allows me to include information for cohorts with equal age ranges for the entire observed period. Second, the paper focuses on the formation of co-residential unions, which usually occurs before childbearing. Thus, because childbearing occurs among women ages 28.6 and 29.4 on average in the UK and Germany, respectively (according to data for 2014) (OECD 2016), I assumed that co-residential union transitions that happened earlier usually occurred within the study's age range.

I utilized several strategies. First, I used sequence analysis and cluster analysis, which allowed me to identify different patterns of career mobility based on sequences of the main economic activity for each individual and group them accordingly (McVicar/Anyadike-Danes 2002). Cluster analysis divides the sequences into groups that are the most similar and the most dissimilar to sequences in other groups. Clustering techniques are usually based on a distance matrix. A common measure for this distance matrix is optimal matching analysis (OMA), which measures the dissimilarity between sequences by quantifying the number of operations required to transform one sequence into another. In this procedure, the minimum operation required for this transformation is defined as the minimum cost. The main challenge in applying this approach is the choice of costs, which can be arbitrary (Studer/Ritschard 2016). Therefore, to prevent this problem, I set the cost of the deletion and insertion operation equal to 1 and followed a data-driven approach that considers similarity if we observe frequent transitions between them (Piccarreta/Billari 2007; Rohwer/Poetter 2004). Furthermore, I used a combination of the Ward (hierarchical algorithms) and PAM (partitioning around medoids) algorithms (Studer 2013).

As a second step, I estimated the process of early career mobility and the development of income mobility and co-residential unions in each country separately. Specifically, I used growth curve multilevel linear models that predicted the development in two outcomes. The first outcome is income mobility, measured as the real log of labour income which includes gross earnings from employment and subsidiary employment as well as profits from self-employment. Income is adjusted for inflation using the consumer price index of 2006[6]. To include zero income, which is important for the analyses, I added 1 to all absolute income values before converting them into logged terms. The second outcome is co-residential unions, measured by the probability of living with a partner, whether or not in a formal marriage (Aisenbrey/Fasang 2017; DiPrete/McManus 2000). I used this strategy because focusing only on either married or cohabiting couples would lead to a loss of unions that are relevant for the study's purpose.

For each person, I built a sequence representation of yearly activity statuses that include education, non-employment, unemployment and a combination of three dimensions of work for employed persons – full-time or part-time work, temporary or permanent work and self-employment or salaried work. I defined standard employment as a full-time, permanent, and salaried job and considered all other categories as various forms of non-standard positions, whether working or not. After excluding missing values, I analyzed 14 time points for 33,921 person-years in Germany and 24,888 person-years in the UK.

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[6] The Consumer Price Index for the UK is taken from the Office for National Statistics (2019).

In order to identify career mobility patterns from the sequence analysis, I imputed missing values for economic status using multiple imputations based on demographic variables for those who appeared in the survey at a minimum of seven points during this period.[7] For another sensitivity test, I also examined the results of sequence and cluster analysis using missing categories instead of multiple imputations. Once again, the results led to the same theoretical clusters. In addition, to correct for the representativeness of the population and for selective attrition, I ran the analyses with weights (a combination of cross-sectional and longitudinal weights), and the results remained the same. Therefore, I continued the multilevel analyses with unweighted data.

In order to measure development in both outcomes, I let the intercept and slopes of age and age squared vary between individuals with different types of careers. To evaluate the national differences in people's trajectories, I also conducted the same analysis with a pooled dataset. The results appear in the supplementary materials. In all of the models, I controlled for cohort, residency and migration background. Because the structural changes during the observed period are important for the formative stage of early adulthood, in the final analysis, I also examined the interaction with cohort effects (for the definitions and measurements of the variables, see supplementary Table A.1).

4 CONCEPTUAL BASIS

4.1 EARLY CAREER MOBILITY IN GERMANY AND THE UK

The findings from the sequence analysis and cluster analysis appear in Figure 1 and Table 2. Table 2 presents the evaluation criteria for different cluster solutions. The table indicates that, according to Ward, PAM and the combined PAM and Ward algorithms, the cluster solutions with the best criteria are those with two, three and four clusters. The ASW shows that two, three and four clusters have a relatively high coherence assignment. In addition, the R-squared drops steeply when reducing the number of clusters from four to three and from three to two clusters. Although the solution of two and four clusters could also fit with respect to these criteria, I chose the solution with three clusters.[8] The focus of the paper is the transition to standard employment instead of a single transition or different transitions between non-standard positions. Therefore, I chose the more parsimonious but also the most informative solution in this regard and continued with the model with three clusters in the subsequent analyses. This solution also provides richer theoretical and empirical information about the data, consistent with the additional sensitivity tests that included weights (see supplementary Table A.2 and Figure A.3 for more information about the goodness of fit of the clusters).

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[7] I used multiple imputations that predict economic status by demographic characteristics for those who appeared in at least seven time points in the sample. In total, 29% of the person-year observations were predicted in the UK and 30% of the observations were predicted in Germany. The multiple imputations are based on age and include the prediction of missing values for 2009 in the UK because the BHPS and the Understanding Society survey skipped this year.

[8] Other indicators, such as PBC, HG, and HGSD also show relatively high values for the model with four clusters, but these measures tend to favour high numbers of clusters. In general, it seems that all of the measures that differ in the three and four clusters are not too large (see supplementary Table A.2). However, additional examinations show that in contrast to the model with four clusters, the model with three clusters was not sensitive to the use of weights.

Table 2. Evaluation criteria of cluster analysis

	WARD		PAM		WARD+PAM	
	ASW	R2	ASW	R2	ASW	R2
Cluster 2	0.21	0.14	0.28	0.11	0.25	0.13
Cluster 3	0.24	0.20	0.26	0.20	**0.25**	**0.21**
Cluster 4	0.08	0.23	0.15	0.24	0.24	0.23
Cluster 5	0.08	0.25	0.16	0.27	0.16	0.27
Cluster 6	0.09	0.27	0.17	0.30	0.17	0.30
Cluster 7	0.09	0.29	0.17	0.31	0.13	0.31
Cluster 8	0.10	0.31	0.17	0.33	0.13	0.33
Cluster 9	0.11	0.32	0.16	0.34	0.14	0.34
Cluster 10	0.11	0.33	0.15	0.35	0.14	0.35
Cluster 11	0.10	0.34	0.15	0.36	0.14	0.36
Cluster 12	0.11	0.35	0.15	0.36	0.13	0.36

Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

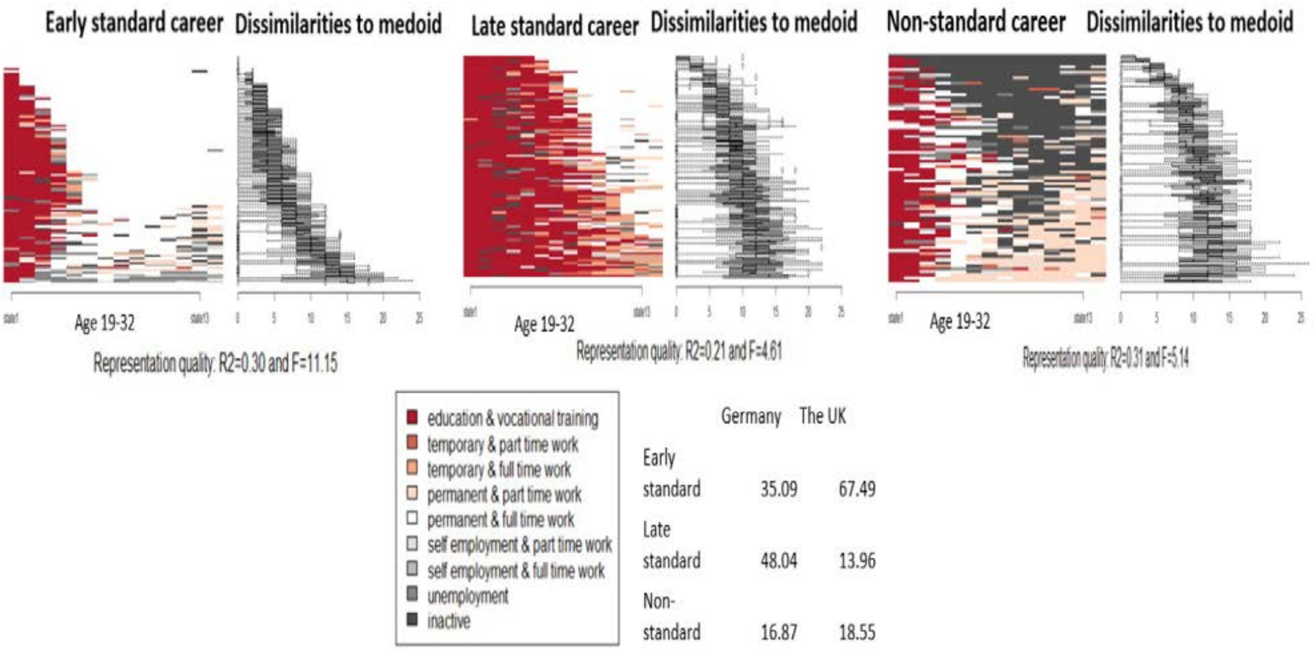
As Figure 1 illustrates, three main career mobility patterns were evident in both countries: early standard career, long training and late standard career, and non-standard career (see supplementary Figures A.1-A.2 for more information about cluster analysis with missing categories and for the weighted cluster results). Specifically, in Germany, while 35.09 % of the people experienced an early standard career trajectory, in the UK, a much larger share of people had this type of early career (67.49 %). In addition, while in Germany 48.04 % had long training periods and late standard careers, in the UK only 13.96 % did so. In both countries, there was a relatively similar share of people with non-standard career patterns, which reflects persistent career marginalization, either through part-time work or labour market disconnections. However, in the UK this share was larger with 18.55 % of young adults with non-standard careers compared to 16.87 % in Germany (for more information about the classification of the young adults into the various early careers, see supplementary Figures A.4-A.5).

