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Transition to adulthood and the intergenerational transmission of disadvantages among young adults in Spain.

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Abstract

Explanations for the delayed and changing nature of transition to adulthood patterns in high-income societies need to account for interdependent forms of social inequality such as social class, gender, and migration status. Intersectionality theory offers a framework for interpreting interdependent forms of inequality and yet, it remains underused in quantitative research, particularly in Europe. Family sociologists have slowly begun to recognize the importance of the intersection of social categories for demographic outcomes and the intergenerational transmission of (dis)advantages. Yet, debates on how to operationalize intersectionality theory with quantitative data are still open. We use the concepts of social space and *probable social classes* to contribute to this debate. We focus on Spain, a country with very high mean ages of leaving parental home, marital union formation, and childbearing. We use information from the 2018 Spanish National Fertility Survey to study how transition to adulthood patterns are intertwined with the intersection of social categories of inequality, including family background, income levels, housing access, occupation, educational attainment, and place of birth. We supplement this analysis with a study of the intergenerational transmission of (dis)advantages focusing on how the intersection of social categories influences likelihood of experiencing negative birth outcomes and complications during delivery among first births from 2018 to 2020. We show that structural and intertwined constraints affect the Spanish population differently, and we describe the family and inequality processes that underlie divergent patterns of transition to adulthood.

Introduction

Sociological research is increasingly examining the connections between different types of inequality including health disparities, gender and racial/ethnic discrimination, as well as long-standing unequal income and wealth distributions (Le Roux et al. 2008; Milanovic 2022; Pikkety 2019). This increased recognition of interlocked inequalities has prompted researchers to scrutinize social configurations of inequality, particularly how race/ethnicity, gender, and migration status interact with one another (Crenshaw 1991). Some of these interactions, however, are rarely used in population studies, and strategies for measuring them in quantitative research are still open to debate (Bauer et al. 2021; Robson & Sanders 2009; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva 2008). The lack of standard methods for measuring inequality configurations are especially salient for migration-status- and nativity-related forms of discrimination, despite the growing relevance of immigration for high-income societies (Castles et al. 2014; Van Mol & de Valk 2016).

Based on the concepts of social space and *probable social classes* (Bourdieu 2005), our work measures social configurations of inequality and their relation with transition to adulthood and the intergenerational transmission of disadvantages. We do not attempt to establish causation between independent variables and outcomes. Our analyses provide a framework for identifying and comprehending the social structure in which demographic processes take place. Drawing from intersectionality theory we argue that social life is not experienced by individuals through single characteristics, such as migration status, educational attainment, or income levels (Choo & Ferree 2010). It is the interplay among these circumstances in specific contexts that constitutes individuals' realities and as such, influence their outcomes (Johnson-Hanks et al. 2011 Introduction). We take young adults in Spain as our locus for investigation.

Spain's demographic regime is characterized by relatively late transition to adulthood and low and delayed fertility (Beaujouan 2020; Billari & Kohler 2004; Goldstein et al. 2009). Despite the richness of the literature concerning high-income countries' demographics, there are no studies on how inequality configurations contribute to their exceptional demographic regimes (Balbo et al. 2013). To contribute to filling this gap, our analyses focus on two aspects. First, the configurations of inequality and the *probable social classes* that constitute the Spanish social space among individuals in early adulthood and among parents when they have their first child. Second, transition to adulthood, fertility plans, and intergenerational transmission of (dis)advantages patterns across these *probable social classes*.

We conduct these analyses using two independent data sources: the 2018 Spanish Fertility Survey (2018-SFS) and 2018-2020 birth records. Using the 2018-SFS, we measure three indicators of transition to adulthood among 22-to-28, and 29-to-35 year old individuals: live independently from parents, co-reside with a partner, and have at least one child. We supplement

the three indicators with prospective measures of fertility, overall fertility preferences, and the fertility gap. Second, we use the 2018-2020 birth records to measure birth and delivery outcomes across *probable social classes*. These outcomes include: premature births, low average gestational growth, low birth weight, delivery complications, and cesarean sections with and without complications.

Transition to adulthood in Spain

Spain stands out demographically in terms of a delayed transition to leaving the parental home, coreside with partner, and parenthood (Cantó et al. 2022; Sánchez-Galán 2019). Previous research has shown that these patterns lead to low complete fertility rates and relatively high involuntary childlessness among older adults (Billari & Kohler 2004; Bueno & García-Román 2021; Castro-Martín 1992). In 2021, Spain ranked in the top four of OECD countries with the lowest total fertility rate, with 1.19 children per woman, the highest mean age at childbearing (32.6 years), and in the top ten of European countries with the highest mean age at leaving parental home (29.8 years) (OECD Database, 2023).

Extensive research has examined the underlying factors contributing to these patterns (Bueno 2020; Cantó et al. 2022; Moreno 2012; Vieira & Gamundi). In addition to structural economic factors, such as educational expansion, increased female labor force participation and financial precarity among young adults, cultural explanations have been proposed to account for the prevalence of delayed transition to adulthood and low fertility (Barbieri et al. 2015; Castro-Martín 1992).The Second Demographic Transition (SDT) theory posits that greater individualism among younger generations is a key driver of delayed transition to adulthood, family formation, and low fertility (van de Kaa 2001). Other arguments allude to the prevalence of strong intergenerational relations of economic and emotional support from older to younger generations, particularly in Southern European nations. Some scholars refer to this phenomena as Southern European *familism* (León & Migliavacca 2013).

Scholars have argued that these culture-based explanations are insufficient to explain the Spanish case (Bueno 2020; Rendall et al. 2010). First, structural factors and the absence of welfare policies for young adults play a more significant role than ideological shifts toward greater individualism in explaining delayed adulthood transitions in Spain (Rendall et al. 2009). Second, it is hard to separate the effect of economic and cultural factors due to their mutual dependency (Portes 2006). For example, the extended economic dependency of young adults with respect to the parental generation due to the labor market's structure is part and parcel of Southern *familism* (Barbieri et al. 2015). Intergenerational solidarity is more likely to develop in contexts where the unemployment rate among the young is high, and in the event of improving labor market conditions intergenerational solidarity is unlikely to vanish from one day to the next.

A concept that encompasses economic and cultural aspects is the notion of unreadiness (Vignoli et al. 2020b,a, 2022). Unreadiness among young Spaniers can be attributed to an adverse socioeconomic context, inadequate welfare policies for early emancipation from parents, and increasing labor force demands for specialization. At the same time, unreadiness captures cultural aspects to the extent that older generations provide support in the forms of housing and financial aid until the younger are deemed ready to live independently. Due to the inclusion of both economic and cultural aspects pertaining to intergenerational relations, the narrative of unreadiness has gained substantial track in contemporary literature. It is our vision, however, that there are important limitations with this narrative, particularly for understanding lower social classes' and immigrants' transition to adulthood patterns (Bueno & Vidal-Coso 2019; De Valk & Bueno 2015; Haller & Portes 2019).

The limitation of the studies based on the idea of unreadiness stems from the fact that they seldom consider intersecting forms of privilege and disadvantages. In these studies, inequality configurations are not a central concept. In addition, immigrants are either excluded or addressed in separated analysis to favor interpretability (Haller & Portes 2019). Some studies focus on immigrants, and exclude native-born individuals, in order to grasp the uniqueness of the migration experience and its role on family formation patterns (Beauchemin & González-Ferrer 2011; González-Ferrer et al. 2017; Kulu & González-Ferrer 2014), while others focus exclusively on the native-born population (Mogi et al. 2022; Nishikido et al. 2022). While these approaches yield results with strong internal validity, their capacity to speak about broader social structures underpinning demographic regimes is limited because they are blind to the interrelations among social categories of inequality, and how they constrain family dynamics and influence the intergenerational transmission of (dis)advantages.

Immigration, interlocked social inequalities, and family dynamics

The socioeconomic changes that occurred in Spain from the 1990s onward along with immigration waves from different parts of the world, in particular neighboring North African nations and former colonies in Latin America, make social inequality in Spain an increasingly complex phenomenon (Bernardi & Garrido 2008; Neyer et al. 2013). According to the Spanish National Statistical Office, in 1990, 2.2% of the population in Spain was foreign-born. This proportion increased to 15.5% in the 2021 population census (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2021). Most of these populations come from Latin American and African countries (Van Mol & de Valk 2016). Besides its relative young age profile, this foreign-born population is highly heterogeneous in terms of national origins and socioeconomic and occupational (Domingo & Gil-Alonso 2007).

This migration stream connects populations and regions with different levels of economic and human development (Organization of American States 2011). In 2018, Spain's Human

Development Index (HDI) was 0.901 whereas this same indicator ranged from 0.541 (Haiti) and 0.856 (Chile) in Latin America and the Caribbean. The HDI among Northern and Western African countries is below 0.75, i.e., 15 points below that of Spain (Smits & Permanyer 2019). These large developmental gaps yield a complex interaction between social inequality and immigration patterns. Some immigrants suffer the consequences of inequality and exclusion both in origin and destination societies, while some others benefit from it, given their relatively privileged socioeconomic conditions (Bueno & Vidal-Coso 2019; Herrera 2013).

We understand social inequality is an unjust state of social relations characterized by disparities and inequities in health (vital), social inclusion/exclusion (existential), and material means (resources) (Therborn 2013). This conceptualization allows us to take a holistic approach by considering how resource and existential inequalities relate to transition to adulthood and intergenerational relations (vital inequality).

