

Social Inequality in Work-Family Life Courses in Five European Societies

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Motivation

Life course as marker of social inequality:

In the end we care about life as a whole. Single events become meaningful in the context of others.

Questions

1. How do welfare states shape life courses?
2. Are life courses more similar across countries for socio-economically advantaged young adults?
3. Which life course experiences do national welfare states shape for the least resourceful?
4. In which welfare states are men and women's life courses most equal?

Social inequality in life courses

Combination of parallel **socio-economic** (education, employment, earnings) and **family-demographic trajectories** age 21 to 40 → **'Life Course Classes'**

Advantages:

- Dynamic - typical trajectories of attainment
- Comprehensive - does not exclude selective populations not employed
- Cumulative – allows to map cumulative (dis-)advantage over time and across two life domains

Social stratification of choice in young adulthood (Billari et al. 2019)

- Stratified *intentions, agency and opportunities* (→ welfare state)
- Socioeconomically advantaged young adults better equipped to realize normative life courses of parenthood in marriage (Thomson et al 2013), completing education and quick upward mobility.
- Incentive structure of the welfare state irrelevant for resourceful young adults

Figure 1: Comparative cohort design

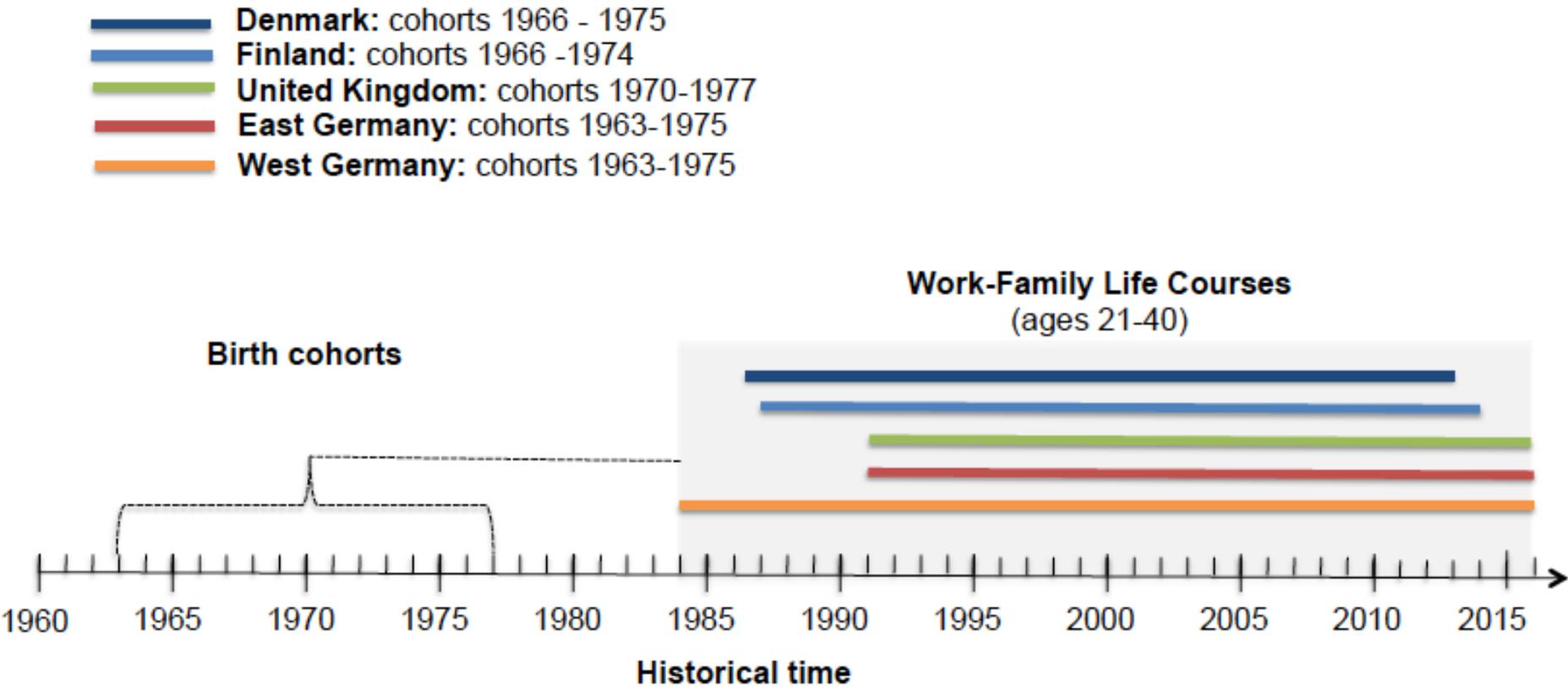


Table 1: Welfare states and mobility regimes

	UK	West DE	East DE	FI	DK
Welfare regime	Liberal	Conservative	Post-socialist conservative	Social democratic	Social democratic
Recession 1990s	None	Moderate	Severe	Severe	Moderate
Mobility regime: life course events	No suppression of events or their consequences	Suppresses events, selectively mitigates consequences	Suppresses events, selectively mitigates consequences	No suppression, mitigates economic consequences	No suppression, mitigates economic consequences
Family policy	Restricted, gender neutral	Moderate, gender conservative	Moderate, gender conservative	Extensive, gender egalitarian	Extensive, gender egalitarian
Gender regime	Male breadwinner, female part time	Male breadwinner	Dual earner legacy	Dual earner	Dual earner

Sources: DiPrete 2000, Esping-Andersen 1990, OECD 2015, LFS, Mayer 2004, Gauthier 2011

Expectations

Similar life courses of high-SES youth (H1): realize normative family lives and successful careers irrespective of welfare states.

Different life courses for low-SES youth (H2):

- **(West-) DE:** stable low earning employment with long interruptions & parenthood in marriage (→ suppression of events)
- **UK:** employment instability in low earning jobs & family instability (→ no suppression of events, no mitigation of consequences)
- **Nordics:** stable low earning employment lives & non-normative family lives (no suppression of events and mitigation of their consequences)

Expectations

- Life courses most gender unequal in West DE, followed by the UK, East DE, and the Nordics (H3).
- Within Nordic and within Germany comparison: “institutional siblings” with more or less severe recession in the 1990s.

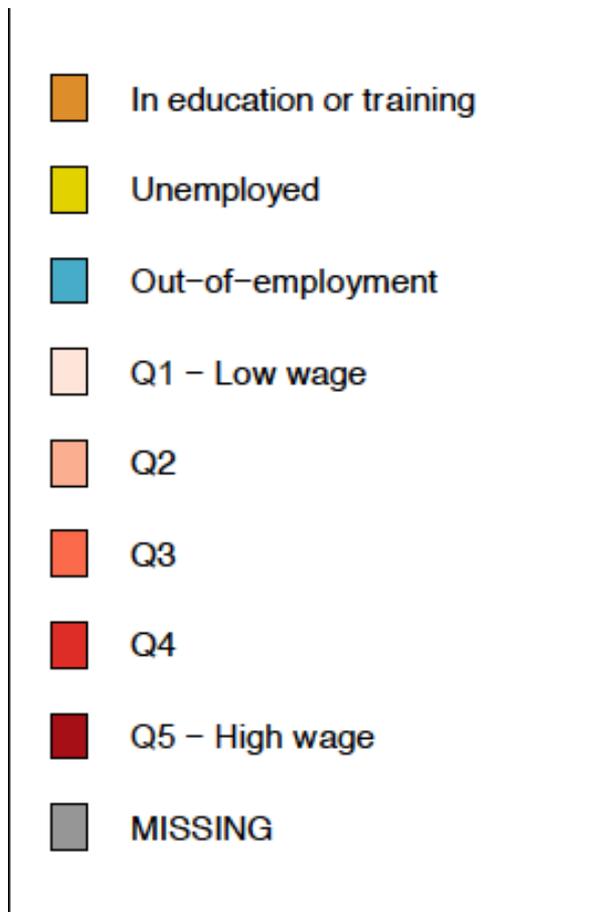
Table 2: Overview of cohorts, observation years and case numbers

County	Data set	Cohorts	Observation years	Case numbers
UK	BHPS & Understanding Societies	1970-1977	1991-2016	733 (with max 5 missings)
East Germany	GSOEP	1963-1976	1991-2016	417 (with max 5 missings)
West Germany	GSOEP	1963-1976	1984-2016	1,255 (with max 5 missings)
Finland	Statistics Finland Registers of Population and Social Statistics, Registers of Income Statistics	1966-1974	1987-2014	10,000 (random selection of cohort population, N=)
Denmark	Population and housing register, tax register, register for education	1966-1975	1986-2013	10,000 (random selection of cohort population, N = 752,869)

