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**THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOVIET AND POST-SOVIET  
GENERATIONS' TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD IN RUSSIA**

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This working paper investigates how Russian men and women from different generations experience their first demographic and socioeconomic events which mark the transition to adulthood. The study uses a panel of the Russian part of the “Generations and Gender Survey” (2004, 2007, 2011; 4,943 respondents) and Russian survey “Person, Family, Society” (2013; 4,344 respondents). Using sequence analysis tools, we analysed the biographies of generations born in 1930–1995.

Our analysis reveals the differences between sexes and changes across generations. Socioeconomic life course events are achieved faster than demographic events. Men demonstrate behaviours oriented more toward economic independence, but they do not spend less time on education than woman. Women of older generations behave differently from men in the socioeconomic sphere of life: they tend to separate from their parents first, rather than start working or complete their education. Women of younger generations rely more on themselves economically. Women start to experience demographic events earlier and more intensively than men, but at the age of 35 they more often appear to be single mothers.

Young people, compared to older generations, much more actively enter cohabitations and even have children in them, but they usually delay childbearing to later ages. They have more diverse trajectories in both demographic and socioeconomic spheres of life. We can see deinstitutionalisation in the trajectories of young people.

*Keywords:* transition to adulthood, sequence analysis, generations, life course, demographic events, Russia.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are many approaches to the study of the transition to adulthood in contemporary social research: approaches to its designation (transition to adulthood, adolescence, early adulthood, emerging adulthood, etc.), to its indicators and to identifying its beginning and end. In this paper, we will review the main approaches to the phenomenon of becoming an adult, and we will empirically explore the phenomenon using the case of Russia.

Russia has a long history of a very traditional demographic model, but the years following the dissolution of the USSR brought many changes to people's lives. The main aim of this paper is to investigate whether the transition to adulthood in Soviet times and in modern Russia differ from one another and, if they do, where the main distinctions lie.

The paper is structured in four main sections. Following the introduction, the second section deals with theoretical frameworks, operationalisation of the transition to adulthood and the review of the circumstances under which Russians have made their sociodemographic decisions in the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. We also formulate the hypotheses to be tested in the first section. The third section discusses the data and analytical approaches employed in the paper. The fourth section presents the main empirical findings of our research. In the concluding part, we check our hypotheses and discuss our results.

## 2. TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD AS A MULTIDISCIPLINARY PHENOMENON

### 2.1. Theories and concepts

The conceptualisation of a distinct stage between childhood and adulthood is relatively recent dating back only to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Human longevity started to increase intensively, and new stages of the life course began to appear. The transition to adulthood (adolescence, late adolescence, early adulthood, young adulthood and emerging adulthood) is the stage of a life course when individuals experience biological, emotional, cognitive and social maturation (Steinberg 2001; Grob 2001). This topic is of import to several scientific fields.

For example, *psychologists*, who first identified adolescence as a new stage of life (Hall 1904), have been studying this phenomenon for more than a century. Psychologists have made several important findings: myriad psychological, biographical and environmental factors influence our development; the transition to adulthood is one of the most rapid and important changes in the human life, psyche and body; the transition to adulthood has its own structure, and the stages of maturation (physical, psychological, social) can be heterochronous.

After the youth movements and rebellions in 1968, *sociologists* realised the power of youth as a new social and age group. To understand youngsters better, sociologists needed to investigate youngster's main life stage process – the achievement of adult social roles and statuses. These ideas were actively explored by Sociology of the Life Course. The Life Course Approach came from psychology and only in 1960s started to be adopted by sociologists and demographers. Its main idea is that human development extends across the whole life course (Elder Jr. 1975; Elder Jr. and Giele 1998). There are several factors shaping the life courses of people: individual development (human agency), history (location in time), culture (location in place), social relations (linked lives), and timing (age, period and cohort intersection). The development of the life course runs parallel with demographic modernisation: the life courses of people are becoming more diverse, deinstitutionalised, de-standardised and individualised (Bertaux and Kohli 1984; Mayer and Müller 1986). There are still some norms and cultural age deadlines in societies that continue to influence people's behaviour (Hagestad and Neugarten 1985), but these norms are becoming internalised, subjective and more flexible (Billari and Liefbroer 2010). Institutional arrangements also influence the behaviour of people, particularly

national cultural features and the welfare state (Buchmann 1989; Esping-Andersen 2007). The Life Course concept offered the term “transition to adulthood”. This term reflects very well the nature of the process: transition to adulthood is a set of events which has very flexible requirements for the presence of the events, their order, tempo and age of occurrence (sequencing, tempo and timing). There is no specific age range for the transition to adulthood. Researchers operationalise this construct on the basis of the culture and specific social group which they investigate.

**Demographers** started to study the transition to adulthood because of their own motives: to make conclusions about changes in demographic behaviour, we need to wait until all the members of a cohort leave the age under the risk of event occurrence. The starting life-course events usually occur during the first third of life, so we may make some comparisons of real behaviour even when new generations have not reached midlife.

There is greater consensus among demographers on what is included in the transition to adulthood because the list of life-course events is much shorter than the list of psychological phenomena. Nowadays, a lot of researchers agree that the following list of sociodemographic events mark the transition to adulthood: first leaving the parental home, completing education, entering the work force, first cohabitation (or partnership), first marriage and the birth of the first child (Buchmann 1989; Liefbroer 1999; Billari et al. 2005; Billari and Liefbroer 2010).

One of the most influential theories in contemporary demography is the Second Demographic Transition. The theory was put forward by Ron Lesthaeghe and Dirk Van de Kaa to explain the demographic development of Europe which started in the late 1960s (van de Kaa 1987; Lesthaeghe 1995). During the last half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, demographic behaviour in almost all developed countries changed in compliance with trends noticed and systematised by Lesthaeghe, Van de Kaa, and others. The main changes in behavioural patterns associated with the SDT include (Billari and Liefbroer 2010; Puur et al. 2012):

- secularisation and modernisation of societies;
- aspiration to self-realisation of people;
- important choices are postponed (marriage, childbearing);
- marriage and fertility rates decrease considerably;
- the transition from direct marriage to cohabitation becomes the dominant pathway to family building;
- non-marital childbearing increases to unprecedented levels.

These changes have influence on the transition to adulthood, and vice versa. Young people gain more freedom and autonomy. Contraceptive, sexual and gender revolutions allow people to shape their lives according to new rules: to set the calendar of their life course events, to set a new gender contract and to live in such cohabiting arrangements which are the most convenient. All these transformations make new youth generations very different from what we knew before. We need to find new criteria and ways to describe and analyse this new reality.

