# Traditional Churches and White Women's Pathways Through Early Adulthood Amidst the Second Demographic Transition in the U.S.: Demographic Behavior and Religious Influence.

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Within contemporary context, how do traditional (and/or conservative) churches influence individuals' transition to adulthood? Lehrer (2008, page 1) notes "analyses to date of how religion influences economic and demographic behavior have generally examined one relationship at a time, e.g. the religion-fertility linkage, the religion-female labor supply linkage, and so on." (page 1). The study reported on here addresses the transition to adulthood holistically, considering changes in multiple statuses as components of a single construct – a pathway into adulthood. A second problem with existing research on the effects of religion on life course outcomes is that relationships are examined at only one level – either at the individual level or at the geographic contextual level. I examine the effect of traditional religious adherence – both at the individual and at the geographic contextual levels – on pathways into adulthood. I interpret findings in light of Second Demographic Transition Theory (SDTT) that posits that a conservative normative climate constrains individualistic change in the transition to adulthood and promotes traditional pathways through this portion of the life-course (Lesthaeghe 1983; Lesthaeghe and Sukyn 1988, Lesthaeghe and Neels 2002).

**The Transition to Adulthood as a Pathway:**

Macmillian and Eliason (2003, page 530) "conceptualize the life course as the interlocked trajectories, or pathways, of social roles over time." With respect to the portion of the life course covering the transition to adulthood, these social roles are defined in relationship to "leaving school, starting a full-time job, leaving the home of origin, getting married, and becoming a parent for the first time" (Shanahan 2000, page 667). In the U.S., prior to adulthood, these domains are highly standardized – most

occupying joint roles of student, non-worker, living in the parental home, and remaining single and childless. For example, in 1980, bracketing off labor-force status, 88 percent of white females aged 16 occupy this role configuration[1] (Fussell and Furstenberg 2005). However, after the age of 16, this role configuration increasingly is subject to change. The process in which individuals leave this role configuration varies in terms of the occurrence of transitions, the timing of transitions that do occur, the sequence in which these roles change (Hogan and Astone 1986, page 112) and in other ways -- such as how closely linked sets of transitions occur in time (i.e. how much transitions within two or more states are coupled). Thus, the transition to adulthood is understood as a pathway of sequenced role configurations that varies across individuals along a number of distinct dimensions.

The construct of a pathway consisting of component role transitions along multiple domains is very useful in theory development and testing. Furstenberg, Rumbaut and Settersten (2005, page 7) lament: "Most prior work on this topic [early adulthood] has generally examined . . . transitions singly, as isolated events and more or less independent of one another. Indeed whole fields of research have been devoted to each of these transitions: completion of schooling, movement from the parental household, entrance into the labor force, formation of partnerships, and the onset of

[1] "Role configuration" is the term used by Macmillian and Eliason (2003) as well as others to denote a combination of states (e.g. 'married,' 'partnered,' or 'single,' and 'parent,' or 'not parent') with respect to corresponding statuses ('union status' and 'parental status' respectively). Given the five spheres specified by Shanahan (2000) (above) an example of a role configuration would be 'a married, parent, student, part-time worker, living independently of one's own parents.' Hogan and Astone (1986) use the term "role complex" with similar meaning.

childbearing and parenting." Such work, however, relies on assumptions that these transitions are either independent of one another or that the order of causal relationships between such transitions across domains can be specified a priori or inferred from patterns in the data. However, within the life course paradigm, these transitions are seen as endogenous, jointly caused, and influence one-another in complex non-recursive relationships that are not conducive to conventional empirical modeling. They are organized within a single biography that is subject to exogenous forces. The conceptualization of a pathway constructed from component role configurations enables the specification of empirically testable models regarding the exogenous factors leading to variation among biographies. Additionally, models may be specified that examine variation in outcomes associated with biographical differences.

Figure 1 illustrates the most general form of such models. In Figure 1, the likelihood of states across five status domains are expressed as observed variables at time *t*. These states are specified as interdependent and embedded in a role configuration. The role configuration at some later time, *t*+*n*, is specified as, in part, dependent on the role configuration *t*+*n-1*. The set of role configurations from time *t* to time *t*+*n* [2] are all embedded in a pathway through adulthood. The model specifies that the pathway through adulthood is influenced by exogenous variables. Such variables may concern the family of origin (including their values, their structure, their economic resources, and their social status), individual characteristics (including personality, intelligence, and

[2] including all configurations at time t+m where m<n – although not illustrated in the model due to space constraints.

physical attributes), and features of the surrounding social world (including the economic structure, cultural mores, and institutional arrangements).

[Figure 1 About Here]

The model points to the reason (beyond understanding the interrelationship between states across five status conditions) that the construct of a pathway through adulthood is important. Within the life course framework, the pathway through adulthood influences demographic outcomes (for example, total completed fertility), status attainment outcomes (for example, risk of poverty) and well-being outcomes (for example, happiness).[3] Lesthaeghe and Niedert (2009) even argue that variation in the pathways through adulthood are meaningful in terms of political outcomes (in this case the propensity to vote democratic during a presidential election). These effects can be understood at both the individual level and at an aggregate level. Variation in the life pathway, thus, may be very consequential.

*Operationalizing Pathways Through Adulthood:*

There are two approaches to operationalizing and measuring variation in pathways through adulthood: the specification of dimensions by which pathways may vary, and the development of typologies. The former approach is largely (but not exclusively) applied to population level analyses such as the large literature that looks across cohorts (and other social groupings) and asks to what extent are pathways standardized (e.g. (Bruchner and Mayer 2005; Fussell and Furstenberg 2005)). Studies

[3] But see Mouw (2005) for evidence that pathways have little independent effect on status attainment and well-being outcomes.

that use individual level, longitudinal data to develop typologies of pathways are less common. Shanahan (2000, page 684) specifies three methodologies conducive to the development (and further analysis) of typologies of pathways: "both latent transition analysis and . . . optimal matching strategy identify patterns of transition markers and their precursors, thus allowing researchers to examine how pathways into adulthood vary by race and ethnicity, gender, income, and other variables. Methods that draw on Boolean algebra could also be used to identify complex combinations of precursors to transition patterns."

Boolean algebra methods are not very effective at reducing data, and are rather restrictive in the in the complexity of data that it can handle. For example, among the recent studies that empirically examine pathways into adulthood (see Table 1), the study employing Boolean algebra (Jackson and Berkowitz 2005) has the greatest number of pathways, and observes the least number of status domains. Moreover, this study applies additional restrictions on the observed data, sampling only cases that achieve a normative role configuration and limiting observations to sequencing only, and not timing.

[Table 1 About Here]

Cluster analysis methods, such as that employed by Mouw (2005) attempt to identify groupings such that the ratio of heterogeneity between groups to the heterogeneity within groups is maximized. This method is effective at reducing data but moderate at handling data complexity. In order to identify discrete pathways using cluster analysis, Mouw (2005) observes timing of 'permanent' transitions from childhood roles to adult roles instead of role configurations. Thus, a person, who moves into one's parents' household for a year at the age of 30 is treated the same as a person who lived

their entire span of years between 18 and 30 in their parent's household, and entirely differently from a person who similarly lived from 18 to 29 but also age 30 outside of their parents household. Cluster analysis also does not provide formal tests to evaluate alternative models, and Mouw (2005) notes that alternative specifications to the one he arrives at also have strong fit to the data.

Basic latent class analysis, such as that employed by Osgood, Ruth, Eccles, Jacobs and Barber (2005), does allow hypothesis testing to compare alternative model specification, including providing both Bayesian and stochastic methods to adjudicate between models with differing numbers of classes. This method also is restrictive in the complexity of data that it can manage. Osgood et al. (2005) analyze data from one time point – essentially capturing a role configuration which they nominally call a pathway. Macmillian and Eliason (2004) develop a two-stage latent class analysis in which they first estimate age specific role configurations which are then input into a second model that estimates pathways. This innovation increases the ability to manage complexity. Eliason, Mortimer, Vuolo and Tranby (2007) improve on the conditional two-stage approach by developing a second order hierarchical latent class model that accomplishes the same task in a single estimation with greater consistency and efficiency.

The empirical work on pathways, despite using a variety of methodologies and data, tends to find between 3 and 6 distinct pathways that individuals follow. The nature of these sets of pathways varies across studies. However, the studies do tend to differentiate between those who transition away from pre-adulthood roles early and those who delay such transitions. Moreover, across each of the studies, transitions within the

domains of marriage and parenthood stand out as particularly salient in differentiating pathways.

Life course literature – not limited to the studies of pathways using longitudinal data -- has arrived at a consensus on four matters. First, the likelihood of any particular pathway through adulthood varies by gender, by race and by cohort. Second, during the baby-boom period, from 1948 to 1964, among whites, pathways into adulthood had a relatively high degree of standardization with role transitions tightly packed into the late teens and early twenties, and with sequences strongly ordered such that completing education preceded marriage which preceded parenthood. Third, after the baby-boom era, the likelihood of delaying transitions into states that had previously marked adulthood progressively increased over time. Fourth, after the baby-boom era, pathways into adulthood became progressively more diverse.[4]

**Second Demographic Transition Theory and Other Frameworks to Understand the Relationship Between Religion and Pathways into Adulthood:**

Second Demographic Transition Theory (SDTT) is a macro level cultural-ecological theory that explains change in post-baby boom family demography with, as yet, untested implications for the macro-micro linkages between religion and transition to adulthood. SDTT explains the emergence of demographic patterns including: an overall decrease in fertility; a decrease in marital fertility; an increase in non-marital fertility[5]; an

[4] For a review of this literature see Shanahan (2000) or Furstenberg, Rumbaut and Settersten (2005).

[5] Lestheaghe and Neidert (2006) conclude that in Europe, non-marital fertility and female-headed households are a component of the second demographic transition, but are not in the U.S, since, in the U.S., they are not similarly distributed as other components of the second demographic transition.

increase in the age of childbearing; an increase in divorce; an increase in the age at first marriage; an increase in cohabitation; an increase in female headed households; a decrease in the two-parent, single breadwinner household model (Teachman et al. 1999). Understood through the lens of the SDTT, these changes collectively describe a single historic phenomenon unfolding gradually over time and engendered by the same general causal force. This force – the rise of a culture of secular-individualism – is part of the superstructure resting on a foundation of an increasingly complex economic organization (Lesthaeghe 1983; Lesthaeghe and Sukyn 1988).

SDTT attends to the process by which regions break from established demographic patterns and innovate such that new patterns emerge. Such innovation would include moving away from the highly standardized, and tightly timed life course pathway defining white women's transition to adulthood during the baby-boom to the highly individuated, desequenced, and delayed pathways that increased in likelihood as the century progressed. Lesthaeghe and Neels (2002) argue that such innovation involves leaders who innovate early and laggards who, after some delay, follow the new patterns established by the leaders. They apply a 'ready, willing, and able' model to explain the process of innovation. Innovation occurs when units are ready, willing and able to adopt new behaviors. With regard to demographic innovation, economic and technological circumstances set the ready and able conditions, but the normative environment sets the willing conditions. Lesthaeghe and Neels argue that with regard to the second demographic transition, the willing conditions provided the final constraint, as certain institutions – in particular traditional/conservative churches promoted norms that enforced established social-demographic practices – practices that constrained the

structure of pathways into adulthood. They argue, and empirically show within Europe, that regional delays in transitions of demographic patterns are related to the prevalence of traditional/conservative churches. Regions where such churches are highly prevalent maintain established demographic patterns longer.

In support of SDTT, in an analysis of U.S. counties circa 1990, Morrison (2009) finds that the greater the proportion of adherents to non-black traditional churches (conservative Protestants or Latter Day Saints) the lower the fertility schedule among non-blacks (i.e. the younger the ages that parents give birth). Similarly, the same study reports that the aging of fertility schedules from 1980 to 2000 is delayed in counties with high rates of adherents to traditional churches and lead by counties with low rates of adherents to traditional churches.

Yet it remains unclear whether these relationships represent a truly ecological effect of church presence, a population composition effect reflecting the behavior of church members themselves, or a mixed effect in which the prevalence of traditional churches moderates the individual level effect of church membership.

SDTT clearly suggests that the effect truly operates at the macro-level, in which a normative climate, both marked and promoted by traditional/conservative churches directly effects individual behavior. On the other hand, a substantial literature has developed addressing the individual level effects of affiliation with traditional and/or conservative churches on various components of the transition to adulthood. In the U.S., white women adherents to traditional churches marry earlier (Lehrer 2004), have higher fertility (Lehrer 1996), complete fewer years of education (Lehrer 1999), and have lower attachment to the labor market (Lehrer 1995). These empirical regularities can be explain

by a micro-level theory of religious influence such as that specified by Brooks (2002) in which conservative protestant affiliation serves as a mechanism exerting an independent causal effect on social-political attitudes regarding family issues. In the same way conservative protestant or traditional church affiliation could have an independent causal effect on the pathway into adulthood.

Macro-level patterns relating church prevalence to traditional fertility may not be a function of regional variation in normative climate, but rather a compositional effect driven by these more micro-level forces. Causally, such patterns may emerge consistent with the specifications of a micro-level theory of religious influence. Alternatively, findings of micro-level associations may emerge even if all the causal action occurs at the macro-level if adherents of conservative religious groups disproportionately live in areas where such churches are highly prevalent. In this case, second demographic transition theory would provide the best model of reality. A third possibility is the religion in context perspective. In this perspective, religious forces operate at the micro-level only insofar as adherents are embedded in communities where their religion is highly represented. Says Lehrer (2008, page 3-4): ". . . the influence of religious factors on the demographic behavior of Jews in New York or Mormons in Utah differs substantially from that for their counterparts in places with smaller concentrations of coreligionists." For example, Stark (1996) finds that the prophylactic individual-level effect of religion on delinquency is only salient in contexts in which individuals are embedded in regions where their religion is highly represented.

**Restatement of Research Question:**

The analysis to follow seeks to determine whether for white women within the U.S., traditional/conservative religion is associated with pathways to adulthood that are closely linked to the normative pathways established during the baby-boom (prior to the on-set of the second demographic transition). If so, is this association found when religion is specified as an individual level attribute, as an ecological-contextual level attribute, or as an attribute that captures an interaction between individual and contextual levels.

**Data and Methods:**

The data for this study come from the 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79) "a nationally representative sample of 12,686 young men and women who were 14-22 years old when they were first surveyed in 1979" (Center for Human Resource Research 2008). Given the consensus that gender, race and cohort are so influential in determining pathways to adulthood, I focus on a subsample that are homogenous with respect to these attributes. The subsample consists of non-black, non-Hispanic women aged 14 to 18 at the 1979 interview date.[6] These women were interviewed annually from 1979 to 1994 and biennially thereafter. Each interview year these women reported information sufficient to construct their status with regard to household arrangement, marriage, parenthood, labor market, and education. With regard to household arrangement, for each year, each respondent was identified as fitting into one of three categories: living in their parents' household, living in an institutional

[6] The respondents are from the 1960 to 1964 birth cohorts although some women born in 1960 were excluded from the subsample as they were 19 years old at the time of the 1979 interview date).

arrangement[7], or living independently of institutions and parents[8]. With regard to labor market status, each respondent was identified as not engaged in the labor market[9], partially engaged in the labor market[10] or fully engaged in the labor market[11]. With respect to education, respondents were assigned to one of two possible statuses – enrolled or not enrolled. With respect to union formation, respondents were assigned to one of three categories: not in a union, partnered but not married, or married. Finally, with respect to parental status, respondents were considered a parent if they lived in a household with a child for whom they had parental responsibility, and not a parent if these conditions did not hold.

The final subsample consisted of 1,835 non-black, non-Hispanic women who provided sufficient data to reconstruct their life histories in terms of status in these five areas during their span of life from 18 to 35 years of age.

For each of the respondents in the data set, we collect two additional pieces of information (1) the religion in which they were raised, and (2) a vector of variables identifying their county of residence at the date of each survey round. Religion is recoded into a binary status – traditional/conservative – including: non-black fundamentalist and evangelical churches, Pentecostal churches, Christian sect churches and conservative non-traditional churches (Woodberry and Smith 1998; Steensland et al.

[7] including both involuntary (such as prison) and voluntary (such as a dorm).

[8] nominally identified as one's own household, although this does not necessarily designate the status of head of household.

[9] operationally defined as working less than 500 hours for pay during the previous year.

[10] Working more than 500 hours but less than 1500 hours the previous year.

[11] Working more than 1500 hours during the previous year.

2000) – versus all others. Appendix A lists the responses to the 1979 question "In what religion were you raised?" and indicates which religions were, for this analysis, coded as traditional/conservative (*T/C*). The county of residence in which the respondent lived at age 14 was assigned a value for the prevalence of *T/C* churches within that county, as was the county of residence in which the respondent lived at age 18. These two values were averaged to get a more reliable estimate of the ecological climate in which the respondent was exposed to. This measure was derived from *Churches and Church Membership In The United States, 1990 (County)* data file (Glenmary Research Center 1990). This data set contains statistics for 133 Judeo-Christian church bodies and includes counts of churches, membership and adherents by denomination by county. Total adherents to *T/C* churches were summed and divided by the non-black census estimate of the population of the county. For a list of the *T/C* denominations observed at the county level see Appendix B. The measure of prevalence of *T/C* churches used in the analysis is the natural log of the percentage of *T/C* church adherents in each county.

One final variable was constructed. I created a term capturing the interaction between the micro-level dichotomous measure of *T/C* religion and the macro-level continuous measure of the county-level prevalence of *T/C* churches.

Methods:

In order to test both the micro-level and macro-level effects of religion on the life course, we employ a latent-life path model: a multi-level latent class model in which a single latent categorical variable captures role configurations that change over time, and a second higher-level latent categorical grouping variable captures pathways (Eliason,

Mortimer, Vuolo and Tranby 2007). This model is an extension of the two-stage latent class model (*2SLCM*) specified by Macmillan and Eliason (2003) which itself is an extension of the general latent class cluster model (*LCCM*) (Vermunt and Magidson 2002).

The *LCCM* resembles cluster analysis in terms of functionality; it is a data reduction strategy in which cases are classified into groups based on the patterns realized in observed variables. In *LCCM*, like in factor analysis, associations among observed variables are assumed to emerge from a joint dependency on an unobserved (latent) variable. Unlike factor analysis, in *LCCM*, the latent variable is assumed to be a single nominal variable having *K* categories called *clusters* or *classes.* Estimation of an LCCM requires input of observed variables, specification of the number of clusters in the model, and specification of a set of exogenous covariates ( $z_{ir}^{\text{cov}}$ ) that predict cluster assignment (Vermunt and Magidson 2002).

The latent life path model applied in this analysis uses maximum likelihood criteria to simultaneously estimate parameters for the model described by Equations 1 through 3 – each a multinomial logistic regression equation but specified at different levels of analysis. Equation 1 expresses the parameterization by which status within each domain is predicted for each year of observation as a function of an individual's latent role configuration at that time.

$$\eta_{b,i,t}^{a} = \beta_{0,b}^{a} + \sum_{k=1}^{K}\left(\beta_{k,b}^{a} * x_{k,i,t}\right) + \varepsilon_{b}^{a} \qquad (1)$$

The left-hand side of Equation 1 represents the predicted log-odds of observing status '*b*' within domain '*a*' (where '*a*' = {education, household, labor force status, parental status, or marital status}) for person '*i*' at year '*t*.' A baseline log-odds for a given status are estimated as, '$\beta^{a}_{0,b}$'. Each individual at each point in time, has an adjusted log-odds of '$\beta^{a}_{k,b}$' for a given status as a function of a their latent role configuration for that individual at that point in time: '$x_{k,i,t}$'. The value of '*K*', the number of distinct role configurations, is specified a priori, and constitutes the number of latent role configurations necessary to capture the joint dependencies among statuses across the five domains.

The log-odds of a particular individual assuming a particular class, '*k*', on the latent role configuration variable '*x*', at time point 't', is parameterized in Equation 2.

$$\eta_{\left(x_{i,t}=k\right)} = \gamma_{0,k} + \sum_{m=1}^{M}\left(\gamma_{m,k} * y_{m,i}\right) + \left(\gamma_{M+1,k} * t\right) + \tau_{k} \qquad (2)$$

All members of the population have the same baseline odds of being in each specific latent role configuration. However, these baseline odds are adjusted for two factors: first, for the particular latent life pathway '$y_m$' that an individual follows, and second for the time point '*t*' in which the role configuration is observed. The value of '*M*', the number of distinct life pathways, is specified a priori, and constitutes the number of latent life pathways necessary to capture the joint dependencies among statuses across the five domains.

Finally, the log-odds of a particular individual following latent life path '*m*' is parameterized in Equation 3 as a function of two exogenous covariates and an interaction effect.

$$\eta_{\left(y_{ii} \quad =m\right)} = \delta_{0,m} + \left(\delta_{1,m} * z_1\right) + \left(\delta_{2,m} * z_2\right) + \left(\delta_{3,m} * z_1 * z_2\right) + \mu \tag{3}$$

The two exogenous covariates in Equation 3 are '$z_1$' the micro-level measure of religious affiliation and '$z_2$' the macro-level measure of religious atmosphere.

Estimation of the parameters in Equations 1 through 3 are simultaneously arrived at using maximum likelihood applying 1000 interations of the expectation-maximization algorithm followed by 50 iterations of the Newton-Raphson algorithm. The analysis proceeded in two phases. First, I conducted an exploratory analysis in which I searched for a latent life course model (a specification of the number of latent role configurations, '*K*,' and number of latent life pathways, '*M*') that best balanced fit to data with parsimony. This exploratory phase included the estimation of 81 distinct specifications of the latent life course model independently varying the number of latent role configurations from 2 to 9 and the number of latent life pathways from 1 to 10.[12] I compared model fit statistics, with particular focus on the Bayesian Information Criteria (BIC) statistic to adjudicate between models. According to our evaluation criteria, the

[12] We also specified a model with one latent role configuration which therefore did not allow us to consider more than one latent pathway. Hence we compared 81 instead of 80 models.

seven by nine model[13] best balanced fit to data and parsimony.[14] I used this specification in the subsequent phase of the analysis (Vermunt and Magidson 2005).

The second phase of the analysis varied the specification of Equation 3. In this phase, I specified four seven by nine models: one with only the micro-level indicator of childhood affiliation with a *T/C* church, a second with only the macro-level measure of the county-level prevalence of *T/C* churches, a third with both measures included in the specification, and a fourth which adds to the third a term for the interaction between the micro the and macro level predictors.

**Findings:**

*Descriptives:*

Of the 1,835 subjects, almost exactly one-fourth (443) report having been raised in a *T/C* church. Figure 2 displays, for both those raised in traditional/conservative churches and those who were not, the distribution of cases along the variable county prevalence in a *T/C* church. Those raised in *T/C* churches were much more likely to live in areas in which *T/C* churches were highly prevalent. .

[Figure 2 About Here]

The dependent variable in this analysis is the pathway into adulthood, which is comprised of roles with respect to marriage, education, the labor market, the household and parenting. Figure 3 illustrates how adult roles become increasingly more prevalent from age 18 to age 35. At the age of 18, three-fourths of the sample have yet to move

[13] Seven latent role configurations and nine latent life pathways.

[14] Table displaying model fit statistics for each of the 81 specifications is available from the author upon request.

into their own household, four-fifths are not married, eight-out-of-nine do not have kids, and half were not enrolled in school. Over time, however, all this changes. By age 23 almost nine-out-of ten the subjects are not enrolled in school, by age 26 the same proportion are living in their own households. By age 24, nearly 60 percent of the sample are fully engaged in the labor market, but this proportion does not increase as this cohort ages. The married proportion of the sample continues to rise until they reach their early 30s, when two-thirds are married. The proportion who are parents rises throughout the period of observation, and by 35 years of age three-fourths are in the role of a parent.

[Figure 3 About Here]

*Latent Role Configurations:*

As model fit criteria indicated that the seven by nine life course model best fit the data, we interpret the role configuration and life course pathways that emerge from this specification. In three of the four estimations of the seven by nine model that vary the specification of the exogenous covariates, the parameterization involving the latent constructs and the endogenous variables are consistent. The model that includes an interaction effect between the micro and macro level measure of religion, Model 4, contains some unique parameter estimates and therefore will be discussed separately.

Table 2 displays the seven role configurations that obtain in Models 1 through 3. The cells in Table 2 indicate the estimated probabilities for each role (denoted by the row heading) conditional on latent class – or roll configuration (denoted by the column heading). The model explains almost all of the variation in parental status (98 percent) indicating that seven latent role configurations are sufficient to distinguish those who are

a parent from those who are not. At the other extreme, the model explains only 39 percent of the variance in work status. The seven columns in the body of the table represent the seven role configurations.

[Table 2 About Here]

The defining feature of role configuration RC-1 is the strong positive effect on the likelihood of enrollment in school. The model estimates that 97 percent of those in this latent class are enrolled in school – and hence this class is nominally designated as "student." The model estimates that most of those in RC-1 do not live independently, they have a very low likelihood of full engagement in the labor force. These students have exceptionally low likelihood of being married, or partnered, and they are exceedingly unlikely to be a parent. The model estimates that about 9 percent of the person-years that this population spends between the age of 18 and 35 are in this role configuration.

The defining feature of role configuration RC-2 is the exceptionally high likelihood of living in the household of one's parents – and thus this configuration is nominally labeled as "parental nesting." The estimated effect of being in this latent role configuration on work status is not significant, and therefore the estimated conditional probabilities of various states within work-force status for those in this class are not much different from the unconditional probabilities for the total population. With respect to marriage and to parenting, parental nesters (RC-2) are not much different from students (RC-1). This latent role configuration is estimated to apply to 13 percent of the person years among the population.

Role configuration RC-3 – those nominally defined as "individualistic" – are distinguished by the combination of strong negative effects on the likelihood of marriage, and parenting and the strong positive effect on the likelihood of being fully engaged in the labor force. As the unconditional probability of living with parents and living in an institution is low for the entire sample, so too is the estimated probability of these living arrangements for those in RC-3. Those in RC-3 are significantly less likely than the baseline of being enrolled in school, but this effect is not substantively large. Individualisitic person-years for white women born in the early sixties and observed from the early 1980s to the late 1990s are about as equally common as parental nesting person years.

"Childless and in a union" is the nominal designation of role configuration RC-4, capturing an estimated 17 percent of the person-years for this population. The defining feature for this latent class is the strong positive effect on the likelihood of marriage combined with the strong negative effect on the likelihood of being a parent, and a very negative effect on the likelihood of living with one's parents. This latent class also exerts a positive influence on the likelihood of being fully engaged in the labor force, but this class is not as likely to be fully engaged as those who are individualistic or those designated as working mothers. Role configuration RC-4 exerts a negative effect on the likelihood of being enrolled in school, although an estimated 10 percent of those in this class were enrolled.

The conditional probability of being married for those in role configuration RC-5 is 4 percent, whereas the conditional probability of being a parent for this group is 92 percent – both strong and significant effects. Thus, the RC-5 latent class is designated as

"unmarried mothers." The role configuration unmarried mothers have a low probability of being enrolled in school, and a low probability of being fully engaged in the labor market. This latent class has a very small, but significant at the $p<.05$ level, positive effect on the likelihood of living in one's parent's household. Unmarried mothers are estimated to account for 11 percent of the person years of the study population during the span of years between 18 and 35.

The latent role configuration RC-6 is defined by an extremely high conditional probability of being a parent, of being married, and an extremely low conditional probability of being fully engaged in the labor force. This role configuration of "traditional housewife" accounts for 19 percent of the person-years under observation and are very unlikely to live with parents (or in an institution) and are also very unlikely to be enrolled in school.

The final latent class, role configuration RC-7, combines all five states marking adulthood. Those in this role configuration are significantly more likely to be a parent, to be married, to be fully engaged in the labor force, to not be enrolled in school and to be living in a household independent of their parents or institutions. Nominally designated as "Working mother," this latent configuration is estimated to account for 19 percent of the person-years for this population.

*Latent Pathways:*

Figure 4 panels A through I display the distributions along the seven latent role configurations for each of the nine latent life paths. Figure 4 panel A presents the estimated distribution of latent role configurations for those on latent life pathways 1

(LLP-1). This latent life pathway is marked by the very high likelihood of the traditional housewife role configuration in the mid-twenties – those on LLP-1 have an estimated 95 percent likelihood of having the traditional housewife role configuration at age 26. Those on this pathway have a very low likelihood of being in the student role configuration (an estimated 20 percent likelihood at age 18 declining to negligible by the age of 20). Instead, this latent class has a very high likelihood of early entrance into marriage and parenting. By age 21, LLP-1 had an estimated 62 percent chance of being in the traditional housewife role configuration, an estimated 25 percent chance of being in the childless and married role configuration, and a 11 percent chance of being an unmarried mother. Nominally, LLP-1 shall be designated as "early family to traditional housewife."

[Figure 4 About Here]

LLP-2 also has a strong convergence to the traditional motherhood latent role configuration (Figure 4, Panel B). However, compared to LLP-1 this convergence occurs later in the life course – in the late 20s and early 30s. The likelihood of the traditional housewife role configuration in the period from 28 to 31 is estimated to be near 100 percent for this group. This pathway has a great deal of variability among latent role configurations during the early years of observation. Notably, for those in LLP-2, in no year is there an appreciable likelihood of being an unmarried mother. Nominally, LLP-2 shall be designated as "delayed traditional housewife."

The third latent life pathway (as seen in Figure 4, Panel C) is marked by a very strong likelihood of the married working mother role configuration persisting from the age of 24 through 35. Women following this pathway had a very low likelihood of being in the student role configuration in their early years of observation so it is unlikely that

many have college education. On the other hand, during the ages 19 to 22 the latent role configurations that are likely are ones that involve adult family roles of wife and/or mother. This pathway, LLP-3, is designated as "low education, early-family, persistent married working mother."

LLP-4, the fourth latent pathway, bears some resemblance to the third. Both are defined by a persistent high likelihood of the married working mother role configuration (see Figure 4, Panel D). One difference between the two pathways is that for LLP-4 the married working mother latent role configuration emerges later (delayed by two years). Also, in the early years of this pathway latent role configurations featuring motherhood are unlikely. This pathway, LLP-4 is designated as "delayed married working mother."

The high likelihood during the mid-twenties of the latent role configuration childless and in a union distinguish the fifth latent life path, LLP-5. Figure 4, Panel E shows that those in this latent life path have 93 percent chance of being in the role configuration childless and in a union at the age of 26. This pathway does not involve any role configurations that include the role of parent until after the age of 30. Even after 30, the likelihood of the latent role configuration married working mother or traditional housewife remain quite low. This pathway is identified as "married, very delayed motherhood."

Figure 4, Panel F presents a pathway with multiple latent role configuration transitions. Those in this latent pathway, LLP-6 have a high likelihood of the student role configuration during the period from 18 to 21. In the mid-twenties, this group is likely to transition to the childless and in union role configuration. They have a high likelihood of transitioning into the married working mother role configuration in the early 30s,

although, at this point, some transition into the traditional housewife role configuration. Nominally, this latent pathway is designated as the "school to marriage to married working mother."

Latent life pathway 7 (Figure 4, Panel G) is very similar to LLP-6. For the traditional college age years, the conditional probability of being in the student role configuration for those following LLP-7 is rather high, suggesting that like those in LLP-6, those in LLP-7 go to college. Unlike those who adhere to LLP-6, those who fit LLP-7 leave school but do not transition to marriage. Instead they transition to the individualistic role which has a strong likelihood of full engagement in the labor market, but a very strong likelihood of being single and not a parent. This group transitions to marriage in the early 30s, and to role configurations involving parenting in the mid 30s. Nominally, this latent pathway is designated as the "school to work to marriage to delayed motherhood."

The persistent high likelihood of the individualistic role configuration emerging in the early to mid 20s distinguishes LLP-8. Those following this pathway have strong attachment to the labor market and have low likelihood of assuming marital or parental roles. This pathway is designated as the "independent individualists."

The final latent life pathway (Figure 4, Panel I), LLP-9 is nominally designated as the "unmarried mother pathway." The latent role configuration that is prominent throughout the life course for those on this pathway is RC-5 -- unmarried mother. This pathway involves a very low likelihood of student status at the beginning of the period of observation. Compared to other pathways, this role configuration has a high likelihood of the traditional housewife role configuration during the early years which suggests that

not all of those on this pathway experience non-marital childbirth. The declining likelihood of the unmarried mother role configuration during the mid 30s suggests that some in this pathway do transition into marriage, however, given the fact that by 35, the estimated chance of being in the unmarried mother role configuration is still at 75 percent.

*The Effect of Religion on the Life Course*

The seven by nine latent life path model is estimated with three specifications varying the inclusion of the two exogenous covariates tapping into the effect of religion on latent life pathway at both the micro and macro level. The first specification (Model 1) only includes the effect of religion at the micro level: being raised in a traditional/conservative church. The second specification (Model 2) only includes the effect of religion at the macro level: living in a county with a high prevalence of adherents to traditional/conservative churches. The third specification (Model 3) includes the simultaneous estimation of the effect of each. Table 3 presents the findings from these three models reported as multinomial logistic regression coefficients estimating the change in log-odds of for each latent life pathway corresponding with a one-unit change in the exogenous covariate. For the micro-level variable – raised in a traditional/conservative church – a one unit change is the difference between having been raised in such a church and not having been raised in such a church. For the macro-level variable – the county-level prevalence of adherents to traditional/conservative churches a one unit change roughly corresponds to a one standard deviation change.

[Table 3 About Here]

In Model 1, being raised in a traditional/conservative church significantly increases the likelihood of the early family to traditional motherhood pathway (LLP-1) and the low education, early family, persistent married working mother pathway (LLP-3). Substantively, estimates from Model 1 suggest that those raised in a traditional/conservative church are 17 percent more likely to follow LLP-1 and 41 percent more likely to follow LLP-3 than those who do not report being raised in such churches. On the other hand, reporting being raised in a traditional/conservative church has a significantly negative effect on the likelihood of adhering to the school to marriage to married working mother pathway (LLP-6), on the school to work to marriage to delayed motherhood pathway (LLP-7) and on the independent-individualistic pathway (LLP-8). Of these three negative effects, the strongest is on the school to married to married working mother pathway (LLP-6), a pathway in which those reporting being raised in a traditional/conservative church are estimated to be 37 less likely than others to follow.

In general, the estimates from Model 1 are slightly attenuated when controls for the macro-level measure of religion are included as in Model 3. Yet, even after controlling for the macro-level prevalence of traditional churches, the micro-level measure of reporting being raised in a traditional/conservative church still exerts a strong and significant positive effect on the likelihood of following the low education, early-family, persistent married working mother latent life pathway. The estimated effect on the likelihood of following a school to marriage to married working mother latent life pathway is also strong and significant, although negative. In Model 3, the micro-level positive effect of religion on the early family to traditional motherhood pathway remains

significant, albeit the estimated effect is smaller than the effect on the previous two pathways.

The measure capturing the effects of religion at the macro level is introduced in Model 2 and is also examined in Model 3 net of the effects of religion specified at the micro-level. In Model 2, the county-level prevalence of traditional/conservative churches has a significant strong positive effect on the likelihood of LLP-3: the latent life pathway low education, early-family, persistent married working mother. This positive effect remains significant even when the variable raised in a traditional/conservative church is controlled (as in Model 3) suggesting that this ecological effect is not merely compositional. Model 2 also identifies a positive significant effect – albeit less strong – of county-level prevalence of traditional churches on the likelihood of following P-4: the latent life pathway delayed married working mother. However, this effect does not remain significant after the micro-level indicator of religion is introduced in Model 3. Finally, if we relax standards of significance to $p<.1$, Model 2 identifies three pathways that become less likely the greater the prevalence of traditional/conservative churches: LLP-6 – school to marriage to married working mother; LLP-7 – school to work to marriage to delayed married working mother; LLP-8 independent-individualistic. Only one of this effects, however, is not attenuated in Model 3. The negative effect on the school to work to marriage to delayed married working mother pathway is enhanced once the micro-level indicator of religion is controlled (Model 3). This pattern indicates that the greater prevalence of traditional/conservative religion lessens the likelihood of this pathway for both those who report being raised in traditional/conservative faiths and for those who do not report being raised in such faiths.

Overall, Models 1 through 3 present strong evidence that religion at the micro-level does influence the life course, but weaker evidence that it exerts an ecological effect. The Wald-statistic tests the hypothesis that the estimated magnitude of the effects of the exogenous covariate on the life course pathways could be obtained even if the exogenous covariate was not at all related to life course pathway in the population from which the sample was drawn. In Model 3, the significant Wald-statistic for the micro-level variable – reporting being raised in a traditional/conservative church – suggests that it is unlikely that this variable would not be related to life course pathway in the population given the size of the estimated effects for the sample. On the other hand, in Model 3, the insignificant Wald-statistic for the macro-level variable – the prevalence of traditional/conservative church adherents – suggests that a random sample from a population in which the ecological religious context has no relationship with life course pathways may produce a pattern of coefficients as large as those we observe in Model 3. The BIC statistic in Model 3 is substantially lower than that of the BIC in Model 2, presenting empirical evidence that coefficients estimated in Model 3 are to be preferred to those from Model 2. However, the BIC statistics in Model 1 and Model 3 are comparable, providing little justification for model preference. In short, a model without the exogenous covariate reporting being raised in traditional/conservative church does not perform as well as a model with this term. However, a model without the exogenous covariate prevalence of traditional church adherents does perform as well as a model with this term.

Micro-Macro Level Interaction:

The final model, Model 4, adds to Model 3 a term capturing the micro-macro level interaction. We discuss findings from this model separately because the maximum likelihood estimation of this specification produces a parameterization of the latent life course modestly different than the parameterization estimated in the previous three specifications. The set of seven role configurations is little changed from Model 3 to Model 4 with one exception. For the role configuration RC-2, parental nesting, the estimates in Model 4 produce a four point higher conditional probability of being fully engaged in the labor market.

With regard to the latent life pathways, seven of the nine latent pathways observed in Models 1 through 3 are little changed in Model 4. However, the specification in Model 4 does not produce a pathway that resembles LLP-2 – the delayed traditional housewife. Instead, most of those members of the sample who had a high probability of assignment to this life pathway in Models 1 to 3, were estimated to have a high probability of assignment to latent life path LLP-1 – early family to traditional housewife. In this re-parameterization, the structure of the life path LLP-1 is little changed from Models 1 to 3 to Model 4, although the estimated proportion of the population belonging to this pathway unsurprisingly has increased. What is changed, however, is the introduction of a distinct latent pathway that does not resemble the pathways found in Models 1 through 3. This pathway, displayed in Figure 5, is marked by the high likelihood of the role configuration parental nesting that persists through the twenties. In Model 4, this pathway, LLP-10 – 'prolonged parental household,' is estimated to apply to 5.6 percent of the population. Those from the sample with a high

likelihood of adhering to this pathway, are largely drawn from individuals who were a poor fit (or low likelihood) with other pathways in Models 1 through 3.

[Figure 5 About Here]

Table 4 displays the findings for the seven by nine latent life path model with an interaction specified between the micro and macro level indicators of religion (Model 4). The Wald-statistic for the interaction term is small and not significant, as is the Wald-statistic for the macro-level term. Thus, we do not have evidence to reject the hypotheses that the interaction term and the term for prevalence of traditional/conservative churches have no effect on the life course. Moreover, the sixteen extra degrees of freedom do not make the observed data sufficiently more likely to warrant the inclusion of these terms in the model (as evidenced by the fact that the BIC statistic in Model 4 is much higher than the BIC statistic for Model 1).

[Table 4 About Here]

While there is little warrant to interpret Model 4, given that it does not improve fit to data over more parsimonious models, the findings with regard to one latent pathway – LLP-9 – are quite suggestive. In models 1 through 3, we find no significant relationship between religion and the likelihood of LLP-9 – the unmarried mother pathway. However, in Model 4 the interaction effect approaches significance on the likelihood of LLP-9 but not for any other latent life pathway. The term is negative, and interestingly, in Model 4 the coefficient for the micro-level effect of religion on LLP-9 is also significant. Table 5 allows us to more clearly interpret the meaning of the pattern of coefficients with respect to LLP-9 found in Model 4. The table presents the effect on the odds vis-à-vis a baseline likelihood of adhering to the unmarried mother pathway for

various combinations of the two variables capturing the effect of religion. For those who do not report being raised in a traditional/conservative church, ecological context has very little influence on their likelihood of following the unmarried mother pathway. On the other hand, those who report being raised in a traditional/conservative church but live in an area with a low prevalence of such churches, have relatively high odds of following the unmarried mother pathway. Those who report being raised in a traditional/conservative church and live in an area with a high prevalence of such churches have relatively very low odds of following the unmarried mother pathway.

*Summary of Findings:*

With respect to the empirical questions that motivated this study, I find that traditional/conservative churches do differentiate pathways through adulthood, but that most of the causal action occurs on the micro-level. Those who report having been raised in a traditional conservative church are more likely to adhere to a pathway that resembles the normative established pathway during the baby-boom – one with early transitions to family roles. Those who do not report having been raised in a traditional church are more likely to follow a pathway in which they obtain post-secondary education, and postpone both marriage and childbearing. Evidence of effects at the macro-level are more ambiguous. Yet, findings are suggestive that net of the individual level effects, the lower the prevalence of traditional/conservative churches the higher the likelihood of following a pathway in which one greatly postpones or foregoes childbearing and spend the middle portion of their twenties having yet to assume 'adult' family roles. Also findings are suggestive that there is a macro-level relationship in which a pathway through adulthood

with early transitions is less likely the lower the prevalence of traditional churches. Finally, in considering the most counter-normative model relative to the standardized pathway established in the baby-boom – the unmarried mother pathway which remained heavily stigmatized for this cohort (citation), we have some evidence for the religion in context model. The expected negative relationship between religion at the micro-level and the likelihood of following this pathway only obtained in the context in which traditional/conservative religion was highly represented. In the context in which traditional/conservative religion was rare, being raised in such a church had a positive effect on the likelihood of following this stigmatized pathway. Given the social stigma attached to this pathway, it is notable that the complex relationship found in this analysis matches the patterns found by Stark (1996) regarding religion and deviance.

**Discussion:**

The pathway to adulthood since the end of the baby-boom has dramatically changed and has included the increasing delays in family formation and decreasing tendency to sequence certain transitions – most notably marriage before childbearing. This paper tests ideas generalized from second demographic transition theory that high prevalence of traditional conservative churches is related to the maintenance of traditional pathways.

This analysis was motivated by the claim that the 'ready, willing, and able' model of demographic innovation provided a fruitful framework for understanding the process of the second demographic transition (Lesthaeghe and Neels 2002). This framework suggests that demographic change occurs when individuals have the material incentives

for change ('ready'), the normative support for change ('willing') and the material conditions to enable change ('able'). Change is inhibited by the failure of any one of these factors to hold. Within this framework, with regard to demographic transitions in the advanced regions of the world, change is delayed by normative climates promoting traditionalism – as the 'willing' component creates lags in the timing of transitions. Traditional normative climates are both marked by, and strengthened by, high prevalence of traditional religious institutions. Thus, traditional religious institutions have been shown, for example, to be associated with delays in fertility transitions (Leshaeghe and Neels 2002).

In this paper, I conceptualize demographic innovation in terms of white women following pathways into adulthood that deviate from the normative standards that white women tended to adhere to during the baby boom era. I find, within the U.S., at both the micro-level and the macro-level that the traditional and conservative churches are associated with a higher likelihood of following pathways in which transitions occur sooner. However, I also find that associations are much stronger at the individual level than at the ecological level. While previous analyses specified at an ecological level have found that the prevalence of traditional conservative churches are associated are associated with lags in demographic change (e.g. Morrison 2009, Lesthaeghe and Neels 2002) these studies have not been able to discern whether these relationships were a function of macro-level forces or a function of micro-level composition. Indeed, Lesthaeghe and Neels (2002, page 329) even warn against making inferences that religion individual level religious affiliation exerts a meaningful influence on demographic innovation.

In this mixed level analysis, I find that micro-level measures of religion have much stronger associations with traditional pathways into adulthood than do macro-level measures. Whether or not one the compositional effect fully attenuates a macro-level effect, depends on what evidence one attends to. When controlling for religion at a micro-level, the model estimates significant effects of religion at the macro-level on two pathways into adulthood, and these effects are in the expected direction (Model 3). On the other hand, the analysis provides evidence that one should not consider a model with religion specified as a macro-level variable at all.

While the findings regarding delays in the transition to adulthood mostly support an interpretation that emphasizes a compositional effect, the likelihood of following one pathway – that of persistent non-married mother -- is best understood in terms of religion-in-context model where the micro-level effects of religion are moderated by macro-level prevalence of traditional conservative churches. This moderating effect is interesting in light of the findings of Lesthaeghe and Neidert (2006) that the role configuration of unmarried mother was not related to their ecological measure of religion. Here, we find that religion does matter, but not in the way expected by second demographic transition theory. Instead of finding that conservative religion inhibits this form of innovation, I find that among those raised in conservative churches are less likely to follow this counter-normative pathway if they are embedded in communities with high conservative religious prevalence, but are more likely to follow this pathway if they are embedded in communities with low prevalence of conservative churches.

*Limitations:*

The analysis is subject to missing variable bias. We do not consider whether the relationship between religion and pathway into adulthood could be spurious. The evidence that traditional/cultural churches makes established pathways more likely and new pathways less likely provides support for the SDTT framework that the 'willing' component – capturing a normative climate, and variation in values conducive toward change – is the essential factor in structuring how such change unfolds. However, if opportunities to draw on rewards from delaying role transitions is related to economic resources, and these economic resources are related to traditional/conservative religion, then the relationship between traditional/churches and life course pathways may be fully attenuated by the inclusion of a measure of economic resources. Such a scenario would suggest that the driving causal force in the process of change was the 'ready' component understood in terms of economic opportunity rather than the 'willing' component understood in terms of norms and the institutions that promote them.

Unfortunately the latent life path-method is not conducive to model building with the inclusion of many co-variates. The models that I estimated in this analysis had nearly 900 parameters, and computational demands are high.[15] Moreover, the addition of new terms to the model may change parameterization, leading to pathways that must be interpreted differently. Therefore, given current computational technology, over-coming missing variable bias using latent path-methods is impractical.

A second limitation of the study is that the findings merely address whether religion matters in influencing the life course, but do a poor job in revealing how much religion matters in influencing the life course. It is difficult to use findings from this analysis to assess whether the impact of religion on pathways into adulthood are

[15] and the time to estimate a model is considerable.

substantial enough to be considered an important mechanism in influencing more general outcomes in the domains of demography, status-attainment, and/or well-being. SDTT, for example, suggests that traditional/conservative religion slows the movement to below replacement fertility rates. While this analysis does suggest that traditional/conservative religion makes pathways involving earlier fertility are more likely, one cannot conclude from the evidence in this analysis whether these relationships make an impact on completed fertility (as well as many other outcomes). Given Mouw's (2005) conclusion that pathways do not have any independent influence on status attainment and well-being, this limitation is a concern.

Overcoming these limitations is a matter for future research. Additional future research may attend to how religion relates to male pathways through adulthood. Also, of particular interest would be how both male and female pathways through adulthood are affected by spatial (ecological) variation in earnings ratios between young males and males of their parents' generation. For example, Oppenheimer, Kalmijn and Lim (1997) theorize that delays in family formation and non-traditional household structures are related in relative declines in the abilities of men to initiate careers. Such a possibility may be reasonably tested using a latent life course model.

*Political Implications:*

The fact of a tendency for the life course of those raised affiliated with traditional/conservative churches to be different from the life course of those raised outside of such churches suggests a potential mechanism by which status differences between these two groups gets reproduced. This possibility has important implications

for understanding political and social cleavages. Lesthaeghe and Neidert (2006, 2009) focus on the political cleavages in their examination of the relationship between demographic variables and voting patterns. Brooks (2002) also focuses on these political cleavages in his analysis of the relationship between conservative church membership, concern for family decline and voting behavior.

Given the findings from this study, political rhetoric of the 2008 presidential election is particularly interesting. A major theme that emerged was the contesting of the legitimacy of distinct modes of the transition to adulthood. Two of the candidates from the major parties were from the cohorts examined in this analysis both of whom attracted much scrutiny over the structure of their biography. One, the Republican candidate for vice-presidency, Sarah Palin, a white woman born in 1964 is a member of the population to whom the analysis herein may be generalized. The other, the Democratic candidate for presidency, Barack Obama a member of the 1961 birth cohort, is not part of the study population by virtue of gender and race.[16] Palin, born Catholic, was raised in a Pentecostal church. Her transition to adulthood closely hued to pathway LP-3 the low education, early-family, persistent married working mother – although she did indeed complete college. Barack Obama writes that he was not raised in a religious household (Obama 2006). His passage through adulthood closely hues to LP-7 (as does his wife's) school-to-work-to-delayed marriage-to delayed parenting.

Of particular interest is how amenable their biographies were to be used as material to mobilize oppositional constituencies. In fact, the challenging the legitimacy

[16] However, his wife, Michelle Obama, also a prominent personality in the election is also from the sample cohort (born in 1964) and does fit the study population by virtue of gender, but not by race.

of both Obama's and Palin's pathway through adulthood provided some of the most memorable moments of the campaign. In the keynote address of the Republican National Convention, Rudolph Giuliani said about Obama:

> You have a resume from a gifted man with an Ivy League education. He worked as a community organizer. What? He worked – I said – I said, OK, OK, maybe this is the first problem on the resume. He worked as a community organizer.

The incredulous "what?" and the laughter that followed signified that Obama's role in the labor force during his mid-twenties is not to be taken seriously. The collective chant of "zero" referred to the level of experience and responsibility that Obama had accumulated in these adult years. The speech that followed Giuliani's, delivered by Palin, provided the confirmation that what was found worthy of ridicule was the lack of responsibility of this labor force role during Obama's mid twenties: "I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a community organizer, except that you have actual responsibilities."

The other side of the political spectrum equally challenged the biography of Palin. Critiques of Palin's lack of world travel were given voice in a question delivered to the candidate by CBS News anchorwoman Katie Couric in her famous September 25th interview:

> a lot of our viewers . . . and internet users wanted to know why you did not get a passport until last year. And they wondered if that indicated a lack of interest and curiosity in the world.

To this Palin responded:

> I'm not one of those who maybe came from a background of, you know, kids who perhaps graduate college and their parents give them a passport and give them a backpack and say go off and travel the world. No, I've worked all my life. In fact, I usually had two jobs all my life until I had kids. I was not a part of, I guess, that culture.

Here Palin defends the attack on her biography and the legitimacy of a comparatively early transition to adulthood. She distinguishes the pathway that she followed into adulthood with those from a different culture who did not take on the serious adult responsibilities as early as she did.

The social cleavage in the structure of the pathways into adulthood could explain the resonance and the power that the 2008 campaign challenges to the biographies of these two candidates had with core constituencies.

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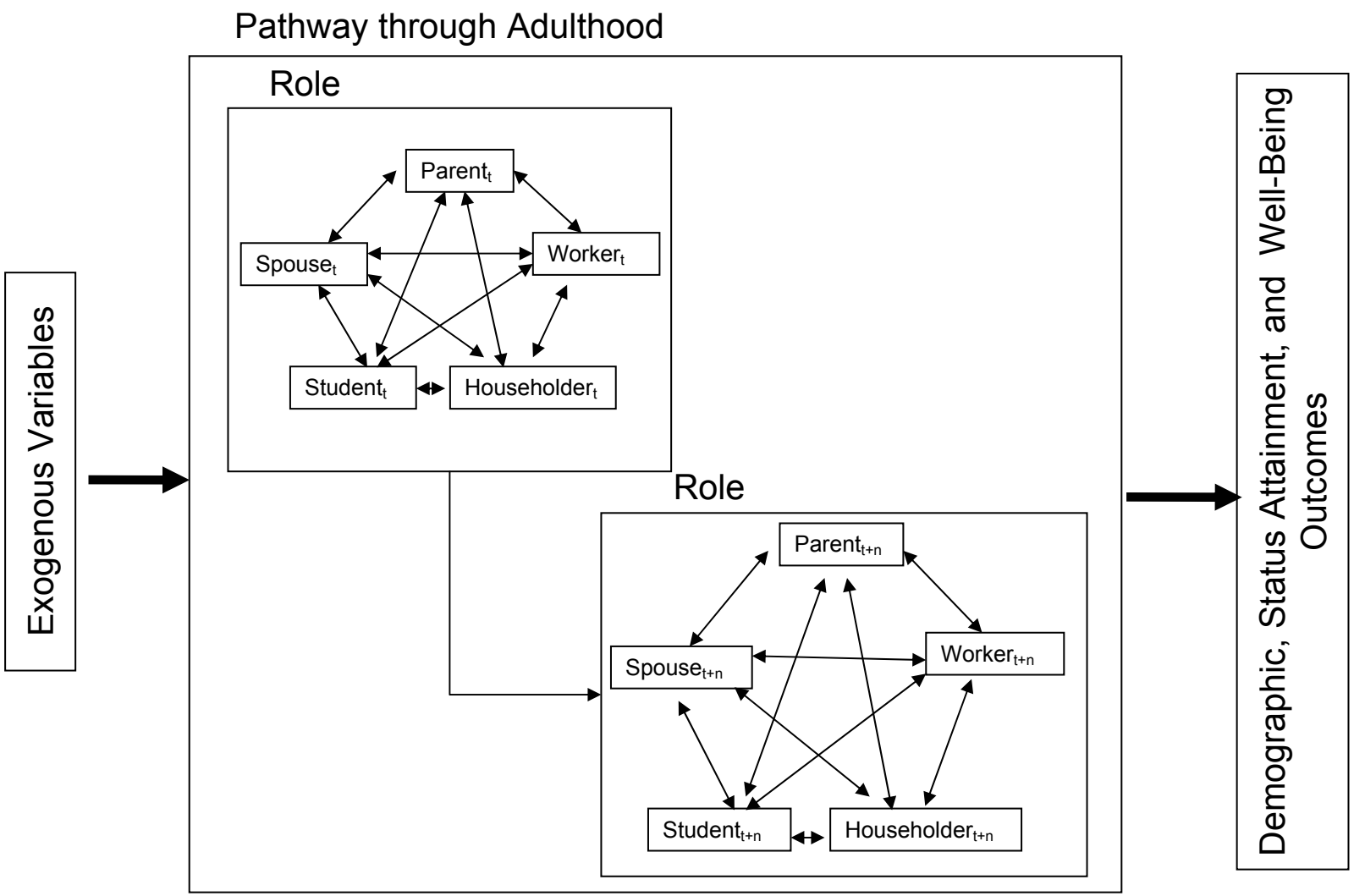


Figure 1: Conceptualization of the Pathway through Adulthood as a Part of the Life Course

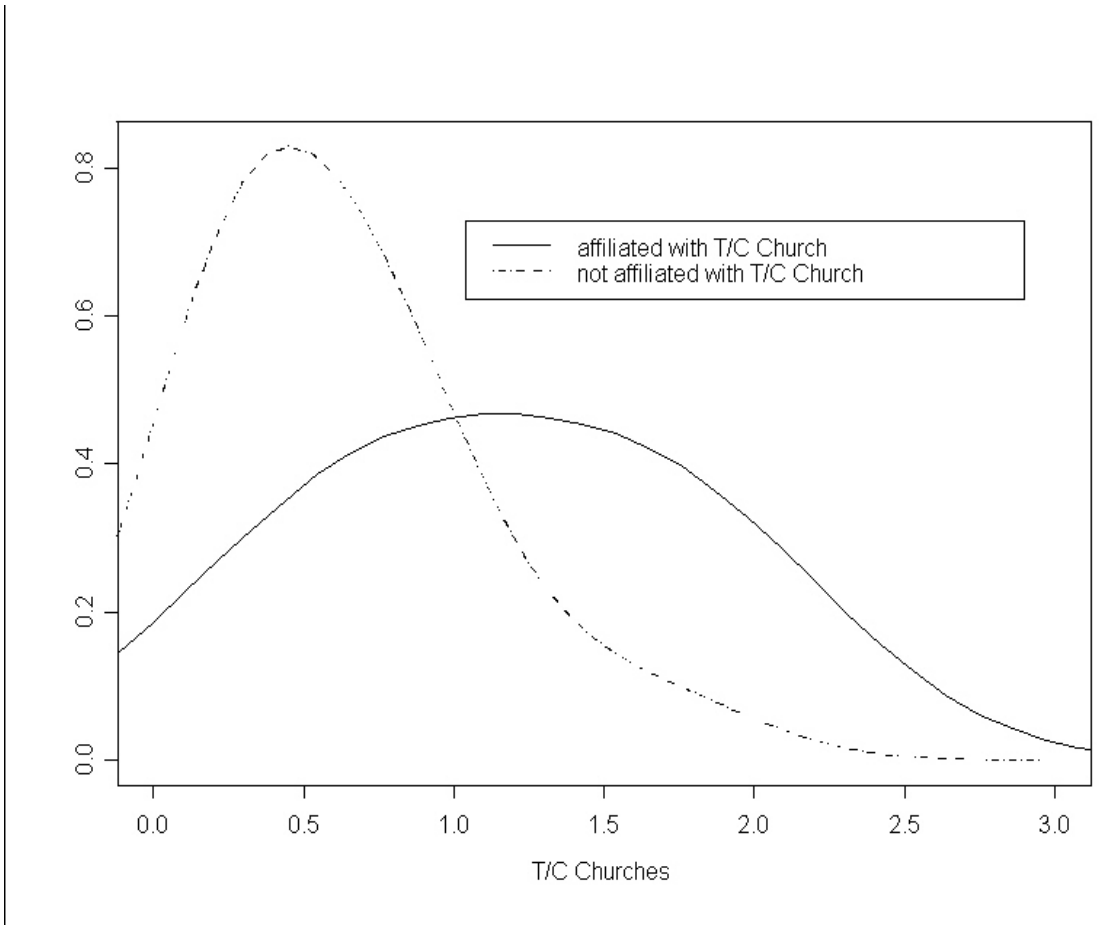


Figure 2: Distribution of 'Scores' for the County Level Prevalence of T/C Churches for Those Respondents Who Reported Being Raised in a T/C Church and for Those Who Did Not Report Being Raised in a T/C Church.

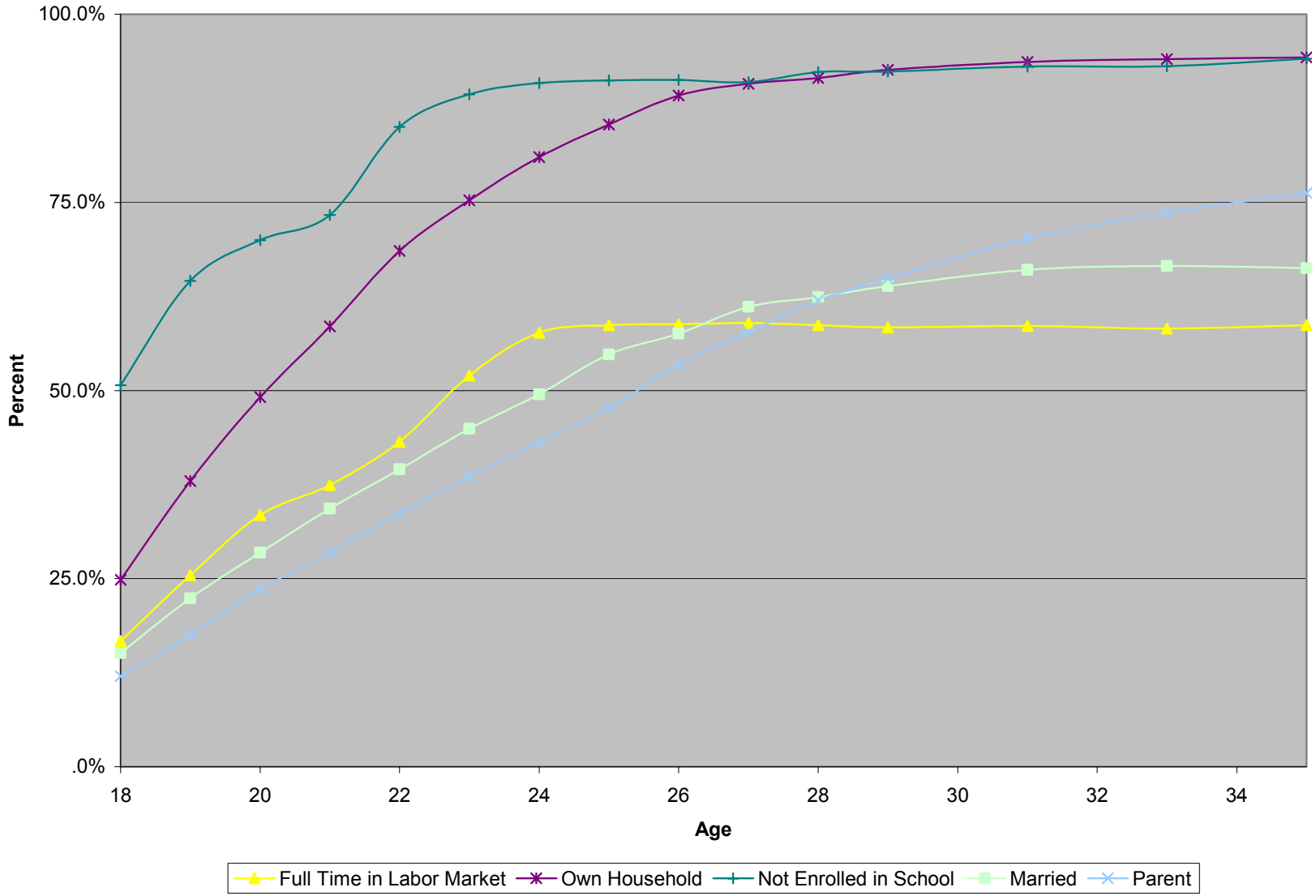


Figure 3: Proportion of Sample by Age In Roles Frequently Occupied During Early Adulthood

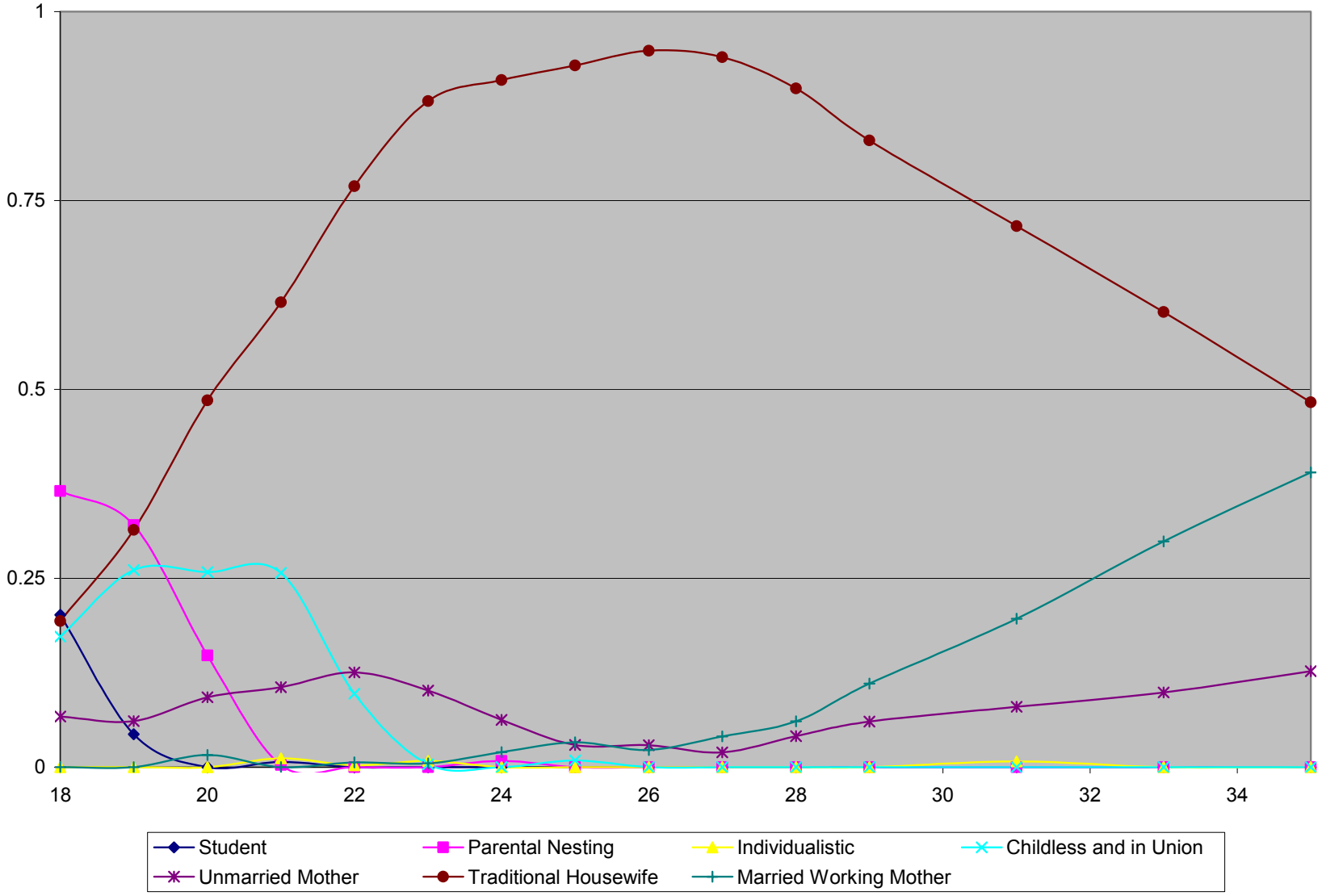


Figure 4, Panel A: Latent Life Path-1 (LLP-1) “Early Family to Traditional Housewife.”

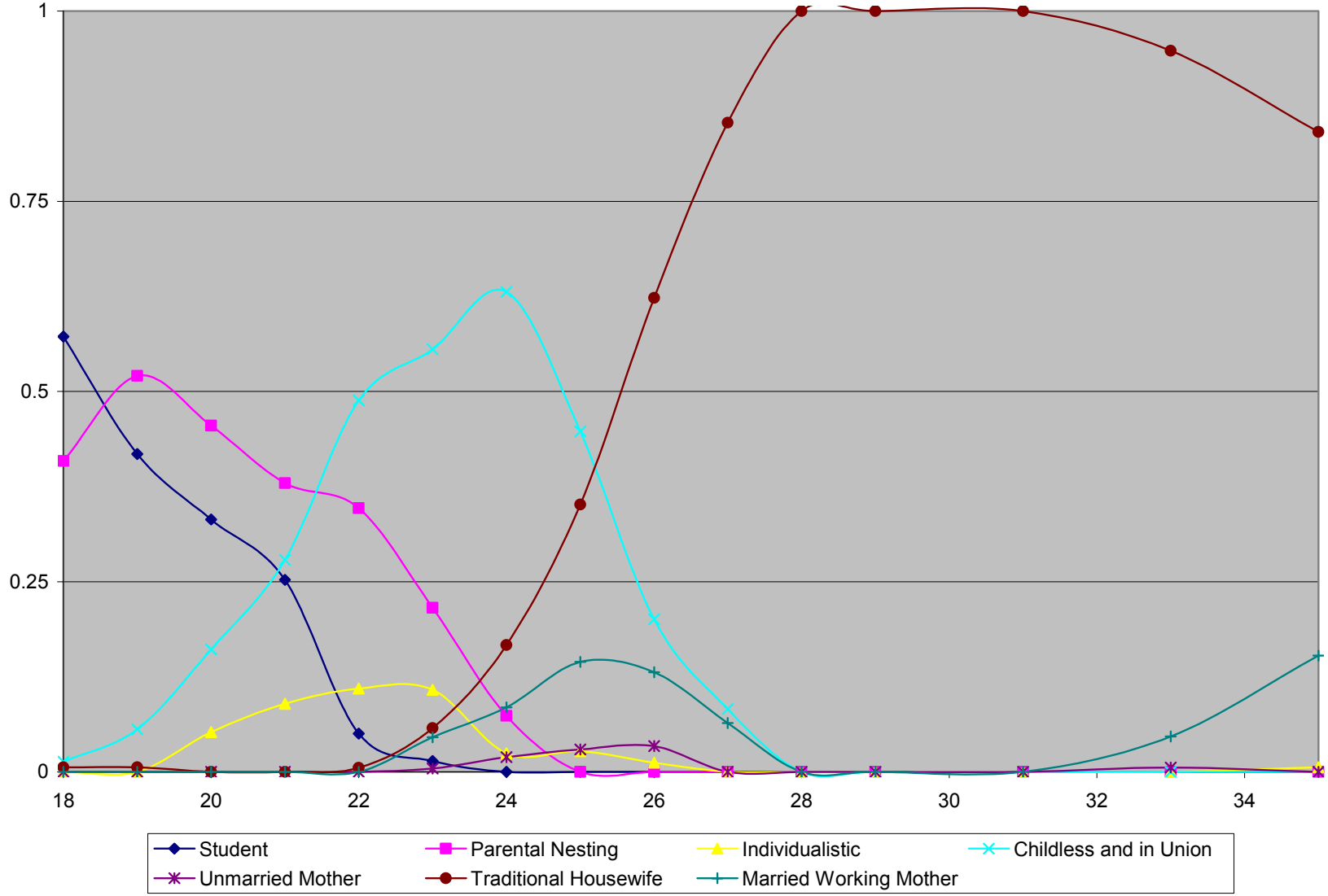


Figure 4, Panel B: Latent Life Path-2 (LLP-2) “Delayed Traditional Housewife.”

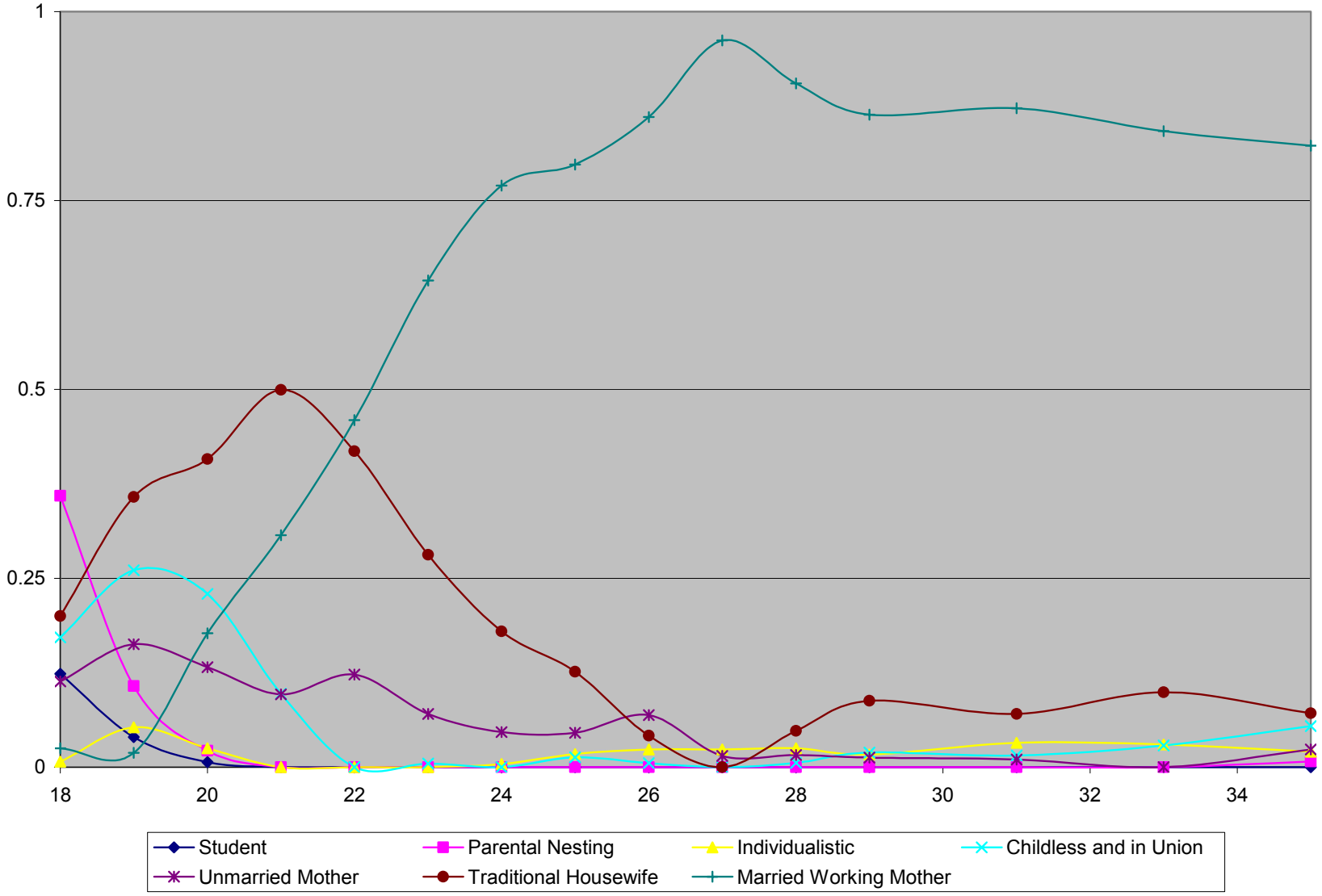


Figure 4, Panel C: Latent Life Path-3 (LLP-3) "Low Education, Early Family, Persistent Married Working Mother."

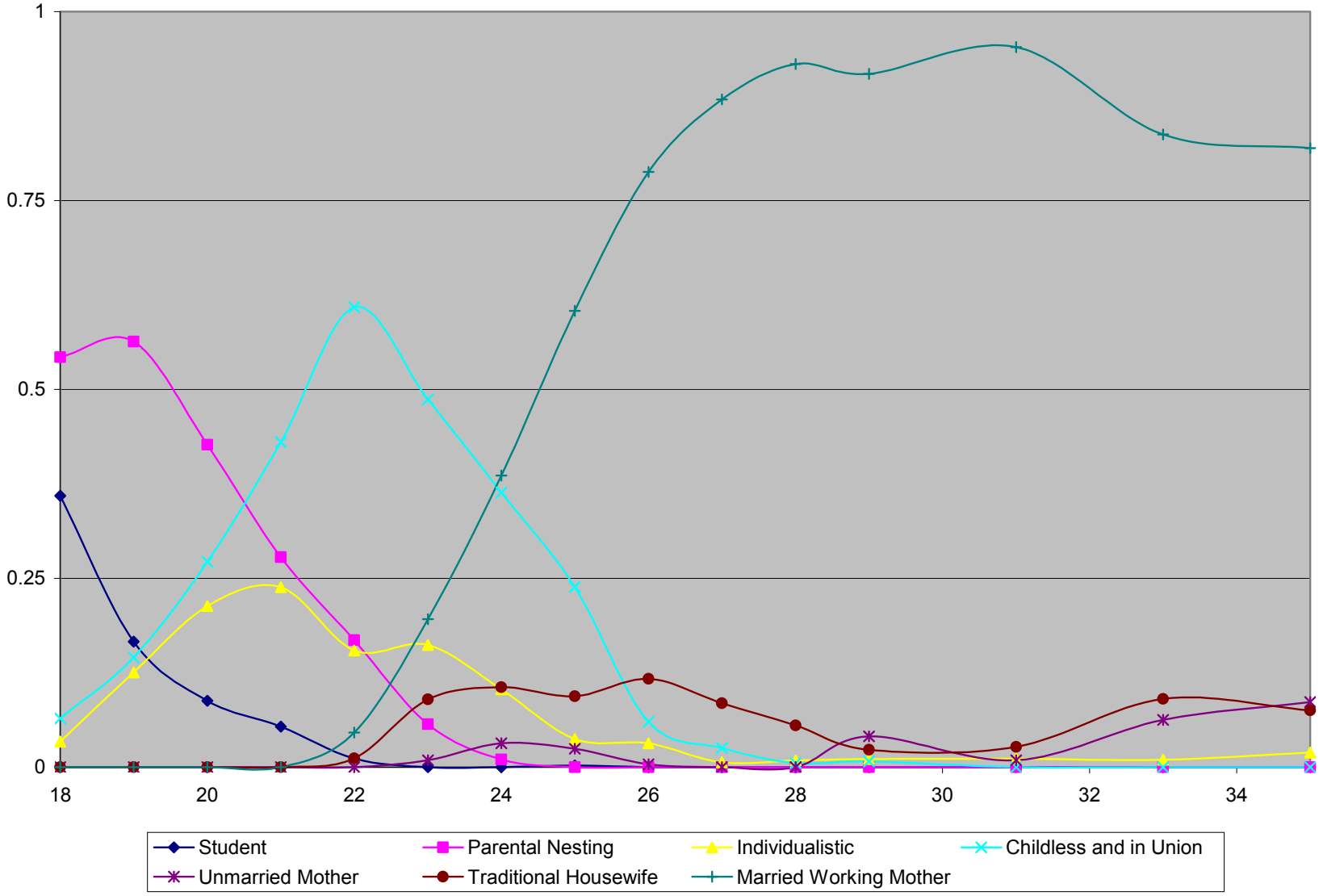


Figure 4, Panel D: Latent Life Path-4 (LLP-4) “Delayed Married Working Mother.”

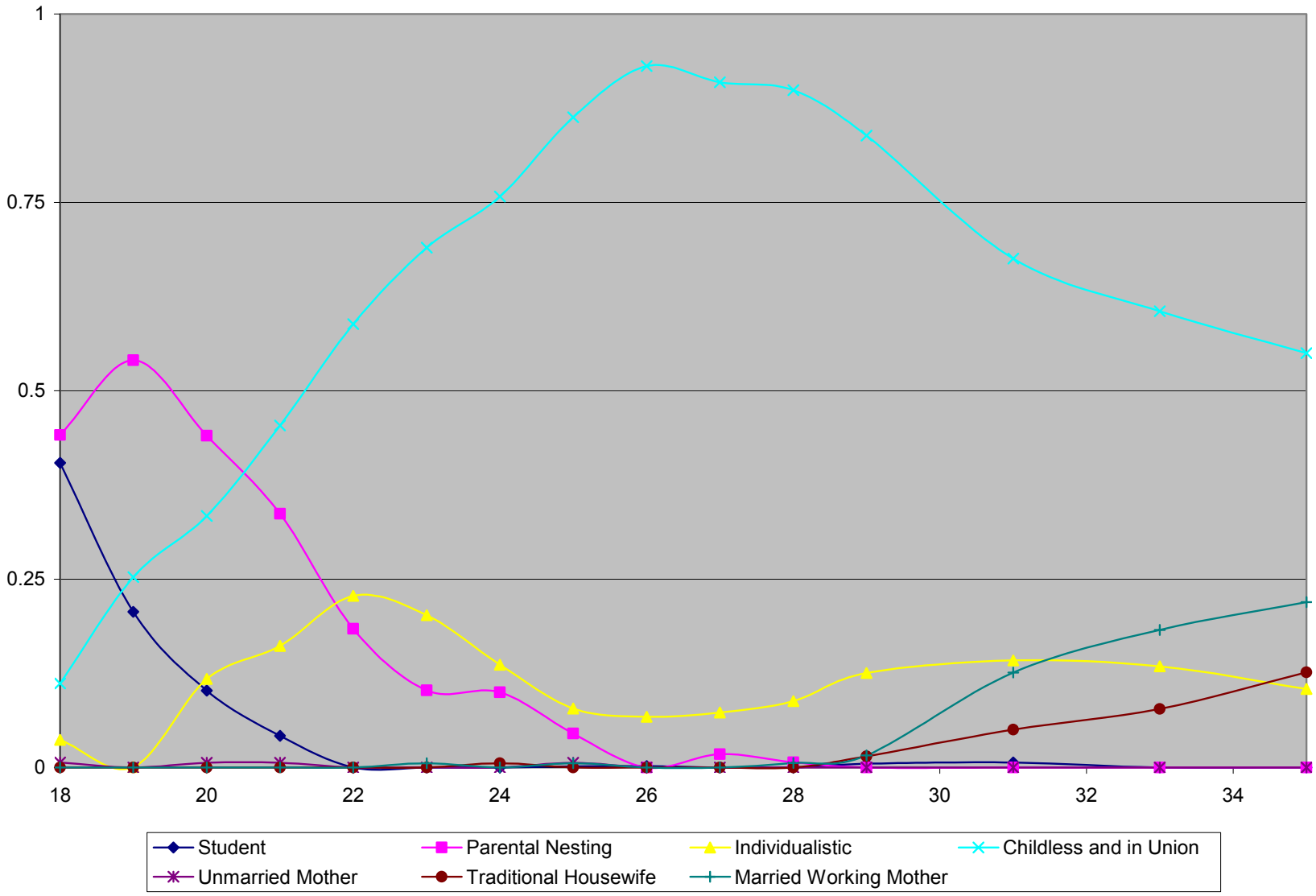


Figure 4, Panel E: Latent Life Path-5 (LLP-5) “Married, Very Delayed Motherhood.”

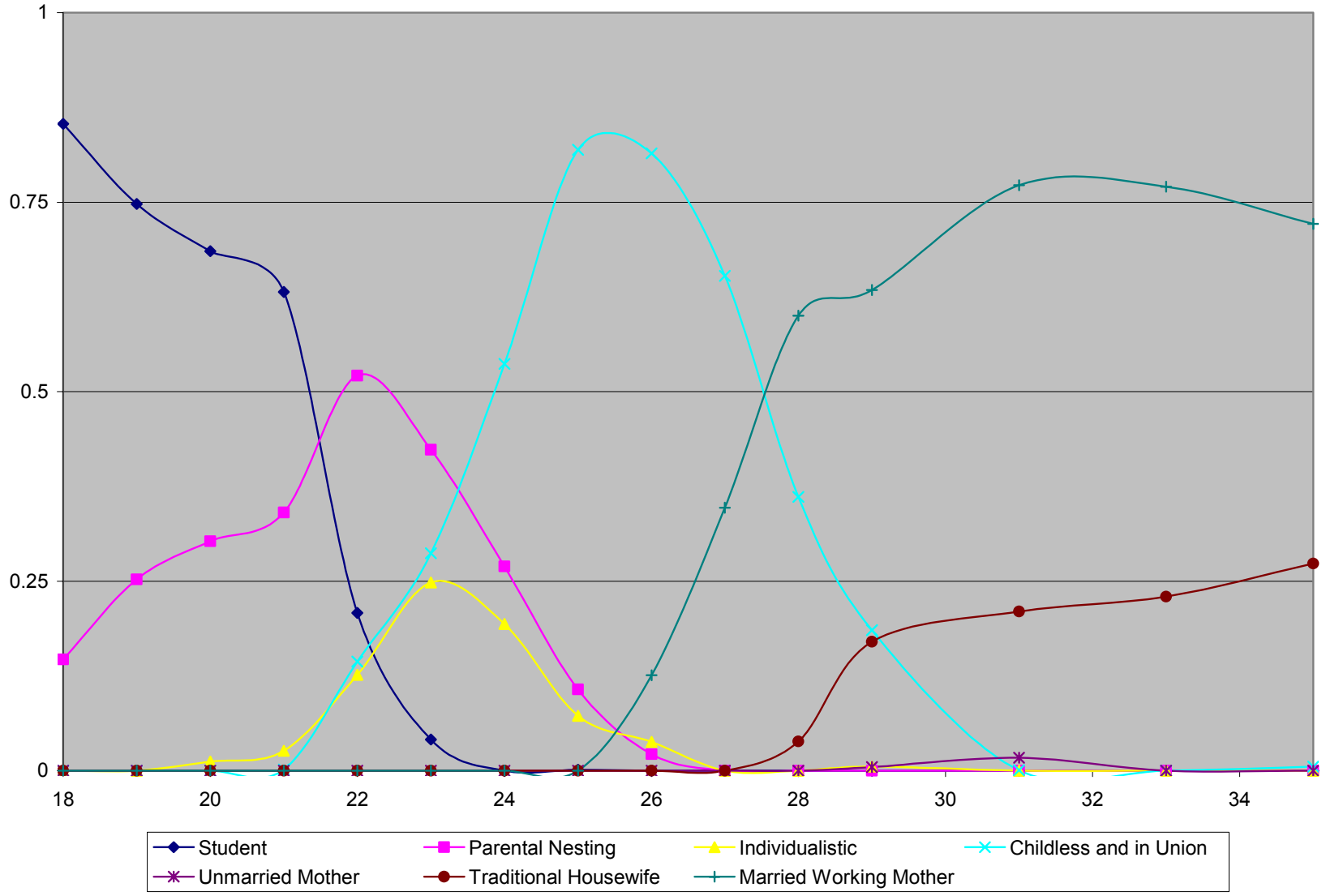


Figure 4, Panel F: Latent Life Path-6 (LLP-6) "School-to-Marriage-to-Married Working Mother."

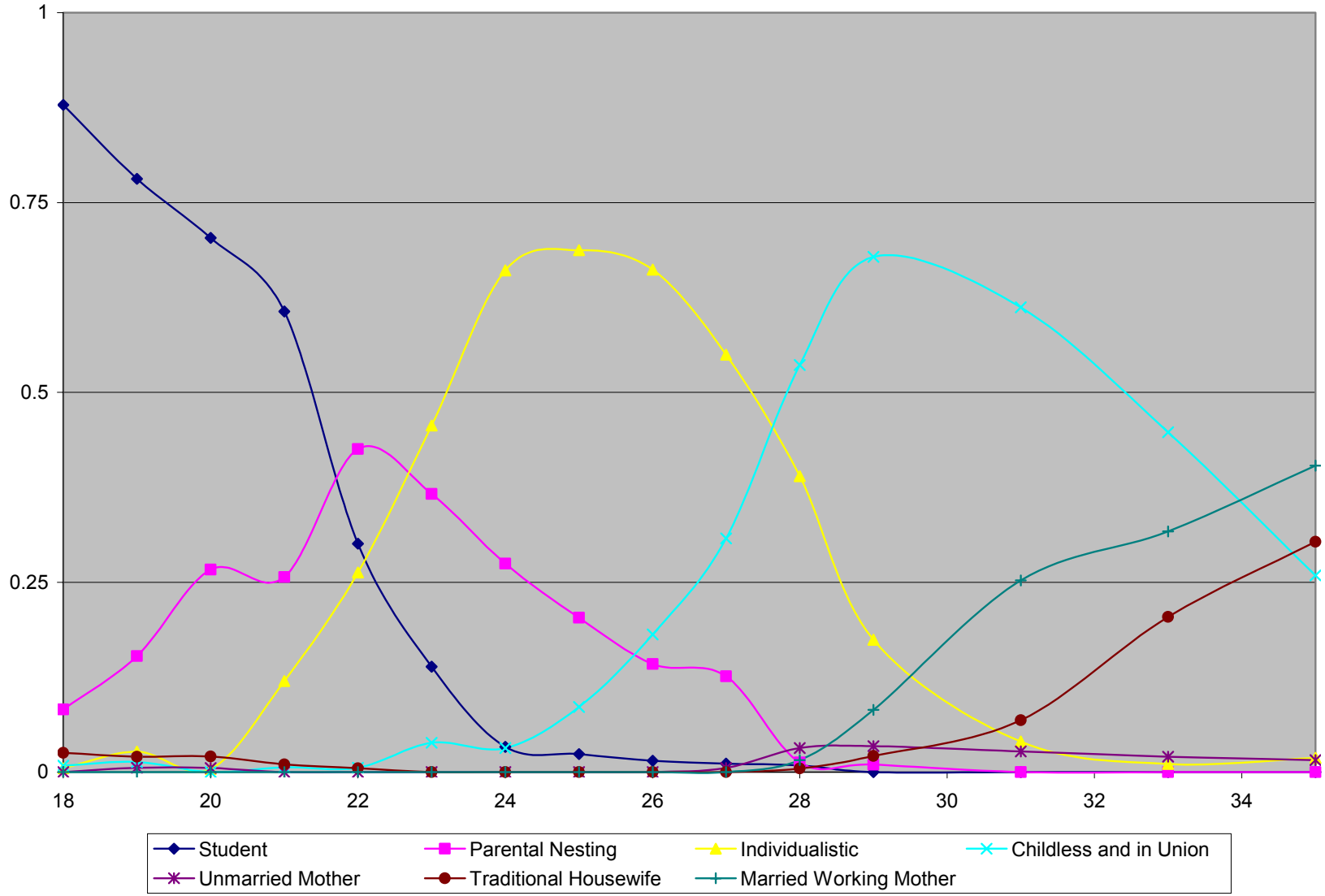


Figure 4, Panel G: Latent Life Path-7 (LLP-7) “School-to-Work-to-Marriage, Delayed Motherhood.”

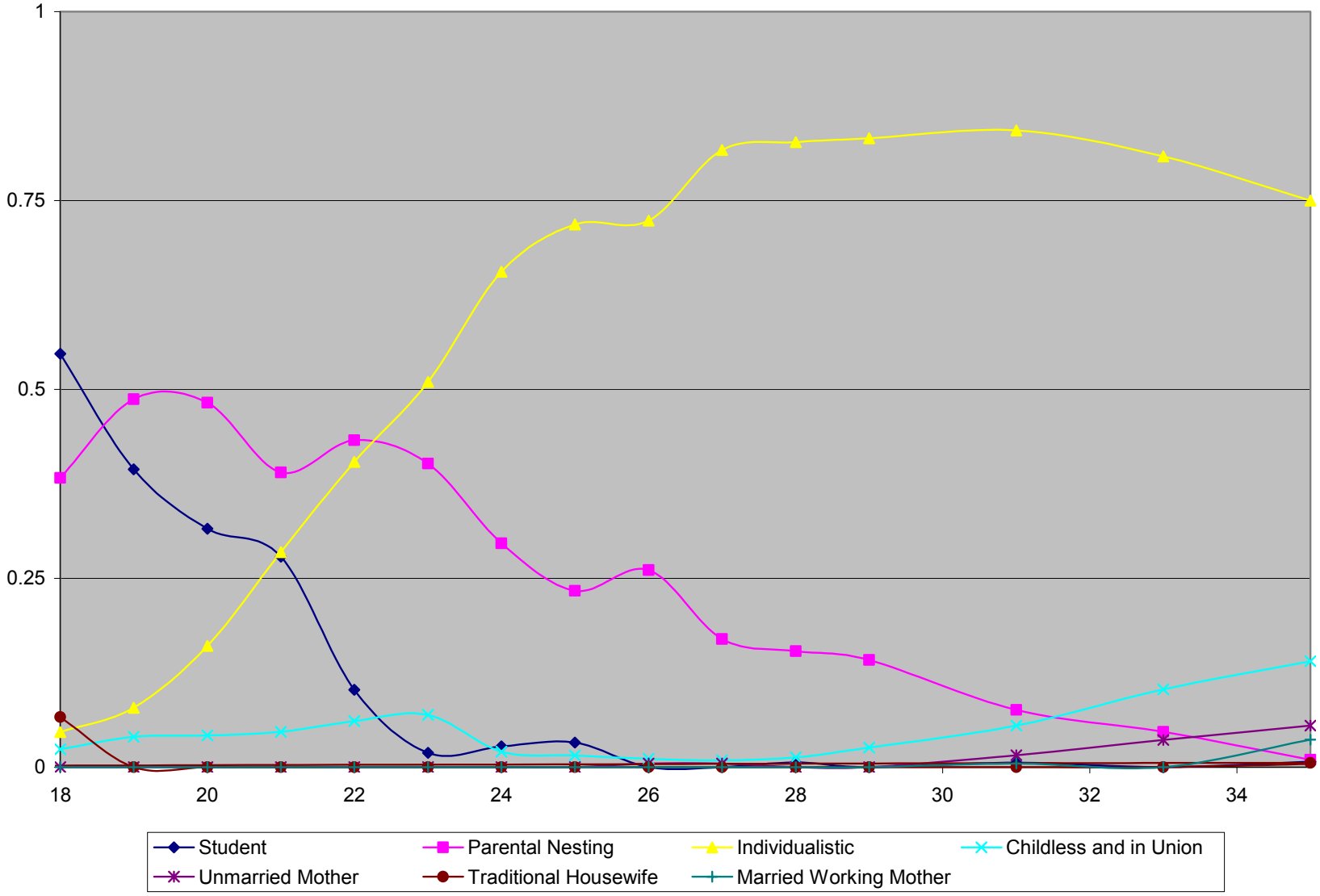


Figure 4, Panel H: Latent Life Path-8 (LLP-8) “Independent Individualist.”

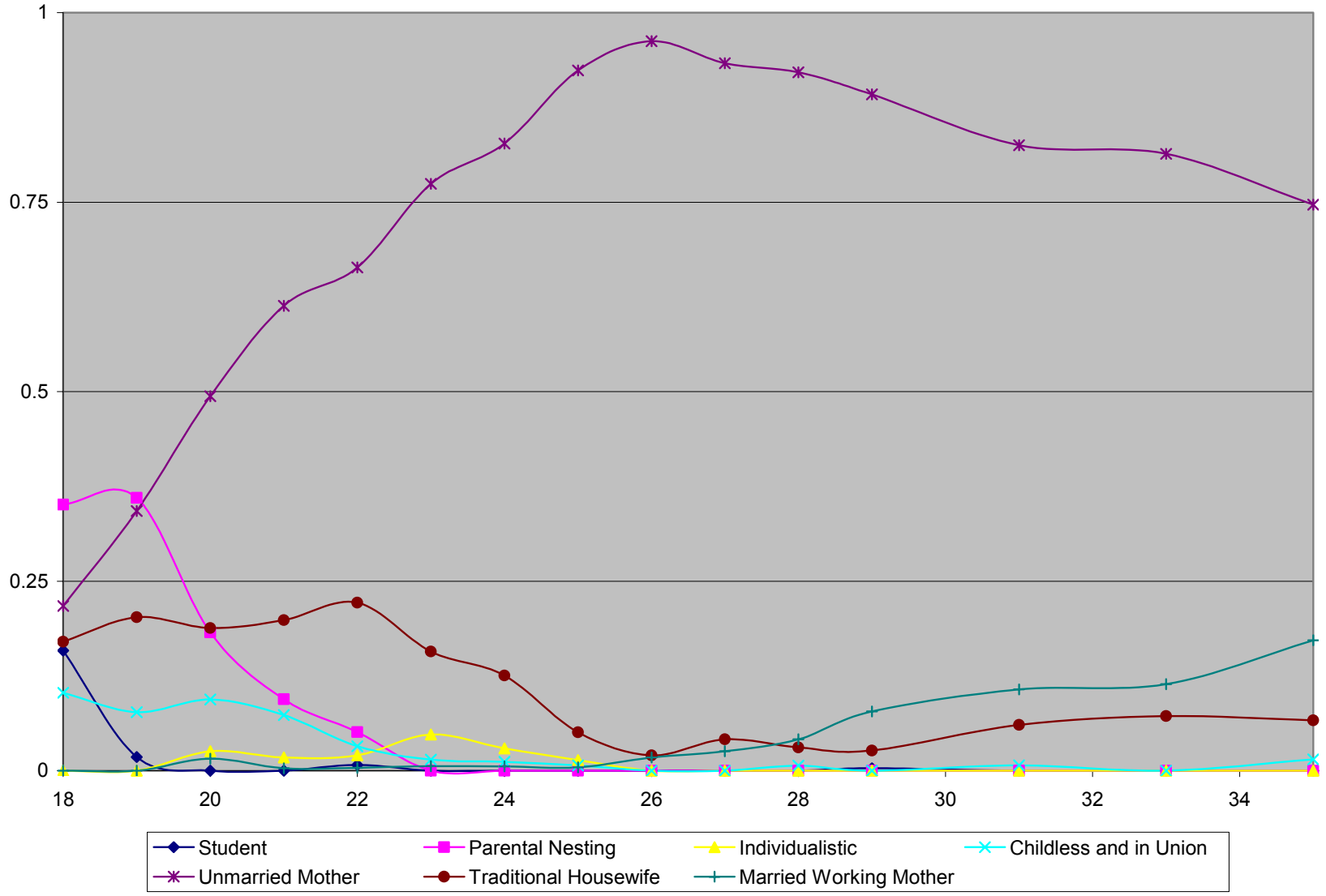


Figure 4, Panel I: Latent Life Path-9 (LLP-9) "Persistent Unmarried Mother."

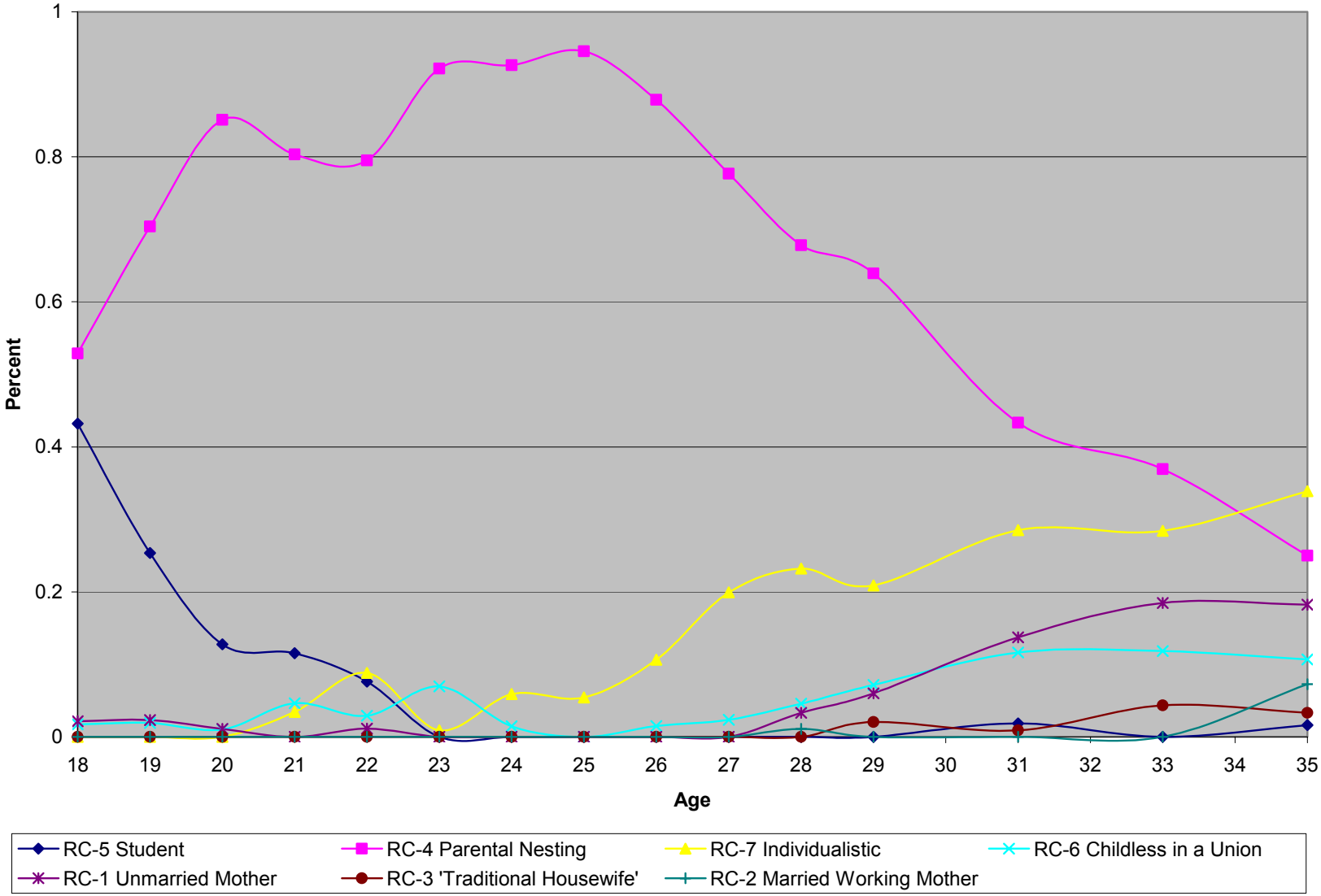


Figure 5: Latent Life Path-10 (LLP-10) “In the Nest.”

Table 1: Empirical Research Specifying Pathway-Types Into and Through Adulthood

| Study | Method | Data Set | Age Span | Status Domains | Pathways |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jackson and Berkowitz (2005) | Boolean Algebra | National Survey of Families and Households | Retrospective (sample of 18-65 year olds) | • work<br>• marriage<br>• parenting | 124 |
| Mouw (2005) | Cluster Analysis (monothetic divisive algorithm) | National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 | Age 22 to 35 | • work<br>• marriage<br>• parenting<br>• education<br>• household | 6 –Men<br>6 - Women |
| Osgood, Ruth, Eccles, Jacobs and Barber (2005) | Latent Class Analysis | Michigan Study of Adolescent Life Transitions | Age 24 | • work<br>• marriage<br>• parenting<br>• education<br>• household | 6 |
| Macmillian and Eliason (2003) | Two Stage Latent Class Analysis | National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 | Age 15 to 32 | • work<br>• marriage<br>• parenting<br>• education | 3 |
| Eliason, Mortimer, Vuolo and Tranby (2007) | Latent Life Path Model (second order hierarchical latent class model) | Youth Development Study | Age 17 to 30 | • work<br>• marriage<br>• parenting<br>• education<br>• household | 5 |

Table 2: Profile of Seven Latent Role Configurations Estimated by the Seven by Nine Latent Life Course Model. Estimated Percent Within Role Configuration In Each Role.

| | | Student | Parental Nesting | Individualistic | Childless & in Union | Unmarried Mother | Traditional Housewife | Working Mother | Overall | $R^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | RC-1 | RC-2 | RC-3 | RC-4 | RC-5 | RC-6 | RC-7 | | |
| Parental Status | | | | | | | | | | 0.98 |
| | Kids in Household | 0.00**↓ | 0.00*↓ | 0.00*↓ | 0.00*↓ | 0.92**↑ | 1.00**↑ | 1.00**↑ | 0.47 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Union Status | | | | | | | | | | 0.80 |
| | Partnered | 0.01*↓ | 0.00**↓ | 0.11 | 0.13 | 0.26**↑ | 0.01**↓ | 0.04**↓ | 0.08 | |
| | Married | 0.00**↓ | 0.01**↓ | 0.00*↓ | 0.87**↑ | 0.04**↓ | 0.99**↑ | 0.83**↑ | 0.49 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Student Status | | | | | | | | | | 0.56 |
| | Enrolled | 0.97**↑ | 0.13**↓ | 0.13**↓ | 0.10**↓ | 0.07**↓ | 0.04**↓ | 0.05**↓ | 0.16 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Household Status | | | | | | | | | | 0.54 |
| | With Parents | 0.52**↑ | 0.84**↑ | 0.14 | 0.01**↓ | 0.22*↑ | 0.04**↓ | 0.02**↓ | 0.21 | |
| | Institution | 0.32**↑ | 0.01*↓ | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.01*↓ | 0.00**↓ | 0.04 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Work Status | | | | | | | | | | 0.39 |
| | Partially Engaged | 0.54**↑ | 0.32 | 0.13*↓ | 0.18*↓ | 0.22**↓ | 0.28 | 0.15 | 0.24 | |
| | Fully Engaged | 0.03**↓ | 0.49 | 0.82**↑ | 0.71*↑ | 0.24**↓ | 0.06**↓ | 0.85*↑ | 0.49 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Size | | 0.09 | 0.13 | 0.13 | 0.17 | 0.11 | 0.19 | 0.18 | 1.00 | |

* - p<.05, ** - p<.01 '↑' – Effect of latent role configuration on likelihood of status is positive and significant '↓' – Effect of latent role configuration on likelihood of status is negative and significant

Table 3: Effect of Being Raised in a Traditional/Conservative Church and the County Prevalence of Traditional/Conservative Churches on Latent Life Pathway. Multinomial regression coefficients represent change in log-odds. (t-Statistics in parentheses).

| | | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Raised in Traditional Church* | | | 49.53** | | | | 29.69** |
| | LLP-1 | 0.15* | *(2.10)* | | | 0.17* | *(2.05)* |
| | LLP-2 | -0.04 | *(-0.48)* | | | -0.05 | *(-0.47)* |
| | LLP-3 | 0.35** | *(4.75)* | | | 0.25** | *(3.04)* |
| | LLP-4 | 0.13 | *(1.56)* | | | 0.06 | *(0.68)* |
| | LLP-5 | 0.14^ | *(1.75)* | | | 0.14 | *(1.48)* |
| | LLP-6 | -0.46** | *(-3.82)* | | | -0.40** | *(-3.40)* |
| | LLP-7 | -0.18* | *(-1.98)* | | | -0.14 | *(-1.33)* |
| | LLP-8 | -0.19* | *(-2.25)* | | | -0.15 | *(-1.57)* |
| | LLP-9 | 0.10 | *(1.31)* | | | 0.11 | *(1.40)* |
| *Prevalence of Traditional Churches* | | | | | 30.45** | | 13.00 |
| | LLP-1 | | | 0.03 | *(0.25)* | -0.05 | *(-0.36)* |
| | LLP-2 | | | -0.08 | *(-0.53)* | -0.03 | *(-0.21)* |
| | LLP-3 | | | 0.51** | *(4.28)* | 0.33* | *(2.43)* |
| | LLP-4 | | | 0.26* | *(2.03)* | 0.22 | *(1.54)* |
| | LLP-5 | | | 0.06 | *(0.43)* | -0.10 | *(-0.67)* |
| | LLP-6 | | | -0.27^ | *(-1.83)* | 0.11 | *(0.74)* |
| | LLP-7 | | | -0.24^ | *(-1.67)* | -0.36* | *(-2.18)* |
| | LLP-8 | | | -0.25^ | *(-1.92)* | -0.06 | *(-0.41)* |
| | LLP-9 | | | -0.03 | *(-0.22)* | -0.07 | *(-0.50)* |
| | | | | | | | |
| BIC | | 142,638.32 | | 142,647.02 | | 142,639.82 | |
| LL | | -66,822.28 | | -66,826.63 | | -66,782.24 | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Parameters | | 882 | | 882 | | 890 | |

* -- p<.05 ** -- p<.01

Table 4: Effect of Being Raised in a Traditional/Conservative Church, The County Prevalence of Traditional/Conservative Churches, and the Interaction Between the Two on Latent Life Pathway. Coefficients represent change in log-odds. (t-Statistics in parentheses).

| | | Model 4 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Raised in Traditional Church* | | | 18.77* |
| | LLP-1 | 0.29* | *(2.01)* |
| | LLP-3 | 0.12 | *(0.75)* |
| | LLP-4 | -0.06 | *(-0.35)* |
| | LLP-5 | 0.10 | *(0.57)* |
| | LLP-6 | -0.40^ | *(-1.91)* |
| | LLP-7 | -0.45^ | *(-1.90)* |
| | LLP-8 | -0.33 | *(-1.37)* |
| | LLP-9 | 0.34* | *(2.18)* |
| | LLP-10 | 0.39 | *(1.70)* |
| *Prevalence of Traditional Churches* | | | 5.53 |
| | LLP-1 | 0.09 | *(0.57)* |
| | LLP-3 | 0.27^ | *(1.63)* |
| | LLP-4 | 0.13 | *(0.68)* |
| | LLP-5 | -0.04 | *(-0.21)* |
| | LLP-6 | -0.06 | *(-0.39)* |
| | LLP-7 | -0.16 | *(-0.85)* |
| | LLP-8 | -0.04 | *(-0.20)* |
| | LLP-9 | 0.11 | *(0.68)* |
| | LLP-10 | -0.31 | *(-1.14)* |
| *Interaction* | | | 8.78 |
| | LLP-1 | -0.25 | *(-0.93)* |
| | LLP-3 | 0.21 | *(0.81)* |
| | LLP-4 | 0.35 | *(1.16)* |
| | LLP-5 | 0.09 | *(0.27)* |
| | LLP-6 | 0.22 | *(0.66)* |
| | LLP-7 | 0.39 | *(1.05)* |
| | LLP-8 | 0.16 | *(0.40)* |
| | LLP-9 | -0.53^ | *(-1.84)* |
| | LLP-10 | -0.64 | *(-1.34)* |
| | | | |
| BIC | | 142,877.27 | |
| LL | | -66,860.17 | |
| | | | |
| Parameters | | 898 | |

^ -- p<.10 * -- p<.05 **-- p<.01

Table 5: Effect on the Likelihood of Following Persistent Unmarried Mother Pathway of Combinations of Values on the Religion Variables Specified on the Micro and Macro Levels According to Model 4.

| Prevalence of Traditional-Conservative Church Adherents in County | Not Raised in a Traditional-Conservative Church | Raised in a Traditional-Conservative Church |
|---|---|---|
| 2% | 1.02 | 1.32 |
| 4% | 1.04 | 1.20 |
| 9% | 1.08 | 1.06 |
| 21% | 1.13 | 0.89 |
| 55% | 1.23 | 0.64 |

Appendix A: Responses to "What Religion Were You Raised In?"
Traditional/Conservative Churches Highlighted in Yellow.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| None | African Methodist Episcopal-Zion | Evangelical | Pentecostal Assembly of God |
| Protestant, etc. | Apostolic | Evangelical Reformed | Pentecostal Church of God |
| Baptist | Apostolic Faith | Evangelical Congregational | Pentecostal Free Will Baptist |
| Episcopalian | Apostolic Pentecostal | Evangelical Mission Covenant | Pentecostal Holiness |
| Lutheran | Assembly of God | Evangelical Friends | Pilgrim Holiness |
| Methodist | Bible Church, Independent | Evangelical United Brethren | Plymouth Brethren |
| Presbyterian | Brethren Church | Foursquare Gospel | Primitive Baptist |
| Roman Catholic | Christadelphian | Free Christian Zion | Dutch Reformed |
| Jewish | Christ in Christian Union | Free Will Baptist | Reformed Church of Christ |
| Armenian Church | Christian, Disciples of Christ | Friends, Quaker | Reformed United Church of Christ |
| Baha'i | Christian and Missionary Alliance | Full Gospel | Salvation Army |
| Buddhist | Christian Catholic | Fundamental | Seventh Day Adventist |
| Confucian | Christian Methodist-Episcopal | Church of Holiness | Southern Baptist |
| Eastern Orthodox | Christian Reformed | Jehovah's Witness | Spiritualist |
| Greek Orthodox | Christian Science | Latter Day Saints, Mormon | Swedish Mission |
| Hindu | Church of Christ | Latter Day Saints Reorganized | Triumph the Church of the Kingdom |
| Moslem | Church of God | Mennonite | Unitarian Universalist |
| Muslim | Church of God in Christ | Mennonite Reformed | United Brethren in Christ |
| Russian Orthodox | Church of the Living God | Missionary | United Church of Christ |
| Shinto | Congregational | Moravian | United Holiness |
| Sikh | Conservative Baptist | Nazarene | Wesleyan |
| Taoist | African Methodist Episcopal-Zion | New Apostolic | Wesleyan Methodist |
| Advent Christian | Apostolic | Northern Baptist | Witness Holiness |
| African Methodist | Apostolic Faith | Open Bible | Zion Union |
| African Methodist Episcopal | Apostolic Pentecostal | Pentecostal | Zion Union Apostolic |
| Other Non-Christian | | | Other Protestant |

Appendix B: Churches Whose Adherents Contributed to the Ecological Measure of Traditional-Conservative Churches.

Advent Christian Church
Allegheny Wesleyan Methodist Connection
Assemblies of God
Baptist General Conference
Baptist Missionary Association of America
Barren River Missionary Baptists
Beachy Amish Mennonite Church
Berean Fundamental Church
Bible Church of Christ, Inc.
Brethren Church (Ashland Ohio)
Brethren in Christ Church
Central Baptists
Christ Catholic Church
The Christian and Missionary Alliance
Christian Churches and Churches of Christ
Christian Reformed Church
Church of God General Conference
Church of God (Anderson Indiana)
Church of God (Cleveland Tennessee)
Church of God (Seventh Day) Denver Colorado
Church of God in Christ (Mennonite)
Church of God of Prophecy
Church of God of the Mountain Assembly Inc.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
Church of the Nazarene
Churches of Christ
Churches of God General Conference
Conservative Baptist Association of America
Conservative Congregational Christian Conference
Cumberland Presbyterian Church
Duck River and Kindred Baptists Associations
Enterprise Baptist
Evangelical Congregational Church
Evangelical Free Church of America
Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Conference
Evangelical Mennonite Church Inc.
Evangelical Methodist Church
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
Fire Baptized Holiness Church (Wesleyan)
Free Methodist Church of North America
National Association of Free Will Baptist Inc.
Friends
Fundamental Methodist Church Inc.
Gen. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
General Six Principle Baptists
Hutterian Brethren
Independent Fundamental Churches of America
International Church of the Foursquare Gospel
International Pentecostal Church of Christ
Interstate & Foreign Landmark Missionary Baptists
Jasper and Pleasant Valley Baptists
Mennonite Church
Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church
Mennonite Church the General Conference
New Hope Baptist Association
The Missionary Church
Midwest Congregational Christian Fellowship
"Old" Missionary Baptist Association
Old Order Amish Church
Old Order River Brethern
Old Regular Baptist
Open Bible Standard Churches Inc.
Pentecostal Church of God
Pentecostal Holiness Church, Inc.
Presbyterian Church in America
Primitive Advent Christian Church
Primitive Baptists Associations
Primitive Methodist Church U.S.A.
Reformed Episcopal Church
Regular Baptists
The Salvation Army
The Schwenkfelder Church
Seventh Day Baptist General Conference
Southern Baptist Convention
Two-Seed-In-The-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists
Truevine Baptists Association
United Baptists
United Brethren in Christ
Wayne Trail Missionary Baptists Association
The Wesleyan Church
Independent Charismatic Churches
Independent Non-Charismatic Churches