Measures

Socio-economic trajectories

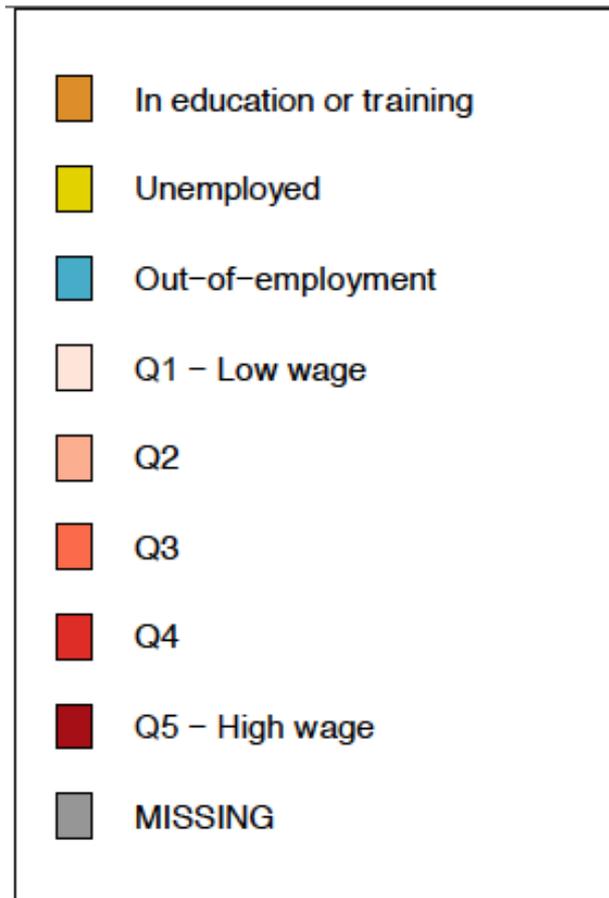
(quantiles of gross wages relative to entire working population)



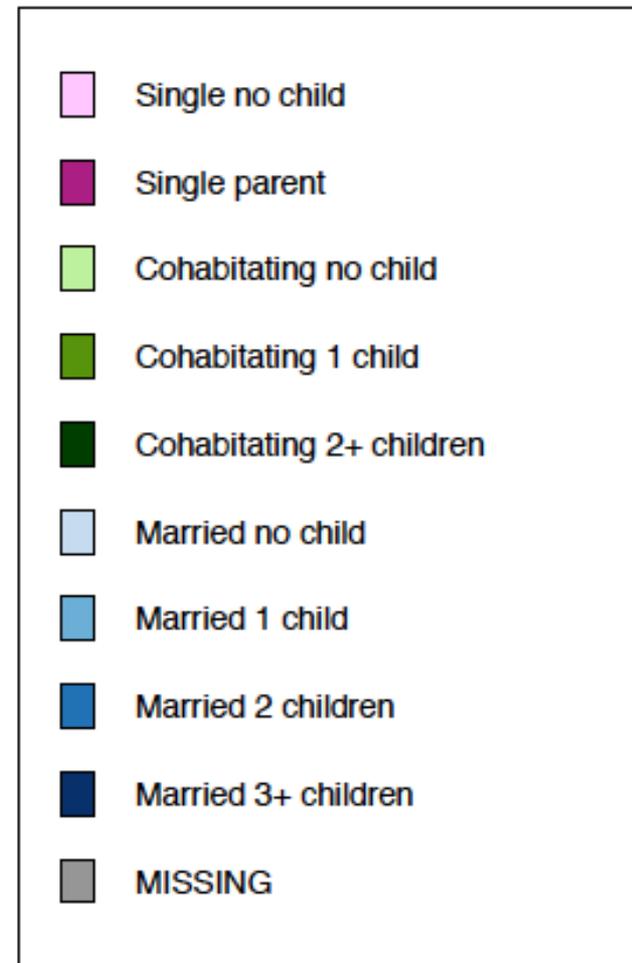
Measures

Socio-economic trajectories

(quantiles of gross wages relative to entire working population)



Family trajectories

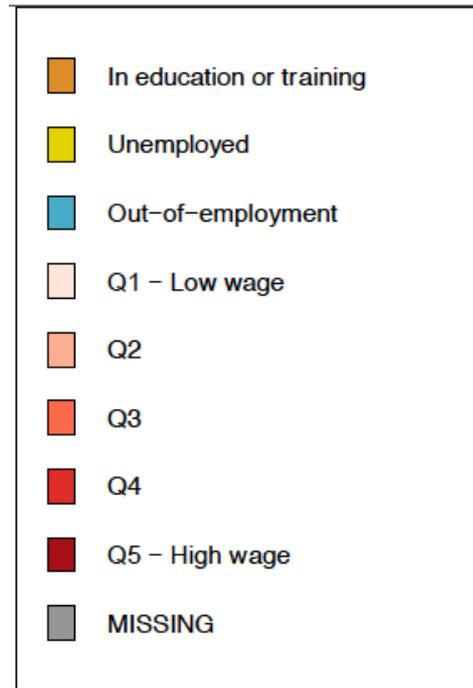
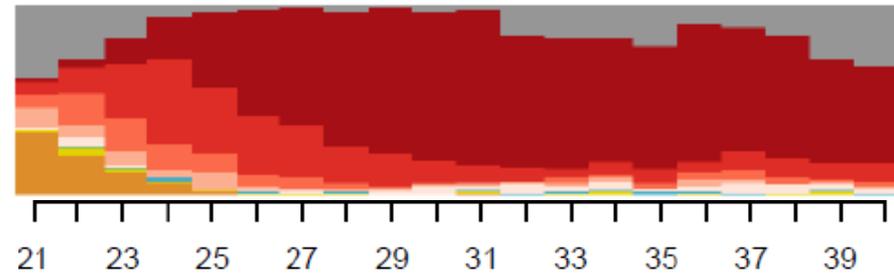
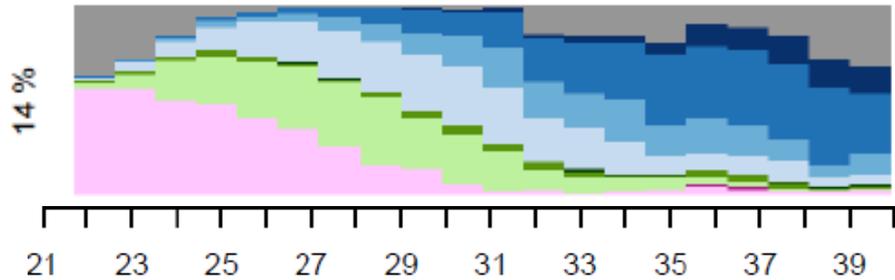


