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**The Turkish second generation in Europe:  
family life trajectories and independence  
in the transition to adulthood**

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*Abstract*

In this paper we study the timing and sequencing of major events in the transition to adulthood of second generation Turks and majority group young adults in Europe. First, this study adds to the literature by questioning what paths (order and timing of events) are predominant by applying sequence analyses. We study the timing of four major events namely leaving the parental home, unmarried cohabitation, marriage, and having a first child and link them to transitions in the public domain (education and work). Second, we study the diversity in trajectories both between the Turkish second generation and majority group young adults as well as between the different European countries. Finally, we analyse the factors explaining different paths into adulthood among the studied groups in the different countries. Our analyses are based on survey data from “The integration of the second generation” (TIES, 2007) for France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland.

Key words: second generation, Europe, transition to adulthood, sequence analysis

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## *Background*

The transition to adulthood is a key period in the individual life course (Goldscheider 1996; Settersten et al., 2005). In terms of life course transitions, those years are very “dense” (Rindfuss et al., 1987) with more demographic events occurring than during any other part of the life course. Despite the growing literature on this phase in life the existing literature mainly covers the majority or native populations in European societies (Corijn & Klijzing, 2001; Liefbroer & Dykstra, 2000; Widmer & Ritschard, 2009). Much less is known for the children of immigrants despite the fact that young adults of migrant origin are a growing share of the young adult population in many European countries. In addition, studies on the transition to adulthood often exclusively take one transition into account (Huschek et al., 2010; Zorlu & Mulder, 2010). This is unfortunate as different events in the transition to adulthood are not separate experiences but are linked to one another. The main goal of our study is to get a more integral picture of the transition to adulthood of the Turkish second generation in Europe by applying sequence analyses.

The literature indicates that the life courses of young adults in western Europe have changed substantially over the last decades (Shanahan, 2000; Liefbroer & Goldscheider, 2006). Transitions are postponed, are no longer experienced in a standard order and are supposed to be subject to individual choice. In addition, the transition to adulthood seems to be prolonged and covers several phases (Billari and Liefborer, 2010). How and to what extent this is also the case among the children of immigrants is not clear yet. Life courses of young persons are in part the outcome of individual life planning, but they are also influenced by the social origin of their parents and the context of the host society.

Although this is valid also for the majority group, young people of migrant origin are however in a special position as their parents come from societies in which the timing and order of events in the transition to adulthood is often different from that of the country of residence. The extent to which children of immigrants adapt to the patterns of the country of residence or maintain different paths into adulthood is the core question of this paper.

This study adds to our knowledge in three ways. First, it covers a range of (family life) events in the transition to adulthood. By studying the timing and ordering of each of the

events in this transition we can get a more comprehensive insight in this phase of life. This allows us to understand the evolvement of individual lives and the factors of importance. Second, we include young adults of the Turkish second generation and the majority group in five European countries. This allows for a double comparative perspective in which we can contrast young adults of different origin living at one location but also make cross-national comparisons for the Turkish second generation. The latter is important to start evaluating whether the Turkish second generation experience the transition to adulthood similar in each of the countries or whether the context of the country of residence is of crucial importance for the life courses of the second generation. So the question is whether we find more similarities between the Turkish second generation irrespective of country of residence or that by and large the Turkish second generation differs in their behaviour between European countries as is found for the majority group young adults in previous studies. We therewith also question whether children of immigrants follow the more traditional paths into adulthood, predominant in their parent's country of origin (at least at the time of migration) or adapt to patterns common in the host society. The growing size of the second generation makes it necessary to get more insight in the timing and sequencing of events as this can have important impacts on the life chances (also later in life) of these young adults. By applying sequence analyses resulting in typology building of typical paths into adulthood we can start to understand the critical moments in young adults' lives. Finally, by trying to explain these different paths, we get at the key factors for each of the routes taken by young adults of different origins. The unique new survey data (from the TIES project) were not available for the second generation in a European comparative perspective before.