Vital inequality includes disparities in fertility aspirations, reproductive outcomes, and health-at-birth outcomes. These three realms are related with immediate and long-term vital resources such as a fulfilling and healthy life and future kinship relations (Alburez-Gutierrez et al. 2023). For example, among individuals who ever wanted to have children, involuntary infertility or downward-adjusted fertility aspirations due to negative reproductive outcomes could prevent them from fully developing downward kin relationships, and benefiting from the social recognition, responsibilities, and self-fulfillment associated with having children, particularly in southern European societies (Ross & Solinger 2017).

This understanding of aspirational and reproductive gaps as a form of vital inequality is in line with theories of stratified reproduction (Bledsoe 2004; Colen 1995). According to these theories, the value ascribed to the care and reproduction of children to mothers in socially disadvantaged positions (e.g., immigrants from global South countries in the United States and Western Europe) is lower than the value ascribed to children in socially privileged groups. This deferential value translates into unequal division of care tasks, economic opportunities, and labor market outcomes that ultimately contribute to social reproduction.

Vital inequalities are often underpinned by existential inequalities, to the point that often they are hard to separate. Existential inequalities are a consequence of societal organization, particularly concerning symbolic representations, such as the assignment of the care-taker role to women or the unjust perception of inferiority based on skin color or national origins. The fact that these unequal relationships stem from symbolic representations does not diminish their significance. On the contrary, symbolic relations exert considerable influence over social outcomes and frequently prove more resistant to change compared to material relations (Zuberi 2001).

Finally, resource inequality refers to differential access to material means for achieving social outcomes. The most studied form of resource inequality is income inequality often measured by the Gini coefficient and related indexes. Inequality of resources also refers to other dimensions such as wealth, cultural capital, and social capital (Bourdieu 1986). Access to housing is a crucial resource when it comes to considering transition to adulthood outcomes and the context in which new generations are born and raised (Adkins et al. 2020).

Social classes as collectives of probable action

We posit that intersecting forms vital, existential and resources inequality lead individuals to occupy different positions within the social space with varying degrees of privilege and disadvantages. The social space and the clusters of individuals occupying similar positions, i.e., the *probable social classes*, offer a framework for assessing the two-end relationship between social configurations of inequality, on the one hand, and transition to adulthood, fertility aspirations, and intergenerational transmission outcomes, on the other. By *probable social classes* we mean groups of individuals sharing similar material and social status living conditions across the main differentiating factors in a given society. These common living conditions make individuals in the same class to have similar patterns in demographic outcomes including reproductive preferences and aspirations (Lebaron 2003).

Borrowing the term *probable social classes* introduces ambiguity concerning the connection between *probable social classes* and the conventional notion of social class, which is more commonly linked to an individual's occupation (Wright 2015). There are compelling reasons to avoid conflating the long-standing tradition of sociological analysis based on occupational categories with the concept of *probable social classes* as presented in this context (Weininger 2005). However, this word choice emphasizes the empirical and constructivist approach to understanding social realities, sidestepping the question of class consciousness and existence.

As such, this concept moves beyond an economist and overly behavioral perspective that understands aggregate outcomes as the sum of individual choices while ignoring social structures. Social collectives do not automatically materialize and act homogeneously merely due to individuals sharing similar living conditions. Instead, collectives exist as potential associations that may or may not act in unison. It is social scientists' task to identify (or build) these groups, empirically test their homogeneity, and explain their similarities and differences in relation to their position within specific social spaces (Bourdieu 1987).

This concept also couples well with the long-dated sociological notions on the multiple-sided nature of the social experience, and the multifaceted nature of identity (Fraser 1998). Individuals experience and construct the social world at the intersection of their socially-ascribed multiple identities, for example, as young Spanish men lacking educational credentials, or as an adult

Latin American woman whose educational background and employment experience are not recognized in Spain. These configurational circumstances not only influence individuals' material opportunities for living independently and transitioning to partnership formation and parenthood, but they are also likely to influence individuals' developing (or adjusting) fertility aspirations.

Initially developed to critique the distinct nature of discriminatory practices faced by Black women from marginalized social classes, the concept of intersectionality has steadily gained significance in academic literature (Hill Collins & Bilge 2016). When discussing our results and in the conclusion section, we rely on this concept for integrating interrelated forms of inequality and the social collectives affected by these disparities.

Methods and data

The 2018 Spanish Fertility Survey (2018-SFS)

We use information from two independent data sources produced and made publicly available by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística - INE): the 2018 Spanish Fertility Survey (2018-SFS) and the 2018-2020 birth records of first birth to mothers between 22 and 35 years of age. The original microdata and documentation can be downloaded from INE's website (www.ine.es). The code for reproducing our results is available from authors upon request.

The 2018-SFS is a cross-sectional nationally representative survey that collects basic socio demographic information, rich socioeconomic data, and retrospective information regarding partnership and childbearing. This survey also includes prospective questions and subjective assessment regarding fertility desires, expectations, and the reasons underlying individual demographic outcomes such as not having children.

We focus on two age groups to compare patterns between emerging (22-to-28, n = 2,170) and young adulthood (29-to-35, n = 2,513). Besides being consistent with previous studies (Moreno 2012), these two age groups reflect two distinct life course stages in the transitions to adulthood, particularly in the context of relatively delayed life course milestone acquisitions. Comparing transition to adulthood outcomes across these age groups allows us to assess the role of the parental generation and how their supporting role varies across probable social classes. The appendix further discusses the implication of these intergenerational relations for our analysis and why we consider them useful for measuring probable social classes among the youth.

After an exhaustive examination of data availability, we measure individual-level material resources inequalities and existing forms of discrimination using the following variables and categories.

1. **Education:** Primary or less, Secondary, University degree, Postgraduate degree.
2. **Home space:** Small, Middle-Small, Middle, Middle-High, and High.
3. **Housing access:** Owner with paid property, Owner with inherited property, Owner Indebted <40%, Owner Indebted >40%, Rent <40%, Rent >40%. The 40% refers to the percentage of income used to pay loan or rent.
4. **Income:** <1000€, 1000€-1500€, 1500€-2500€, 2500€-5000€, >5000€.
5. **Occupation:** Inactive, Unemployed, Elementary and Operators, Qualified agricultural workers, Artisans and Services, and Technicians and Superiors (including very few cases of Directors and Managers).
6. **Parents education:** Primary or less, Secondary, University degree, Postgraduate degree (highest achiever).
7. **Region of birth:** Africa, European Union, Latin America, Spain and Other (including North America, Asia and Oceania
8. **Urbanization:** Rural, Intermediate, Urban.

The transition to adulthood outcomes include the proportion of individuals who live independently from their parents (Living independently), the proportion coresiding with a partner either married or in cohabitation (Coresiding with partner), and the proportion of individuals that are parents (At least one child). We supplement these indicators with fertility desires (zero, one child, and the mean), and fertility plan within the next three years. Additionally, we compute a prospective fertility gap as the difference between the desired number of children and the sum number of children at the time of the survey plus the fertility plans for the next three years. This measure estimates the fertility gaps three years ahead assuming that fertility plans will be enacted.

The 2018-2020 administrative birth records

To study intergenerational relations between young adults and their offspring, we use information from the 330,378 first births registered in Spain between 2018 and 2020 to women ages 22 to 35. We focus on these births because they signify the transition to parenthood and refer, statistically, to the population interviewed by the 2018 SFS. For consistency with the 2018-SFS analysis, we split the birth records into the same age groups: 22-to-28 and 29-to-35 year old first time mothers.

We use six variables for measuring *probable social classes*: place of birth, educational attainment, and occupation for both parents. We excluded 18,897 births (5.4%) due to missing

information in three or more of these variables. Despite having fewer socioeconomic variables compared to the 2018-SFS, the advantage of birth records is that they cover all births in the Spanish territory and include measures of health at birth and delivery conditions.

We measure six outcomes related to the gestational process, newborns' health at birth, and the delivery circumstances.

1. **Premature births:** Births occurring before 37 weeks of gestation.
2. **Low average gestational growth:** Births where the average weight gained by gestational week was below 67.6 grams. This threshold is because 67.6 grams/week leads to 2,500 grams in 37 weeks.
3. **Low birth weight:** We use the standard of 2,500 grams to identify low birth weight.
4. **Delivery with complications:** All births for which medical complications were reported.
5. **Unplanned cesarean sections:** Deliveries that implied a cesarean section among deliveries with medical complications. This variable proxy unexpected cesarean sections.
6. **Planned cesarean sections:** Cesarean section among deliveries without medical complications. This variable proxy planned cesarean sections.

The first three outcomes relate to the later-life socioeconomic and well-being conditions therefore signaling the intergenerational transmission of (dis)advantages (Hoddinott et al. 2013). Instead, the prevalence of complications during delivery have been conceptualized as a measure of stratified reproduction in the United States (Johnson et al. 2023) and the extent to which some of these complications end up in cesarean section may imply a differential treatment within the Spanish health system and healthcare institutions. Finally our proxy for planned cesarean section adds another angle on how mothers relate to health institutions by anticipating delivery conditions.

Measuring the social space, probable social classes, and Spanish social structure

We rely on Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) to measure and visualize how confluent privilege and disadvantaged categories shape the Spanish social space. We use MCA techniques because they allow assessing multivariate correlations among the above-mentioned variables via factorial axes (Le Roux & Rouanet 2004). Factorial axes are individual-level numerical variables that summarize the main associations among categorical variables.