As I expected in H1a, there are clear differences between the countries, especially in relation to the timing of beginning a standard job. In Germany, beginning standard employment occurs relatively late, presumably due to the standardized educational system that is coordinated with employers' demands to ensure job matches and a smooth education-to-work transition. In contrast, in the UK, individuals begin standard jobs earlier because on-the-job training is more prevalent. However, as H1b posited, compared to Germany, non-standard careers are more prevalent in the UK. However, they are characterized mainly by inactivity and part-time work, which may not be due only to job mismatches.

Furthermore, the findings in Figure 2 show that structural changes seem to play an important role in shaping both the timing of obtaining a standard position and the gender specialization within households. Specifically, in the UK, changes over time in early career mobility are reflected in an increasing share of men with non-standard careers (2.01 % for men who were born in 1972 to 1974 and 4.74 % for those who were born in 1981 to 1984) with some additional increase in the share of women with late standard careers (10.43 % for the 1972 to 1974 cohorts and 13.72 % for the 1981 to 1984 cohorts). In Germany, we see even more profound changes in early career mobility, reflected in the large increase in the share of young people with late standard careers together with a slight increase in the share of men with non-standard careers. In accordance with H1c, there is a growing share of people with non-standard career patterns, but mainly among men in the UK. There is also an increasing share of people who delay entry into standard employment, especially in Germany.

In addition, the findings in Figure 3 support part of H3a by demonstrating the role of gender in early career mobility patterns. Men were far more likely to have a standard career pattern (early or late), while women were more likely to have a non-standard career. These gendered career patterns seem to change over time, particularly in

Figure 1. Patterns of career progression in Germany and the UK

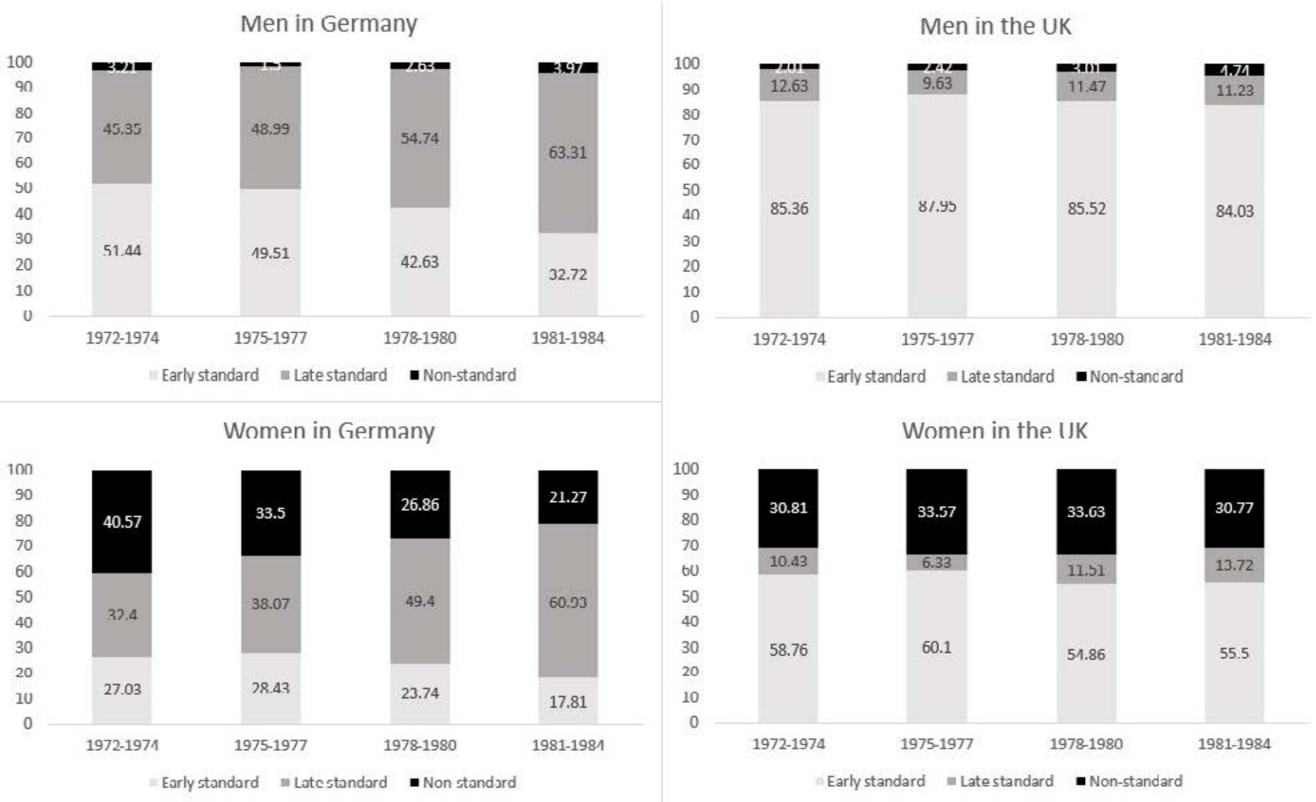


	Germany	The UK
Early standard	35.09	67.49
Late standard	48.04	13.96
Non-standard	16.87	18.55

Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Notes: The sequence results for early and late standard careers are sorted by the timing of entering into a permanent and full-time position in the sequence with the LCS and K=100 ($p < 0.001$). The results for non-standard careers are sorted by the timing of entering an inactive status and K=80 ($p < 0.001$)

Figure 2. Career patterns by country, gender, and cohort



Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Germany. While in Germany, the share of women with non-standard careers declined from 40.57 % in older cohorts to 21.27 % in recent cohorts, in the UK, it remained around 30.77 %-33.63 % during this period. Thus, it seems that in Germany, the gender equalization in family policy during the observed period translated into greater gender equality in early career patterns among the youngest cohorts. While I expected to find convergence of both countries in gendered early career patterns, the findings indicate that gender equality in early careers is stronger in Germany than in the UK, which partly supports H3b.

4.2 EARLY CAREER MOBILITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN ECONOMIC AND FAMILY TRAJECTORIES

The findings from the growth curve multilevel models are presented in Table 3 and Figures 4-5. These models provide answers to the second and third research questions: How is the timing of obtaining standard work associated with income mobility and with the creation of co-residential unions? First, in both countries, long training and late standard careers, as well as non-standard careers, seem to delay income mobility, compared to beginning standard jobs earlier. As expected, in the UK (mainly among men), the decline in income growth for having a non-standard career compared to an early standard career was more pronounced than in Germany (see also the results from the average marginal effects in supplementary Figures A.6-A.7). In other words, young adults with this type of career pattern suffer from greater economic insecurity in the UK than in Germany. Do these types of early careers translate into differences in the formation of co-residential unions in parallel to the development of income mobility? In addition, are these processes systematically related to mobility regimes?

In both contexts, there was evidence of the synchronization in income mobility and the formation of co-residential unions due to career mobility among men. In contrast, among women, this process was relevant only for those with standard careers. Specifically, for both men and women, delayed entrance into standard work delays not only their economic mobility but also their creation of co-residential unions compared with those who start standard jobs early. Furthermore, once these people obtained standard work, their income improved, and their chances of being in co-residential unions increased in parallel. In addition, these differences in the timing of family formation were greater in the UK than in Germany. The results also show that the expected gaps between early and late standard careers in these developments were significant (see supplementary Figures A.6 and A.7).

Moreover, in both countries, men with non-standard careers and little income mobility experienced a longer delay in their co-residential unions than those with early standard careers. However, these differences were consistently significant only in the UK. Together, these findings imply that people's long-term absence from standard work might result in a persistent solo life and economic dependency during this transitional period. Generally, these findings support the insecurity hypothesis. Income mobility and the creation of co-residential unions progress in the same way when people have career security. However, while in Germany, this process is consistently significant only for those with standard careers, in the UK, it holds both for people with standard careers and for men with non-standard careers.