### *Data and analyses*

For this paper we make use of the data from "The Integration of the European Second Generation" (TIES) survey; a European comparative survey on young adults of the second generation from Turkey, Morocco and former Yugoslavia and their majority group peers<sup>1</sup>. The survey was carried out in 15 cities in eight European countries. For our work we have to restrict ourselves to those five countries where Turkish young adults were sampled and where full details on the different transitions were collected in the survey; although an identical questionnaire was used in all cities some small changes were made resulting in the fact that the data we have are not suited for our type of analyses. In each of these countries two large cities (with the exception of Sweden) were surveyed in which many second generation Turks are living. This implies we will focus on five countries namely France (Paris/Strasbourg),

Germany (Berlin/Frankfurt), the Netherlands (Amsterdam/Rotterdam), Sweden (Stockholm) and Switzerland (Zurich/Basel).

Respondents were defined as second generation if they were born in the country of residence and at least one of their parents was born in Turkey or Morocco. Those who were born from two native born parents are defined to belong to the majority group. The sample was randomly drawn from the population registers in the case of the Netherlands and Sweden. For France, Germany, and Switzerland surname-recognition techniques using phone books were used. This method had to be applied as in France only information on the country of birth of a person and not on that of the parents is available, whereas in the German speaking countries strict data protection laws prevent access to population register data., using the administrative data from these registers on (parental) origin, place of birth and age of the respondent. In total 1,000 Turkish second generation respondents as well as 1,200 majority group young adults are included in our analyses.

### *Measures*

In this paper we include different transitions in both the family and public domain. Each respondent was asked retrospectively at what age he/she first left the parental house, for the first time started cohabiting with a partner, got married to a partner for the first time and had a first child as well as finished education and entered the labour market. Each of these transitions was measured in exact full years, implying we know the age (in years) when a transition was experienced but we are unsure about the order when two events were taking place at the same age. Although these are not detailed event history data, the available information allows for reconstructing sequences of events that were not available for the second generation in a European comparative perspective before. The information on the separate transitions is used to construct family life trajectories. In this paper we thus look at timing of the events, the quantum of experienced events and the sequencing (order) of these events. In addition, to the information on family life transitions, we analyse the data on starting independent living by focusing on three events: finishing education, entering the labour market and leaving the parental home. All transitions experienced between the ages of 15 and 25 years of age.

### *Methods*

The analyses covered four separate steps. First, characteristics of the trajectories into adulthood are described. Descriptive event history techniques were used to give an overview

of the ages at which transitions are experienced by the young adults in our sample. In the next step, sequence analyses are carried out on the family life events and a separate analyses on reaching independence via education and work. For the two life domains (family formation and independence via education and work), a state-space of the possible configuration during life course is defined. For each year the status a young adults takes is determined and we construct a yearly sequence representation of the mentioned life course events. The sequence of states of each individual is denoted as  $s_i = \{s_{i1}, \dots, s_{iT}\}$  and the length of the sequence is the same for each individual (from age 15 to 25). The coding of states was done by determining whether the person had left the parental house, entered a cohabiting union, got married or had a child at time  $t$  (Aassve et al., 2007; Piccarreta & Billari, 2007), leading to 7 possible states. For the education/work domain, we consider leaving parental home, finishing education and entering the job market (8 possible states).

Third, optimal matching was applied to calculate the differences between individual trajectories. This technique for the analysis of sequence data takes into account the number of transitions, the ordering and timing of the sequences (Abbott, 2005). It uses iterative minimisation procedures for finding distances between pairs of sequences in a sample. The distance between two sequences can be defined as the minimum number of operations one must perform to match the sequences. To each operation is assigned a “cost” based on the inverse of the transition frequencies (Piccarreta & Billari, 2007). The resulting matrix of pairwise dissimilarities is used for further analyses (Brzinsky-Fay and Kohler, 2010). The dissimilarity coefficients are used to group the different trajectories using a Ward’s cluster analysis. In the final step these clusters of trajectories are analysed by using multinomial logistic regression to study the effects of different individual characteristics on the likelihood of taking the specific path into adulthood. The characteristics of the sample and the used variables can be found in Table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of the sample and explanatory variables by origin group and sex