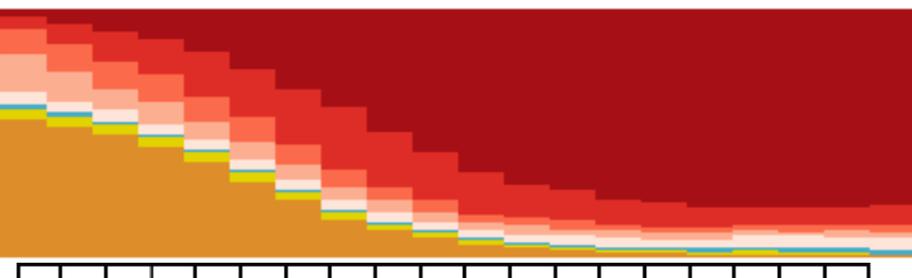
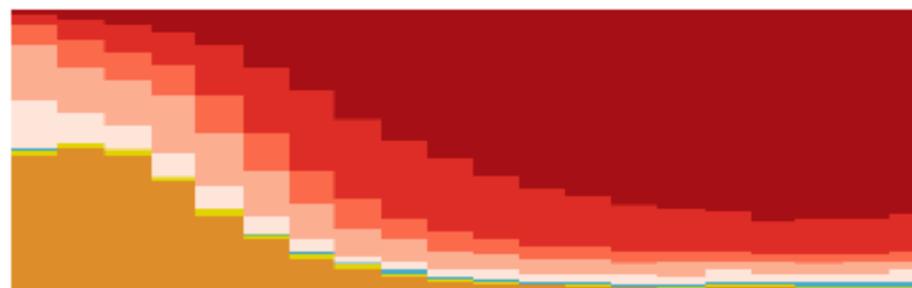
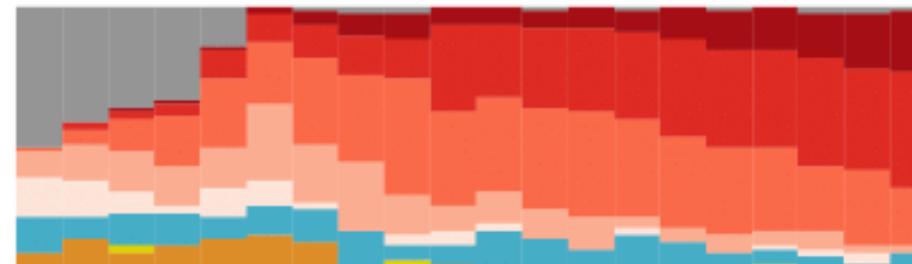
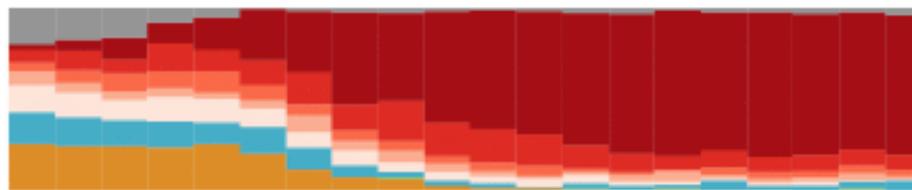
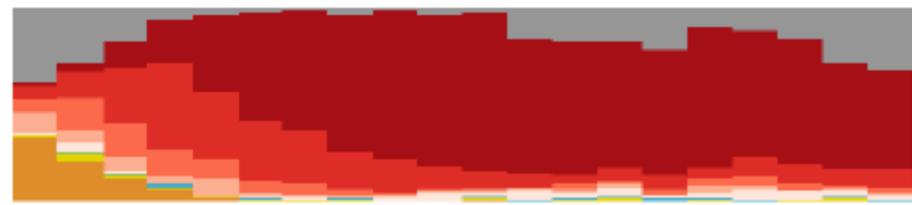
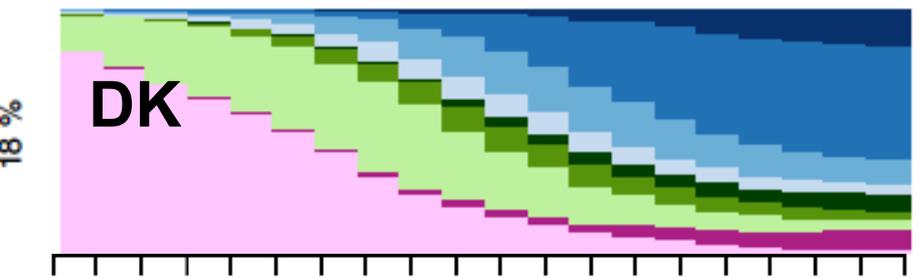
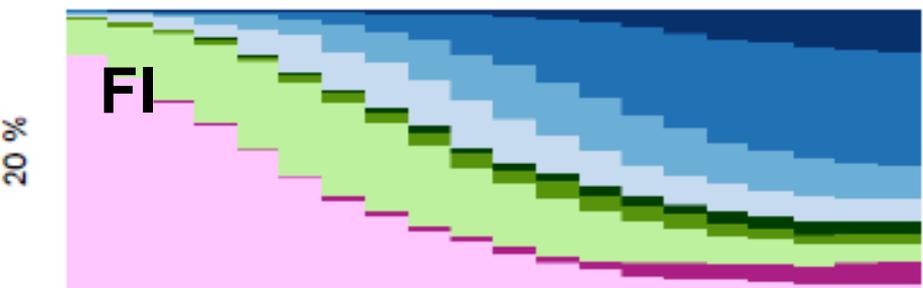
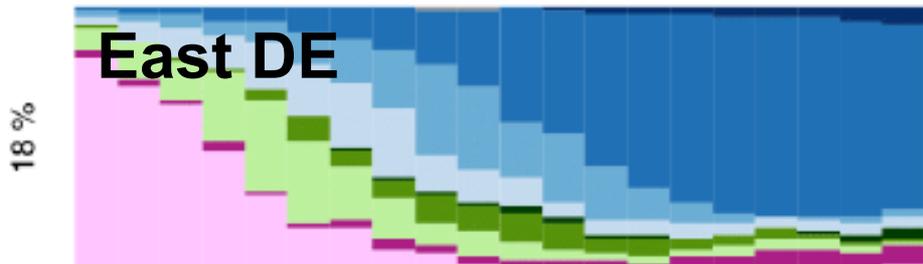
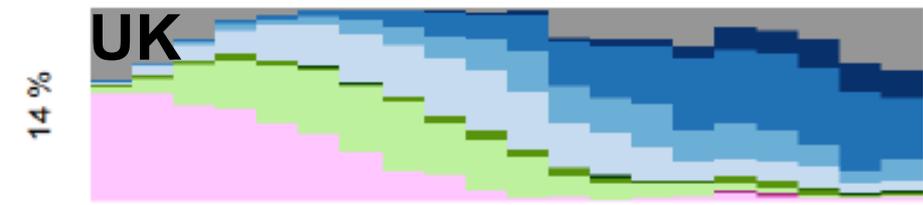
Analytical approach and methods

- Multichannel sequence analysis and (PAM) cluster analysis
- Logistic regression