This MCA feature aligns strongly with the tenets of *probable social classes*, and intersectionality theory. The location of individuals across MCA axes is a measure of their position within the social space, and the distribution and shape of the cloud of individuals across MCA-axes represent social structure (Atkinson 2024). We utilize hierarchical and non-hierarchical clustering techniques to group individuals based on their proximity across MCA axes using the

Euclidean distance. Such an approach implies that our groups are formed based on shared characteristics among the most salient intersecting privileges and disadvantages as present in the data. We first implement the Ward method and identify six clusters. Next, we ran the PAM-once algorithm on the six-cluster solution for clusters' consolidation.

These clusters represent groups of individuals with similar socioeconomic conditions within specific age groups in the 2018-SFS data, and among new parents in 2018-2020 in the birth records. We use them as our measure of *probable social classes* and we focus on between-cluster heterogeneity in the transition to adulthood, fertility aspirations and health at birth outcomes.

Results

Confluent categories of privilege and disadvantage among young adults in Spain

Figure 1 shows the top 25% contributing categories to the first three factorial axes by age groups. Panels A and B show results for the younger age group, and panels C and D for the older. The first three axes comprise 67.6% and 68.7% of the total variance among the younger and older age groups, respectively. These high percentages mean that most of the differences across the eight variables are well summarized by these axes due to strong multivariate correlations. Table A1 in the appendix shows the percentage contribution of the eight variables to the axes' inertia. These percentages are in line with the pattern depicted in Figure 1 and support the following interpretation.

Figure 1. Confluence of privileges and disadvantages among individuals by age groups according to the 2018 Spanish Fertility Survey

Individuals 22 to 28 years old

Panel A   *Panel B*
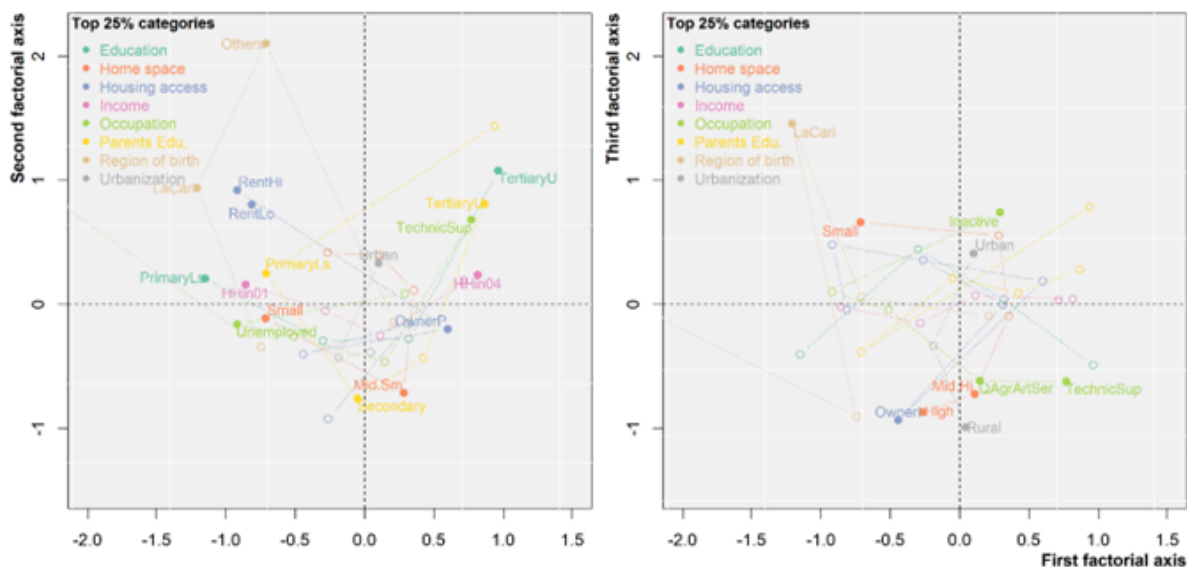
Individuals 29 to 35 years old

Panel C   *Panel D*

Note: Only the top 25% contributing categories to the variance of the first, second (left panel) and third (right panel) factorial axes are labelled to highlight the main areas of socioeconomic distinctions among young adults.

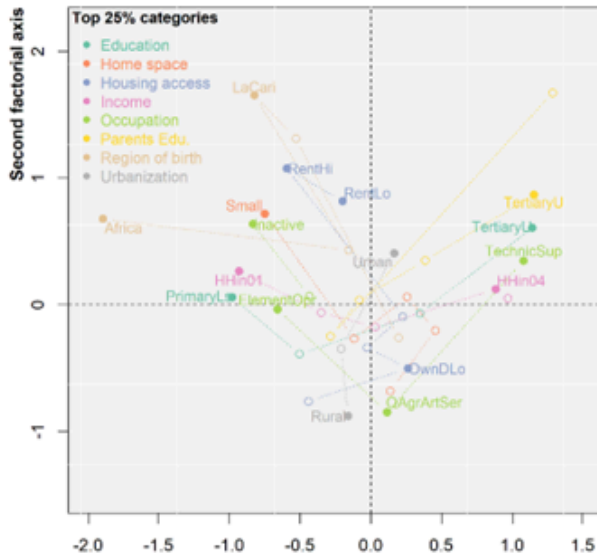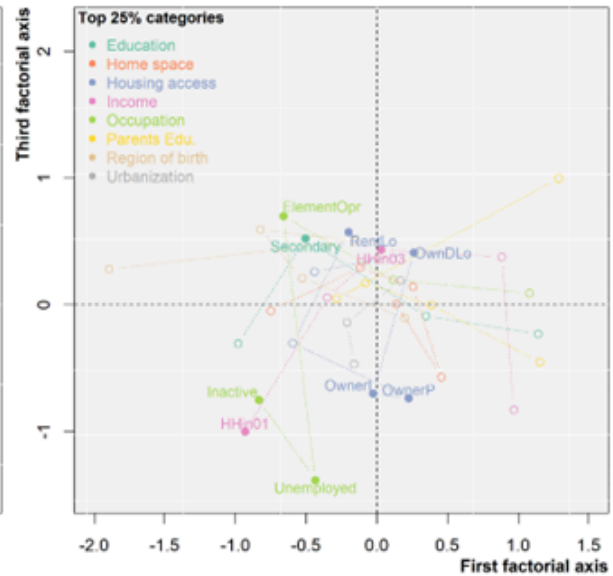Figure 1 confirms the validity of our intersectionality assumption regarding the confluence of privileges and disadvantages for young adults. According to the first quadrant of Panel A, technical and manager occupations, tertiary education in both generations, high household income, and home ownership without debt in urban areas constitute the pattern of privilege among 22-to-28 year olds. On the left-hand side, lower educational attainment, access to housing via rent, low household income, unemployment, and reduced space at home make up the pattern of disadvantage.

The third axis displayed in Panel B distinguishes urban and rural residents. The former go along with the smallest space availability at home, inactivity, and Latin America and the Caribbean as regions of origin. The rural category associates with relative privileges regarding access to housing via inheritance, and medium to high space availability at home. Due to the large percentage of individuals that co-reside with their parents in this age group (i.e., 65%), the distribution of categories in Panels A and B reflect the role of intergenerational relations on the social structure. Parental background plays an important role in younger generations' living conditions through household income and access to dwelling. The role of immigration is also clear with foreign-born categories being associated with access to housing through rent, i.e., low homeownership, and high levels of inactivity and very limited space at home.

Regarding the 29-to-35 year old individuals, the confluence of privilege and disadvantages is also marked, and more attached to individuals' labor force insertion compared to the younger, signaling a detachment from parental socioeconomic conditions. Panel C shows the confluence of income, educational and occupational privileges in urban areas in the first quadrant (top right). There is no home ownership category in this area of the plot which speaks to the lower influence of this variable among older adults compared to younger.

The bottom area of panel C comprises the categories of artisan and agricultural workers, along with rural residence and home ownership with low financial burden due to loans. Moving towards the upper left area in Panel C we encounter the category for elementary occupations, primary education and the lowest income level. Further to the upper left (second quadrant), the categories for renting, small space at home, inactivity, and two regions of origin, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa, coincide. These latter results signal the greater relevance of occupation among older adults and the augmented heterogeneity of disadvantage profiles in this group compared to the younger.

Panel D further nuances the heterogeneity of disadvantages by showing the confluence of home ownership through inheritance with low income, inactivity and unemployment, on the bottom left area of the panel. The positive coordinates on the third axis reveal yet another particular configuration involving renters and owners with low financial burden, the secondary education category and elementary occupations. This is likely a configuration of relatively well-off working class individuals, the absence of a region of birth category indicates this is likely a set of features shared among Spanish-born individuals.

Probable social classes among young adults in Spain

The confluence of privileged and disadvantaged categories depicted in Figure 1 allows us to group individuals according to the similarity of their living material and social status conditions. We refer to these clusters as *probable social classes,* social classes, collectives, or simply clusters. To ease interpretation, we plot cluster's distribution by age groups along the first and second factorial axes in Figure 2, and describe their main characteristics. The figure includes 80% confidence ellipses, and the legends indicate the relative size of each *probable social class*. Table A2 in the appendix includes a full characterization of the clusters based on the eight input variables. The next paragraphs present a summary description of these clusters based on their most salient characteristics.