		Men		Women	
		Second generation Turks	Natives	Second generation Turks	Natives
Parents' education	<i>Primary education or below</i>	54.4	1.7	59.2	2.2
	<i>Secondary education</i>	36.9	58.3	36.0	56.9

	<i>Tertiary education</i>	8.7	40.0	4.9	40.9
Raised with religious education		81.5	54.7	83.4	53.6
Mother was working when respondent was 15		61.0	41.7	60.0	37.7
Country	CH	18.6	22.7	15.2	19.7
	DE	28.6	22.2	30.3	26.7
	FR	14.8	14.2	20.9	16.1
	NL	21.4	26.3	20.0	24.4
	SE	16.6	14.7	13.6	13.1
Sample size		392	600	455	600

### *Preliminary findings*

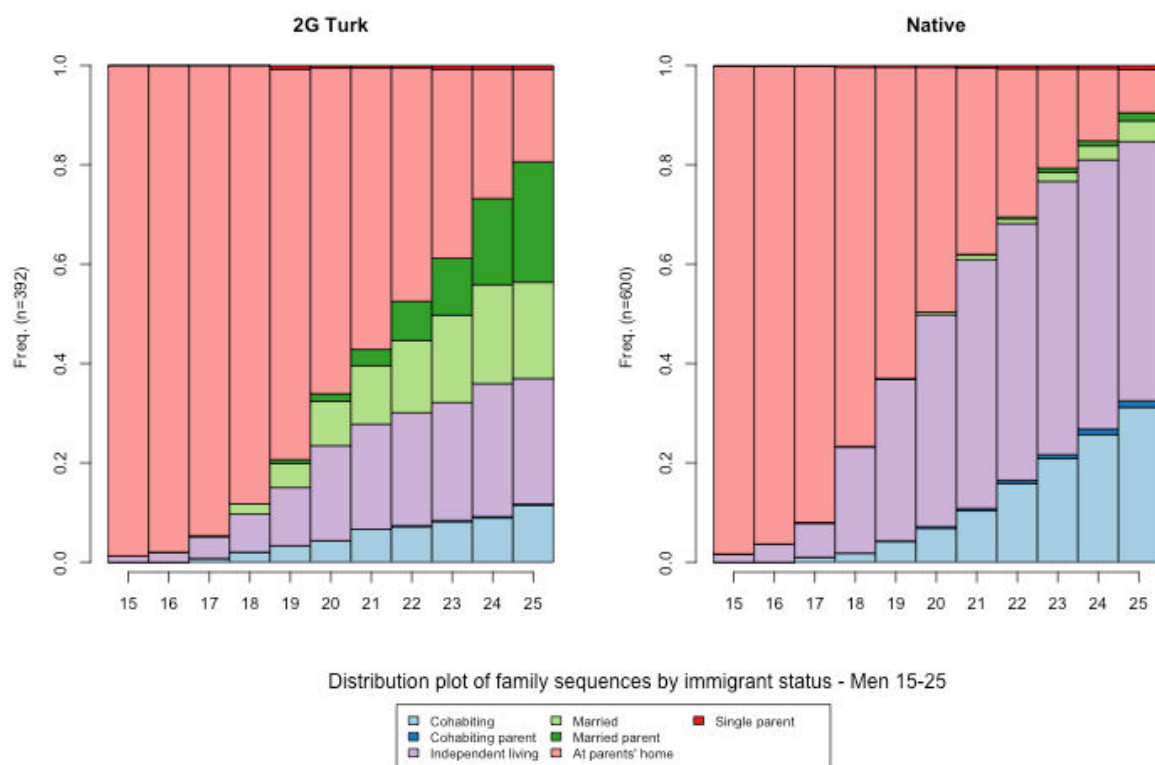
Below we provide some first insights into the descriptive findings from the analyses on the full sample without age selection. When looking at the median ages at which the different transitions are experienced we find that overall the second generation experience transitions at younger ages than natives with two exceptions: leaving the parental home and start of cohabiting union (Table 2). Transitions are clearly taking place earlier for the majority group of young adults. It indicates that among the Turkish group, marriage directly from the parental home remains important. At the same time we also find that the Turkish second generation leaves the education system at younger ages than is the case for the native group which is in line with previous studies. These findings overall hold for men and women though the differences in patterns for the Turkish second generation women and their native peers are clearer than they are for men. With respect to labour market entry, our results show that as a result of the early exit out of the educational system, the Turkish second generation men also start a job earlier than is the case for the native men. For second generation Turkish women the earlier end of education is not reflected in an earlier entrance on into the first job.