The patterns of the transition to adulthood change in both quantitative (tempo and timing) and qualitative (sequencing) vectors. Billari and Liefbroer (2010) supposed that we are moving from the old pattern of the transition to adulthood (“early, contracted, and simple”) towards the new one (“late, protracted, and complex”). This is how they described a new pattern: “a relatively early exit from the parental home, followed by time spent living without a partner, entry into a non-marital union, the birth of a first child (at a relatively “late” age), and marriage occurring either late (just before or after entry into parenthood) or not at all”.

We agree that some patterns (e.g. universal and early marriage, early ages of transitions and a small variety of scenarios) could be called traditional or old, whereas others (e.g. new forms of cohabitation and childbearing, postponement of transitions, large variety of scenarios) could be called modern or new. We suppose that the sociodemographic behaviour of Soviet generations tended to follow a more traditional model, but we expect that the youngest generations will show more modernised patterns.

We also expect to reveal a sex disparity, because the traditional model of demographic behaviour always assumes different life course trajectories for men and women. Previous studies of Russians' transitions to adulthood (Blum, Seville, and Zakharov 2009; Mitrofanova 2016a, 2016b) and matrimonial and reproductive behaviours (Mitrofanova 2013; Mitrofanova and Artamonova 2016a, 2016b) showed that this disparity is real. The traditional model assumes that men are breadwinners, so they tend to seek employment at earlier ages, whereas women are caregivers, and thus would be more focused on family building. We also know from the studies that Russian women get married and have children at earlier ages than their male peers (Mitrofanova 2013; 2016b).

## **2.2. Operationalisation of the transition to adulthood**

We define a transition to adulthood as a complex process which consists of changes in biological, emotional, cognitive, and social components of an individual. As social scientists, we will omit the first three aspects and will focus on the social (i.e. sociodemographic) aspect of the transition to adulthood. In this case, we understand a transition to adulthood as a sequence of status transitions (or life-course events), which form the biography of an individual in different spheres of life: professional career, family building, independent living, etc.

In this study, we decided to divide the life-course events marking transition to adulthood into two groups: demographic events and socioeconomic events. Altogether, we will call them *sociodemographic* events. This distinction is important for our study for two reasons: first, it will allow us to compare socioeconomic and demographic events (their timing and tempo), and second, we will be able to discover which goes first and which goes last (sequencing).

*Demographic* events comprise first partnership, first marriage and birth of the first child. We define first partnership as an unregistered union and the first marriage as a registered union. The surveys we used define partnership as a union based on shared-space living arrangements lasting at least three months.

*Socioeconomic* events comprise completion of education, first job and separation from parents. By "first job", the surveys we used imply a work arrangement lasting at least six months. By "separation from parents" (or "leaving the parental home"), the surveys imply the first time when a respondent left his or her parents for at least three months.

We can also call all the events "starting events", though we know that finishing education is not a starting event in itself. However, in the chain of events marking the transition to adulthood, finishing education plays a starting role, because it allows the start of a career – the means to earn a consistent and livable income and become financially independent. It is very hard to start a career without finishing at least some level of education. Moreover, we will explain in the Data section why we study only the events occurring before age 35, but since almost all the generations in our survey passed the age of 35, we can use the information about their education as a finished event, which will not change over time.

In the next paragraphs, we will discuss how social norms are transferred and regulated in Russia, that is, what sanctions and other mechanisms have been used in Soviet times and today.

## **2.3. The demographic and socioeconomic events of Russians**

In this paper we divide the generations of Russians covered in our study into two groups: the *Soviet* generations and the *post-Soviet* or *modern* ones. The dividing line is the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, which influenced the most the people who were 15 or younger at the time of the breakup. This generations born in 1975 or later had a chance to become adult in a new society with different rules.

After 1991, Russians felt much more freedom to realise their own plans in all spheres of life. This led to shifts in the timetable of life, the structure of educational, reproductive, matrimonial and other calendars. People started to pay more attention to their careers and other means of self-actualisation, and they started postponing childbearing, family making and finishing of their education. The desire for quality instead of quantity increased in all spheres (Vishnevsky 2006). All of the transformations indicate that the demographic behaviour of the Russians is modernising. The welfare regime is also changing: there is more autonomy for people and less normative pressure (Esping-Andersen 1990; 1999).

These changes have had great influence on the transition to adulthood, and vice versa. Young people have gained more freedom and autonomy. Contraceptive, sexual and gender revolutions have allowed people to shape their lives according to new rules: to set the calendar of their life course events, to set a new gender contract and to live in such cohabiting arrangements which are the most convenient. All these transformations make new youth very different from what we knew before. We need to find new criteria and ways to describe and analyse this new reality.

### 2.3.1. Demographic behaviour

*Matrimonial behaviour.* Given the fluctuations of the Russian social and cultural environments, family and marriage institutions are becoming more differentiated; new forms of legitimate partnerships (cohabitations, unregistered unions) are appearing; people are gaining more freedom and options. The focus of the family unit was, in Soviet times, subsumed into government aims: the Soviet propaganda condemned unregistered unions; only legal marriage was accepted as a norm and a rule.

Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, the family unit became a part of the social and psychological needs of individuals. In this new context, a tolerance to divorces has formed; the relationships between men and women have become more egalitarian. Moreover, with the expansion of career, educational and social opportunities, women no more perceive marriage as the only way of successful self-realisation.

The elongation of the partner selection period led to a postponement of first marriages and a decrease in total marriage intensity. Younger generations, born and socialised in modern Russia, prefer unregistered relationships to traditional marriages as the first unions. After the “trial” period of partnership, couples usually get married (Zakharov 2009), but the amount of people who perceive a partnership as an independent union is rising (Mitrofanova and Artamonova 2016b).

*Reproductive behaviour.* Russia’s total period fertility rate (TPFR or TFR) changed a lot during the last century, reacting to wars and crises with birth rate decreases, and to stable, prosperous times with increases. As demographers, we know that these fluctuations lead to shifts in the birth calendars of cohorts but hardly change the number of children per woman in a cohort (total cohort fertility rate, TCFR). The analysis shows that the TCFR was around 1.85 children per woman for the 1950s birth cohort and decreased only to 1.6 in the 1970s cohort (Frejka and Zakharov 2012). However, the age at first childbearing slowly decreased from older to younger cohorts: if the median age at first childbirth for women of the 1930s was around the age of 23–24, for women of the 1970s it decreased to age 21 (Blum, Sebille, and Zakharov 2009). The very early age of motherhood attained in the latter generations reflects of changing values in the cohorts which socialised during the time of *glasnost* and *perestroika* (1985–1991). They started to obtain sexual experience at earlier ages, but the absence of contraception lead to unplanned pregnancies. The norms of the society still did not allow children to be born in unregistered unions, so these pregnancies led to abortions or forced marriages. Thus, women who saved their pregnancies became parents and spouses at the earliest ages in Soviet history.