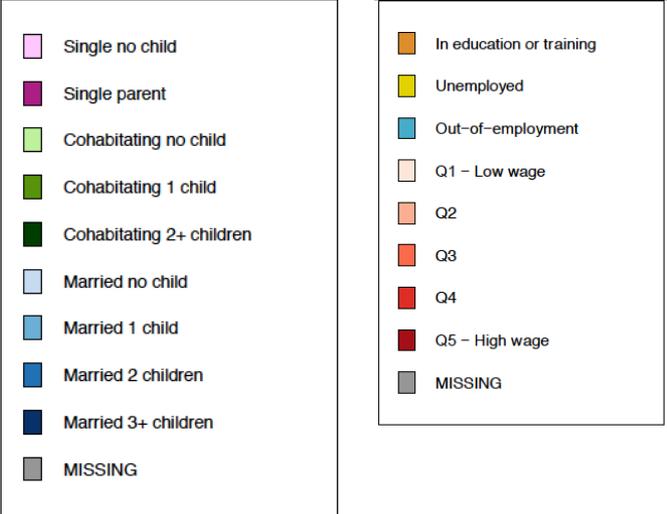
United Kingdom

Normative high earner

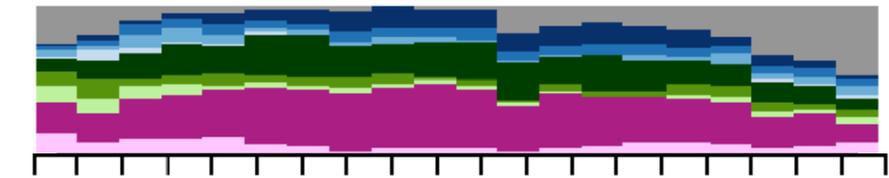




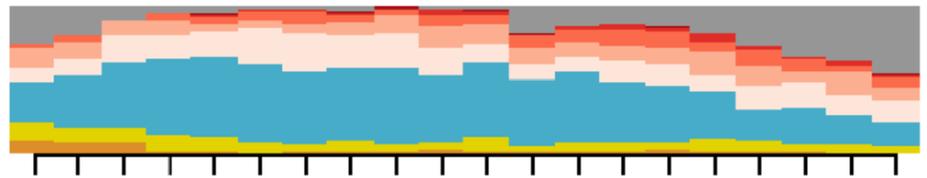
Least advantaged – UK and Germany



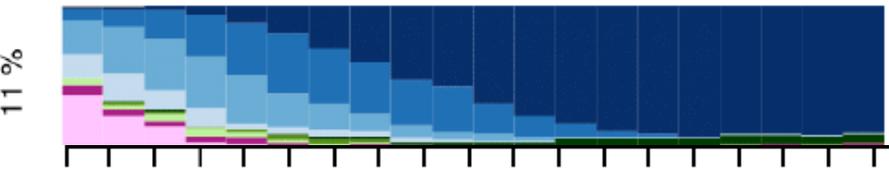
Parents OLF



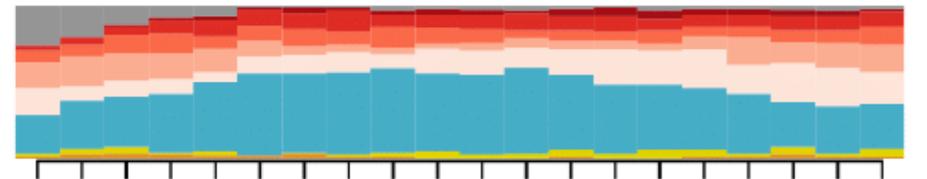
UK



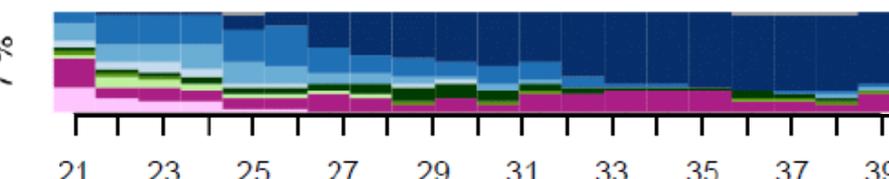
Married 3 kids OLF



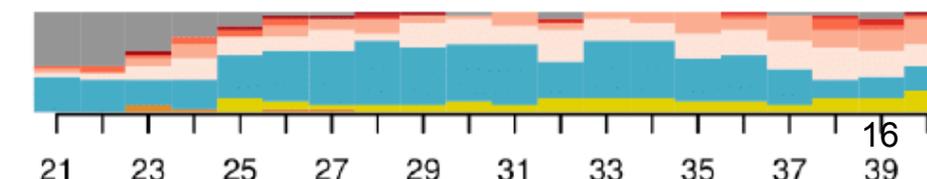
West DE



Married 3 kids OLF



East DE

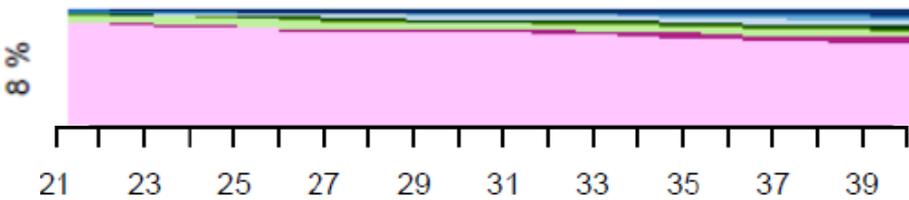


Least advantaged – FI & DK

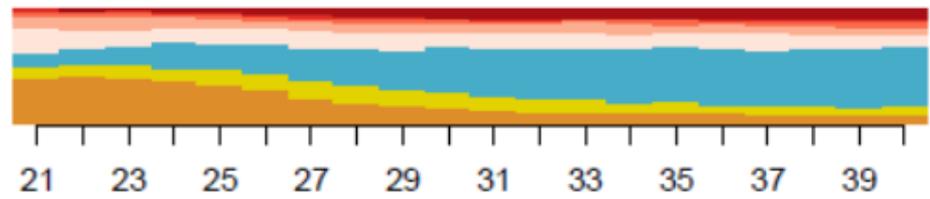
Single parents



Non-normative NEET



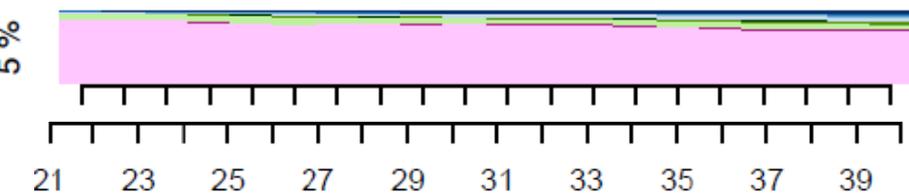
FI



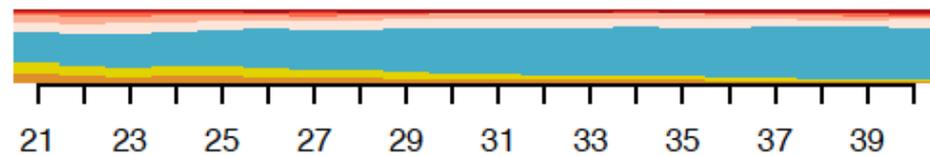
Single parents



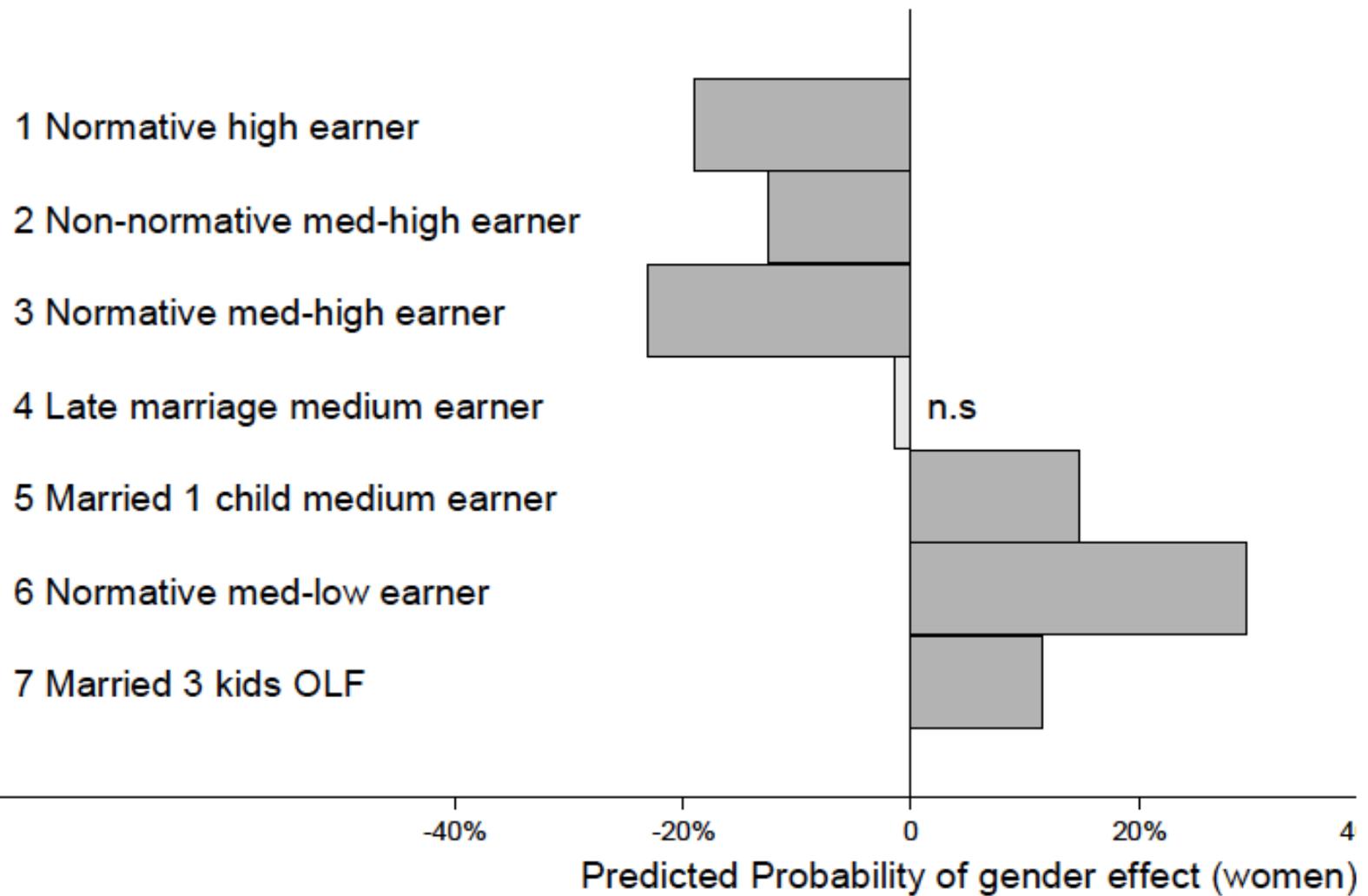
