

Leaving the parental home in Italy and Sweden
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The paper deals with quantum, timing, and determinants of leaving the parental home in Italy and Sweden, considering the gender differences.

The comparison between the two countries is particularly interesting as they are extremely different; on the one side Sweden with a tradition of early nest leaving and reduced gender differences, on the other side Italy with the persistence of late nest leaving and gender differences as regards intensity, timing and determinants.

We aim at explaining the differences in intensity and timing between the countries and genders. In order to do that, we utilize two surveys - "Family and Working Life in the 21st century" (year 1999, Statistics Sweden) for Sweden, and the "Indagine Multiscopo Famiglia e Soggetti Sociali (year 1998, Istat) for Italy. We selected comparable variables from the two surveys. Methods of survival analysis have been carried out to study intensity and timing, and determinants have been tested by means of Cox models.

The following results were obtained:

First of all, in addition to the enormous differences between the two countries regarding intensity and timing of leaving, we observe remarkable differences between Italy and Sweden regarding the reasons for leaving the parental home: whereas in Italy, leaving the parental home is almost exclusively related to the formation of a marital union, and very few choose to leave to cohabit with a partner without marrying or for study or work reasons, the young Swedish start to live on their own, mainly to study at the university or for work reasons; if they leave the parental home to enter a union, that is rarely a marital union, more often an informal cohabitation.

As to determinants, given to the limitation of comparable information, we included in the model only gender, cohort of birth, size of town of residence, parental education (highest level between the two parents), and siblings.

From the Swedish samples, we observe an earlier nest leaving for women, the oldest cohort, for those residing in smaller towns, and for people with not only biological siblings. Parental education delays children's leaving, only if the reason for leaving is the formation of a union.

Results from the Italian sample are similar, even though being a woman has a much stronger influence on earlier nest leaving than in the Swedish case. Moreover, whatever the reason for leaving parental home, the dimension of the family is positively related to earlier leaving, whereas parental education somehow delays the time for leaving.

The analysis will be extended by focusing on contextual aspects, for example the extent of support provided to young people to be able to leave parental home (housing, labour market, economic help), with the hypothesis that these factors may explain a substantial part of the observed differences between the two countries.