In modern Russia, the contraceptive culture is becoming stronger because contraceptives fall outside the purview of government, and pharmacological companies have a reasonable interest in educating people. Available contraceptives, plus more a liberal social environment, allows the ties between matrimonial, sexual and reproductive behaviours to start disappearing (Mitrofanova 2013): now a pregnancy does not always lead to marriage (or abortion). People can have a child and still live in partnership or even not live together at all (i.e. “living apart together” relationships). People obtained the instrument of planning pregnancies and they started to understand childbearing as a personal choice and not a matter of circumstance or duty.

### 2.3.2. Socioeconomic behaviour

Education, employment, places of residence, housing and circumstances of mobility – these were controlled by the Soviet government. Basically, a person had just one area of free choice in the socioeconomic sphere – the profession – other choices the government made for a person.

After completing education, people were distributed to work<sup>1</sup>. Neither the place of work, nor the exact conditions could be discussed or argued<sup>2</sup>. The distributions were made based on the needs of regions for employees of a particular profession. Very often, the organisation to which a person was distributed was located in a different place, so a graduate would have to migrate. In such a case, a graduate could receive some financial help, fringe benefits, a subsidised apartment and social guarantees. Only after five (or later, three) years of work, these people could change their jobs and choose some other employer. However, this person could not quit this job until working through the full period, nor could the employer fire said person without a special permit from the Ministry. In addition, people could not simply refuse to work, because the Soviet government did not acknowledge unemployment. The USSR proclaimed itself a worker’s state, where everyone who is able should work (“who does not work – does not eat”), so avoiding employment was unacceptable and even criminally charged by the law<sup>3</sup>.

The real estate market, as all other markets, did not exist in Soviet times, so people could not buy a flat; they could only get it from someone (e.g. an employer, the government<sup>4</sup>, parents or other relatives, a spouse) or exchange one flat for another. Thus, to separate from parents in Soviet times, people mostly needed to make a serious decision: to get married, to get a job or to bear a child. In these circumstances, all the important events in life (not only socioeconomic, but also demographic) were closely tied. The study shows that Soviet people completed their transitions to adulthood within three years (Blum, Sebille, and Zakharov 2009).

In modern Russia, no compulsory job placement exists. There are educational and job markets now, and everyone can choose what he or she wants. The number of people with higher education increased a lot: education even lost its special influence on a person’s development because education became so widely available, and its quality decreased. Educational mobility

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<sup>1</sup> Higher education in the USSR was free of charge, but according to the law of 1968, all students of the institutions of higher education had to work after finishing university in the organisation chosen by a special committee.

<sup>2</sup> There were several exceptions: married people still were assigned to some organisation, but they could not change their current locations; men who served in the army worked by distribution fewer years corresponding to time spent in military service.

<sup>3</sup> Law against social parasitism (1961-1991): beggars and the homeless who did not have an official job for more than four months, people who visited shops and cinemas during working hours and people who worked as free artists and free farmers, among others, could be caught, arrested and tried. The punishment could be compulsory community service up to four years or jail placement.

<sup>4</sup> If a person gave birth to a child and/or included a spouse in his/her household, and if, after these actions, the living space per person became less than the norm, the government could give such a family a new apartment or room for free, though these people would need to wait several years.

We should also mention the quality of the housing which a Soviet citizen could get. Very often, the housing consisted of a room in a communal flat with one kitchen and toilet for several families. If it was a flat, it was commonplace and simple; a Soviet-era abode could satisfy only the very basic needs of people.

increased because what is important now is not higher education itself, but the rank and reputation of the university; thus, if one wants to study in the best university, one must move to a big city. Education is lasting longer now. Lifelong learning is a prominent new trend (Hake 1999; Aspin and Chapman 2000; Blossfeld and Maurice 2011).

Entry into the first job does not necessarily follow finishing one's education anymore. Many students are beginning their careers during their studies. The job market which appeared after 1991 changed the dynamics of work: in Soviet times, people changed jobs very rarely; now they are free to change jobs as often as they need and work at the locations they want.

There are almost no ways to get an apartment from the government or an employer, but there is an array of opportunities for people with money. Everyone who has finances can buy, rent or take out a mortgage for as many flats as he or she wants. The quality and diversity of houses is impressive, allowing people to go far beyond meeting their basic needs. If in Soviet times separation from parents was stimulated by other sociodemographic events, today they very often compete. Separation from parents can be a "contributor" to other events (leaving parents for educational or job mobility) or a "consequence" (when marriage leads to moving into a spouse's house or when a job gives financial independence, which allows for renting a house).

To sum up the empirical evidences, the signs of the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) in Russia have become apparent. It is reflected not only in changes of the quantitative parameters of people's behaviour, but also in the deep qualitative transformations of the relations between people. With the emergence of widely available contraceptives, people have the capacity to control the timetables of their lives. With changes in social discourse and environment, they can use this opportunity and live in accordance with their own aims and values.

## 2.4. Hypotheses

In this paper, we make a step towards better understanding the transition to adulthood in Russia. Herein we investigate only the sequence of life course events. It is presently a less-developed field in Russian sociology and demography, so we expect many new and interesting findings.

We formulate the following hypotheses:

### **H1. The transition to adulthood differs among generations.**

H1.1. The event opening a transition to adulthood changes across generations, and the level of diversity increases. The oldest generations included in the analysis mostly started with completing education, but the younger ones can start their biographies with any event, including demographic ones.

H1.2. The last event changes less than the first event. We expect that the last event for all generations will still be a childbirth, because it is the most irreversible event in the biography.

H1.3. The youngest generations demonstrate less intensity in starting the transition to adulthood: they postpone events until later ages.

H1.4. The share of people who are cohabiting rises in the modern generation.

### **H2. The transition to adulthood differs between sexes.**

H2.1. The first event in the transition to adulthood is different for men and women. We expect that men will start biographies with completing education or getting a job, whereas women will start their biographies with getting married and separated from their parents.

H2.2. The last event differs less than the first one. We expect that the last event for both sexes will be a childbirth.

H2.3. Men are more proactive in the socioeconomic sphere, whereas women are more engaged in starting families.

### 3. DATA AND ANALYTICAL APPROACH

All the classic cohort indicators of demographic behaviour have one major problem: censoring of events. The measures of central tendency for young people would be shifted to the younger ages because they would represent only people who already experienced an event, so people who postponed an event, would be seen by such measures only after some unknown count of years.

The set of methods which deals well with censoring is event history – or survival – analysis. Usually, researchers create Cox regressions or Kaplan-Meier survivor functions for each event and compare median ages or quartiles of survivor functions. The main disadvantage of such methods is that we can analyse one or, at most, two events in one model. Moreover, if we include two events in a model, we should remember that both of them need to happen before the interview (Billari 2001).