Table 2 Median ages for transitions and percentage experienced transition at age 25, by origin and sex

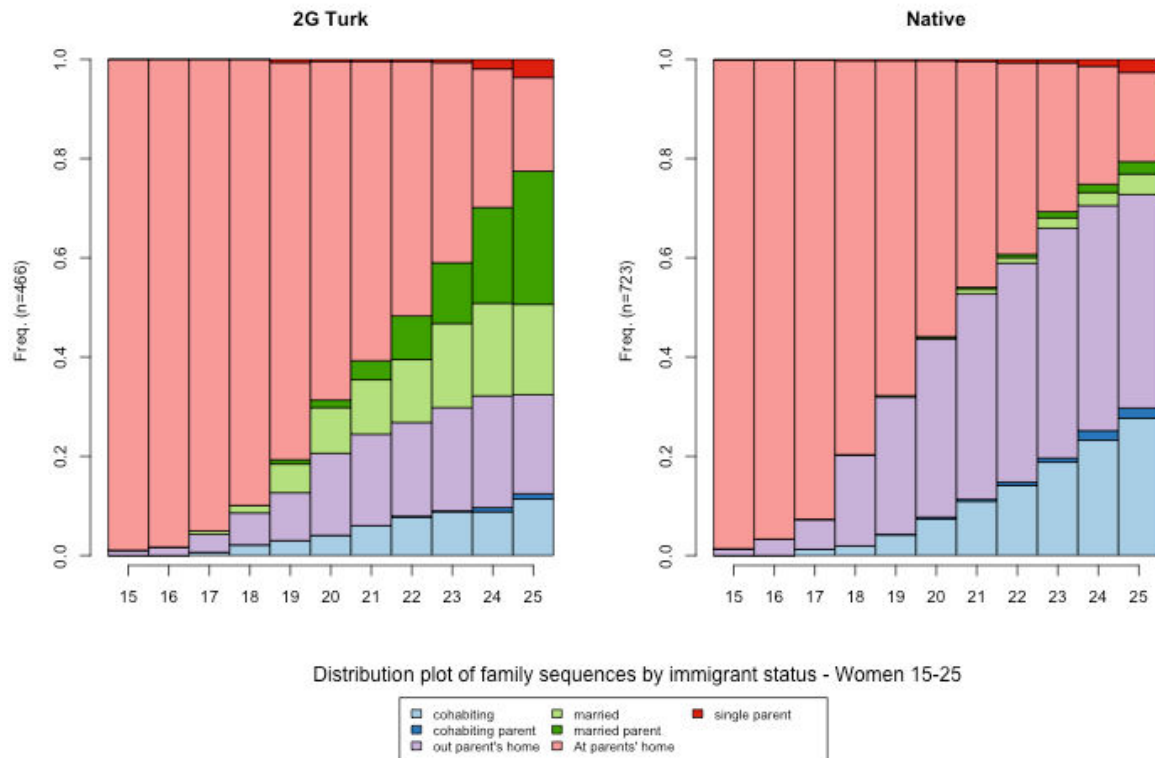
	Men		Women	
	Second generation Turks	Natives	Second generation Turks	Natives
Median age at leaving parental home	23	21	22	20
Proportion left parental home at age 25	0.75	0.91	0.83	0.93

Median age at Cohabitation	28	27	28	26
Proportion ever cohabited at age 25	0.19	0.37	0.18	0.47
Median age at Marriage	26	30	24	29
Proportion ever married at age 25	0.44	0.06	0.57	0.12
Median age at first child	27	30	26	29
Proportion ever had children at age 25	0.25	0.04	0.45	0.08
Median age at finishing education	20	24	20	23
Proportion finished education at age 25	0.73	0.61	0.75	0.67
Median age at first job	20	22	24	23
Proportion ever had a job at age 25	0.74	0.75	0.55	0.69