Non-normative NEET



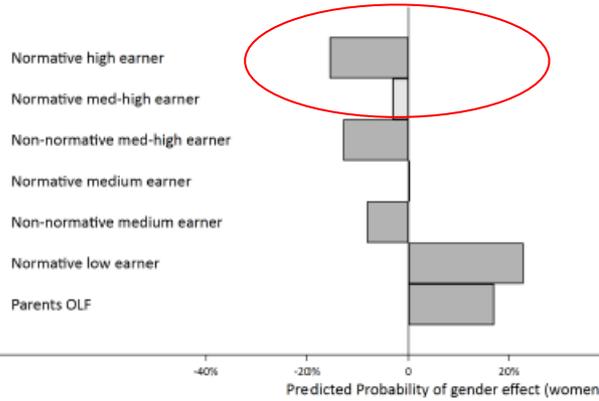
DK



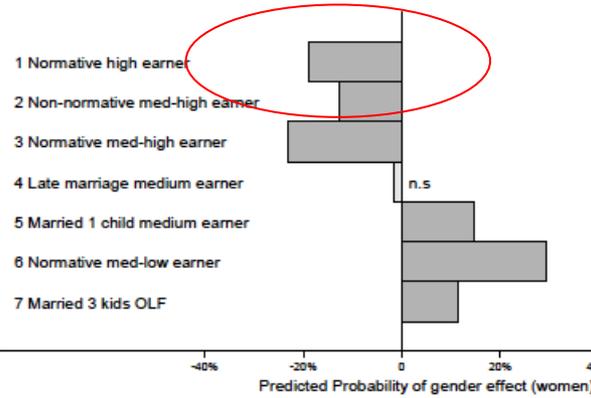
West Germany



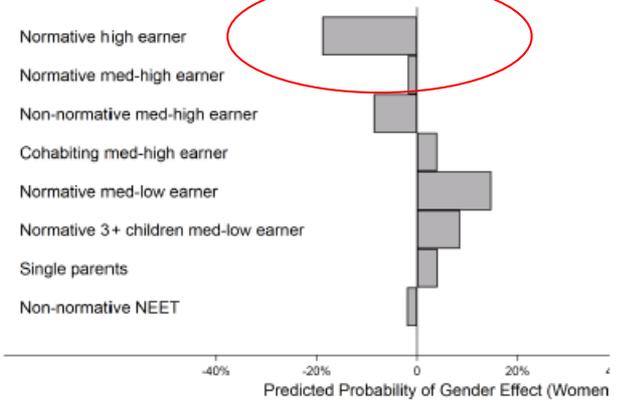
United Kingdom



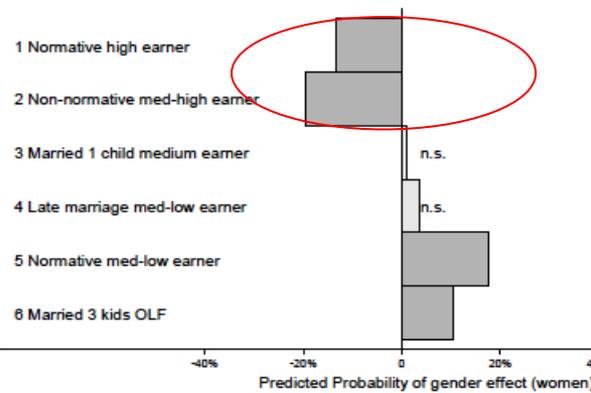
West Germany



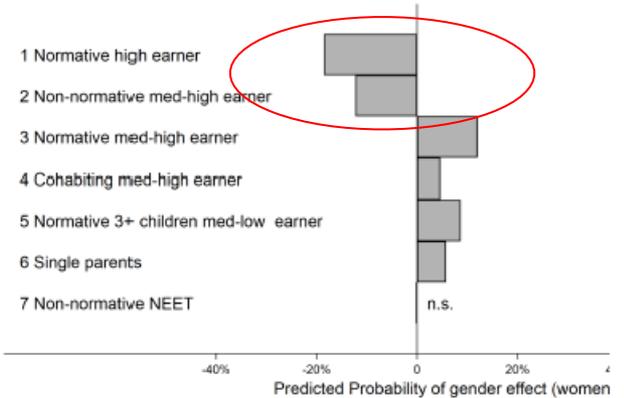
Denmark



East Germany



Finland



Conclusions

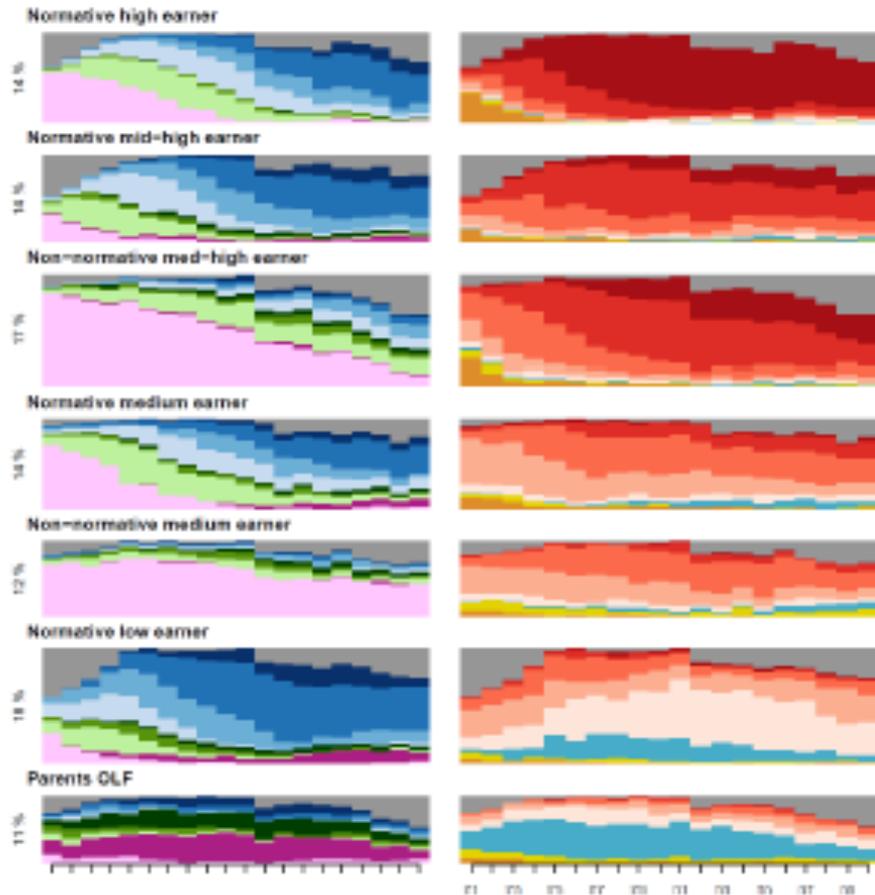
The most resourceful young adults realize normative life courses everywhere → accumulation of advantage in work and family lives over time.

Socio-economically disadvantaged life courses highly country-specific in line with national mobility regimes.

Men far more likely to experience the most privileged life courses in all countries.