The transition to the study of event chains makes it possible to achieve a new level of understanding of the structure of individuals' lives. An advanced method known as Sequence Analysis (SA) helps demographers and sociologists to achieve this aim (Abbott and Tsay 2000; Billari 2001; Billari and Piccarreta 2005; Aisenbrey and Fasang 2007; Aisenbrey and Fasang 2010). SA allows researchers to study the timing (i.e. the age at which events are experienced), the sequencing (i.e. order) and the quantum of events (i.e. observed number of events) (Billari, Fürnkranz and Prskawetz 2006).

We used several descriptive techniques of SA: chronograms, parallel coordinate plots, the durations of statuses and the frequencies of subsequences on tables. In this paper, the biographies of Russians were studied through sequence analysis. We also promote our approach to data visualisation using Lexis grids.

We presume that, for the majority of Russians, the transition to adulthood starts at age 15 and ends at age 35. We chose 15 years because Russian citizens get their passports at the age of 14; at the same age they can start to work; the youngest age at which people are allowed to marry is 14–16 years, depending on the region; 15 years is the usually designated starting age of reproductive behaviour. Thus, we decided that 15 years is an age at which some Russians could legally start gaining life course events (i.e. legally marry, get a job, etc.). The age of 35 was chosen as the “upper boundary” of the transition to adulthood because our investigations show (Mitrofanova 2016a; Mitrofanova and Artamonova 2016b) that by the age of 35, the majority of Russians have almost all the first events.

The study uses a panel of the Russian part of the “Generations and Gender Survey” (GGS: 2004, 2007, 2011)<sup>5</sup> and the Russian survey “Person, Family, Society” (PFS 2013)<sup>6</sup>. The subsample of GGS consists of 4,943 respondents born in 1930–1986 (32% men and 68% women)<sup>7</sup>. The PFS contains information about only people at reproductive ages, so we have three generations born in 1970–1995: the PFS includes 4,344 respondents (50% men and 50% women).

Based on empirical data and existing classifications, we defined the cohorts born in 1930–1969 as “Soviet generations” (those who socialised in the Soviet Union), and cohorts born in 1970–1995 as “modern generations”. Figure 1 shows the distribution of men and women by generations. It also indicates the ages of respondents of each generation at the time of each survey.

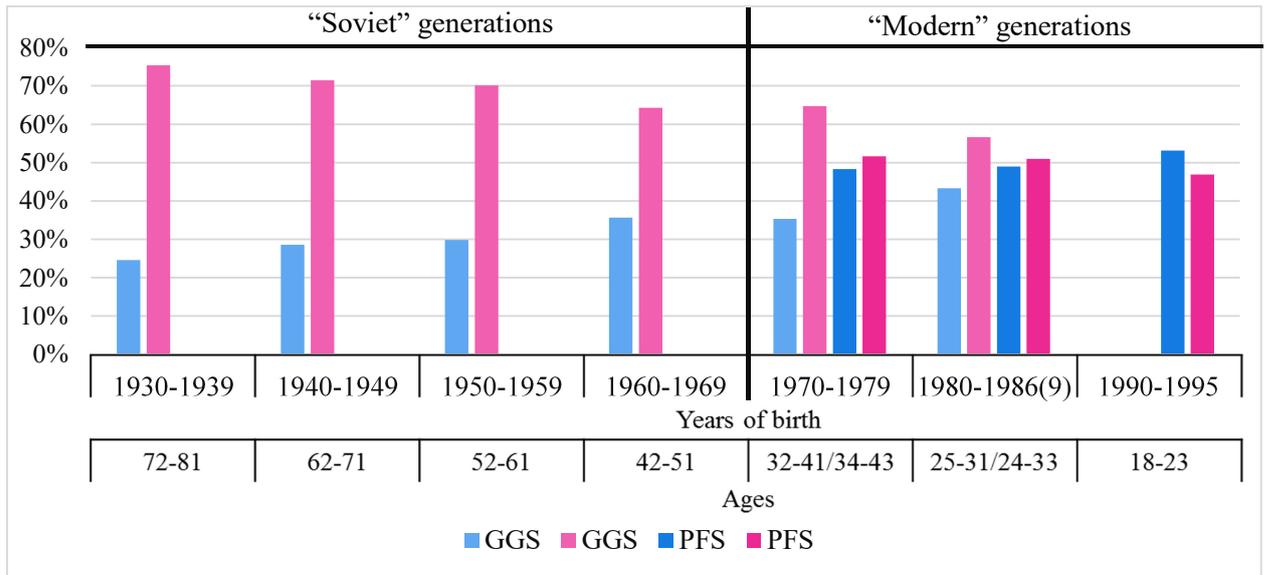
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<sup>5</sup> The Russian part of GGS is “Parents and Children, Men and Women in Family and Society”. The three waves of the survey were conducted by the Independent Institute for Social Policy. For more information: [http://www.socpol.ru/eng/research\\_projects/proj12.shtml](http://www.socpol.ru/eng/research_projects/proj12.shtml).

<sup>6</sup> The survey “Person, Family, Society” was conducted by the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration. For more information: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2559218](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2559218).

<sup>7</sup> The sex imbalance is due to the “rash” of the sample and the inability to correct the panel data by weights.