Figure 2. Social space and *probable social classes* among 22-28 and 29-35 years-old in the Spanish Fertility Survey, 2018.
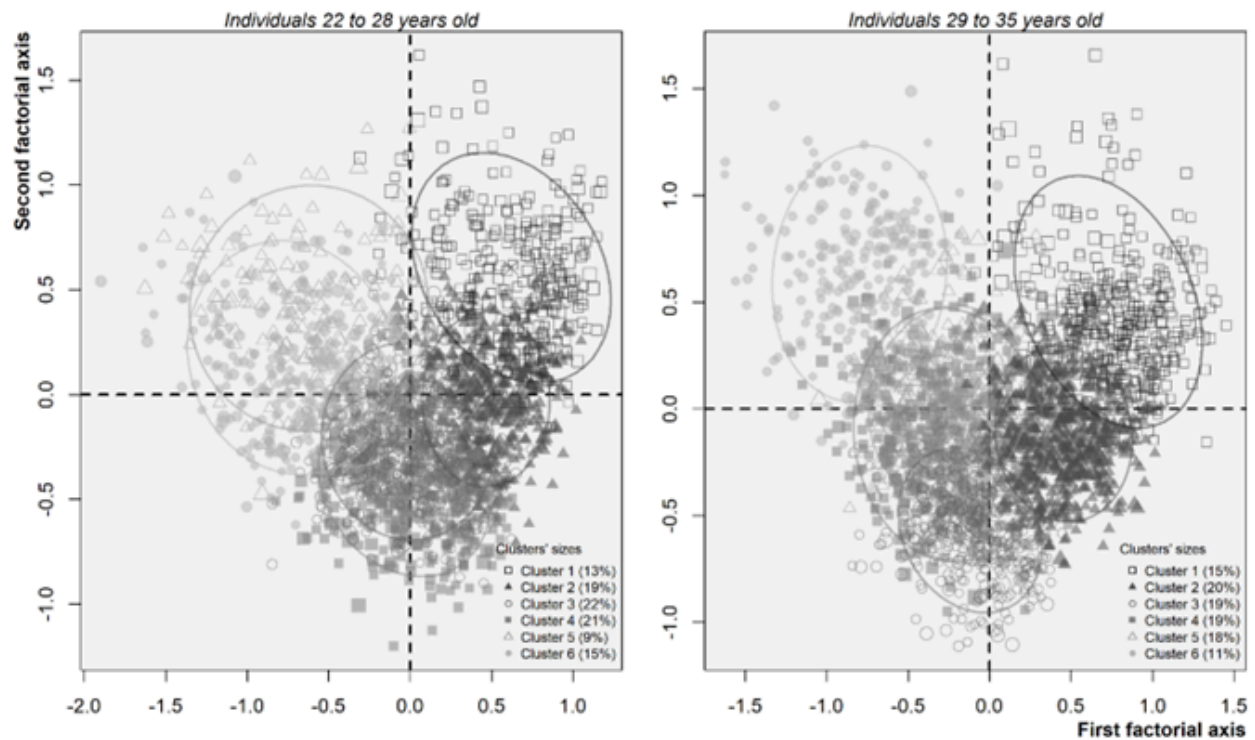
Note: Clusters also differ in their locations along the third factorial axis (not shown). Therefore, overlapping distribution should be interpreted carefully.

Clusters 1 and 2 comprise socially privileged young adults, slightly more than one third of the studied population in both age groups. Individuals in Cluster 1 are highly educated and work as technicians or managers in urban areas: 66.3% and 82.6% are Technicians and Superior in the younger and older age groups, respectively. Likewise, more than 80% of individuals in Cluster 1 live in urban or intermediate areas. Cluster 2 comprises a large share of individuals out of the labor market among the younger group. These individuals are probably studying: 51.7% are Inactive, and 62.8% had tertiary education. Among the older, the Cluster 2 comprises 26.0% qualified workers, and 65.4% Technicians and superiors.

Very few individuals in Clusters 1 and 2 report space constraints at home, and the vast majority are owners of their dwelling or pay loans and rents below 40% of their total income; having to pay for housing is more salient in Cluster 2 than 1. The proportion of individuals from Cluster 1 in the top income category is more than twice that of the overall sample: 15.8% vs 7.3% among the younger, and 11.0% vs 6.5% among the older. The shares of top income earners in Cluster 2 are much lower: 9.4% and 9.3% in each age group, respectively.

Immigrants from places other than Africa are relatively well represented in Cluster 1 among the 29-to-35 years old groups, whereas Cluster 2 is predominantly Spanish-born. In addition, there are virtually no African immigrants in Clusters 1 to 4 in both age groups, African immigrants only appear well-represented share-wise in Cluster 5 and 6. These two latter clusters are located at the other end of the social space.

This lower end of the social space comprises both Spanish-born and immigrants; the former as a majority and the latter as overrepresented groups. Among the younger age group, the share of Spanish-born individuals in Clusters 5 and 6 are 18.5% and 68.7%, respectively. Among the older group these figures are 71.1% and 13.8%. The predominant region of origin is Latin America and the Caribbean and immigrants from Africa are strongly over represented in Clusters 6 in both age groups: 12.6% and 23.5%. Together, Cluster 5 and 6 account for 24% and 28% of the younger and older adult populations, respectively.

In Clusters 6, 58.7% and 54.2% the individuals have only finished primary school among the 22-to-28 and 29-to-35 age groups, respectively; and less than 3% of them have Tertiary upper education in both age groups (2.1% and 1.9%, respectively). These educational profiles are in strong contrast with that of any European country. Therefore, and not surprisingly, the percentage of unemployed in these two clusters is higher than the percentages in the overall population: 28.9% and 14.1% for the younger and older, respectively, and those employed work in elementary occupations.

Space availability at home is reduced among the older age group with 62.5% of the individuals having less than 20 square meters per person at home. This is not the case among the younger, potentially due co-residence with parents. Homeownership is rather uncommon with almost two-thirds of the individuals paying rent in both Clusters 6. These patterns are very similar in Clusters 5 with 77.9% and 45% of individuals paying rent among the younger and older, respectively. Home owners in these two clusters are typically paying a loan meaning that they do not benefit from inheritance and that their income is subject to debt payments in the long term.

Cluster 3 and 4 are in between the upper privileged and the lower-end *probable social classes*. Their most salient feature is that at least 93% of the individuals in these Clusters are Spanish-born. These clusters also excel by the low share of individuals in urban areas which speaks to the broader geographic scope of these classes. Individuals in Clusters 4 are particularly affected by inactivity (38.1% and 24.7%) and unemployment (17.9% and 51.9%); this is not the case in Clusters 3 where more than 80% of individuals work. Given these patterns, we refer to these clusters as middle (Cluster 3) and middle-lower non-urban (Cluster 4) Spanish *probable social classes*.

Probable social classes and the transition to adulthood

Table 1 displays transition to adulthood and prospective fertility profiles for the six clusters in the two age groups. In addition, the BIC ratios compare the Bayesian Information Criterion of two model specifications predicting the outcome in each column. One model specification uses the eight variables of the MCA as predictors (32 dummy variables) and the other uses the six clusters (five dummy variables). A BIC ratio close to 100 indicates similar goodness of fit between these two model specifications; above 100 BIC ratios signals better fit in favor of the six clusters.

Table 1. Transition to adulthood and prospective fertility by *probable social classes* among 22-to-28 and 29-to-35 years old individuals, and ratios of the Bayesian Information Criteria from multivariate regression models and bivariate regression model based on the clusters.

Cluster	Transition to adulthood (all individuals)			Fertility desires (all individuals)			Fertility aspirations (desired children > 0)	
	Living independently	Coresiding with a partner	At least one child	No children	One child	Desired children	Plan to have children in three years	Prospective fertility gap
Individuals aged 22 to 28								
1	43.0	18.7	2.1	26.2	2.7	1.9	25.1	2.3
	(5.4)	(1.5)	(0.6)	(1.8)	(0.6)	(0.0)	(6.2)	(0.1)
2	14.5	5.5	1.0	25.6	6.0	1.8	18.7	2.2
	(1.7)	(0.9)	(0.3)	(1.7)	(1.0)	(0.0)	(2.0)	(0.1)
3	45.0	23.2	6.8	24.5	8.6	1.8	40.6	1.8
	(1.8)	(2.2)	(1.2)	(1.7)	(1.7)	(0.0)	(3.9)	(0.1)
4	15.1	10.1	8.1	21.5	9.6	1.7	28.4	1.8
	(2.0)	(1.1)	(2.0)	(1.6)	(1.3)	(0.0)	(1.5)	(0.0)
5	44.5	22.9	18.5	20.5	11.1	1.7	37.1	1.5
	(3.6)	(6.9)	(7.5)	(2.8)	(3.1)	(0.1)	(5.2)	(0.1)
6	65.3	37.5	20.8	25.0	15.2	1.7	38.3	1.7
	(1.4)	(3.3)	(6.2)	(5.5)	(1.8)	(0.1)	(2.3)	(0.1)
BIC ratios	88	92	97	104	106	101	101	101
Individuals aged 29 to 35								
1	79.1	54.1	23.0	16.4	13.3	1.9	66.0	1.3
	(2.7)	(5.9)	(2.5)	(3.7)	(1.0)	(0.1)	(1.8)	(0.0)
2	80.9	64.1	32.8	16.5	15.5	1.7	62.1	1.1
	(1.2)	(1.6)	(2.1)	(3.2)	(1.0)	(0.1)	(3.6)	(0.0)
3	79.5	62.4	43.0	10.0	20.4	1.8	54.4	0.9
	(1.2)	(3.7)	(3.6)	(0.7)	(1.7)	(0.0)	(1.7)	(0.0)
4	54.6	36.1	32.4	22.0	14.2	1.6	42.6	1.3
	(5.5)	(7.2)	(7.8)	(4.2)	(1.3)	(0.1)	(4.6)	(0.1)
5	83.3	68.2	46.9	14.6	18.6	1.8	49.3	1.1
	(1.2)	(2.5)	(3.1)	(2.7)	(3.2)	(0.0)	(1.8)	(0.1)
6	85.2	74.7	73.6	4.4	16.9	2.3	39.4	1.2
	(4.5)	(4.0)	(2.2)	(0.8)	(2.1)	(0.1)	(3.1)	(0.1)
BIC ratios	89	82	82	99	103	100	103	100

Note: The BIC ratios compared the goodness of fit of a multivariate model with nine explanatory variables vs a bivariate model where the explanatory variable is the clustering. Above 100 ratios indicate that the clustering yield smaller BIC, meaning a better goodness of fit. BIC ratios below 100 indicate the opposite.