These findings are consistent with H2a and demonstrate the impact of differences in the institutions of the mobility regimes in each country. The stronger market coordination and generosity of the welfare system that provides support largely based on families rather than individuals in Germany moderate the adverse consequences of career insecurity in the family domain. In contrast, in the more individualized, less coordinated,

Table 3. Multilevel models predicting income mobility and co-residential union trajectories by country and gender

Germany					The UK			
	Men		**Women**		**Men**		**Women**	
	Income mobility	**Co-residential union**	**Income mobility**	**Co-residential union**	**Income mobility**	**Co-residential union**	**Income mobility**	**Co-residential union**
	B **(S.E)**	**B** **(S.E)**	**B** **(S.E)**	**B** **(S.E)**	**B** **(S.E)**	**B** **(S.E)**	**B** **(S.E)**	**B** **(S.E)**
Career patterns								
Long training & late standard	**-2.21*** **	-0.03	**-3.09*** **	**-0.06***	**-3.03*** **	**-0.08**	**-2.06*** **	**-0.11***
	0.16	0.02	0.21	0.03	0.25	0.04	0.26	0.05
Non-standard career	-0.99	0.01	**-1.16*** **	**0.20*** **	**-2.61*** **	0.11	**-1.46*** **	**0.24*** **
	0.51	0.08	0.23	0.04	0.49	0.08	0.18	0.03
Age	**0.37*** **	**0.05*** **	**0.42*** **	**0.06*** **	**0.47*** **	**0.07*** **	**0.54*** **	**0.08*** **
	0.03	0.00	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.00
Career patterns*age								
Long training & late standard	**-0.10***	**-0.03*** **	**0.12***	**-0.02****	0.09	**-0.05*** **	0.07	**-0.04*** **
	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.06	0.01	0.06	0.01
Non -standard career	**-0.45*** **	-0.03	**-0.81*** **	**0.04*** **	**-0.71*** **	**-0.05*** **	**-0.70*** **	**-0.02****
	0.13	0.01	0.06	0.01	0.11	0.01	0.04	0.01
Age squared	**-0.02*** **	**-0.00*** **	**-0.03*** **	**-0.00*** **	**-0.02*** **	**-0.00*** **	**-0.03*** **	**-0.00*** **
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Career patterns*age squared								
Long training & late standard	**0.02*** **	**0.00*** **	**0.01***	**0.00*** **	**0.01****	**0.00*** **	**0.01***	**0.00*** **
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Non -standard career	**0.03****	0.00	**0.06*** **	**-0.00*** **	**0.04*** **	0.00	**0.04*** **	0.00
	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Variance individual								
Age slope	0.05	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.07	0.00
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intercept	3.96	0.14	5.07	0.18	3.65	0.13	4.57	0.17
	0.25	0.01	0.29	0.01	0.23	0.01	0.26	0.01
Covariance	-0.33	-0.01	-0.49	-0.01	-0.28	-0.01	-0.45	-0.01
	0.03	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.03	0.00
Persons-years	**15,581**		**18,340**		**11,198**		**13,690**	
Persons	**1476**		**1,699**		**1,071**		**1,311**	

Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Significance levels: * p < .05 ** p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

A Variance of individuals: Confidence intervals for age slope, intercept, and covariance are different from zero.

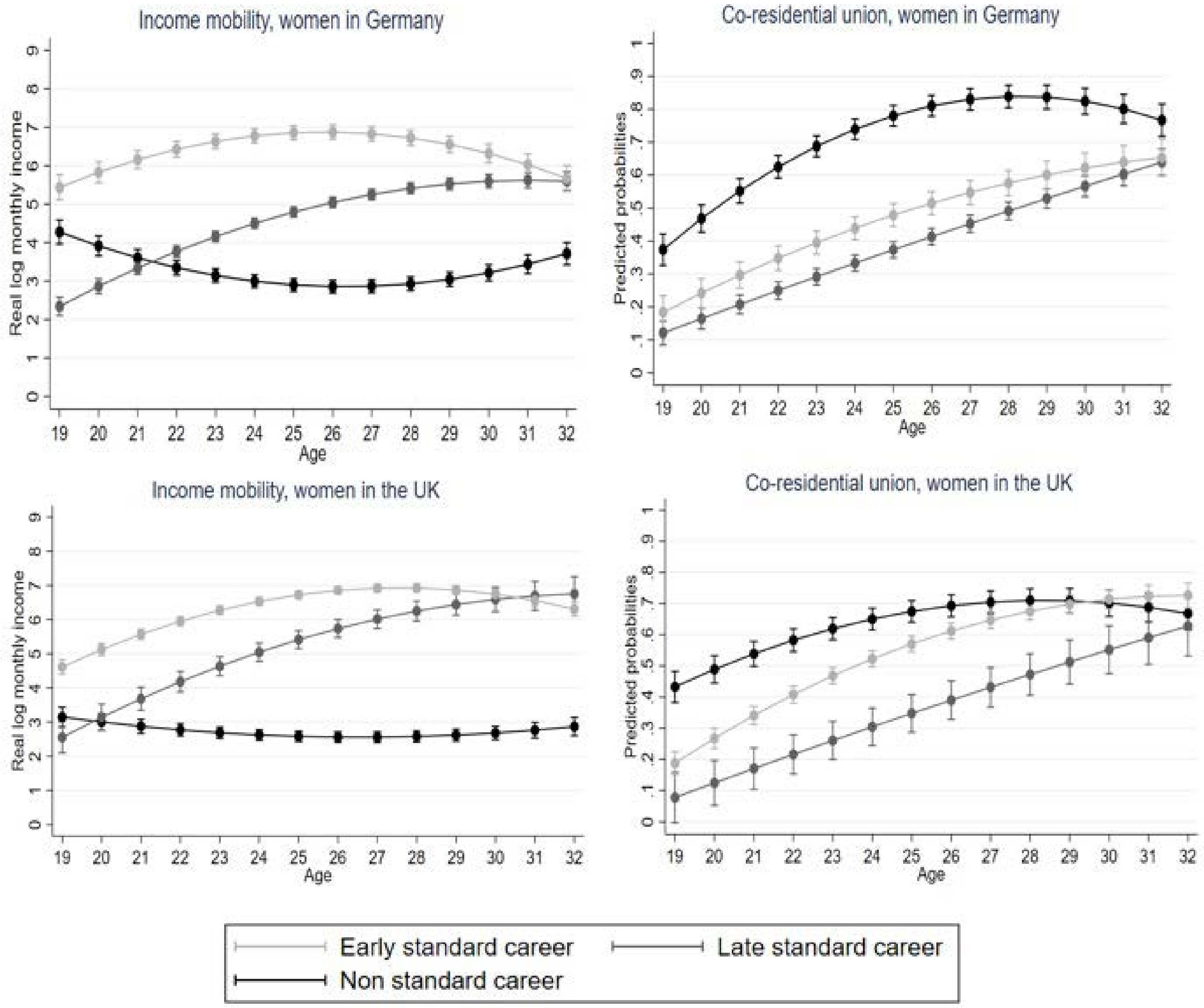
b Omitted category: Early standard career.

c All models control for demographic characteristics: migration background, cohorts, and residency.

and less generous welfare systems in the UK, market forces play a major role in people's behaviours and choices in the family domain.

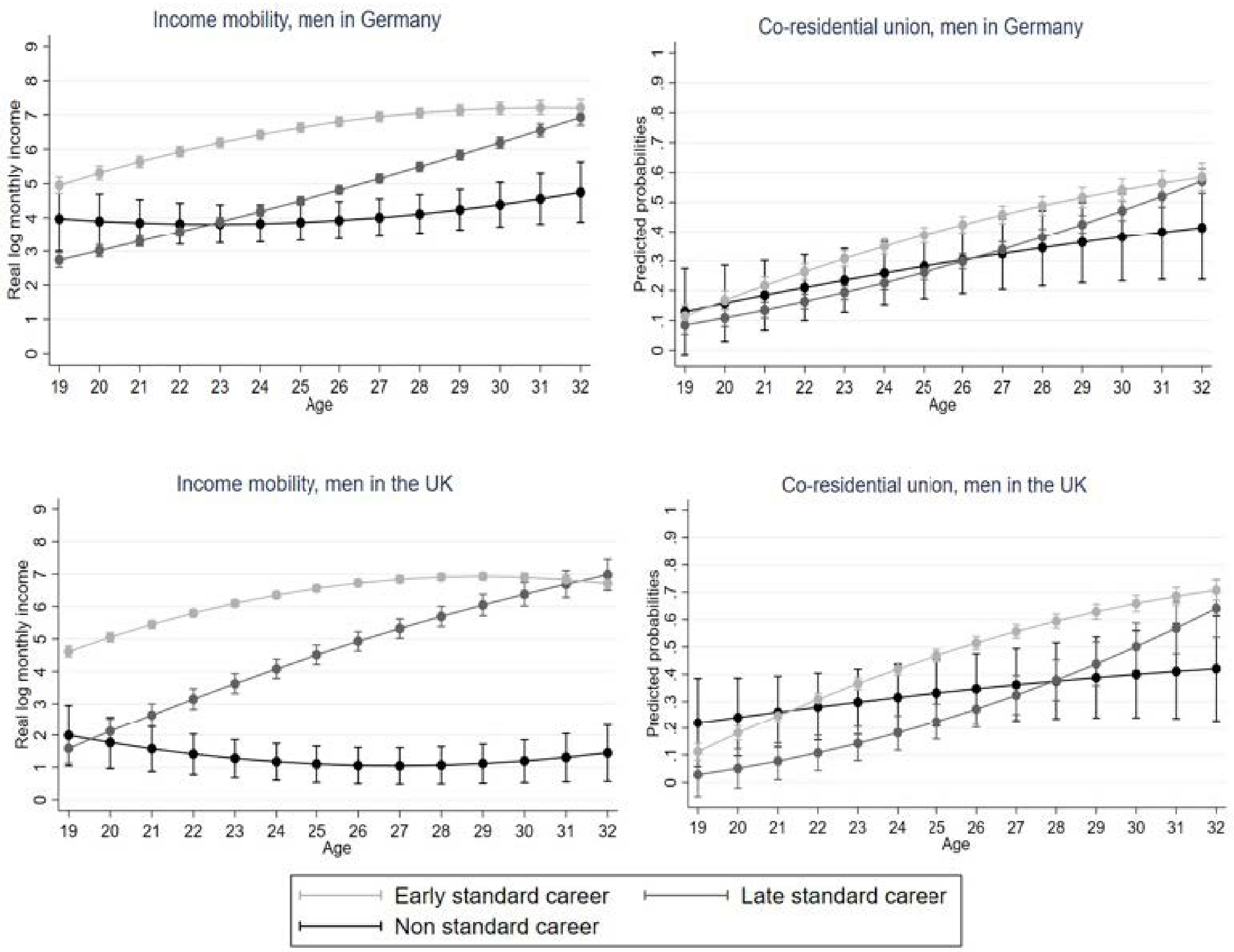
In addition, the findings highlight the gendered life courses in the two countries. Similar to men with non-standard careers, women with these career types also experienced limited income mobility. However, their creation of co-residential unions followed different trajectories, depending on the country. British women with non-standard careers formed partnerships early, but their chances of doing so increased only at the beginning of this period, with little growth in this area later. Interestingly, similar to their British counterparts, German women with non-standard careers formed partnerships early, without having income mobility. However, unlike British women, their chances of forming co-residential unions remained very high over time.

