Pathways to adulthood in Uruguay

Ana Fostik | Benoît Laplante | Daniel Ciganda
McGill University | Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique | Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Abstract

Using two complementary methodological strategies, we analyse the pathways to adulthood in Uruguay by means of biographical data from the 1990 and 2008 National Youth Surveys (NYS). We seek to provide some keys to the changes in the pathway to adulthood, understood as a single process rather than a sum of events. We also seek to understand the relations between the types of pathways to adulthood and the first birth at a younger age, identifying which types of trajectories are more likely to lead to the first birth during the youth.

We find a high degree of heterogeneity in the pathways to adulthood, which is rooted in the unequal social structure. While some women experience fast routes to adult roles, others delay even the take-off of the adulthood in both cohorts, regarding the type of key events experienced, the duration of states and the order in which the events happen. Trajectories that include family events, particularly the first birth, early school leaving and periods without formal activity (in the school system or the labour market) are experienced by women from lower social origins, with low educational attainment and who tend to currently live in poor households. On the contrary, trajectories with long periods of schooling or combined schooling and labour market insertion are experienced by women from middle or high social origins and who tend to currently live in households above the poverty threshold.

Findings

We find a high degree of heterogeneity in the trajectories to adulthood in both cohorts, regarding the type of key events experienced, the duration of states and the order in which the events happen. Trajectories that include family events, particularly the first birth, early school leaving and periods without formal activity (in the school system or the labour market) are experienced by women from lower social origins, with low educational attainment and who tend to currently live in poor households. On the contrary, trajectories with long periods of schooling or combined schooling and labour market insertion are experienced by women from middle or high social origins and who tend to currently live in households above the poverty threshold.

Method

Firstly, the evolution of typical sequences in the pathway to adulthood of Uruguayan young women from two cohorts (1961-1965 and 1979-1983) is analysed through sequence analysis. These analyses address four events indicating the pathway to adulthood: home leaving, school leaving, first job and first birth.

Secondly, the variations in the timing of the first birth are analysed using the combination of the other three events by order of occurrence as the main independent variable. Such combination is introduced in the survival analysis as a time-varying variable and it enables identifying states that are more likely to delay or induce the first birth.

Contact

ana.fostik@mail.mcgill.ca
daniel.ciganda@upf.edu
Benoit.Laplante@UCS.INRS.Ca