**Figure 1.** The distribution of the respondents by sex and generations, GGS and PFS

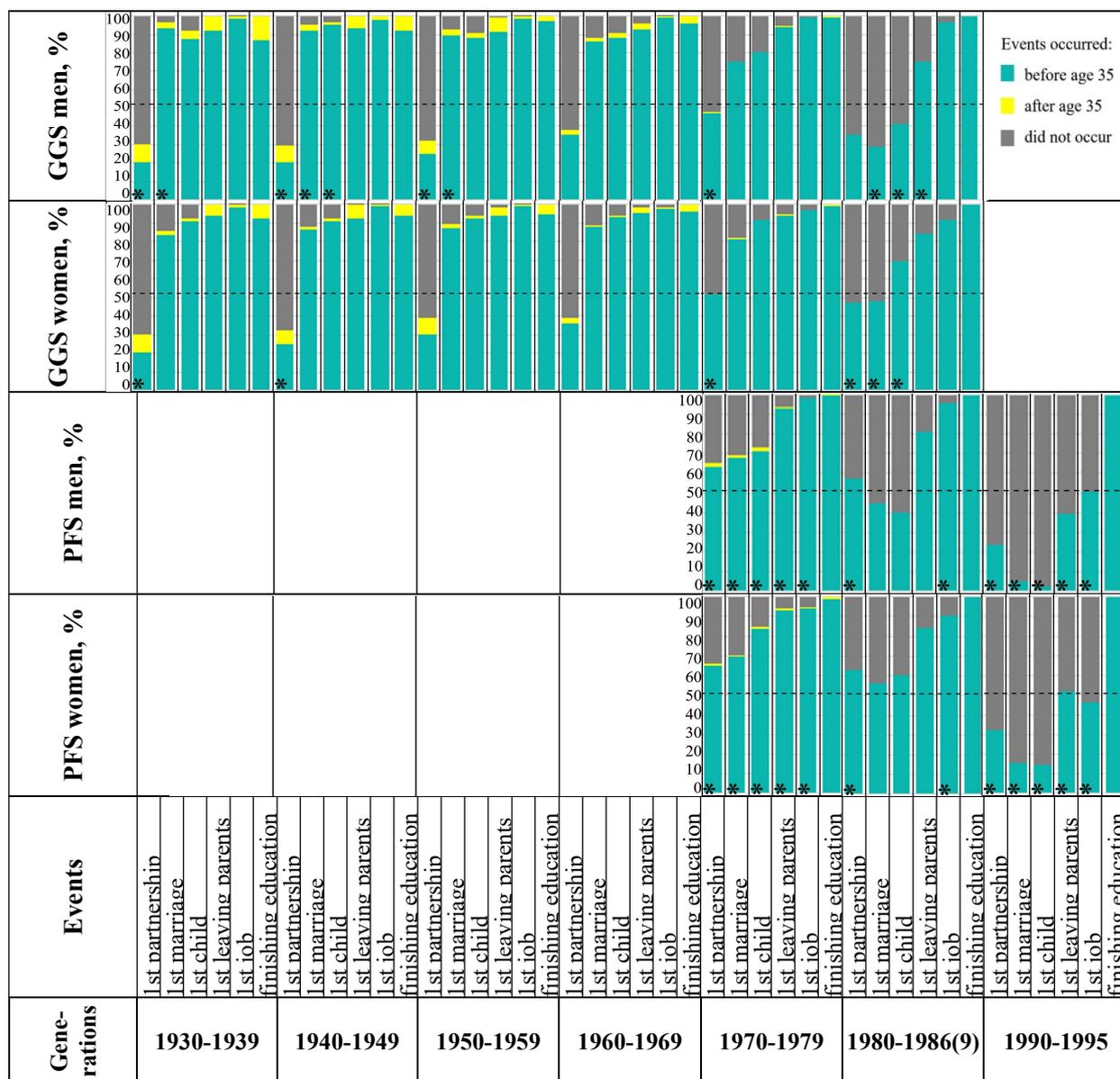


Source: Author's calculations.

Figure 2 contains information about the shares of people who experienced observed events before age 35, after age 35 or have not experienced them yet. As we can see, most events were experienced before the age 35 (and it confirms our decision to set the end of the observation period here). Interestingly, almost all people from Soviet generations have all events except partnership. Young generations give more credit to partnership by choosing it over a marriage.

Analysing the set of these events, we should remember that modern generations only started their biographies, and some events are represented by a very small share of the generations.

**Figure 2.** The shares of respondents experienced starting events before, after age 35 and have not experienced yet, GGS and PFS



\* p<0,001

Source: Author's calculations.

## 4. RESULTS

We started our analysis from the discovery of the first (Table 1) and the last (Table 2) demographic and socioeconomic events separately and in combination (sociodemographic events). As we mentioned in the operationalisation section, we divided the life-course events marking the transition to adulthood into two groups: demographic events (first partnership, first marriage and birth of the first child) and socioeconomic events (completion of education, first job and separation from parents). Altogether, we call them sociodemographic events.

The first interesting note is that starting *sociodemographic* and purely *socioeconomic* events are almost the same (and with the same numbers!), which means that people tend to build their careers and gain economic independence first. The first sociodemographic (and purely socioeconomic) events have differences by sex and generations.

*Men* born in 1930-1959 started their transition to adulthood with getting a job, men of younger generations with finishing of education; if the first two oldest generations demonstrated quite strong preference for a job as a first event (40-46%), however, the men of other generations do not show such strong results. The numbers fluctuating at around 33% show that all the events are competing, and a “win” of education is not so strong. The youngest generations of GGS and PFS show high results, but only because they now have a low level of education. If it increases, the date of finishing of education will change for older, and some other event can take the starting position.

*Women* show a greater diversity: the oldest women started the transition to adulthood (and socioeconomic biography) with finishing education; the generation following them with getting a job; the next three generations with separation from parents; and the youngest women of GGS and all the women of PFS with finishing education. The only strong result belongs to women born in 1940-1949: some 40% of them started to work first. Other generations (except the youngest from PFS) demonstrate results under 34%. Interestingly, shares of women who have the listed events are not the same in sociodemographic and socioeconomic terms as for men, which means that the leadership of socioeconomic events is not so strong, and demographic events are successfully competing.

The first *demographic* events are the same for men and women, but differ by generations: respondents born before 1979 had a marriage as a first event, while people born after had a partnership as a first event. The numbers here are very explicit: for Soviet generations, they are more than 60%, for modern generations the shares are declining, but only because of censoring.

**Table 1.** The first sociodemographic, demographic and socioeconomic events by sex and generations, GGS and PFS

Generations	Men						Women					
	Socio-demographic		Demographic		Socioeconomic		Socio-demographic		Demographic		Socioeconomic	
	Event	Share, %	Event	Share, %	Event	Share, %	Event	Share, %	Event	Share, %	Event	Share, %
<b>GGS</b>												
1930-39	job	46.4	marriage	76.2	job	46.4	education	32.9	marriage	67.9	education	34.8
1940-49	job	40.3	marriage	76.7	job	41.7	job	40.0	marriage	69.7	job	41.4
1950-59	job	35.1	marriage	71.8	job	36.7	separation	32.2	marriage	67.4	separation	37.1
1960-69	education	33.3	marriage	61.9	education	34.8	separation	33.8	marriage	63.0	separation	40.4
1970-79	education	34.4	marriage	48.0	education	36.4	separation	25.2	marriage	48.6	separation	42.5
1980-86	education	43.6	partnership	35.7	education	43.6	education	27.9	partnersh.	41.0	separation	37.7
<b>PFS</b>												
1970-79	education	43.4	partnership	58.0	education	49.6	education	33.5	partnersh.	56.6	education	39.9
1980-89	education	41.9	partnership	54.5	education	46.4	education	31.3	partnersh.	58.3	education	38.6
1990-95	education	69.8	partnership	22.8	education	75.3	education	63.4	partnersh.	31.4	education	66.1

Source: Author's calculations.

The last *sociodemographic* events coincide with the last purely *demographic* events, and for all generations except the youngest it is childbearing. Probably, people are postponing this event because it is the most life-changing and requires the greatest responsibility. Young people are also postponing childbearing, and the fact that the last and the first events for them are the same (and Figure 2 as well) gives us a hint that it is the only event which a majority of them have.

Among *socioeconomic* events, the last one is separation from parents for the oldest generations and education for some young men and women. We can assume that leaving the parental home needs more resources than other socioeconomic events, and to have these resources, people usually need to have earnings, requiring a job and an education necessary for that job.