Figure 3. Estimated values and predicted probabilities of economic mobility and co-residential union trajectories, women by country



Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Figure 4. Estimated values and predicted probabilities of economic mobility and co-residential union trajectories for men by country



Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

British women with non-standard careers and little income mobility tend to form co-residential unions early in life, indicating that for them, economic necessity is presumably the mechanism that drives them to form co-residential unions “too early”. They do so without extensively testing whether they match with their partners or not. Therefore, consistent with hypothesis H2a, they experience little progression in their relationships later in life.[9] Conversely and interestingly, for their German counterparts, the stability and strong growth in the probability of co-residential unions imply that a culture of gender norms with respect to who “should” be the main provider of economic security shapes these strong, unchanging co-residential trajectories. In other words, in conservative contexts where women are structurally expected to be dependent on their partners (either their spouse or co-residential partner), the specialization mechanism becomes more relevant. These early life trajectories among German women with non-standard careers align with the described gendered life courses in H3a, which assumes early, strong and stable co-residential union trajectories and limited income mobility.

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[9] Non-standard careers include two meaningful groups. One group includes people who switch to part-time work from full-time work and the other group includes people with persistent non-employment. Additional analysis showed that the “specialization” mechanism exists for the two groups in Germany, while in the UK, “specialization” exists only for the first group and “economic necessity” exists only in the second group.

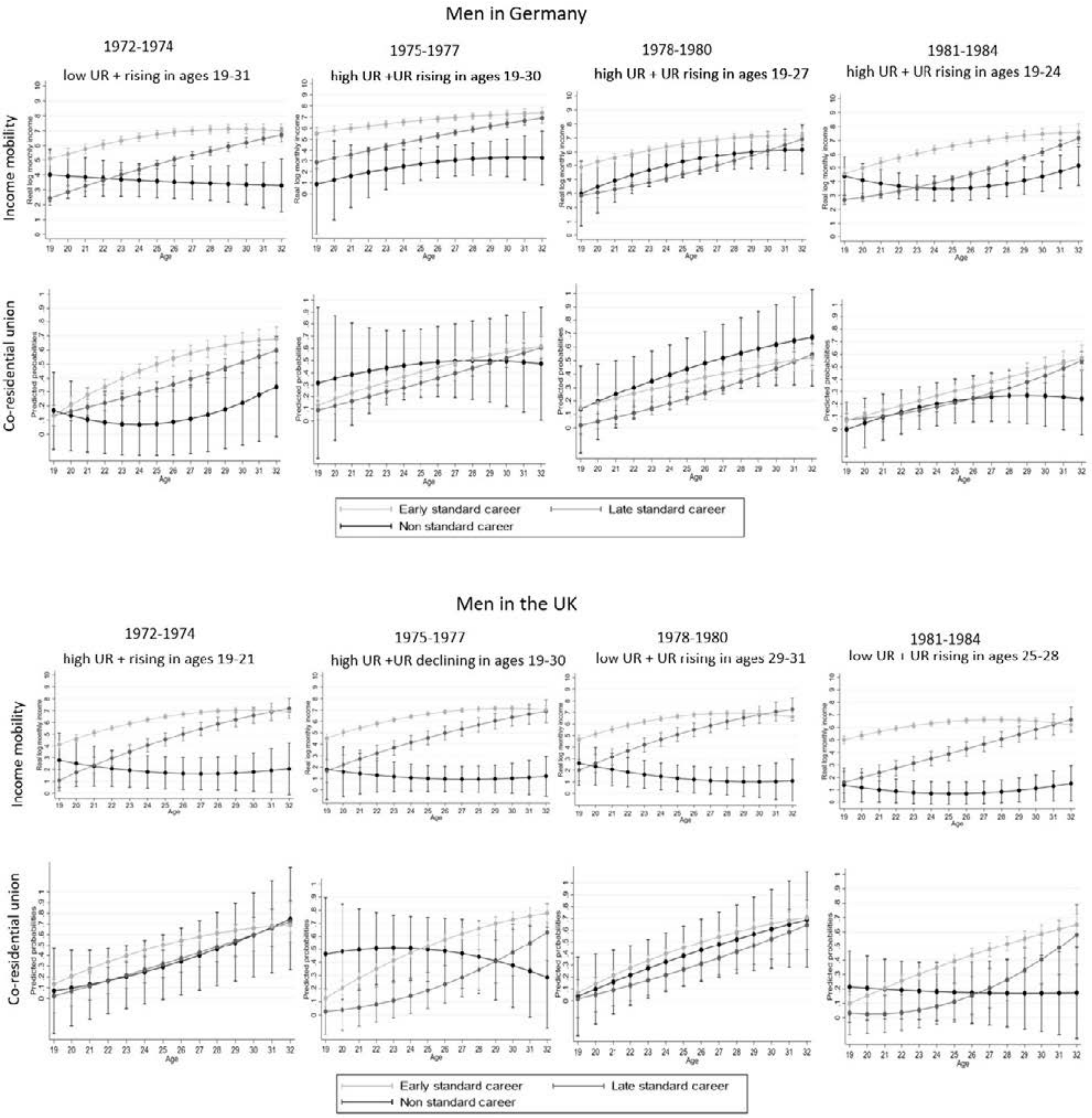
Finally, to assess the impact of structural changes on the association between early career patterns and income mobility and co-residential unions, I examined the cohort effects in an additional model (results are available upon request). The findings from these models (Figures 6 and 7) indicate that, as expected, career insecurity strongly delays income mobility and co-residential unions for men with late and non-standard careers compared to those with early standard careers among older cohorts in Germany (1972-1974), but not among younger cohorts. Moreover, this mechanism of "economic insecurity" also seems to be stronger among older cohorts in the UK, but it is especially consistent and profound among younger cohorts in the UK (1981-1984). These findings support H2b. The only exception is the fact that older cohorts in the UK were not as affected by it as those in the young cohorts, especially the men.

Why do we see that men in the older cohorts in Germany and in the recent cohort in the UK have the longest delay in their income mobility and co-residential life due to their career insecurity? Unlike other cohorts, these cohorts have encountered periods of both low unemployment and a dramatic increase in unemployment in their broader social environment. These events occurred during a critical developmental stage of their lives (see supplementary Table A.3 for more information on unemployment rates by country, year, age, and cohorts). Thus, it might be the shock in the change in the level of economic insecurity that triggered the major differences between the cohorts in their progression in economic and family domains. As economic insecurity increased, those with early standard careers who were not affected by the change in economic conditions were economically and emotionally willing and able to cement their relationships and create co-residential unions. In contrast, those who did not have a stable position at this point experienced extreme delays in both their economic and co-residential lives. In other time periods, however, when unemployment rates were high but not increasing, the different reactions to economic insecurity were less profound.

Earlier research provides some support for these findings. Researchers have demonstrated that the personal experience of unemployment that reduces one's standard of living and makes one feel that he or she has lost social status, rather than normative perceptions at the national level, erodes trust in the political system (Giustozzi/Gangl 2021).

Moreover, when observing the life trajectories of German women in Figure 6, the findings also demonstrate the strong role of the culture of gender norms. Women with non-standard careers have limited income mobility but strong, stable levels of co-residential unions, despite the major economic changes during this period. However, the recent cohorts in Germany with early standard careers who have high levels of income mobility are less likely to establish co-residential unions than their older cohorts, regardless of the changes in the economic conditions. This finding may imply that there is a parallel trend emerging in Germany (Gangl/Ziefle 2015) of increased economic independence in work and family life. This trend does not appear in the UK. Robustness checks, described in supplementary text A.1, did not alter the main conclusions.