For both age groups, most of the BIC ratios are above 90 suggesting that the clustering is good for predicting transition to adulthood and fertility outcomes. The only exceptions are "Coresideing with a partner" and having "At least one child" among 29-to-35 year old individuals, for which the BIC ratios are 82. Notably, BIC ratios are 100 or above for all fertility desires and aspirations outcomes meaning that these two realms are better understood from a configurational perspective than a linear/additive one. Note that the model specification based on the clustering is substantially more parsimonious than the saturated model (five vs 31 parameters) and it incorporates variables' interactions as captured by the clusters.

The greater parsimony and the configurational nature of the clustering approach enhances our capacity to detect new patterns and gaps in existing explanations. For example, the good socioeconomic conditions of individuals in Clusters 1 and 2 do not translate into fast transition to adulthood. These two top classes display low and intermediate levels in the three transition to adulthood measures compared to other clusters. In the younger age group, although more than 40% of individuals in Cluster 1 live independently, less than 20% and 3% of them co-reside with a partner and are parents, respectively. In Cluster 2, only 14.5% of individuals live independently, 5.5% co-reside with their partner, and virtually none are parents (1.0%).

These figures contrast with the high percentages across the three measures in Clusters 5 and 6, the most disadvantaged clusters. A theory based on economic uncertainty would predict a much higher fraction of individuals living independently, co-residing with parents and having children in Clusters 1 and 2, and much lower proportions in Clusters 5 and 6; this is not what our data shows.

Among the older age group, these top-bottom divergent patterns persist. Although virtually 80% of all individuals in top and bottom clusters live independently in this age group, coresidence with a partner is much lower among the top classes than the bottom. Top-bottom divergence is more marked when it comes to transition to parenthood. Whereas less than 35% of individuals in Clusters 1 and 2 are parents, 46.9% and 73.6% have at least one child in Clusters 5 and 6, respectively.

Clusters 3 and 4 display divergent transition to adulthood profiles, meaning that transition to adulthood is not an homogenous process among the middle classes in Spain either. Among the younger age group, 45.0% of individuals in Cluster 3 live independently, whereas only 15.1% do so in Cluster 4. This gap in favor of Cluster 3 replicates in the older age group at a higher level for all three indicators: Live independently (79.5% vs. 54.6%), Coresiding with a partner (62.4% vs. 36.1%), and Having at least one child (43.0% vs. 32.4%). Recall that Cluster 4 excels by its high levels of inactivity and unemployment, and by having access to housing without financial burdens.

Together, these patterns suggest that the potential reasons for delayed transition to adulthood and childbearing across social classes are likely different. While continued education and relatively high opportunity cost may apply to Clusters 1 and 2, lower fertility desires (see below), unreadiness, and lower socioeconomic prospects apply to Clusters 3 and 4. The fact that Clusters 5 and 6 display the highest percentages in all three transition to adulthood measures requires explanations beyond the idea of uncertainty as a key driver, as well as the ideational change proposed by the SDT and Southern familism approaches.

Comparing fertility desires between age groups shed light on potential changes over the lifecourse. The proportion of individuals who do not want children decreases with age, except in Cluster 4 where roughly more than one of each five individuals do not want children in both age groups: 21.5% and 22.0%, respectively. In contrast, the proportion of individuals who want one child increases with age, potentially reflecting fertility desire adaptations as individuals' economic prospects detach from parental resources. As a consequence, whereas the mean number of desired children hovers around 1.8 for all clusters in the younger age groups, it follows a U-shaped pattern over clusters among the older, with the lowest value, expectedly, among Cluster 4.

Fertility aspirations seem to offset reality to different extents among 22-to-28 year olds depending on their social class. In all clusters, the percentage of young adults that plan to have children in the next three years is larger than the percentage of them who co-reside with a part-toner; which is, arguably, a minimum requirement for fertility in the Spanish context. The gap between partnership co-residence and fertility plans is minimal only in Cluster 6 (37.5% vs 38.3%). By the same token, the percentage of individuals who plan to have a child in the next three years is the lowest in Cluster 2 with 18.7%, followed by Cluster 1 and 4 with 25% and 28%, respectively. These figures contrast with those of Clusters 3, 5 and 6 where at least 35% of the individuals have a fertility plan within the next three years. As a consequence, higher classes display greater prospective fertility gaps: 2.3 and 2.2 children in Clusters 1 and 2, respectively.

Among older adults, the class gradient in short-term fertility plans is reversed suggesting that the life course prompts fertility plans among top classes, i.e., among those with favorable material conditions for enacting the hitherto delayed transitions. More than 55% of individuals in Clusters 1 (66.0%), 2 (62.1%) and 3 (54.5%) plan to have a child in the next three years. This figure is below 50% for all other clusters. Part of this divergence is explained by the fact that 73.6% of individuals in Cluster 6 are already parents. As a result, prospective fertility gaps among older adults are virtually indistinguishable across clusters, but for different reasons. In clusters 1 and 2, fertility postponement seems to be the driving factor of low fertility gaps. I clusters 3, 5, and 6 fertility goals are partially achieved by age 29. Finally, fertility aspirations and possibilities (e.g., singlehood) seems to be diminished in cluster 4.

Social configurations of inequality for first births

Figure 3 displays the distribution of first births according to the first two factorial axes of the MCA on the six variables for births to 22-to-28 year old mothers (left panel), and births to 29-to-35 year old mothers (right panel). The first three factorial axes comprise 52.5% and 60.6% of the total variances in the younger and older mothers samples, respectively. Because these MCA are independent, factorial axes are left free. Variables' contribution and axes inertia are reported in Table A3.

Figure 3. Social space and probable social classes of first births registered in Spain during 2017 and 2018 to mothers 22 to 35 years old.
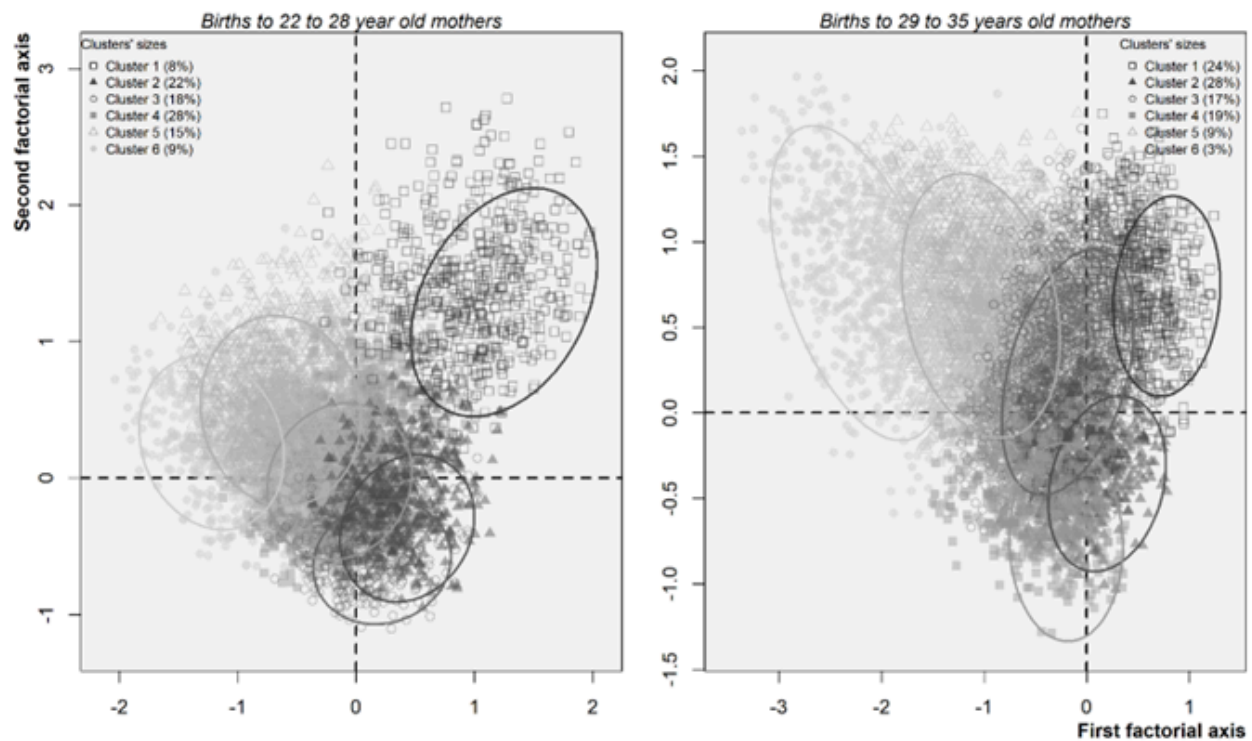
Note: Clusters also differ in their locations along the third factorial axis (not shown). Therefore, overlapping distribution should be interpreted carefully.

A key feature of birth record results is that place of birth and occupation play a more significant role than educational attainment in shaping the factorial axes. This result speaks to the complex interaction between migration and employment opportunities in the context of transitioning to parenthood. Among parents, a group in which foreign-born are overrepresented, high status occupations are more strongly concentrated in Spanish-born individuals than among young adults in general.