**Table 2.** The last sociodemographic, demographic and socioeconomic events by sex and generations, GGS and PFS

Gene- rations	Men						Women					
	Sociodemographic Event	Share, %	Demographic Event	Share, %	Socioeconomic Event	Share, %	Sociodemographic Event	Share, %	Demographic Event	Share, %	Socioeconomic Event	Share, %
<b>GGS</b>												
1930-39	child	38.7	child	72.4	education	39.8	child	45.3	child	73.1	separation	46.9
1940-49	child	39.8	child	74.3	separation	45.1	child	41.7	child	72.2	separation	39.6
1950-59	child	42.7	child	74.0	separation	46.0	child	45.0	child	72.9	separation	36.5
1960-69	child	46.2	child	75.5	separation	43.2	child	49.2	child	76.9	separation	36.0
1970-79	child	44.2	child	70.4	separation	44.9	child	36.0	child	72.5	job	32.5
1980-86	child	25.0	child	34.3	separation	37.1	child	31.1	child	60.1	educ/ job	32.8
<b>PFS</b>												
1970-79	child	47.4	child	62.6	separation	47.2	child	44.0	child	69.6	separation	38.3
1980-89	child	28.7	child	34.6	separation	36.8	child	34.4	child	52.7	education	32.6
1990-95	education	51.2	marriage	3.3	education	53.4	education	49.9	child	13.3	education	56.8

Source: Author's calculations.

Using sequence analysis, we investigated starting life course events, which we grouped according to three dimensions (corresponding statuses are in parentheses)<sup>8</sup>: the presence of children (no children, first child), marital status (single, first partnership, first marriage), socioeconomic status (no events, first separation from parents, first job, completing an education career). The number of status combinations is very high, so in order to reduce their amount, we focused only on the first event in pairs of socioeconomic events and on the last one in the triple events. The list of determined statuses are specified and their codes are shown in Figure 3.

The colour grey indicates censored events which have not yet occurred at the time of the survey. The censoring is possible because the representatives of the youngest generations are 18-23 years old (PFS) and 25-31 years old (GGS).

Using the information on the data occurrences, we reconstructed the segments of the respondents' biographies. We created statuses for each month from age 15 to age 35 for each respondent. We chose the age of 15 as the margin of childhood and capped the observation period at the age of 35 to equalise the chances of different generations in terms of event occurrence, and to exclude marginal cases (since the first events most likely occur in the first half of life).

<sup>8</sup> We used the R package TraMineR (Gabadinho et al. 2011).

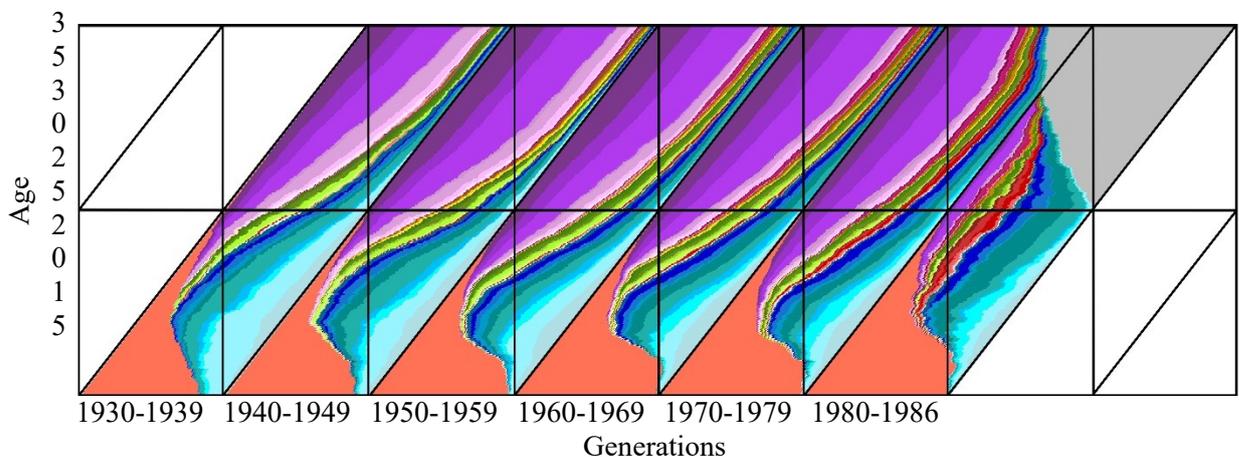
**Figure 3.** Groupings of statuses used in the sequence analysis

Socioeconomic events	Demographic events					
	Childless (C0)			1 <sup>st</sup> child (C1)		
	Single (S)	1 <sup>st</sup> partner (P)	1 <sup>st</sup> marriage (M)	Single (S)	1 <sup>st</sup> partner (P)	1 <sup>st</sup> marriage (M)
No events or one event	SC00 (no events)					
	SC0L (separation from parents)	P1C01	M1C01	SC11	P1C11	M1C11
	SC0J (job)					
	SC0E (education)					
1 <sup>st</sup> leaving parents (L) > some event	SC0L+	P1C0L+	M1C0L+	SC1L+	P1C1L+	M1C1L+
1 <sup>st</sup> job (J) > some event	SC0J+	P1C0J+	M1C0J+	SC1J+	P1C1J+	M1C1J+
Finishing of education (E) > some event	SC0E+	P1C0E+	M1C0E+	SC1E+	P1C1E+	M1C1E+
2 events concurrently	SC02	P1C02	M1C02	SC12	P1C12	M1C12
2 events > 1 <sup>st</sup> leaving parents (L)	SC0++L	P1C0++L	M1C0++L	SC1++L	P1C1++L	M1C1++L
2 events > 1 <sup>st</sup> job (J)	SC0++J	P1C0++J	M1C0++J	SC1++J	P1C1++J	M1C1++J
2 events > finishing of education (E)	SC0++E	P1C0++E	M1C0++E	SC1++E	P1C1++E	M1C1++E
3 events concurrently	SC03	P1C03	M1C03	SC13	P1C13	M1C13
Censoring						

We obtained the frequency distribution of occurrences of different statuses at any given time for each generation; this distribution became the framework for building chronograms representing these frequencies for GGS men (Fig. 4), GGS women (Fig. 5) and both sexes of PFS (Fig. 6). The chronograms were placed on Lexis grids, thus allowing for comparison across the three time dimensions: the X-axis – time, the Y-axis – age, and the diagonal – generation. The X-axis represents the proportion of the delayed status at each point in time inside the corridors of each generation; the Y-axis depicts ages from 15 to 35 years.