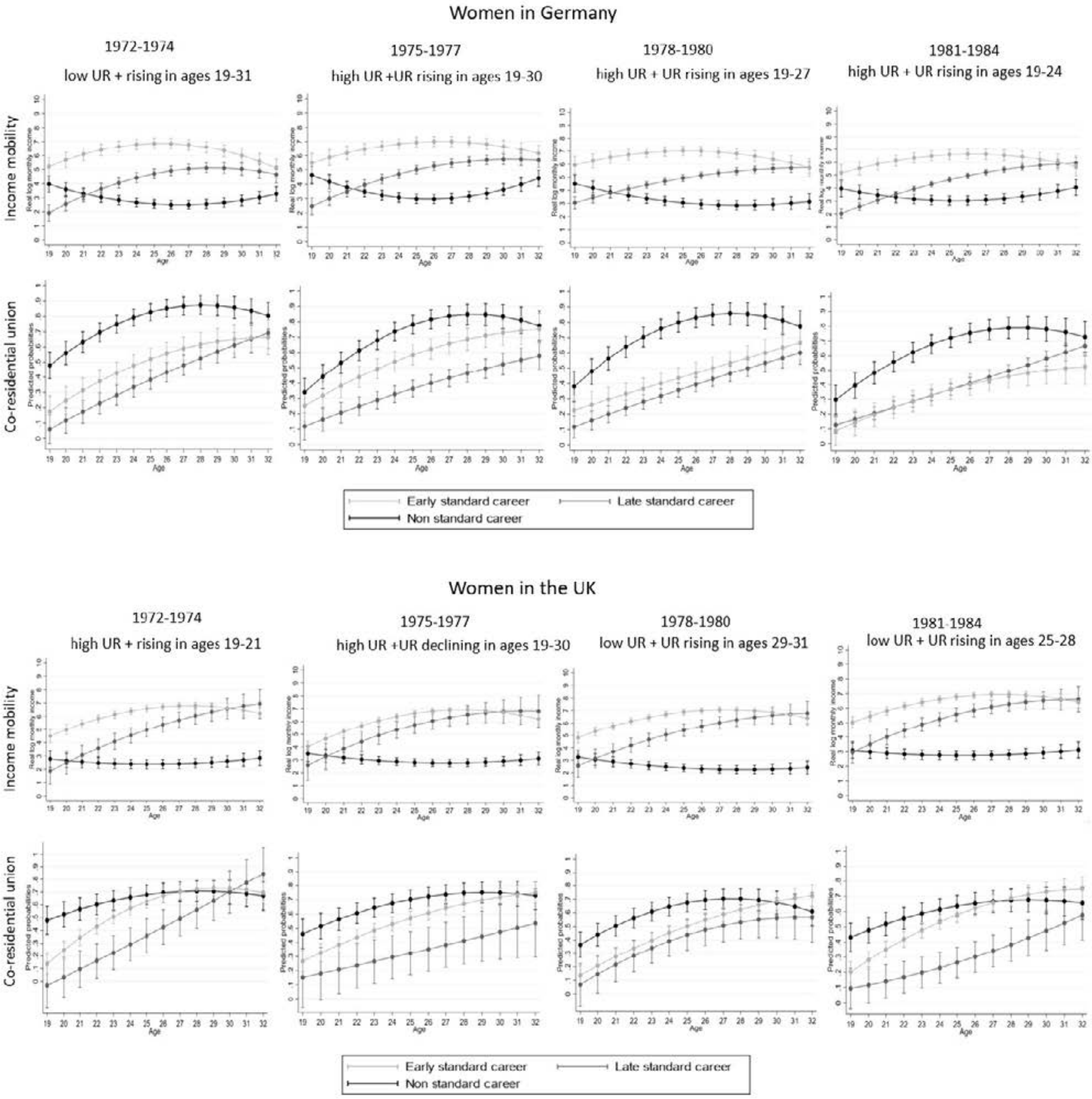
Figure 5. Estimated values and predicted probabilities of economic mobility and co-residential union trajectories by cohorts for men by country



Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Note: a) UR = unemployment rate

Figure 6. Estimated values and predicted probabilities of economic mobility and co-residential union trajectories by cohorts for women by country



Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Note: a) UR = unemployment rate

5 SUMMARY

Rising economic insecurity (Kalleberg 2009) has created new challenges for liberal societies as new generations of young adults have more difficulty obtaining economic independence in their transition into adulthood (Larson et al. 2002). This paper investigates the process of transitioning to adulthood by providing an extensive analysis of the role of standard employment and its timing in shaping income mobility and co-residential unions in two countries with different manifestations of liberalism – Germany and the UK.

The findings reveal several interesting insights. First, in Germany, young adults are more likely to begin standard work relatively late compared to the UK. Indeed, this delay in obtaining standard employment is profound among recent cohorts in Germany. In addition, among recent cohorts in the UK, there are more people with non-standard careers, particularly women.

Second, non-standard and late standard careers seem to delay young adults' income mobility and their formation of co-residential unions. In both contexts, there is synchronization between the economic and family domains, but in the UK, this process is consistently significant and stronger than in Germany. This outcome supports the *insecurity mechanism* that assumes that people are less willing to make long-term plans in insecure stages of their lives (Blossfeld et al. 2006; Golsch 2003). In addition, this parallel progression in income mobility and co-residential unions is stronger when economic conditions deteriorate in critical developmental stages of people's lives.

Third, in accordance with prior research (Blossfeld et al. 2006), I also found gender differences in career patterns that had consequences for economic and family life. However, I determined that the potential mechanisms underlying these processes vary by mobility regimes. In both countries, there was a substantial share of women who had non-standard careers and economic precariousness. While I expected the differences between the countries in gendered early careers to decline and converge, in Germany, women experienced a greater shift in their career behaviours, with a smaller share of women with non-standard careers in recent cohorts compared to the UK. In the UK, the share of women with non-standard careers remained high and stable. These unexpected results may be due to the fact that I looked at the entire extent of women's careers rather than at one point in time. Overall, these findings imply a behavioural change regarding gender norms in Germany towards gender equality, which is in line with the more gender egalitarian family policy reforms in the early 2000s (Bünning 2015; Zoch/Schober 2018). In the UK, on the other hand, persistent precariousness for women remained high and stable in spite of the more generous welfare payments and more gender-egalitarian policies for younger cohorts.

The partnership behaviour of women with non-standard careers varies depending on the mobility regime but is unaffected by any structural change. British women with non-standard careers may form co-residential unions early without having income mobility. They also experience little progression in their partnership trajectories later in life. Given that these women tend to form co-residential unions because of economic pressure, it is unsurprising that their relationships progress slowly over time. This finding aligns with the *economic necessity mechanism* about cohabitation instability among poor women in the UK. As earlier research shows, these women are less likely to marry. They are more likely to cohabitate, but their cohabitation is usually of short duration (Lichter et al. 2006).

German women with non-standard careers, on the other hand, may also enter into co-residential unions early before having income mobility.

However, their chances of being in such partnerships largely increase and remain relatively high in later stages of life, meaning that strong dependency on their partners may drive their partnership behaviour. Thus, their life trajectories are more in accordance with the *specialization mechanism*. This finding, together with the “standard” life pathway that was evident for men in Germany, confirms the gender hypothesis that men form co-residential unions when they feel economically secure, while women form such partnerships when they are economically dependent (Blossfeld et al. 2006). These findings are in line with the conservative family policy in Germany that rewards married couples and largely provides benefits to families rather than to individuals. The implication of this finding is that the culture of gender norms in the form of Germany’s conservative family policy, which prevailed among older cohorts, might play a role in shaping gendered trajectories throughout life. Evidently, the strong decline in gendered life courses in Germany happened at the same time when family policy became gender egalitarian.

This study has several limitations. First, it compares two mobility regimes. I argued that the differences between Germany and the UK in this study are explained by the variation in their general opportunity structure, in which several institutions operate together. However, it is possible that other factors that I could not capture might account for the differences between the two countries. A cross-national comparison with a large number of countries that includes the Scandinavian countries which have comparatively the most egalitarian social policy model might result in a more precise analysis with respect to the institutional mechanisms that shape life trajectories. Second, data limitations did not allow me to track the long-term trends of young adults from later cohorts (1985+). Therefore, it was impossible to estimate the potential impact of a shorter time for obtaining a degree following the Bologna reform on the economic and family trajectories in Germany.

The study also makes several contributions. First, it adds new and important insights to the social stratification and mobility research by integrating the timing of lives perspective. The findings imply that standard work and its timing play a crucial role in the chronological development of social roles in people’s economic and family life. Thus, delays in entering standard work or failure to do so make the transition to adulthood longer and result in young adults being more dependent on others. These consequences are especially acute in times of growing economic insecurity in both countries and are particular pronounced in the stages of life when social roles are developed. In addition, in more extreme cases, as was consistently evident in the UK cohorts, such delays, failures or transitions that occur early might also result in a persistent lack of progression in co-residential unions and economic dependency later in life.

Changes in the economy and cultural values in modern societies that have eroded the traditional formats of work and family and promoted more flexible lifestyles in these two domains (Lesthaeghe 2010) may account in part for the late and non-standard transitions in economic and family life among young adults from recent cohorts. However, at the same time, this flexibility and the long period of economic dependency have pushed some people into persistent career marginality and a precarious life trajectory, thereby challenging the liberal script of individual autonomy. The study’s findings demonstrate the temporal dynamic in career and family spheres and reveal a new challenge of the liberal order in modern societies. When young adults do not become independent, they are less able to participate in and contribute to society as adults, which may hinder the future development of societies at large (Larson et al. 2002).

In addition, the fact that having standard careers plays a role in the progression of multiple trajectories in people's lives challenges the current policy framework. This role is particularly important given the contemporary trends of changing family structures, reflecting the fact that more people are remaining single (Lesthaeghe 2010). Naturally, because the welfare triangle of the market with the family and the state are interconnected, changes in one welfare component may result in changes in the other components. Thus, the study's findings have not only major demographic implications but also are important for welfare policies. In recent decades, the retrenchment of the welfare state in labour market matters may result in unequal opportunities for young adults in their transition into standard employment. In turn, this situation might make young people more dependent on the economic and family domains, which could affect future dependence on the welfare state through pensions and social assistance systems. As a result, these people may face cumulative disadvantages in several spheres in later stages of life that may translate into an increase in lifetime economic inequality (Boehnke et al. 2015).

Finally, the paper highlights the role of family policy in determining gendered life pathways. In both countries, gender specialization prevails, and men are still the main providers of economic security. Thus, we see more women who form co-residential unions early without having economic mobility. However, in the UK, economic pressure from market forces seems to be an important mechanism in the partnership behaviour of women with non-standard careers and gendered life pathways. In contrast, in Germany, cultural forces in the form of gender norms regarding who "should" be the main provider of economic security, which are reinforced by family policies, translate into gender inequality in life trajectories. These findings raise the question of whether the recent family policy reforms in Germany, as in other liberal societies (Daly 2011), which targeted increasing mothers' participation in the labour market, will continue to change this model and lead to securer trajectories for women.