As a result of these confluences, first births to socially and economically privileged couples are on the top right in Cluster 1. There are fewer births among younger (8%) compared to older mothers (24%) reflecting the above-reported correlation between delayed transition to parenthood and social classes. Cluster 1 stands alone comprising highly educated parents: more than 60% and 70% of mothers and fathers in this cluster have tertiary education, respectively. They are technicians, directors or managers: 82% among mothers, and 96.8% among fathers (refer to Table A4).

First births to socially and economically disadvantaged parents are located to the top-left area in Clusters 5 and 6. These two clusters are larger among young mothers compared to older, and comprise a majority of immigrants with less than 30% of Spanish-born parents (refer to Table A4). The educational and occupational profiles of these Clusters is significantly worse than that of Cluster 1 and the categories of No information in these two variables are overrepresented. This latter result indicates two things. First, that lower social class mothers are less likely to report fathers' information potentially due to their absence. Second, that missing information is not random as it correlates strongly with markers of social disadvantages.

Finally, first birth to middle class parents are at the bottom of the plot, with intermediary levels of educational attainment and a clear occupational gradient: Cluster 2 comprise 99% of fathers working as qualified agricultural, artist and service workers in both age groups, and Clusters 3 among the younger mothers and Cluster 4 among the older comprise 99% of fathers working as elementary operators. The main occupational features of the remaining Clusters are inactivity and missing information.

Social configurations of inequality and the intergenerational transmission of disadvantages

Table 2 displays the percentages of premature births, births with low average gestational growth, low birth weight, deliveries with complications (DC), the fraction of DC that resulted in cesarean sections (C-sections), and potentially planned cesarean sections across *probable social classes*. Table 2 also compares the largest difference in percentage points among clusters in each outcome against the largest differences across mother's educational attainment groups.

The first three outcomes in Table 2 are the result of the gestational process and therefore can be seen as a cumulative result of the circumstances during the pregnancy. Among younger mothers, these three columns follow an inverted-U pattern where Clusters 3 and 4 display the highest incidence of premature births, low average weight, and low birth weight. Clusters 5 and 6 display slightly better outcomes but still worse than the first two clusters. These results mean that the stratification of these three birth outcomes is mainly a story of privilege at the top. Differences across clusters are larger than differences across maternal educational attainment categories signaling the relevance of a configurational approach to gestational birth outcomes among young

mothers. Among older mothers, the social class gradient is similar with Clusters 1 and 2 displaying the best aggregate outcomes across the first three measures. The largest difference by cluster is similar or lower to the largest difference across mothers' education levels.

Table 2. Delivery and birth outcomes by *probable social classes* among first births to mothers aged 22-to-28 and 29-to-35 the administrative birth records 2018 to 2020, and differences (diff.) between the maximum and minimum values across *probable social classes* and maternal educational attainment categories.

Cluster	Gestationtal process outcomes			Delivery circumstances		
	Premature birth	Low avg. gestational growth	Low birth weight	Delivery with complications (DC)	Cesarean section among DC	Cesarean section among non-DC
Births to women aged 22 to 28						
1	4.3	6.3	5.1	12.6	60.5	14.4
2	5.1	7.4	5.9	15.0	67.0	15.5
3	5.3	7.9	6.5	14.8	67.0	15.5
4	5.6	9.1	7.3	15.0	70.4	14.7
5	5.2	7.4	6.2	13.7	70.6	13.9
6	5.0	7.6	6.3	14.0	72.2	13.8
Largest cluster diff.	1.4	2.8	2.2	2.4	11.7	1.7
Largest educational diff.	1.4	2.4	2.1	3.4	9.6	3.3
Births to women aged 29 to 35						
1	4.5	6.8	5.4	14.4	59.8	18.1
2	5.2	8.1	6.5	16.5	67.4	19.6
3	5.4	8.0	6.6	17.0	67.6	19.6
4	5.6	8.6	7.0	17.0	68.8	19.4
5	5.8	8.4	7.0	16.8	71.9	19.2
6	5.6	9.0	7.5	17.3	74.6	19.1
Largest cluster diff.	1.3	2.3	2.0	2.9	14.8	1.5
Largest educational diff.	1.5	2.7	2.3	4.4	12.4	2.9

Note: The gaps are calculated as the ratio between the smallest and largest proportion across clusters and mother's educational attainment categories (no information, primary or less, secondary, tertiary, and upper tertiary).

The following three outcomes measure how deliveries unfold when women encounter the medical system. The inverted U-pattern along with the lower propensity towards negative outcomes in Clusters 1 is very apparent for delivery complications, women in Clusters 3 and 4 in both age groups display the greatest probability of experiencing complications during delivery. When these complications occur, however, it is women at the lower end of the social stratification, the ones that have the higher chances of having a cesarean section. There are 11.7 percentage point and 14.8 percentage point differences in the proportion of cesarean sections among DC between births in Clusters 6 and 1, for younger and older mothers, respectively. These are huge gaps signaling the divergent circumstances that newborns and mothers

experience according to their social class- Differences by mothers' educational attainment are smaller, again, highlighting the relevance of a configurational approach for understanding demographic and health outcomes.

Finally, regarding cesarean sections that did not involve delivery complications (i.e., potentially planned or desired cesarean sections), there is a social class gradient among younger mothers where the percentage of planned cesarean sections goes up with social class. This percentage ranges from 13.8% in Cluster 6 to 15.5% in Clusters 2 and 3 (14.4% in Custer 1). Differences by educational attainment in this outcome are much larger than those across clusters: 3.3 percentage points vs 1.7 percentage points, respectively. Among older mothers, the proportion of planned cesarean sections is very similar across all clusters, except in Cluster 1 where it reaches a minimum of 18.1%, a much larger figure than any observed among the young mothers' cluster. This result further highlights the importance of the lifecourse and the need to account for it in studies of social stratification and the intergenerational transmission of disadvantages.

Conclusions

Our results confirm that the confluence of socioeconomic and social status privileges and disadvantages, termed by us social configurations of inequality, are related to transition to adulthood patterns. These patterns include establishing independent living arrangements, co-residing with partners, and transitioning to parenthood, as well as, short-term fertility plans. Social configurations of inequality also contribute to social reproduction via the intergenerational transmission of disadvantages. As a result, transition to adulthood and intergenerational relations patterns are part and parcel of the social processes undergirding, vital, existential, and resource inequalities in Spain.

Our analyses add nuances to the generally accepted narrative that explains the delayed transition to adulthood and low fertility in Spain, and potentially other European countries, based on the combination of economic and cultural arguments such as young adults' unreadiness and the so-called southern European *familism* (Barbieri et al. 2015; Vignoli et al. 2022). We find that this narrative provides only partial explanations for observed patterns in certain social classes, leaving others unaccounted for.

In the lower social classes, among young adults, the transition to adulthood and fertility milestones are tangible and materialized, meaning that there are no signs of delayed transitions and fertility gaps. Conversely, among those in the middle and upper classes, the transition to adulthood and fertility milestones are less integral to their short-term plans, leading to delayed transitions and fertility gaps. However, these delays and gaps differ in their magnitude and prospective outcomes. The fact that upper-class individuals catch up when we incorporate prospective fertility plans highlights the importance of material resources for the transition to

adulthood at the top end of the social stratification system. This indicates that the relative deprivation of the middle classes could be a significant driver of sustained delayed transitions and fertility gaps.

We also show that social configurations of inequality in Spain effectively characterize intergenerational relationships, encompassing the transmission of (dis)advantages from parents to newborns. These results add to existing theories on synergistic forms of inequality and social exclusion such as intersectionality theory by showing that confluent material disadvantages further social inequalities. These inequalities are likely to extend to the entire life course because adverse birth outcomes correlate with disadvantaged conditions later in life.

If delayed transition to adulthood and fertility gap were to be countered, our results suggest the need for both a holistic and a differentiated policy approach. Overarching, inequality-reducing policies are needed to overcome the root factors underpinning unequal transition to adulthood patterns, fertility gaps, and negative birth outcomes among social classes. Considering basic income and access to housing as rights seem to us as appropriate strategies to counter disparities among *probable social classes* in these three realms (Adkins et al. 2020; Casassas 2024).

In terms of differentiate policies, the one-fifth and one-tenth shares of young adults at the bottom of the social stratification system, i.e., clusters 5 and 6 in each age group respectively, are in need of greater opportunities for affordable housing including access to homeownership and control in rent prices, and economic transfers that alleviate their low income levels. The overrepresentation of foreign-born individuals in these clusters suggests special attention to overcoming potential barriers that prevent immigrants from acquiring these social benefits; these barriers could include potential language barriers, existing institutional discrimination, or administrative requirements that may exclude foreign-born individuals from social benefits.

Policy needs for the middle classes are of a different kind. According to our results, this majority population, between 40% and 60% depending on the age groups, are severely affected by unemployment, inactivity and a debt burden. Policies to boost employment opportunities and reduce the burden of debt associated with housing should address these populations. Special attention should be given to the relatively low educational attainment profiles of these classes. Likewise, the geographical dispersion of individuals in these classes across the urbanization spectrum requires further investigation to identify specific needs, particularly in rural and intermediate areas. The fact that these classes display the worst birth and delivery outcomes imply that tackling their needs could be a major contributor to reducing the intergenerational transmission of disadvantages.

Among the upper class, it remains to be seen whether short-term prospective fertility plans materialize as assumed in this study. If this assumption does not hold, future research could

address why sufficient material and social status resources fail to support the transition to adulthood and fertility plans. These investigations could inform whether the needs of the upper classes to realize fertility intentions and transition to adulthood escape the realm of public policy.