Thank you

United Kingdom



Legends for figures 2, 3, 4

Single no child

Single parent

Cohabiting no child

Cohabiting 1 child

Cohabiting 2+ children

Married no child

Married 1 child

Married 2 children

Married 3+ children

MISSING

In education or training

Unemployed

Out-of-employment

Q1 - Low wage

Q2

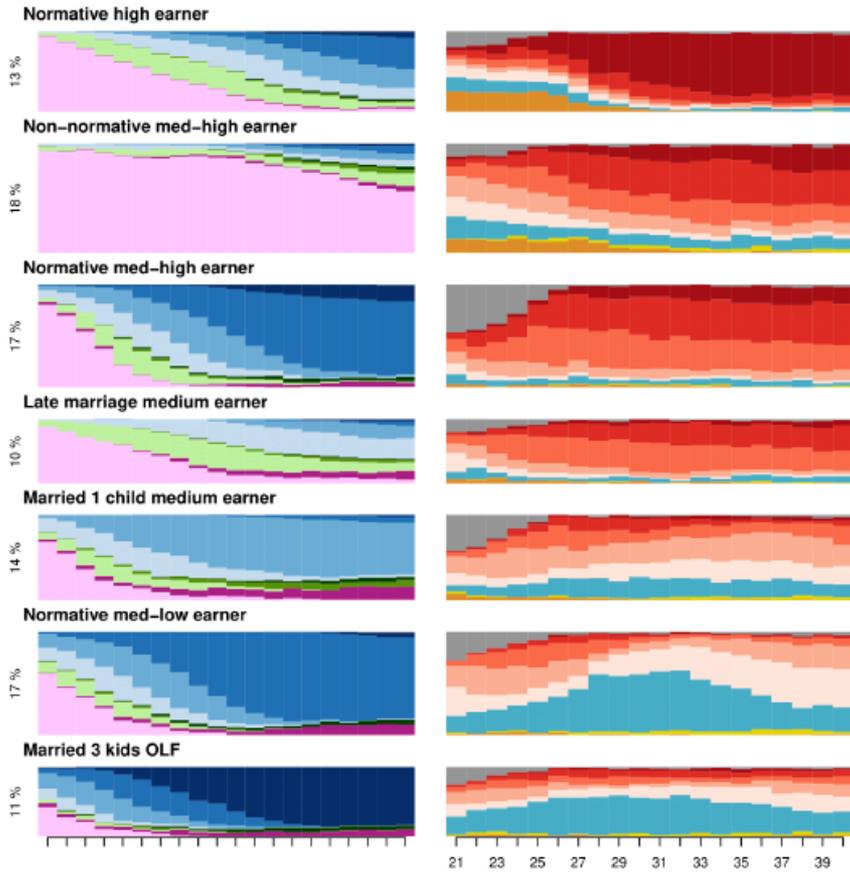
Q3

Q4

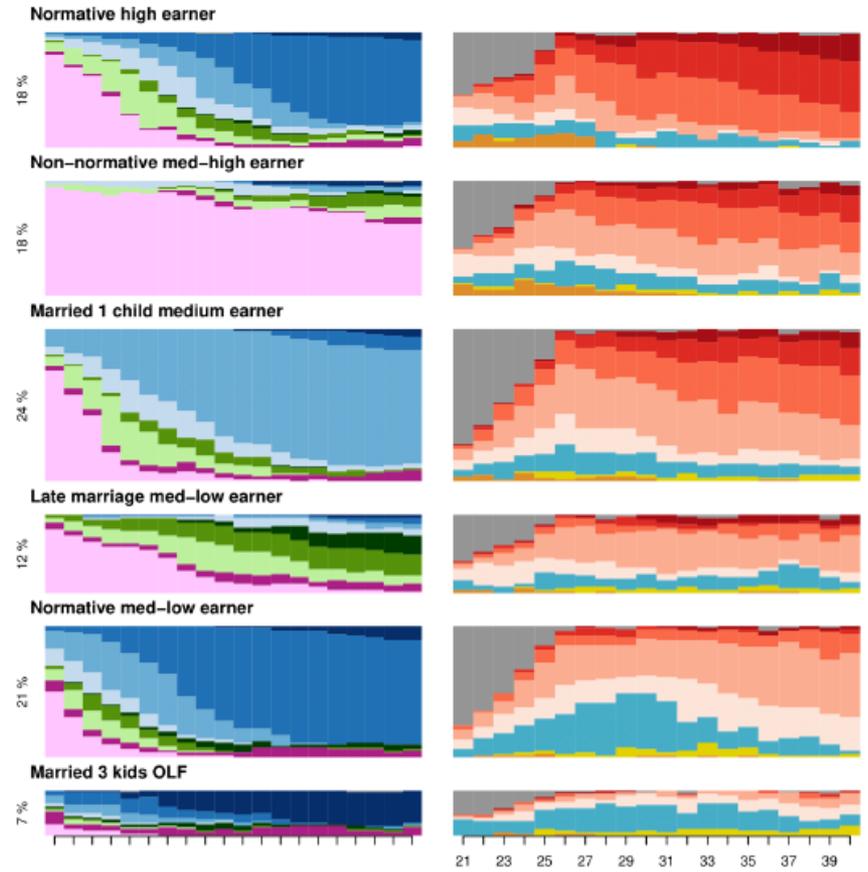
Q5 - High wage

MISSING

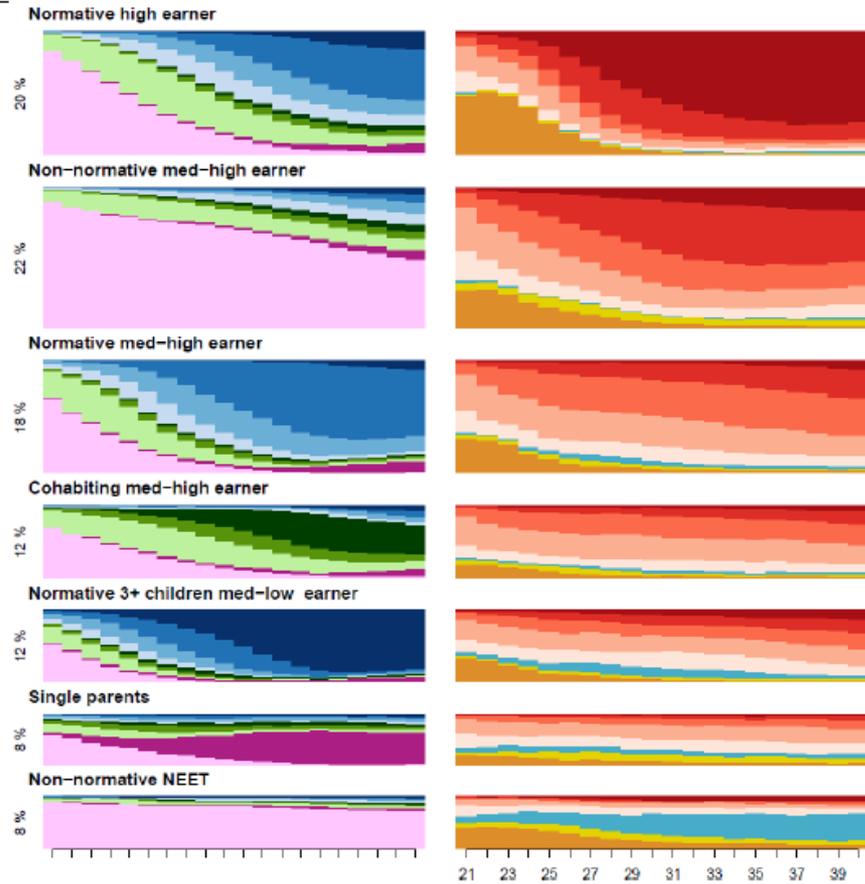
West Germany



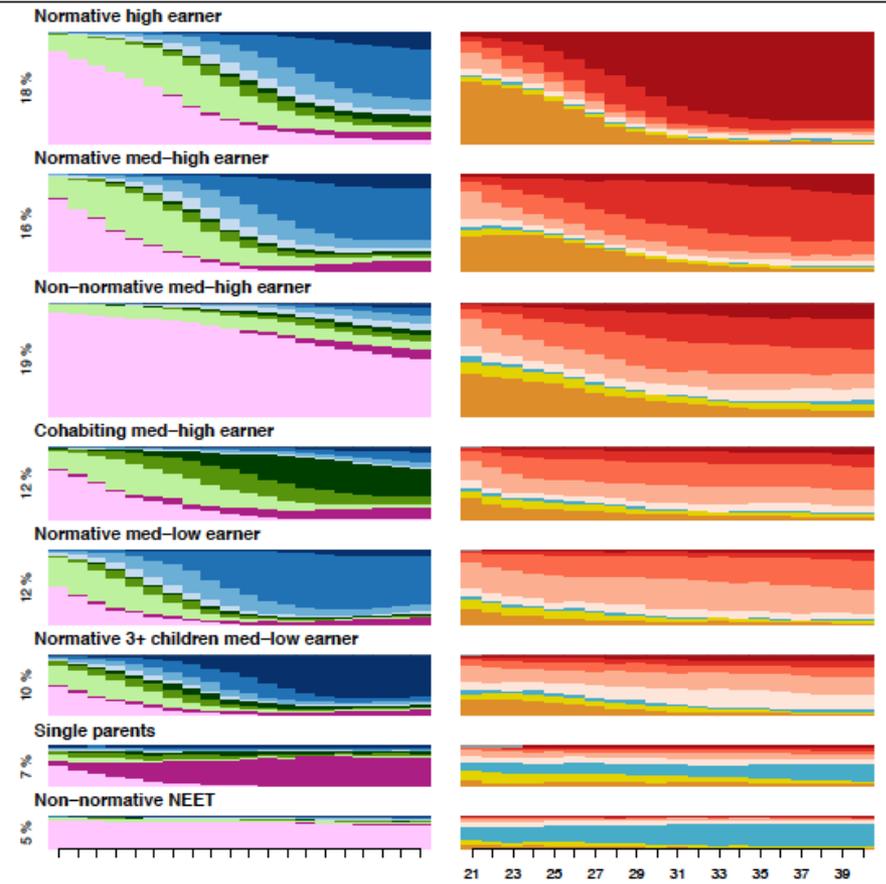
East Germany

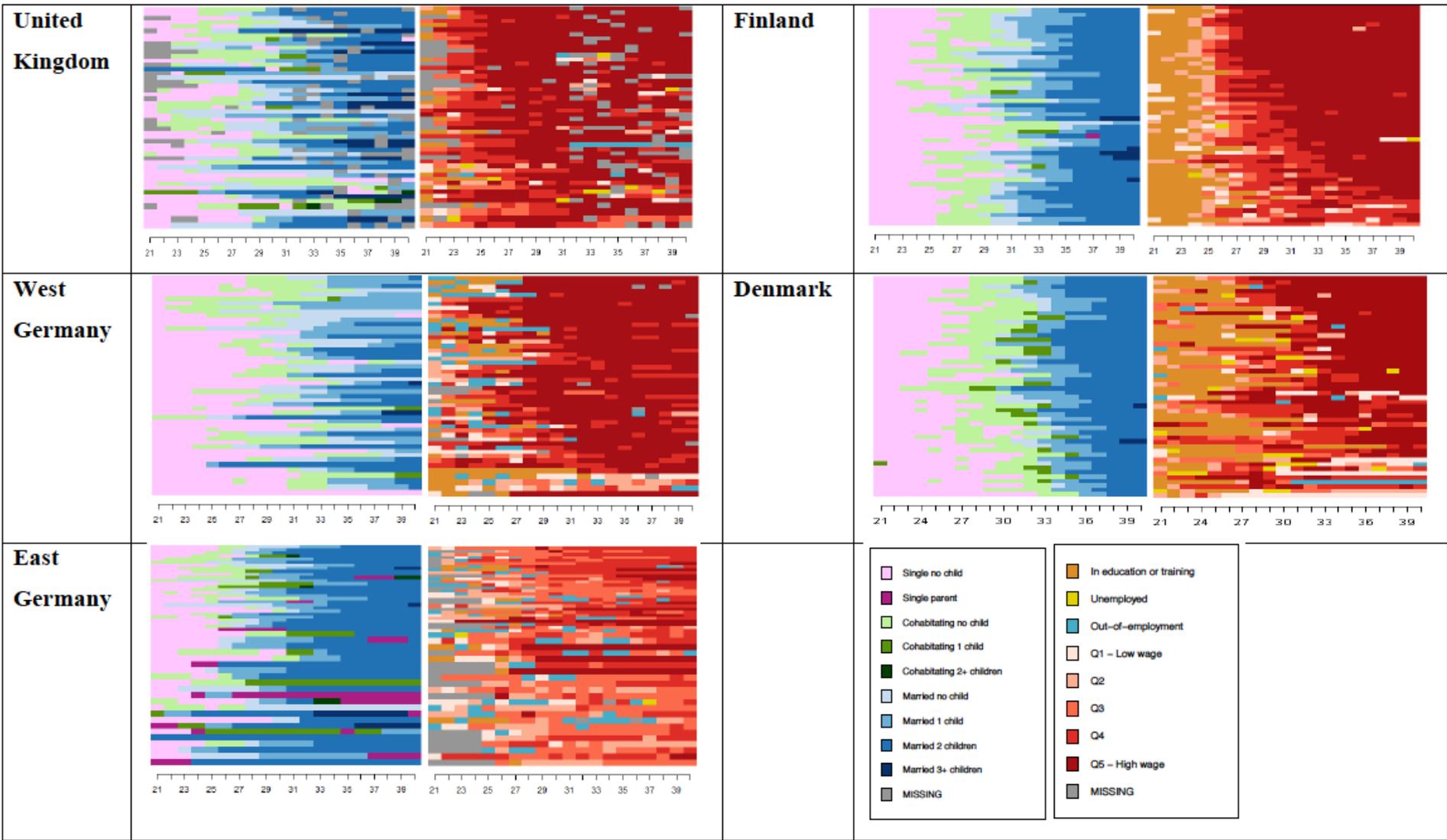


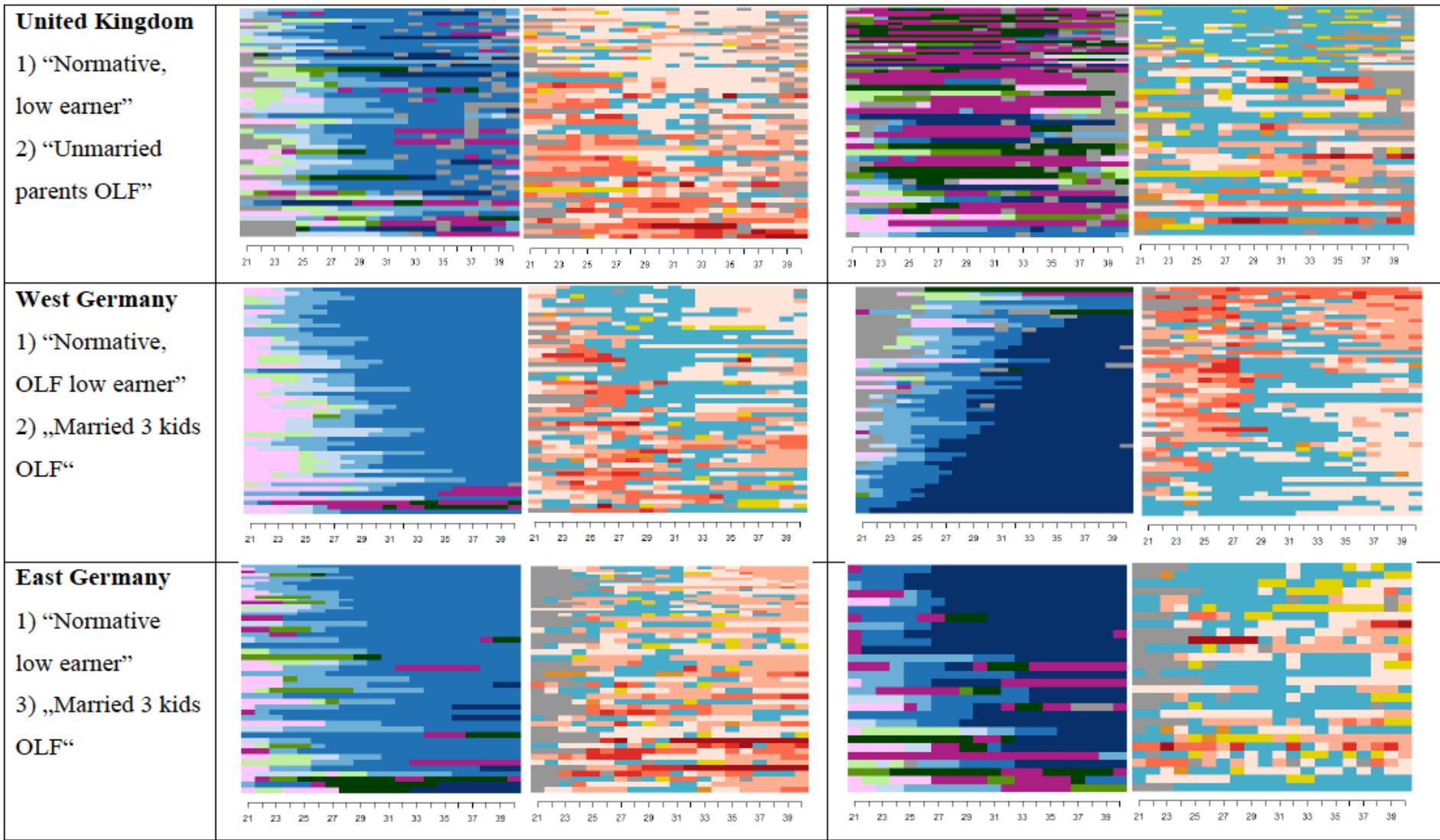
Finland