The current study demonstrates how the delay in obtaining standard employment and rising economic insecurity challenge the way young adults integrate into adult life. While the study focused on 1991 to 2016, the challenges and long-term economic and family implications I identified are especially crucial in light of the increase in unemployment and the precariousness of employment during the COVID-19 pandemic (Blustein et al. 2020). This study provides a starting point to investigate this issue in future research.

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SUPPLEMENTARY DATA

Supplementary Table A.1. Descriptive statistics, definitions for variables in Germany and the UK

	Germany	Definition/scale	The UK	Definition/scale
	% /mean (s.e. between, s.e. within)		% /mean (s.e. between, s.e. within)	
Gender (male=1)	46.49	Male=1; Female=0	44.94	Male=1; Female=0
Cohort				
1972/1974	21.98	Dummy variables (1972/1974= omitted category)	23.27	Dummy variables (1972/1974= omitted category)
1975/1977	22.39		26.42	
1978/1980	25.29		24.11	
1981/1984	30.33		26.21	
Migration background	24.91	Any migration background=1; No migration background=0	8.53	Any migration background=1; No migration background=0
Region				
England			63.75	Dummy variables (England=omitted category)
Wales			13.42	
Scotland			14.76	
Northern Ireland			8.07	
East	27.38	East=1; West=0		
Age	25.58 (1.88, 3.40)	19-32	25.55 (1.7, 3.52)	19-32
Status				
Education & vocational training	24.43	Current economic activity based on information about employment status (e.g., full time, part time), work contract (e.g., temporary, permanent) and occupational position (e.g., employment, self-employment, education, inactivity or unemployment)	9.06	Current economic activity based on information about type of work (full time, part time), work contract (temporary vs. permanent) current economic activity (self-employment, (employment, education, inactivity or unemployment)
Fixed term & part time work	3.13		1.07	
Fixed term & full-time work	6.94		3.34	
Permanent contract & part time work	6.79		8.40	
Permanent contract & full-time work	33.92		55.39	
Self-employment & part time work	2.83		0.63	
Self-employment & full-time work	3.24		3.28	
Unemployment	8.03		6.61	

	Germany	Definition/scale	The UK	Definition/scale
	% /mean (s.e. between, s.e. within)		% /mean (s.e. between, s.e. within)	
Inactivity	10.69		12.22	
Marital partnership (living with a partner=1)	42.02	Living with a partner=1/ No partner in the household=0	49.92	Living with a partner=1/ No partner in the household=0
Economic independence (monthly income)	1099.18 (797.35,849.16)	Gross labour income (monthly)	1064.07 (698.71, 695.50)	Gross labour income (monthly)
N	3,175		2,381	

Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Supplementary Table A.2. Evaluation criteria of cluster analysis

	PBC	HG	HGSD	ASW	ASWw	CH	R2	CHsq	R2sq	HC
Cluster 2	0.47	0.55	0.55	0.25	0.25	821.65	0.13	1542.08	0.22	0.21
Cluster 3	0.55	0.65	0.65	0.25	0.25	724.2	0.21	1537.89	0.36	0.17
Cluster 4	0.56	0.69	0.69	0.24	0.24	567.73	0.23	1230.61	0.4	0.15
Cluster 5	0.47	0.62	0.62	0.16	0.17	508.99	0.27	1093.06	0.44	0.2
Cluster 6	0.5	0.69	0.69	0.17	0.17	471.84	0.3	1050.96	0.49	0.17
Cluster 7	0.42	0.64	0.64	0.13	0.13	411.53	0.31	909.49	0.5	0.2
Cluster 8	0.44	0.67	0.67	0.13	0.13	383.41	0.33	869.35	0.52	0.18
Cluster 9	0.45	0.71	0.71	0.14	0.14	364.8	0.34	841.89	0.55	0.17
Cluster 10	0.45	0.73	0.73	0.14	0.14	332.79	0.35	769.71	0.56	0.16
Cluster 11	0.45	0.75	0.75	0.14	0.14	312.74	0.36	735.41	0.57	0.15
Cluster 12	0.42	0.73	0.73	0.13	0.13	288.39	0.36	682.23	0.58	0.16

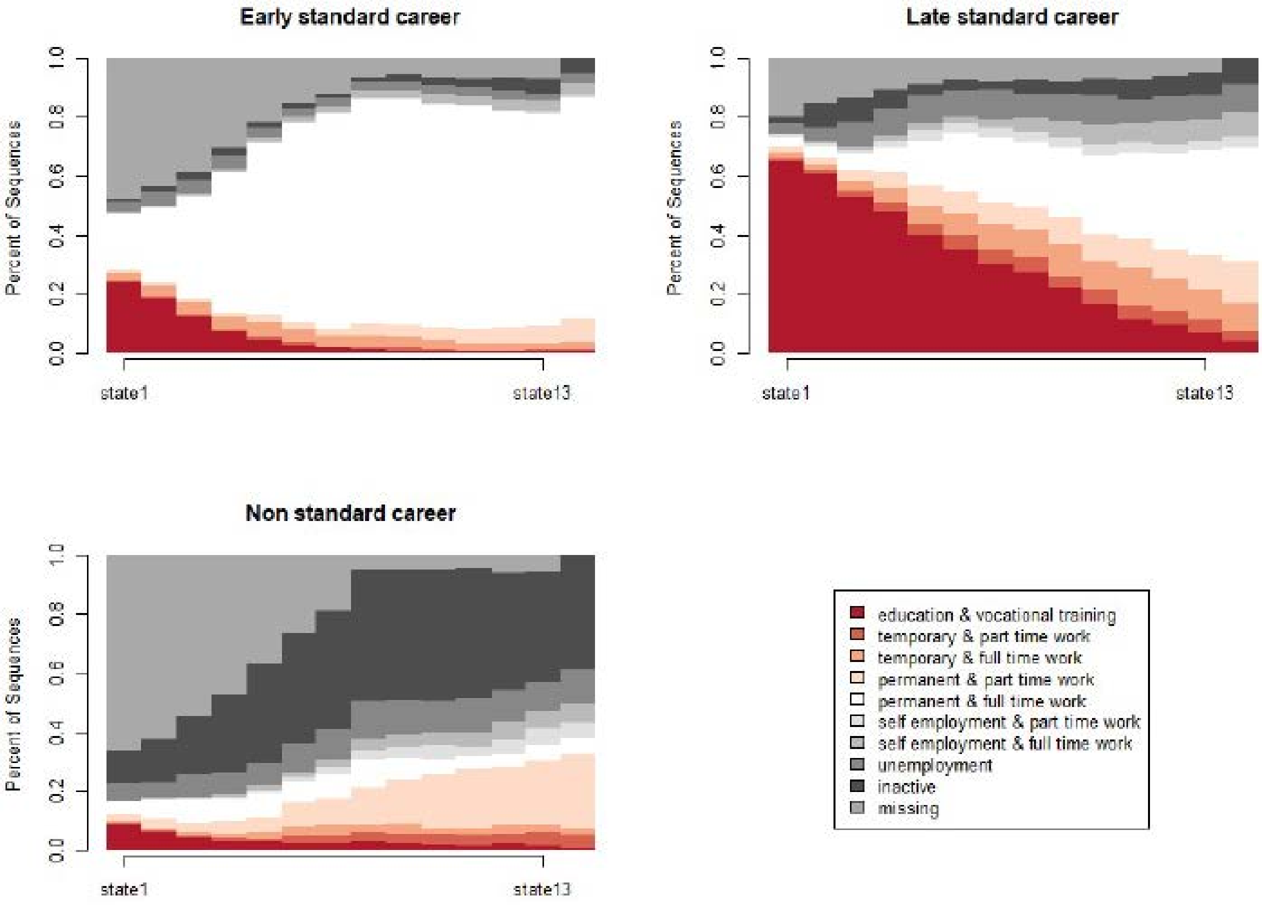
Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Supplementary Table A.3. Unemployment rate by country, year, cohort, and age

	Germany	The UK		1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
1991	5.5	8.6		19												
1992	6.6	9.8		20	19											
1993	7.8	10.2		21	20	19										
1994	8.5	9.3		22	21	20	19									
1995	8.3	8.5		23	22	21	20	19								
1996	8.9	7.9		24	23	22	21	20	19							
1997	9.7	6.8		25	24	23	22	21	20	19						
1998	9.5	6.1		26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19					
1999	8.6	5.9		27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19				
2000	8.0	5.4		28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19			
2001	7.9	5.0		29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19		
2002	8.7	5.1		30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	
2003	9.8	5.0		31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19
2004	10.5	4.7		32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20
2005	11.3	4.8			32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21
2006	10.3	5.4				32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22
2007	8.5	5.3					32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23
2008	7.4	5.6						32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24
2009	7.6	7.6							32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25
2010	7.0	7.8								32	31	30	29	28	27	26
2011	5.8	8.1									32	31	30	29	28	27
2012	5.4	7.9										32	31	30	29	28
2013	5.2	7.6											32	31	30	29
2014	5.0	6.1												32	31	30
2015	4.6	5.3													32	31
2016	4.1	4.8														32