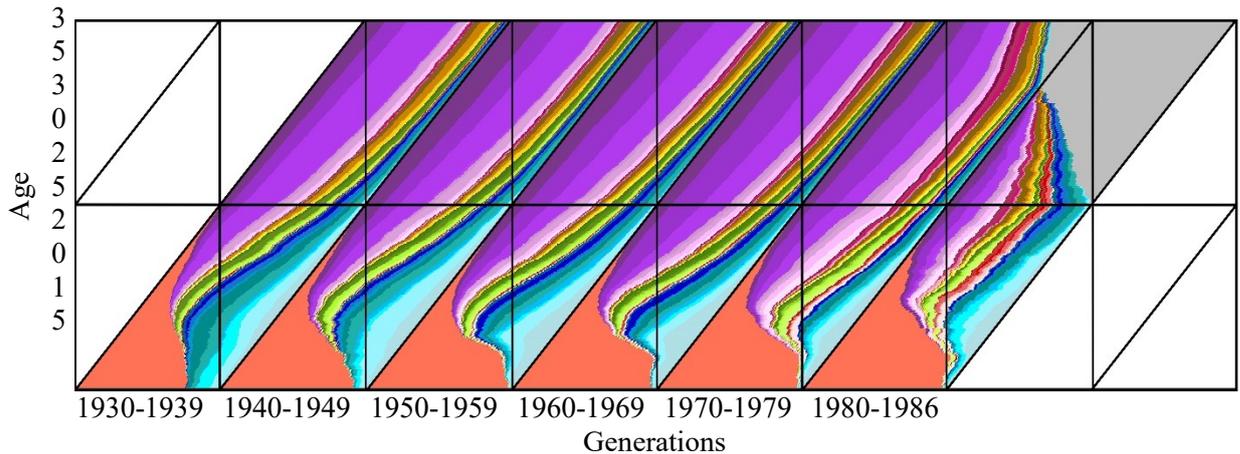
We also derived the list of statuses at the ages of 15, 25 and 35 to support the visual representation of the biographies with numbers (Appendix 1).

**Figure 4.** Chronograms for men by generations, GGS



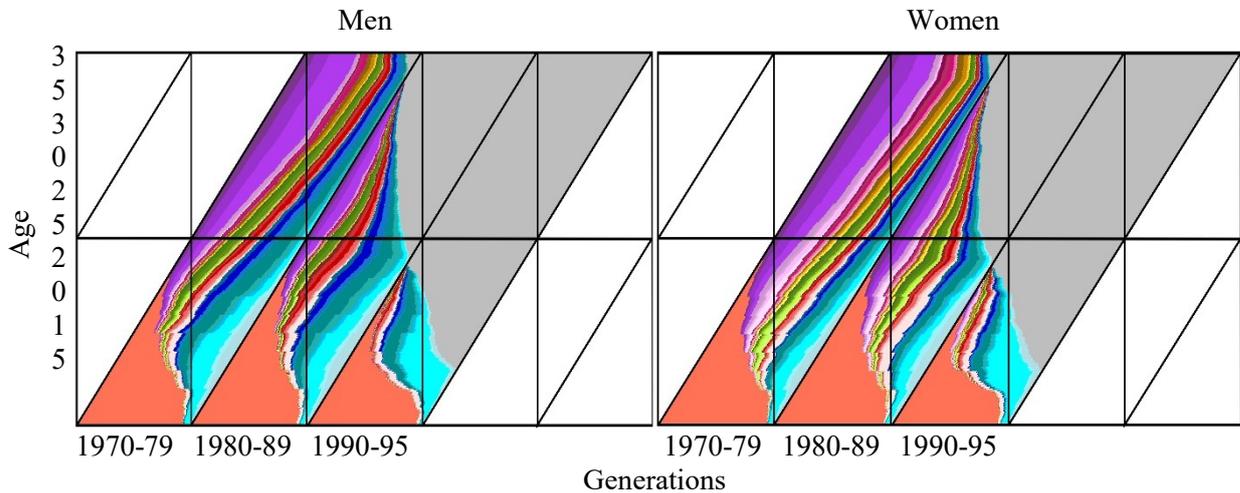
Source: Author's calculations.

**Figure 5.** Chronograms for women by generations, GGS



Source: Author's calculations.

**Figure 6.** Chronograms for men and women by generations, PFS



Source: Author's calculations.

The form of the start of biographies (i.e. the “neck”, from which the colours appear) indicates that, at the *age of 15*, the older generations had a much larger number of events than the younger generations; for older generations, such events were mainly socioeconomic, while young generations experienced more demographic ones. Almost 90% of men of the older generations had exclusively socioeconomic events (blue palette) by the age of 20. By about the same age, men of other generations began to acquire demographic events, but only 70-80% of them had socioeconomic ones. Women began demographic careers two years earlier and have approximately 35-65% of the socioeconomic events by this age.

*At the age of 35*, 70-95% of men born in 1935-1974 have most of the *demographic* events: they are married and have at least one child (purple palette), while among women from similar generations less than 80% have such statuses, and 8% are in partnership with a child (pink palette). Some 10-20% of women have a child and are not married or cohabiting (yellow colours). In contrast, a man with a child is almost always a man in a relationship. Among the men and women of the younger generations, only 10% are married and have a child, but these representatives have had very few other events, because only a small portion of the respondents have reached the age of 35. For both sexes, when we move to younger generations, there is a

tendency towards reduction in the share of those who are married and an increase in the share of those who are in partnership.

All generations include respondents who do not have any demographic event by the **age of 35**, but their share does not exceed 5%. The oldest generations more often had a job as the first *socioeconomic* event. The youngest generation has almost equal shares of possible events. Their trajectories are more diverse. Except the oldest, women rarely have the finishing of education as a first event. This can mean that they spend more time learning, or that they have breaks in education because of maternity leave. By the age of 35, there are many completed socioeconomic sequences. People who started with a job have the most diverse trajectories. People who started with leaving parents more often had education and a job simultaneously (probably to cover school costs). When the first event was finishing of education, the chain of other events was the steadiest: first people obtained a job, then they left their parents. When the trajectory started with education and a job simultaneously, the next logical step was separation from parents.

*Men* from the two oldest generations most often had the trajectory “job→separation→education”. They studied for a solid amount of time or had advanced training at work. Other generations have the trajectory “education+job→separation”. These people finished their education quite early, which can imply a low level of education.

*Women* of all generations, except 1930-1939 and 1970-1979, most often have the trajectory “separation→education+job”. This model of behavior can be called traditional because the separation from parents in Soviet times, in most cases, meant that a woman married and moved to her husband’s household, or that the government provided a bigger apartment because of the birth of children and the reduction in space for one person in the previous residence. The generation 1970-1979 demonstrates the opposite trajectory: “education+job→separation”. They first obtain financial independence and then leave parents, because in post-Soviet Russia, apartments are no longer provided gratis. The youngest generation contains a lot of censoring, but we can see the “traditional” trajectory of their behavior. It may be valid, but we still need to remember that times have changed, and now separation from parents can more often happen because of a job or education.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper illuminates how men and women from different generations gain their first demographic and socioeconomic events. We analysed the first and the last events of the transition to adulthood and represented the individual biographies on chronograms. We confirmed our hypotheses.