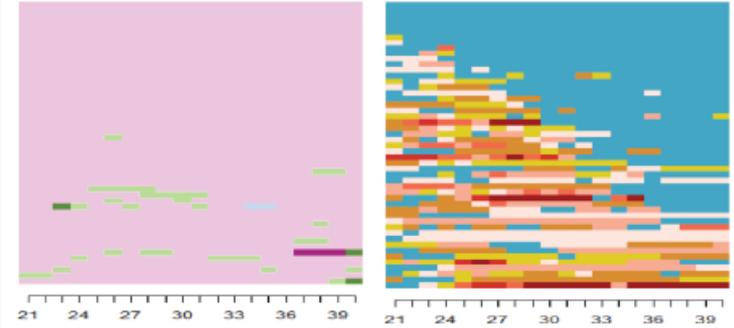
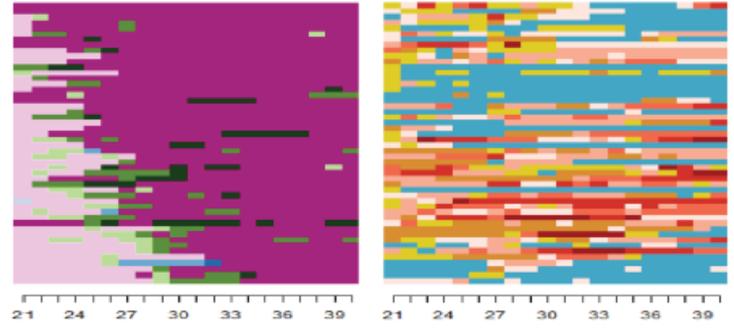
Denmark



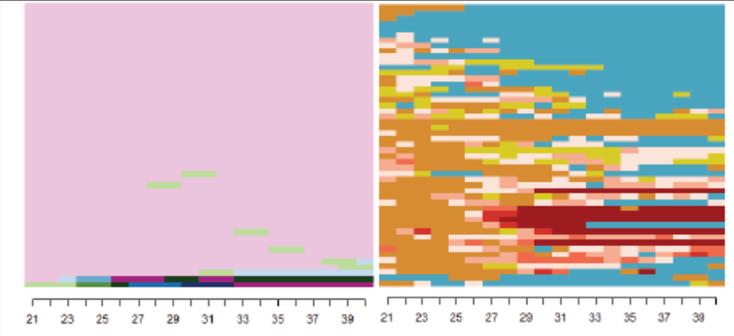
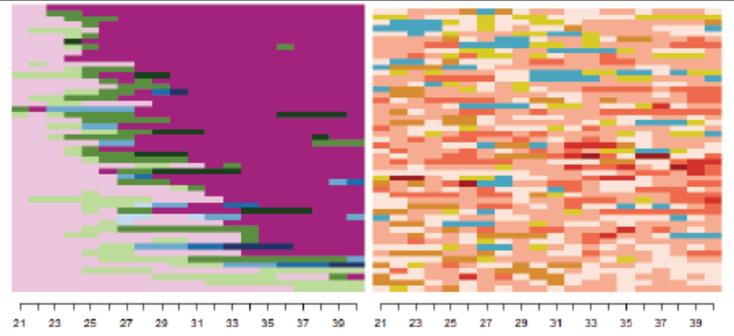




Denmark
1) single parent /
interrupted OLF
2) single childless / OLF



Finland



Unemployment rates over time

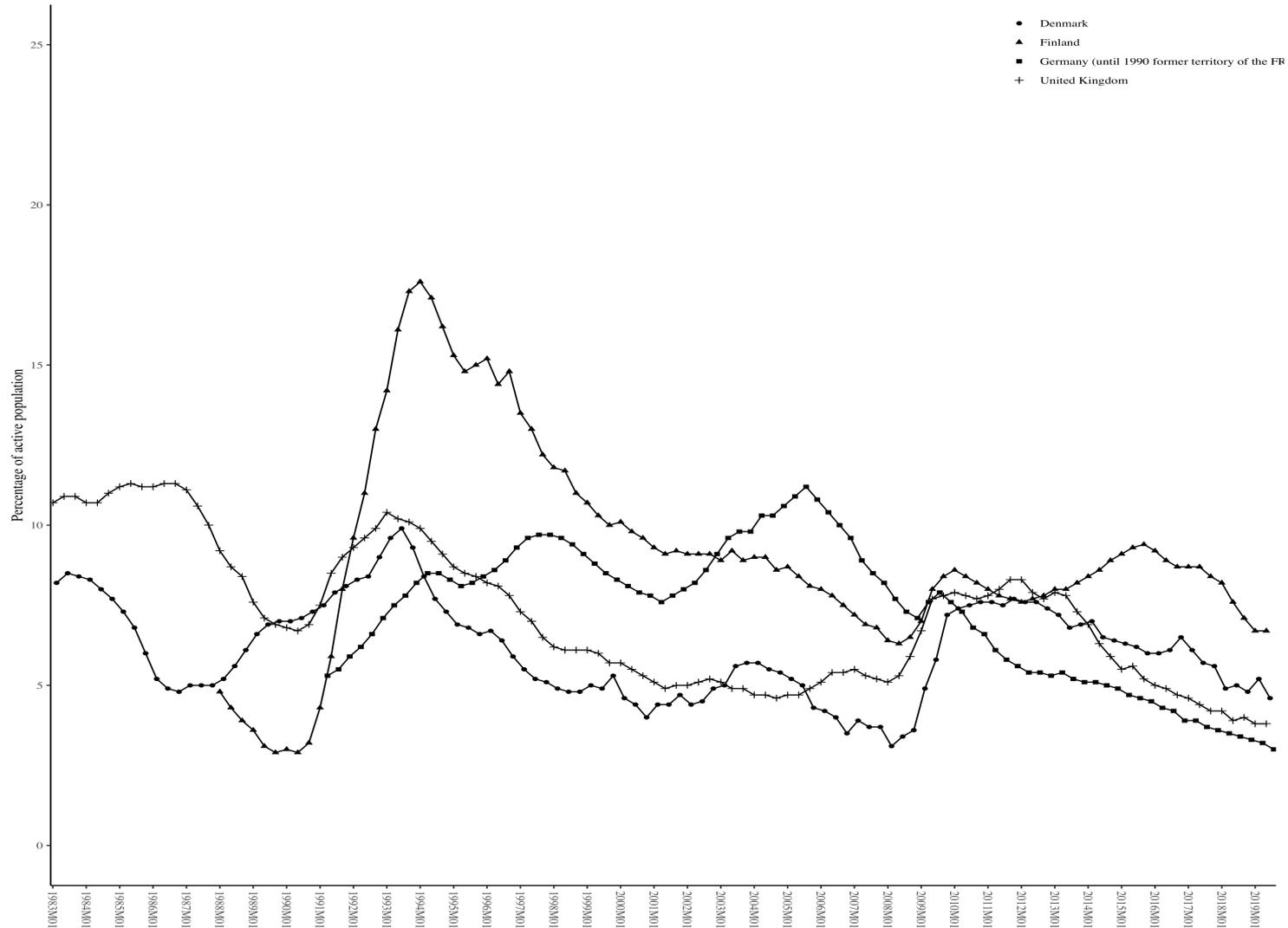


Table 1: Select country indicators (Separate east and West Germany)

		UK	DE	FI	DK
Inequality					
Gini coefficient	1991	.34	.26	.21	.24
	2010	.34	.29	.26	.25
Relative poverty (60%)	1991	22.8	11.8	10.7	14.6
	2010	17.4	16.4	15.0	13.5
Employment					
Female LFP	1991	66.2	61.0	72.6	78.5
	2010	70.0	70.3	74.5	76.5
Unemployment	1991	8.4	5.6	6.7	9.2
	2010	5.6	7.3	6.7	3.4
NEET rate age 20-25	2005	15.5	18.7	13.1	8.3
	2010	19.4	12.7	15.8	12.1
Female/male pay ratio	1991	.68	.73	.78	.85
	2010	.80	.76	.84	.86
Demography					
Total fertility Rate	1991	1.8	1.3	1.8	1.7
	2010	1.7	1.4	1.9	1.9
Children/single mothers	1991	16.0	8.6	10.5	14.6
	2010	21.0	16.0	10.4	16.9
Family leave					
Weeks maternity leave	1991	18	14	25.8	18
	2010	39	14	25.8	18
Maternity pay (% wage)	1991	45	100	80	69
	2010	14.5	100	70	39
Weeks parental leave	1991	52	78	31.6	10
	2010	52	156	31.6	32
Paid weeks parental leave	1991	0	22	80	69.4
	2010	0	22.3	70	39.1

Sources: Gauthier 2010, OECD 2015, Luxembourg Income Study