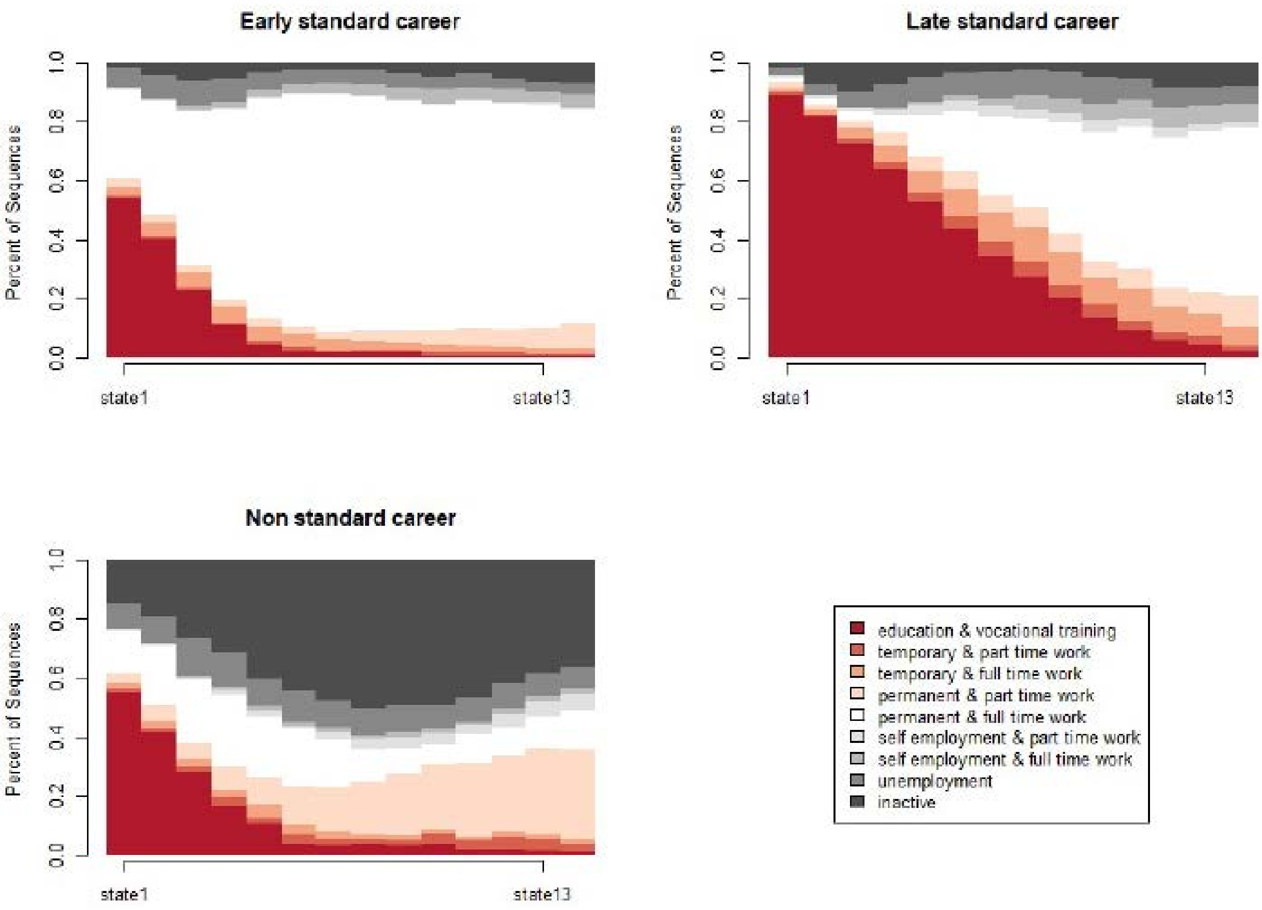
OECD iLibrary: Unemployment rate (indicator), 2020

Supplementary Figure A.1. Early career pattern with special category of missing values



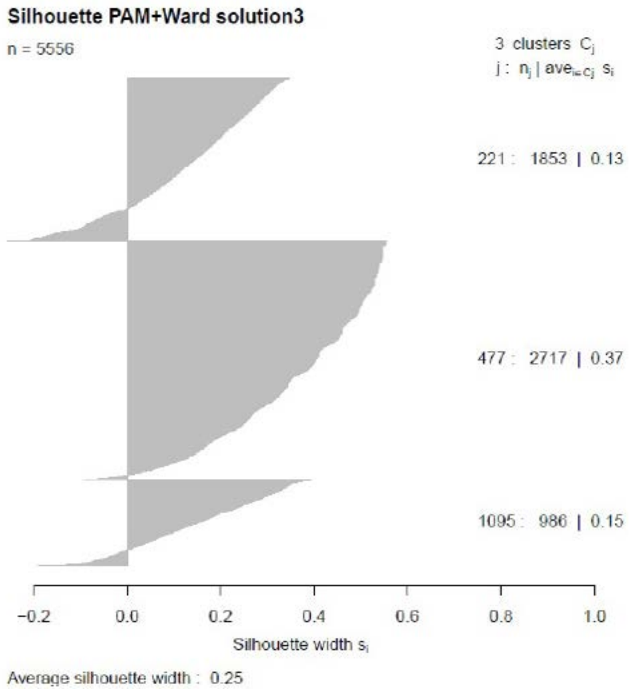
Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Supplementary Figure A.2. Early career pattern with weighted data



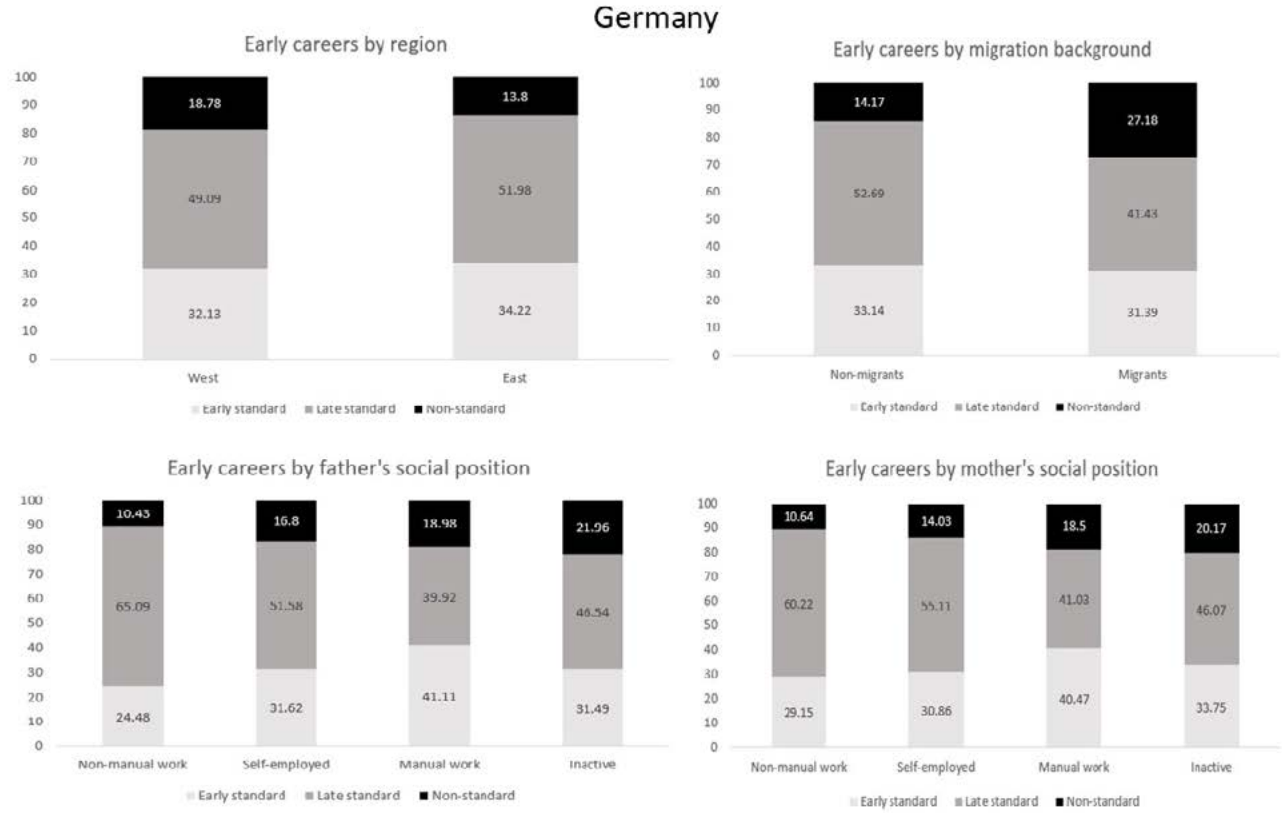
Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Supplementary Figure A.3. Silhouette Pam+Ward solution