Figure 1 Sequence distribution plots of family trajectories by gender and origin







The distribution plots of the sequences in the family domain (covering all five study countries) indicate that although cohabitation is occurring among the second generation (light blue) it is not as widespread as it is among the natives. The same holds for living independently (purple) which is very common among young adults of native origins in particular after age 19. Unmarried cohabitation and independent living capture the life courses of by far the majority of young adults of native origin (both men and women). Although some of the Turkish second generation are living on their own without having experienced any other transition this is not as widespread though more common for men than women. In particular the life courses of Turkish second generation women are already by age 22 much more characterised by marriage and childbearing. At the same time Turkish second generation men seem to stay in the parental home longer and postpone transitions almost to the same extent as native men. When clustering the individual trajectories in meaningful paths into adulthood in the family domain we find four predominant clusters whereas five clusters can be determined with regard to gaining independence (Tables 3a-b, Figure 2).

In order to further test our hypothesis on effects of countries of residence we also provide this information for each of the five countries separately (Table 4) for the family life clusters. In the last part we finally assess the relevance of a few core individual characteristics on the followed paths to adulthood (Table 5). Since we assume differences in the transition to

adulthood we include dummy variables for the country of origin to see whether different reception/welfare state contexts are of different importance for the trajectories of the Turkish second generation.

Table 3a Clusters of family life transitions by origin and sex

	Men		Women	
	Second generation Turks	Natives	Second generation Turks	Natives
Delayed family transition	37.50	32.67	27.69	26.56
Transition to independent living	20.66	44.17	11.65	38.59
Transition to cohabitation	9.18	21.50	8.13	30.63
Traditional family formation	32.65	1.67	52.53	4.22
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N	392	600	455	640

Table 3b Clusters of gaining independent living by origin and sex

	Men		Women	
	Second generation Turks	Natives	Second generation Turks	Natives
Delayed Independence	17.52	20.11	15.19	18.96
Gradual Transition	14.80	21.46	11.90	17.53
Inactive at young age	17.22	10.34	36.46	17.17
Traditional	39.27	21.26	25.57	18.78
Long education and independence	11.18	26.82	10.89	27.55
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N	392	600	455	640

Table 4 Clusters of family life transitions by origin and sex and country of residence

<b>Men</b>																
		Switzerland			Germany			France			Netherlands			Sweden		
		Second generation	Turks	Natives	Second generation	Turks	Natives	Second generation	Turks	Natives	Second generation	Turks	Natives	Second generation	Turks	Natives
Delayed family transition		39.73	41.18	41.35	42.86	36.21	36.47	29.76	24.68	36.92	17.05					
Transition to independent living		24.66	39.71	42.11	18.75	15.52	34.12	20.24	51.90	24.62	50.00					
Transition to cohabitation		8.22	16.91	13.53	8.93	12.07	27.06	5.95	22.78	12.31	32.95					
Traditional family formation		27.40	2.21	3.01	29.46	36.21	2.35	44.05	0.63	26.15	0.00					
Total		100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00					
N		73	136	133	112	58	85	84	158	65	88					
<b>Women</b>																
		Switzerland			Germany			France			Netherlands			Sweden		
		Second generation	Turks	Natives	Second generation	Turks	Natives	Second generation	Turks	Natives	Second generation	Turks	Natives	Second generation	Turks	Natives
Delayed family transition		33.33	30.95	37.43	37.68	23.16	33.01	17.58	16.67	20.97	8.33					
Transition to independent living		18.84	36.51	42.11	13.04	7.37	24.27	8.79	41.67	11.29	46.43					
Transition to cohabitation		8.70	27.78	13.45	2.90	4.21	35.92	13.19	41.03	17.74	44.05					
Traditional family formation		39.13	4.76	7.02	46.38	65.26	6.80	60.44	0.64	50.00	1.19					
Total		100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00					
N		69	126	171	138	95	103	91	156	62	84					

Table 5 Regression coefficients of the multinomial regression (traditional family formation reference category)