Methodologically, our study raises important points for future research. The interconnection of advantages and disadvantages categories suggests that explanations based on separate effects of factors on transition to adulthood, fertility aspiration, and intergenerational relations outcomes are likely unsatisfactory, or at the very least, blind to synergistic associations. This conclusion echoes Jhonson-Hanks' claims (2011) for focusing conjunctions, rather than in separate exogenous effects, for understanding family variation and change. Testing this approach in other geographical and spatial contexts, as well as with other Spanish surveys, is required to verify and extend the validity of this approach beyond contemporary Spain.

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Appendix

Methodological implications of the sample composition and robustness checks

In the 2018-SFS data, household-level variables such as space availability at home, type of access to the dwelling, and household income correspond to the parental household for those living with parents. Hence, the *probable social classes* that we identify among 22 to 28-year-old individuals are influenced by parental background because 65% of them co-reside with their parents. This is less the case in the second age group where less than one-fourth of individuals co-reside with their parents (23%). We decided to keep all individuals in our analysis because varying levels of parental support, including support through co-residence, are part and parcel of individuals' opportunities and outcomes for transitioning to adulthood.

We understand this decision can be criticized because one of our outcome variables is precisely living independently. However, this critique will only apply if we were interested in separating the effect of individual variables on transition to adulthood outcomes, as in standard regression analysis. However, the concept of inequality configurations and the Multiple Correspondence Analysis approach lead us in the opposite direction. We assume that the confluence of circumstance is a better descriptor of transition to adulthood patterns than individual variables; and we want this description to be applicable to all young adults. Excluding the parental influence from this framework or excluding young adults that co-reside with their parents will lead us to mask a substantial part of the story.

The influence of parental socioeconomic backgrounds enriches our measurement of configurational forms of inequality and *probable social classes* in several ways. It captures instances where young adults who reside with their parents receive additional support and benefit from privileged conditions; co-residence with parents could allow them to pursue higher education or professional training. Meanwhile, co-residence can also serve as an economic strategy among less well-off families to mitigate housing costs if the young are unemployed or to favor resource pooling if they are working. All these scenarios of support across affluent and less well-off families reveal meaningful variations in co-residence that may be obscure if we exclude household-level variables of it we focus on individuals who live independently. Additionally, the inclusion of the other five variables, such as individuals' region of birth, occupation, educational attainment, place of residence and parental education, allows us to interpret household level features in the context of other living conditions.

Table A1. Variables' contribution to the first three axes of the Multiple Correspondence Analysis for younger and older adults in the Spanish Fertility Survey 2018. Contributions above 12.5% are bolded.

Variables (Number of categories)	Individuals 22 to 28 years old			Individuals 29 to 35 years old		
	Axis1	Axis2	Axis3	Axis1	Axis2	Axis3
Place of birth (5)	12.4	**12.7**	**13.6**	10.2	**21.0**	3.8
Educational attainment (4)	**18.3**	**15.6**	8.4	**24.3**	6.8	7.4
Occupation (5)	**13.9**	9.5	**20.2**	**24.6**	**13.2**	**32.8**
Space availability at home (5)	7.8	9.0	**22.3**	7.8	11.7	4.9
Access to dwelling (6)	**15.7**	**17.5**	11.0	3.4	**22.3**	**22.3**
Place of residence (3)	0.8	9.2	**17.6**	1.5	**13.5**	3.7
Household income group (5)	**14.9**	2.7	0.5	**17.4**	1.6	**22.4**
Parent's education (5)*	**16.2**	**23.9**	6.5	10.8	9.9	2.6
Sum of contr. above 12.5%	79.0	69.7	73.8	66.3	70.0	77.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percentage of the total variance**	53.9	8.3	5.5	50.5	13.2	5.1

Note: * Parental educational attainment is measured using the highest achiever and there is a "No information" category. ** These percentages are calculated using the Greenacre correction (Greenacre & Blasius, 2006).

Table A2. Clusters' characteristics by age groups in the Spanish Fertility Survey, 2018. Bolded numbers indicate within-cluster percentages that are higher than the percentages in the overall sample.

	Individuals aged 22 to 28							Individuals aged 29 to 35						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Place of birth														
Africa	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	**4.2**	**12.6**	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	**6.6**	**23.5**	3.8
European Union	0.4	0.0	**6.9**	1.7	0.9	**6.6**	3.1	**6.0**	3.1	1.9	1.3	**10.0**	**5.9**	4.5
LaCar	1.1	0.3	0.0	0.8	**69.2**	7.5	7.5	**9.0**	0.1	0.0	1.1	8.0	**48.2**	8.1
Others	**4.6**	0.4	0.0	0.0	**7.1**	**4.6**	2.0	**4.1**	0.0	0.0	1.4	**4.3**	**8.6**	2.5
Spain	**93.9**	**99.3**	**92.7**	**97.5**	18.5	68.7	85.0	80.9	**96.8**	**98.1**	**95.4**	71.1	13.8	81.1
Educational attainment														
Primary and below	0.4	2.0	15.7	7.8	**20.4**	**58.7**	16.4	0.0	2.0	**24.4**	**31.9**	**21.7**	**54.2**	20.5
Secondary	1.5	22.2	27.9	**47.6**	**53.5**	19.3	28.2	0.5	6.3	**52.8**	21.9	**45.1**	**30.3**	26.4
Tertiary low	20.8	**62.8**	**48.8**	**44.5**	25.1	19.8	40.4	29.9	**61.8**	22.4	**35.6**	30.9	13.6	34.3
Tertiary upper	**77.3**	13.1	7.5	0.1	1.0	2.1	15.0	**69.6**	**29.9**	0.4	10.6	2.3	1.9	18.8
Occupation														
Inactive	19.9	**51.7**	9.0	**38.1**	**40.7**	12.2	28.0	5.2	1.4	0.9	**24.7**	5.6	**34.5**	10.5
Unemployed	2.0	4.7	11.9	**17.9**	**20.4**	**28.9**	13.8	5.0	1.8	2.4	**51.9**	1.8	**14.1**	13.1
Elementary and Operators	4.1	10.5	**25.2**	**30.8**	**32.7**	**43.2**	24.1	3.5	5.3	**42.0**	8.1	**69.6**	**48.1**	28.3
Qualif. Agric, Art. and Serv.	7.7	11.7	**31.5**	12.3	4.3	10.7	14.9	3.6	**26.0**	**50.0**	8.8	14.7	2.7	19.4
Technicians and Superiors	**66.3**	**21.4**	**22.4**	0.9	1.9	5.1	19.2	**82.6**	**65.4**	4.7	6.4	8.3	0.6	28.6
Space availability at home														
Small	1.6	14.4	7.1	**37.8**	**61.6**	**28.1**	22.1	15.8	5.9	3.4	**25.1**	**30.7**	**62.5**	20.9
Small-Middle	7.2	**22.4**	7.1	**39.9**	10.0	5.7	16.9	8.9	**16.9**	**23.8**	13.7	**16.7**	10.9	15.7
Middle	**45.8**	**48.0**	**42.6**	19.3	18.6	25.9	34.6	**44.8**	**40.0**	32.3	26.9	**38.1**	19.1	34.2
Middle-High	**27.9**	11.3	**27.3**	1.5	7.1	**16.5**	15.5	**22.3**	**16.8**	12.2	**23.1**	7.0	2.7	14.7
High	**17.5**	3.8	**16.0**	1.6	2.7	**23.9**	10.9	8.2	**20.4**	**28.3**	11.3	7.4	4.8	14.4
Access to dwelling														
Owner indebted high	0.9	3.5	**6.2**	**11.4**	**5.7**	3.0	5.5	1.1	3.3	**15.7**	5.6	5.0	3.4	6.0
Owner indebted low	15.7	**33.9**	**21.7**	19.4	10.3	7.5	19.6	16.9	**48.6**	**49.1**	15.6	29.0	6.0	29.8
Owner inherited	7.4	2.0	**31.5**	7.8	2.6	**18.9**	13.2	8.5	14.3	**16.0**	**32.0**	10.3	5.5	15.5
Owner debt payed	**48.8**	**58.8**	28.3	**54.0**	3.5	7.9	37.0	**24.4**	16.9	14.9	**35.6**	10.7	2.4	18.5
Renter high	5.3	0.3	3.1	3.2	**36.1**	**23.2**	8.8	**10.1**	3.1	0.1	6.8	7.2	**26.4**	7.5
Renter low	**21.8**	1.5	9.2	4.2	**41.8**	**39.5**	15.8	**38.9**	13.8	4.0	4.4	**37.8**	**56.4**	22.7
Place of residence														
Urban	**76.9**	**76.1**	18.8	54.8	**89.1**	47.1	55.6	**84.0**	**57.4**	27.0	35.3	**69.8**	**63.8**	54.4
Intermediate	15.4	16.5	**52.5**	**38.8**	10.5	**39.6**	32.1	14.3	31.7	**50.8**	**43.7**	25.8	31.0	33.8
Rural	7.7	7.3	**28.7**	6.4	0.4	**13.3**	12.3	1.7	10.9	**22.2**	**20.9**	4.4	5.2	11.8
Household income group														
<1000€	5.8	6.6	16.7	22.6	**37.0**	**53.5**	22.0	2.7	2.4	8.4	**46.3**	6.3	**51.5**	17.7
1000-1500€	12.7	8.4	**26.7**	**21.7**	**21.0**	**22.1**	19.0	10.4	14.5	**25.5**	**26.7**	**35.7**	22.3	22.8
1500-2500€	25.4	**37.9**	**33.3**	**45.1**	22.5	22.3	32.9	24.0	**39.5**	**45.5**	17.3	**46.2**	23.3	33.6
2500-5000€	**40.4**	**37.7**	14.7	7.4	10.6	2.0	18.8	**45.8**	**34.4**	17.7	2.5	11.1	1.5	19.4
>5000€	**15.8**	**9.4**	**8.6**	3.2	**8.8**	0.0	7.3	**17.2**	**9.3**	2.9	**7.2**	0.6	1.4	6.5
Parent's education														
No parents	**7.3**	**3.5**	0.0	0.0	**2.1**	0.0	1.8	**3.5**	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Primary and below	21.4	8.8	**45.4**	19.2	**44.8**	**83.1**	35.4	19.1	60.1	**85.2**	**71.3**	**68.9**	**73.3**	63.7
Secondary	3.1	13.5	**30.5**	**52.9**	23.1	9.6	24.3	6.0	**14.7**	10.3	12.2	**19.6**	**14.3**	13.0
Tertiary low	14.5	**32.1**	**19.7**	**25.1**	11.4	3.7	19.3	**17.4**	**13.8**	4.5	8.6	8.3	8.0	10.0
Tertiary upper	**53.8**	**42.2**	4.3	2.8	18.6	3.6	19.1	**53.9**	11.3	0.0	7.9	3.2	4.5	12.7