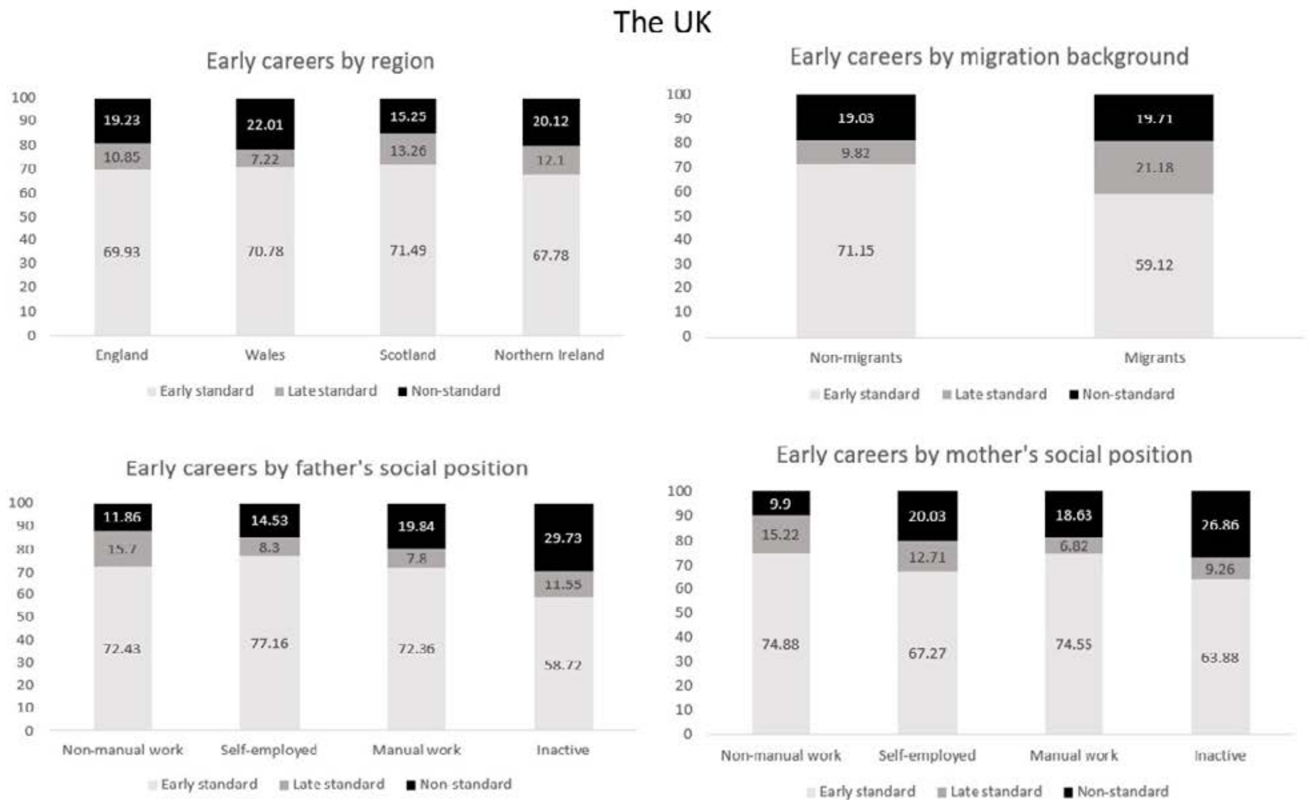
Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Supplementary Figure A.4. Who goes into which early career types in Germany?



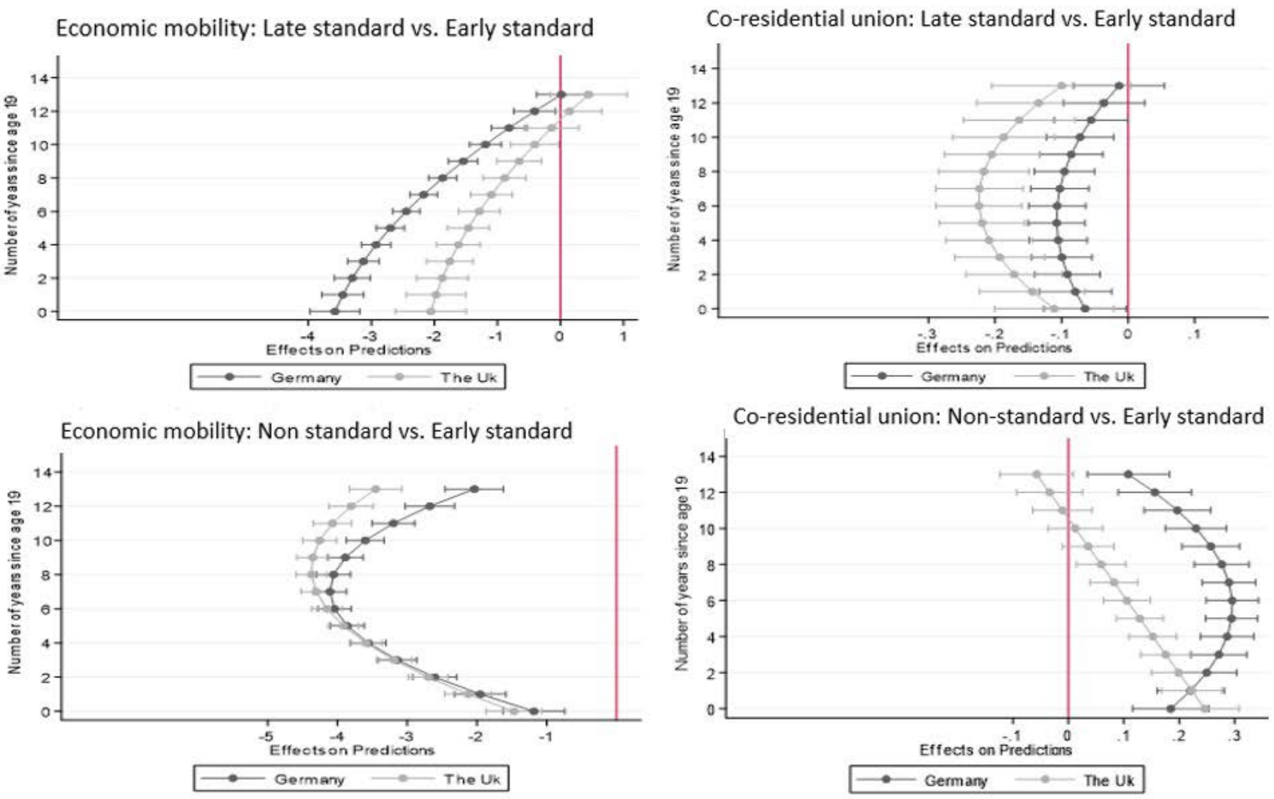
Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Supplementary Figure A.5. Who goes into which early career types in the UK?



Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Supplementary Figure A.6. Average marginal effects of models predicting economic mobility and the creation of co-residential unions among women, by country

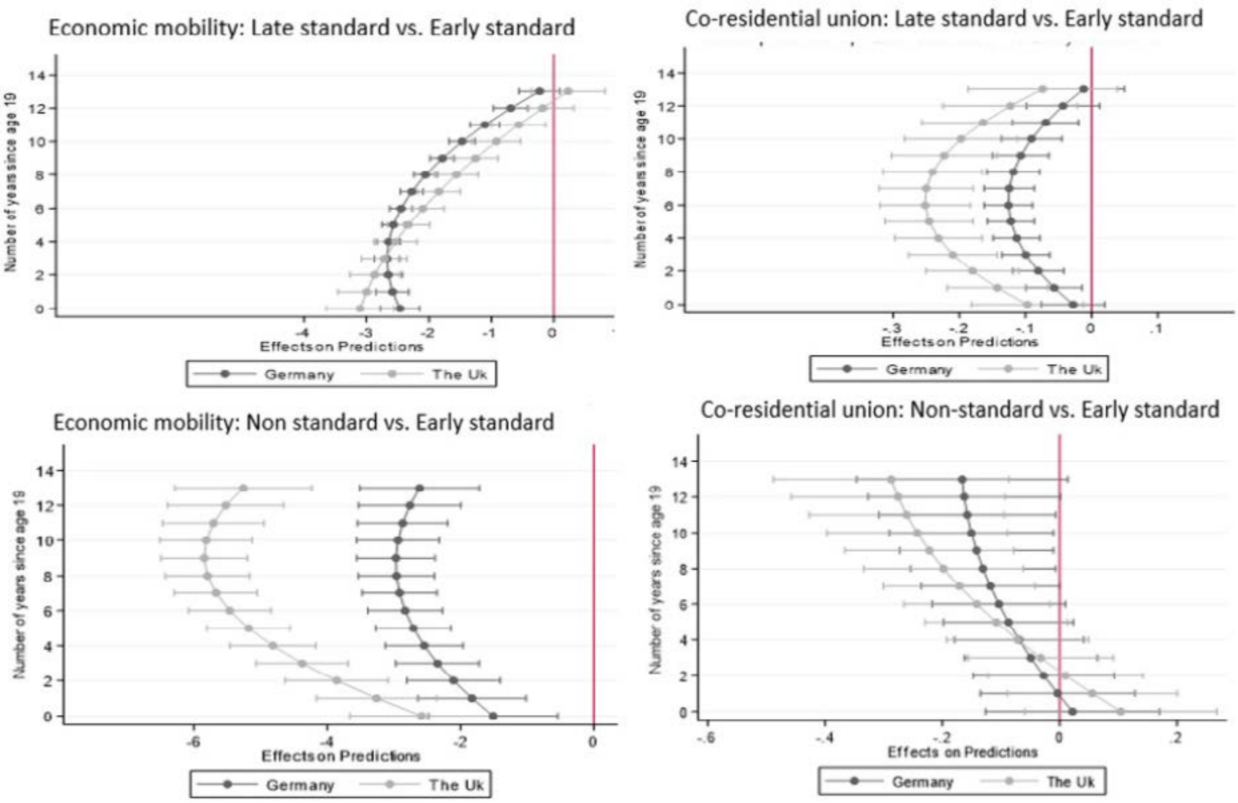


Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016

Notes: Region is not included in the harmonizing analysis of both countries because of collinearity with the country. However, the results did not change in the separate models that included information on the region.

Omitted category: Early standard career.

Supplementary Figure A.7. Average marginal effects of models predicting economic mobility and the creation of co-residential unions among men, by country



Data: BHPS and Understanding Society, 1991-2016; GSOEP, 1991-2016
Note: Omitted category: Early standard career

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXT A.1 ROBUSTNESS TESTS

In order to examine the robustness of the results I conducted several sensitivity tests (results are available upon requests). I tested other models that assumed interactions with region and cohort effects in Germany (East vs. West). The findings showed that the synchronization process in early cohorts was driven by the life trajectories of men from West Germany but not from the East. For women, their life trajectories generally remained the same for those from both the East and West. The trend of growing economic independence expressed by high levels economic mobility and low probabilities of co-residential unions for those with early standard careers hold only in West Germany.

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