	Delayed family transition			Transition to Independent living			Transition to cohabitation		
	Mod 1	Mod 2	Mod 3	Mod 1	Mod 2	Mod 3	Mod 1	Mod 2	Mod 3
Female ( <i>ref: Male</i> )	-0.924*** (0.147)	-1.153*** (0.386)	-1.102*** (0.387)	-0.918*** (0.157)	-1.042*** (0.382)	-0.988** (0.385)	-0.451*** (0.172)	-0.553 (0.390)	-0.501 (0.394)
Second Generation Turks ( <i>ref: Natives</i> )	-2.315*** (0.222)	-2.517*** (0.364)	-3.983*** (0.808)	-3.222*** (0.231)	-3.287*** (0.371)	-5.165*** (0.816)	-3.283*** (0.250)	-3.274*** (0.399)	-4.826*** (0.838)
Parents' education= High or medium ( <i>ref: primary education or below</i> )	0.155 (0.174)	0.162 (0.174)	0.221 (0.177)	0.573*** (0.190)	0.572*** (0.190)	0.661*** (0.196)	0.448** (0.213)	0.445** (0.213)	0.549** (0.218)
Raised with religious education ( <i>ref: raised not religious</i> )	-0.654*** (0.194)	-0.654*** (0.193)	-0.632*** (0.195)	-0.459** (0.201)	-0.459** (0.201)	-0.365* (0.205)	-0.951*** (0.210)	-0.951*** (0.210)	-0.903*** (0.214)
Mother was working when respondent was 15 ( <i>ref: Mother not working</i> )	-0.460*** (0.155)	-0.460*** (0.155)	-0.472*** (0.156)	-0.343** (0.165)	-0.342** (0.165)	-0.329** (0.167)	-0.371** (0.180)	-0.370** (0.180)	-0.374** (0.182)
SE	-0.0107 (0.277)	-0.00865 (0.277)	-0.694 (1.254)	0.218 (0.271)	0.220 (0.271)	-0.165 (1.237)	0.302 (0.285)	0.305 (0.285)	-0.124 (1.240)
( <i>ref: NL</i> )	0.694*** (0.243)	0.689*** (0.243)	-0.862 (0.803)	0.00453 (0.250)	0.00136 (0.250)	-1.778** (0.797)	-0.119 (0.270)	-0.124 (0.270)	-1.759** (0.803)
DE	0.852*** (0.215)	0.848*** (0.215)	-1.255 (0.770)	0.0804 (0.223)	0.0747 (0.223)	-2.146*** (0.763)	-0.601** (0.257)	-0.608** (0.257)	-2.836*** (0.776)
( <i>ref: NL</i> )	0.114 (0.235)	0.110 (0.234)	-1.327* (0.806)	-0.848*** (0.253)	-0.850*** (0.253)	-2.431*** (0.801)	-0.405 (0.260)	-0.407 (0.261)	-1.859** (0.802)
Female * Second Generation Turks		0.357 (0.422)	0.299 (0.423)		0.0448 (0.438)	-0.0244 (0.441)		-0.0747 (0.472)	-0.125 (0.476)
CH * Second Generation Turks		1.539* (0.858)	1.539* (0.858)			2.492*** (0.872)			1.760* (0.918)
SE * Second Generation Turks		0.898 (1.289)	0.898 (1.289)			0.477 (1.286)			0.457 (1.299)
DE * Second Generation Turks		2.263***	2.263***			2.822***			2.801***

FR * Second Generation Turks									
Constant	3.818*** (0.406)	4.189*** (0.735)	5.504*** (0.996)	4.109*** (0.422)	4.330*** (0.734)	5.639*** (0.994)	3.388*** (0.453)	3.573*** (0.754)	(0.879) 1.455 (0.912) 4.856*** (1.010)
Observations	2044	2044	2044	2044	2044	2044	2044	2044	2044