Note: Standard errors are available upon request.

Table A3. Variables' contribution to the first three axes of the Multiple Correspondence Analysis for first time younger and older mothers according to the 2018-2020 records. Contributions above 3.1% are bolded.

Variables	22 to 28 years old mothers			29 to 35 years old mothers		
	Axis1	Axis2	Axis3	Axis1	Axis2	Axis3
MOTHERS'						
Educational attainment						
Primary and below	**3.2**	0.7	0.0	**7.3**	1.3	0.5
Secondary	0.3	2.7	0.1	1.6	**3.2**	0.0
Tertiary low	**4.5**	0.0	0.2	0.9	0.7	0.0
Tertiary upper	2.2	**5.7**	0.0	**3.5**	**3.7**	0.0
No information	**3.9**	0.1	0.0	2.4	1.3	0.2
Occupation						
Elementary and Operators	0.3	**8.4**	**5.2**	0.4	**10.3**	**16.4**
Inactive	**5.2**	1.0	0.0	**6.2**	1.1	0.0
No information	0.6	0.8	0.2	1.3	2.7	2.1
Qualif. Agric, Art. and Serv.	2.3	2.7	**8.5**	0.3	**5.4**	**16.9**
Technicians and Superiors	**10.0**	**16.6**	**3.4**	**9.5**	**9.9**	**4.2**
Place of birth						
Africa	**9.9**	0.7	**14.5**	**10.9**	2.0	**5.0**
European Union	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.3	0.2
LaCar	1.8	1.2	**4.2**	1.5	0.8	1.9
No information	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0
Other	1.1	2.9	**11.3**	1.2	1.0	1.4
Spain	**5.3**	1.9	0.2	2.1	0.8	0.1
FATHERS'						
Educational attainment						
Primary and below	0.1	**6.7**	**7.2**	1.5	**9.3**	**17.6**
Secondary	**5.4**	2.0	0.5	**6.4**	**3.8**	1.5
Tertiary low	0.3	1.3	0.1	0.2	1.7	0.8
Tertiary upper	0.7	1.8	**8.0**	0.0	**4.8**	**16.7**
No information	**9.1**	**17.9**	**3.4**	**8.6**	**10.6**	**4.1**
Occupation						
Elementary and Operators	**4.7**	0.4	0.9	**5.7**	0.6	0.5
Inactive	0.2	**5.2**	0.0	1.1	**8.0**	0.0
No information	**3.7**	1.4	0.1	1.8	0.1	0.1
Qualif. Agric, Art. and Serv.	2.5	**10.2**	0.1	**4.1**	**8.0**	0.1
Technicians and Superiors	2.9	0.9	1.4	**3.3**	**3.4**	0.9
Place of birth						
Africa	**10.1**	0.7	**14.4**	**10.9**	1.9	**4.8**
European Union	0.5	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.5	0.3
LaCar	2.0	1.1	**4.4**	1.6	0.8	2.1
No information	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0
Other	1.3	2.7	**11.5**	1.4	0.9	1.5
Spain	**5.7**	1.7	0.2	2.1	0.8	0.1

Table A4. Clusters' characteristics for first births to 22-to-28 and 29-to-35-year-old first time mothers registered in Spain from 2018 to 2020.

Clusters	Births to mothers aged 22 to 28							Births to mothers aged 29 to 35						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
MOTHERS														
Place of birth														
Africa	1.2	0.0	0.6	1.9	0.2	93.9	9.5	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.2	1.9	89.5	3.3
European Union	4.2	3.2	3.6	10.1	8.0	0.9	5.8	2.7	2.3	6.2	3.2	15.9	3.6	4.5
LaCar	7.2	5.7	2.0	12.6	52.6	0.4	13.5	3.2	3.3	10.2	3.1	32.4	1.7	7.0
No information	1.6	0.2	0.2	1.4	1.2	0.3	0.8	0.7	0.2	1.3	0.3	2.0	1.0	0.7
Other	2.9	1.2	0.0	0.5	31.5	0.0	5.3	1.1	0.7	2.9	0.5	19.6	1.0	2.9
Spain	82.9	89.7	93.7	73.4	6.5	4.5	65.1	92.3	93.5	78.9	92.6	28.3	3.1	81.6
Educational attainment														
Primary and below	1.0	0.8	1.1	5.4	14.0	18.5	5.8	0.1	0.0	1.8	1.6	18.9	43.8	3.8
Secondary	22.6	48.8	51.3	33.9	22.7	19.6	36.3	11.2	36.6	35.1	46.0	35.5	33.0	31.8
Tertiary low	34.5	26.8	24.1	10.0	4.8	2.9	16.8	33.5	37.4	30.2	35.0	11.7	4.1	31.3
Tertiary upper	28.9	7.8	3.8	3.6	7.3	2.4	7.1	54.2	25.0	29.5	16.1	15.2	3.9	29.5
No information	13.0	15.8	19.7	47.1	51.1	56.7	34.0	1.0	1.1	3.4	1.3	18.6	15.2	3.6
Occupation														
Elementary and Operators	0.0	0.3	82.8	8.3	1.8	7.6	18.3	0.0	0.0	1.5	84.9	1.8	11.8	17.0
Inactive	16.3	16.9	17.2	67.0	70.0	81.0	44.8	4.5	8.3	46.6	15.1	59.1	73.2	21.9
No information	1.6	0.0	0.0	20.3	15.0	8.6	8.8	0.0	0.0	41.7	0.0	30.6	10.7	10.1
Qualif. Agric, Art. and Serv.	0.1	82.8	0.0	4.3	13.1	2.7	21.3	0.0	91.7	6.6	0.0	8.0	3.6	27.3
Technicians and Superiors	82.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	6.8	95.5	0.0	3.6	0.0	0.5	0.7	23.7
FATHERS														
Occupation														
Elementary and Operators	0.1	0.3	99.1	26.8	8.3	35.8	30.1	0.0	0.0	5.9	99.3	6.4	35.4	21.7
Inactive	1.4	0.7	0.9	46.0	54.3	37.1	24.8	0.1	0.4	38.1	0.7	62.1	38.5	13.5
No information	1.1	0.0	0.0	4.2	7.1	4.8	2.8	0.0	0.0	18.9	0.0	11.3	5.8	4.4
Qualif. Agric, Art. and Serv.	0.6	99.0	0.0	19.4	28.7	20.4	33.0	0.0	99.6	21.4	0.0	17.8	17.5	33.3
Technicians and Superiors	96.8	0.0	0.0	3.6	1.6	2.0	9.4	99.9	0.0	15.7	0.0	2.5	2.8	27.0
Educational attainment														
Primary and below	1.1	1.8	3.8	10.7	16.8	35.2	9.9	0.1	1.0	1.8	2.7	16.6	38.8	3.9
Secondary	22.8	72.7	80.4	60.0	32.9	44.0	57.9	14.3	62.0	44.4	78.7	34.0	41.7	47.5
Tertiary low	37.2	16.7	9.6	7.8	5.2	3.4	11.7	35.1	25.4	30.1	17.2	8.0	3.5	24.7
Tertiary upper	34.8	3.9	0.7	2.3	6.9	2.1	5.7	49.3	11.3	21.8	1.0	9.1	2.5	19.7
No information	4.1	4.9	5.5	19.1	38.1	15.3	14.8	1.3	0.3	1.8	0.4	32.2	13.6	4.1
Place of birth														
Africa	1.0	0.0	1.1	3.3	0.2	96.5	10.2	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.4	3.2	89.9	3.5
European Union	3.0	2.2	3.1	9.5	9.1	0.6	5.4	2.2	1.9	5.0	2.6	18.1	3.4	4.1
LaCar	5.5	5.6	2.0	11.2	53.4	0.2	13.1	2.3	3.0	7.3	2.8	32.1	1.4	6.1
No information	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.9	1.0	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.9	0.2	1.9	0.8	0.5
Other	1.5	0.5	0.0	0.3	30.1	0.0	4.8	0.5	0.3	1.3	0.2	18.1	1.1	2.1
Spain	88.0	91.6	93.6	74.9	6.2	2.2	66.1	94.6	94.7	85.0	93.8	26.7	3.3	83.6

Note: Standard errors are available upon request.