

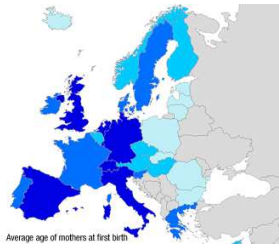
Summer School Description

Growing uncertainty about economic and social developments has become a permanent aspect of post-industrial Western societies. In this context, individuals have been confronted with new risks during their lives. They face increased levels of instability and insecurity in relevant life domains such as work and family. On the one hand, given the diffusion of flexible work contracts, job mobility and unemployment experiences during the life course, employment careers have become less stable and predictable. On the other hand, the increase of marital dissolutions and the expansion of cohabitations and of other new family arrangements have contributed to a reduction in the cohesiveness and stability of family life..

Life course patterns are now less standardized and less predictable. Specific risks such as a change of job or a divorce or a health problem can influence an individual biography differently depending on the individual's stage of life, the historical period and the institutional settings in which the individuals live. From a life course research perspective, such trajectories developments are the outcome of a complex interaction of personal characteristics and individual action as well as institutional, structural, cultural conditions. Analysis of such trajectories requires consideration of the interrelationships between macro, meso and micro-levels of analysis.

From this perspective, exposure to a specific micro risk may have different social outcomes depending on the macro contexts in which it takes place. Both life course trajectories and career changes are shaped and mediated by specific institutional factors, by economic and social policies, not to mention cultural differences and social expectations that have deep historical roots. Moreover it is crucial to identify the factors and circumstances mediating the process by which a specific life event becomes a "biographical break" that - in particular institutional contexts - fosters a process of cumulative disadvantage and inequality.

The increased availability of longitudinal (retrospective, panel and cohort) data on individuals and households allows us to develop new and in-depth analysis of life course events and dynamics over time and across countries. Such data allow to provide the foundation for the implementation analytic and holistic methodologies. Analytic approaches, based on event history, panel and multilevel techniques, focus on modeling events and transitions and assessing how events or changes in one area of social life may significantly affect other key dimensions of the life course. A second form of analysis centers on describing how the various life-course trajectories vary systematically across social groups, and the manner in which "biographical breaks" contribute to different "evolutions". Holistic approaches, thus, try to describe and explore "trajectories" with a particular focus on using sequence analysis techniques. In this case the main aim is to identify typologies of life courses.



The VII ECSR, EQUALSOC & Trento University Summer School will provide a unifying perspective on these research traditions, applying life course approach to a variety of 'topics' including different life-course phases and breaks: education and the transition from school to work; work career and work-life discontinuities; family formation and family breaks; demographic events and their consequences on individual life chances; etc.

From 3 to 7 September 2012, researchers from both the ECSR and the Equalsoc networks drawing on their theoretical, methodological and research skills will contribute to providing an exposure to critical issues in this area to a small number of selected Phds and post Phd students. They will also facilitate collective discussion of students' projects and papers.

Among the invited speakers to this round of the Summer School are the following:

Goetz Rohwer, Yossi Shavit, Melinda Mills, Paolo Barbieri, Ulrich Kohler, Brendan Halpin, Stefani Scherer, Nicola Barban, Cristiano Vezzoni.