### **H1. The transition to adulthood differs among generations.**

H1.1. The event opening a transition to adulthood changed over generations. It is still a socioeconomic event, but it has changed from getting a first job to finishing education for men and it is still very diverse for women. The first demographic event changed from marriage to partnership.

H1.2. The last event changed less than the first one. The last sociodemographic event coincides with the purely demographic one and it is childbearing for almost all the generations. The last socioeconomic event is very often separation from parents. Only some young generations constitute exceptions, but this can be because they only started their biographies and have a lot of censoring at the time of the surveys.

H1.3. The youngest generations demonstrate less intensity in starting the transition to adulthood: they delay the onset of all the events, especially childbearing, to later ages.

H1.4. Young people, compared to older generations, much more actively enter partnerships and even have children in them.

### **H2. The transition to adulthood differs between sexes.**

H2.1. The first sociodemographic and purely socioeconomic events are very different for men and for woman. Men usually have a job or education, while women usually experience separation from parents. There are no differences among the first demographic events of men and women.

H2.2. The last event differs less than the first one. The last sociodemographic and purely demographic events are childbearing. The last socioeconomic event is usually separation from parents with just some exceptions.

H2.3. Men devote a significant part of their youth to achieving socioeconomic events, while women much earlier and more actively initiate their demographic careers. Nevertheless, by the age of 35, there are more respondents among men who have children and relationships than men who do not experience such events.

Thus, we definitely see a modernisation trend in sociodemographic behaviour in post-Soviet generations. The sequencing of events is becoming more variable, unpredictable and free from institutional influence. The time of the onset of events is increasing: if generations born in the 1930s already had some events at the age of 15 and gained other events very quickly, modern generations start their biographies in later ages. The tempo characteristics show that younger generations pay more attention to career in the first part of the transition to adulthood; when they start family formation, they begin not with marriage and simultaneous childbearing, but with partnership. Our results indicate agreement with studies of European countries: the transition to adulthood in Russia has also become “late, protracted and complex” (Billari and Liefbroer 2010), and the life courses of youngsters are becoming more deinstitutionalised (Bertaux and Kohli 1984; Mayer and Müller 1986).

The next steps of our research are to compare Russians with other Europeans and to examine two theoretical approaches: one which predicts the convergence and the other which expects the divergence of the sociodemographic behaviours of different countries. Up to this point, we see that the general patterns of the transition to adulthood in Russia are developing similarly to those in other countries, but we want to compare specifically the sequencing, tempo and timing of event occurrence.

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## APPENDIXES

**Appendix 1.** Statuses at the ages of 15, 25 and 35, GGS (statuses with support of less than 4% at least in one cell of the row were deleted)

Statuses	Men, %						Women, %					
	1930– 1939	1940– 1949	1950– 1959	1960– 1969	1970– 1979	1980– 1986	1930– 1939	1940– 1949	1950– 1959	1960– 1969	1970– 1979	1980– 1986
Age of 15												
SC00	81	88	95	97	96	96	74	89	96	94	94	95
SC0J	12	5	2	1	2	1	7	4	1	1	1	0
SC0E	2	1	0	0	0	1	10	3	0	0	1	1
Age of 25												
SC0L	5	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
SC0J	6	5	2	2	3	4	2	2	2	2	1	2
SC0J+	10	4	5	4	4	9	4	5	4	3	2	5
SC0E+	4	6	4	7	4	16	3	3	3	3	3	5
SC0++L	5	3	3	4	5	10	4	2	2	1	1	4
SC0++J	3	2	4	5	5	8	4	2	4	3	2	3
SC0++E	4	2	3	3	2	4	1	3	3	2	0	3
SC1++J	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	4
P1C0++L	0	0	0	1	3	4	0	0	0	1	1	2
P1C0++J	1	0	0	1	1	4	0	0	0	1	0	2
P1C1++J	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	4
M1C0J+	5	3	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2
M1C0++L	4	5	4	4	4	1	5	3	4	2	1	2
M1C11	5	2	3	2	2	0	1	2	2	1	2	3
M1C1L+	2	4	4	4	3	0	3	3	3	4	8	5
M1C1J+	7	11	7	5	3	1	6	9	7	4	7	3
M1C1E+	1	2	3	2	3	0	3	3	3	3	5	3
M1C1++L	8	14	15	15	16	8	22	18	15	18	15	9
M1C1++J	5	8	10	10	12	2	8	11	16	21	17	8
M1C1++E	5	4	8	7	5	1	6	11	10	9	7	7
Age of 35												
Censoring	0	0	0	0	29	100	0	0	0	0	26	100
SC1++L	1	2	2	2	1	0	7	3	3	4	4	0
SC1++J	0	0	1	2	2	0	1	3	2	4	2	0
SC1++E	1	2	0	1	0	0	3	4	3	4	2	0
M1C1L+	3	4	1	2	1	0	2	2	2	1	1	0
M1C1J+	12	7	3	3	1	0	5	5	4	3	1	0
M1C1++L	30	35	31	31	22	0	34	27	26	24	14	0
M1C1++J	14	14	16	17	14	0	15	17	21	25	17	0
M1C1++E	21	23	24	19	11	0	14	22	20	15	14	0

Source: Author's calculations.

**Appendix 2.** Statuses at the ages of 15, 25 and 35, PFS (statuses with support of less than 4% at least in one cell of the row were deleted)

Age	Statuses	Men, %			Women, %		
		1970– 1979	1980– 1989	1990– 1995	1970– 1979	1980– 1989	1990– 1995
Age of 15	SC00	91	90	94	93	92	91
	SC0E	5	3	2	3	3	4
Age of 25	Censoring	0	15	100	0	20	100
	SC0J+	5	6	0	4	3	0
	SC0E+	12	9	0	4	5	0
	SC0++L	5	7	0	3	2	0
	SC0++J	6	7	0	4	3	0
	SC0++E	4	3	0	2	3	0
	P1C0++L	4	5	0	2	3	0
	P1C0++J	2	4	0	2	2	0
	M1C0++L	5	4	0	4	4	0
	M1C1L+	1	0	0	5	2	0
	M1C1E+	2	1	0	5	2	0
	M1C1++L	7	7	0	9	7	0
	M1C1++J	7	4	0	10	6	0
	M1C1++E	4	3	0	5	5	0
	Age of 35	Censoring	11	100	100	14	100
SC0++L		5	0	0	3	0	0
P1C1++L		4	0	0	3	0	0
M1C1++L		24	0	0	16	0	0
M1C1++J		12	0	0	15	0	0
	M1C1++E	10	0	0	10	0	0

*Source:* Author's calculations.