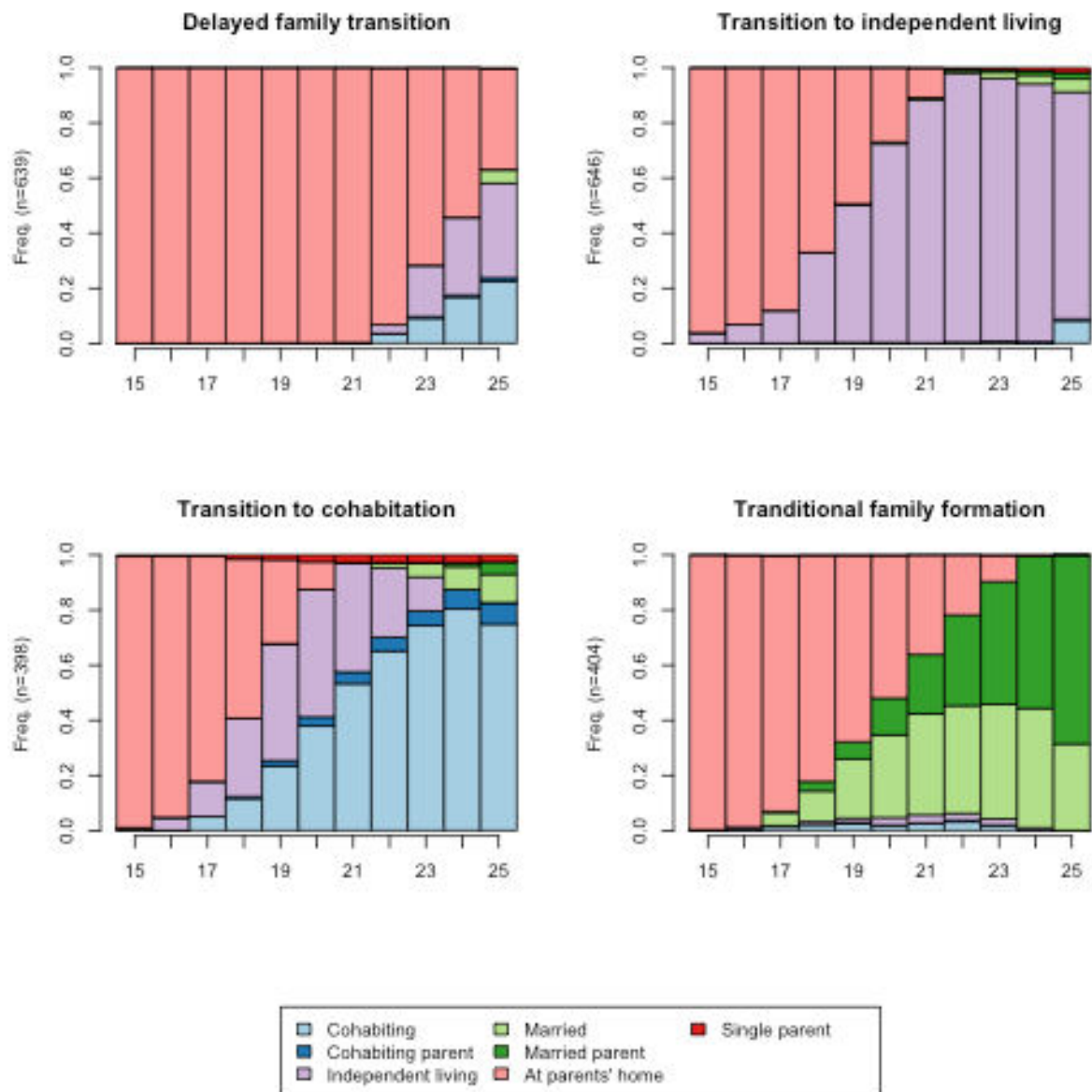
Standard errors in parentheses

=\*\* p<0.10

\*\* p<0.05

\*\*\* p<0.01"

Figure 2 Sequence distribution plots for different patterns of family trajectory



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<sup>i</sup> The TIES survey was carried out by survey bureaus under supervision of the nine national TIES partner institutes: Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) and Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) of the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands, the Institute for Social and Political Opinion Research (ISPO), University of Leuven in Belgium; the National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED) in France; the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies (SFM) of the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland; the Centre for Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations (CEIFO) of the University of Stockholm in Sweden; the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies