

# Pathways to adulthood in Uruguay

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## Abstract

Using two complementary methodological strategies, we analyse the pathways to adulthood in Uruguay by means of biographical data from the 1990 and 2008 National Youth Surveys (NYS). We seek to provide some keys to the changes in the pathway to adulthood, understood as a single process rather than a sum of events. We also seek to understand the relations between the types of pathways to adulthood and the first birth at a younger age, identifying which types of trajectories are more likely to lead to the first birth during the youth.

We find a high degree of heterogeneity in the pathways to adulthood, which is rooted in the unequal social structure. While some women experience fast routes to adult roles, others delay even the take-off of the transition to adulthood. School insertion plays a key role in explaining these differences.

### Trajectory types and changes in their relative weight between the 1961-1965 and 1979-1983 cohorts. Percentages

Trajectory type	1961-1965	1979-1983
Early and complete transition	17%	26%
Postponement of family events, extended schooling-work	21%	25%
Extended schooling-work in independent households without children	---	17%
Early school leaving, prolonged period without formal activity, with independent household formation	14%	---
Early school leaving, short spell without formal activity, with independent household formation	30%	16%
Early school leaving, prolonged period without formal activity, with independent household formation and children	10%	11%
Early school leaving, spell without formal activity, then first job and children in extended households	8%	5%

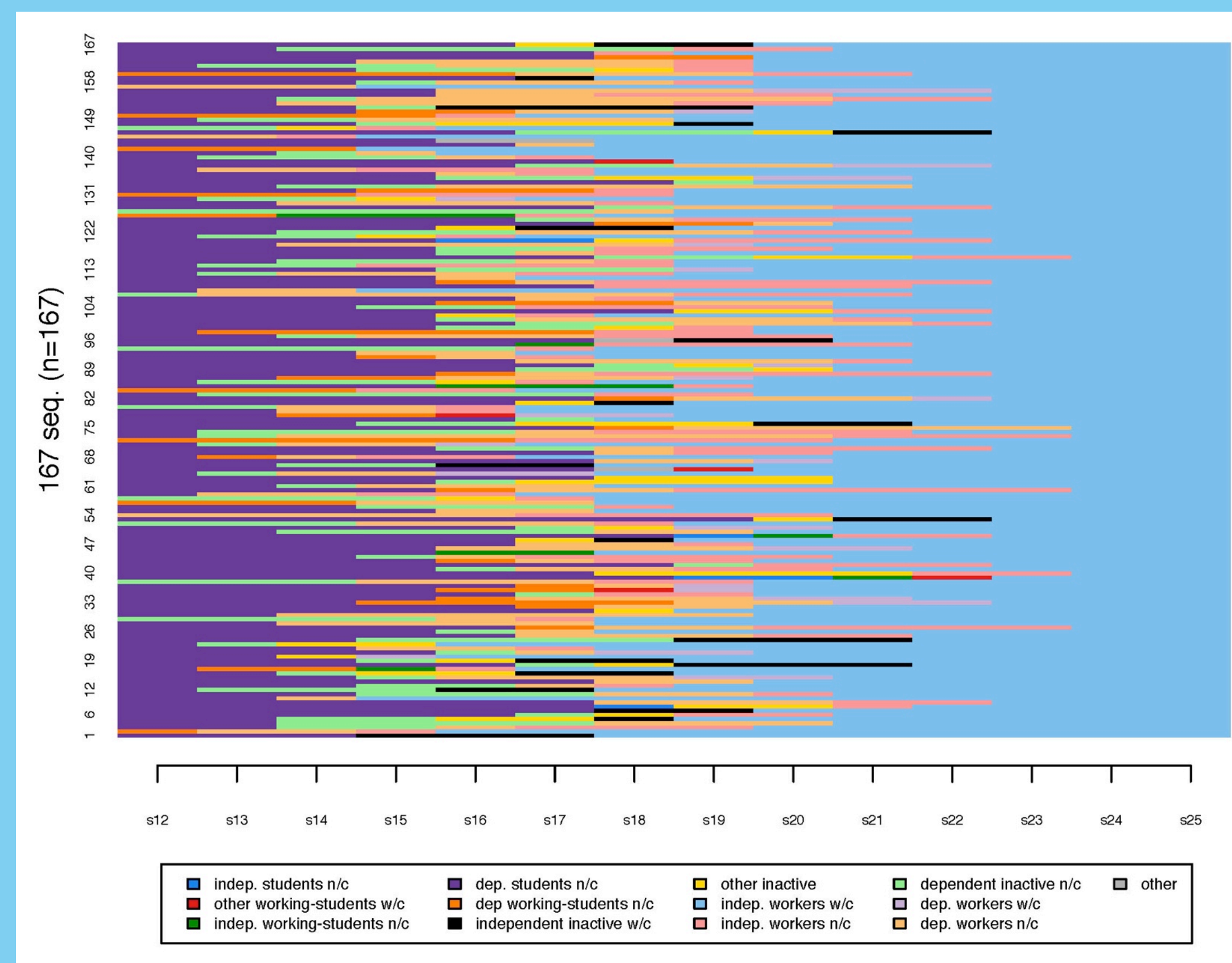
Source: NYS 1990 and 2008, own elaboration. Weighted estimation.

### The transition to the first birth. Proportional hazards Cox model. Coefficients reported as hazard ratios. Results after controlling for social origins, year of birth and region of residence

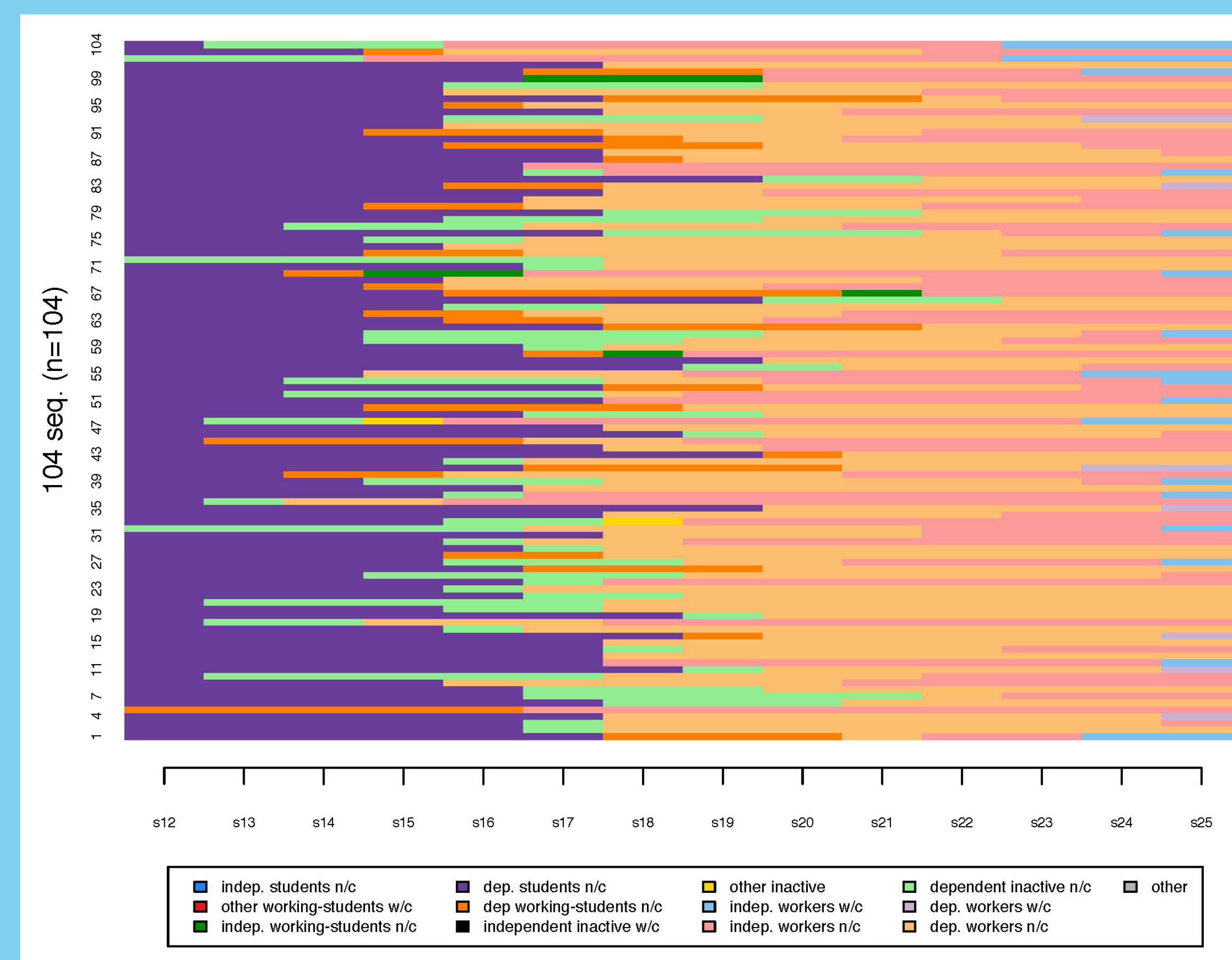
State [E] [Out of school (no other events)]	1961-1975	1979-1993
0 In parental home, in school, without first job	0.14***	0.09***
EW First job, after school leaving	1.32**	0.73†
EH Independent household, after school leaving	9.15***	3.66***
EHW First job, after school leaving followed by independent household formation	5.90***	2.62***
EWI Independent household, after school leaving followed by first job	7.51***	2.92***
H Independent household (no other events)	2.59**	0.60*
HE Out of school, after independent household	5.04***	3.41***
HW First job, after independent household	5.50***	0.71
HEW First job, after independent household formation followed by school leaving	5.38***	2.65***
HWE Out of school, after independent household formation followed by first job	6.63***	1.86**
W First job (no other events)	0.24***	0.18***
WE Out of school, after first job	1.57**	0.8
WH Independent household, after first job	3.20***	0.76
WEH Independent household, after first job followed by school leaving	6.90***	2.60***
WEI Out of school, after first job followed by independent household formation	7.42***	2.42***

Source: NYS 1990 and 2008, own elaboration. Weighted estimation.  
†: p<0.10; \*: p<0.05; \*\*: p<0.01; \*\*\*: p<0.001. Reference categories are placed within brackets.

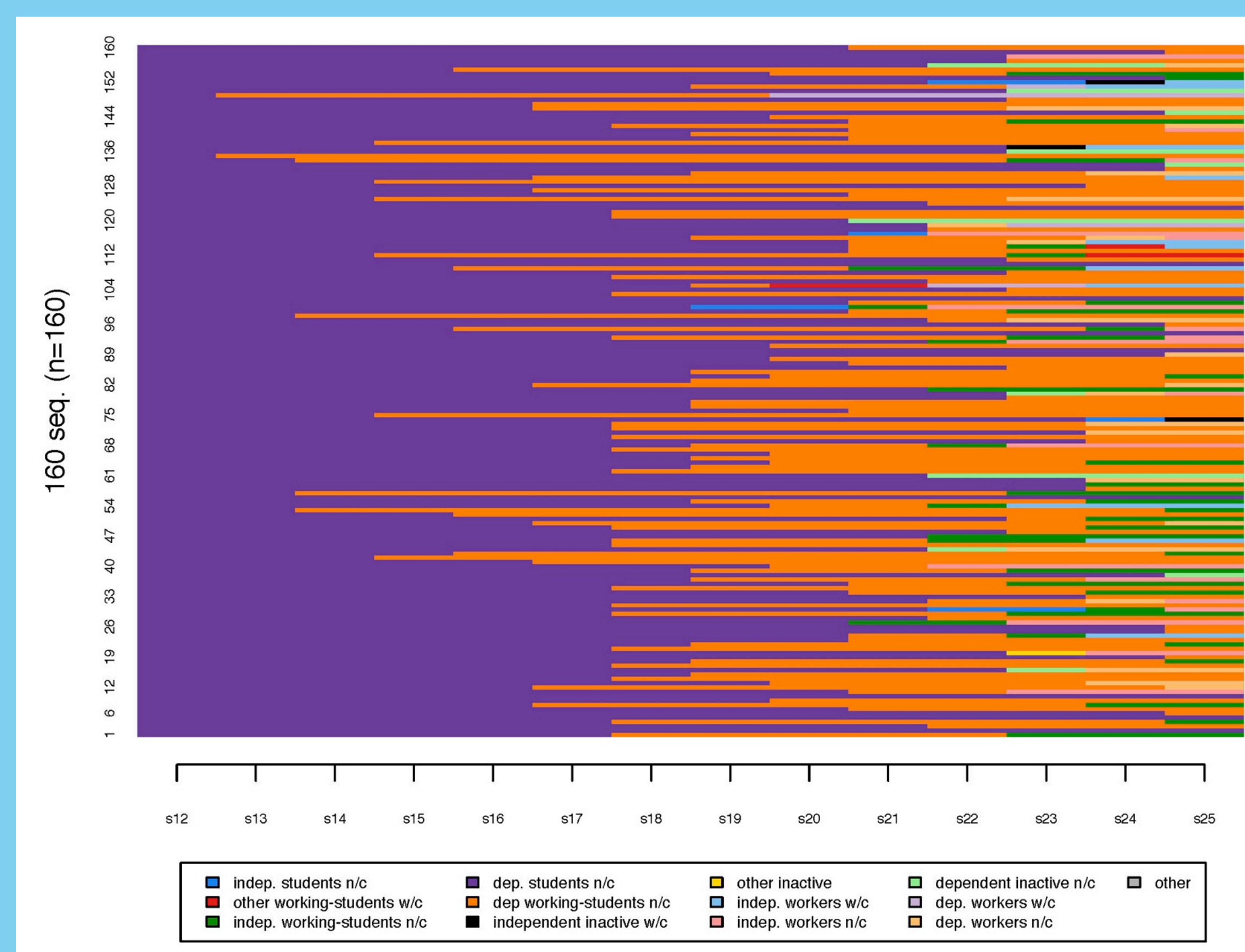
### Early and complete transition, 1979-1983 cohort



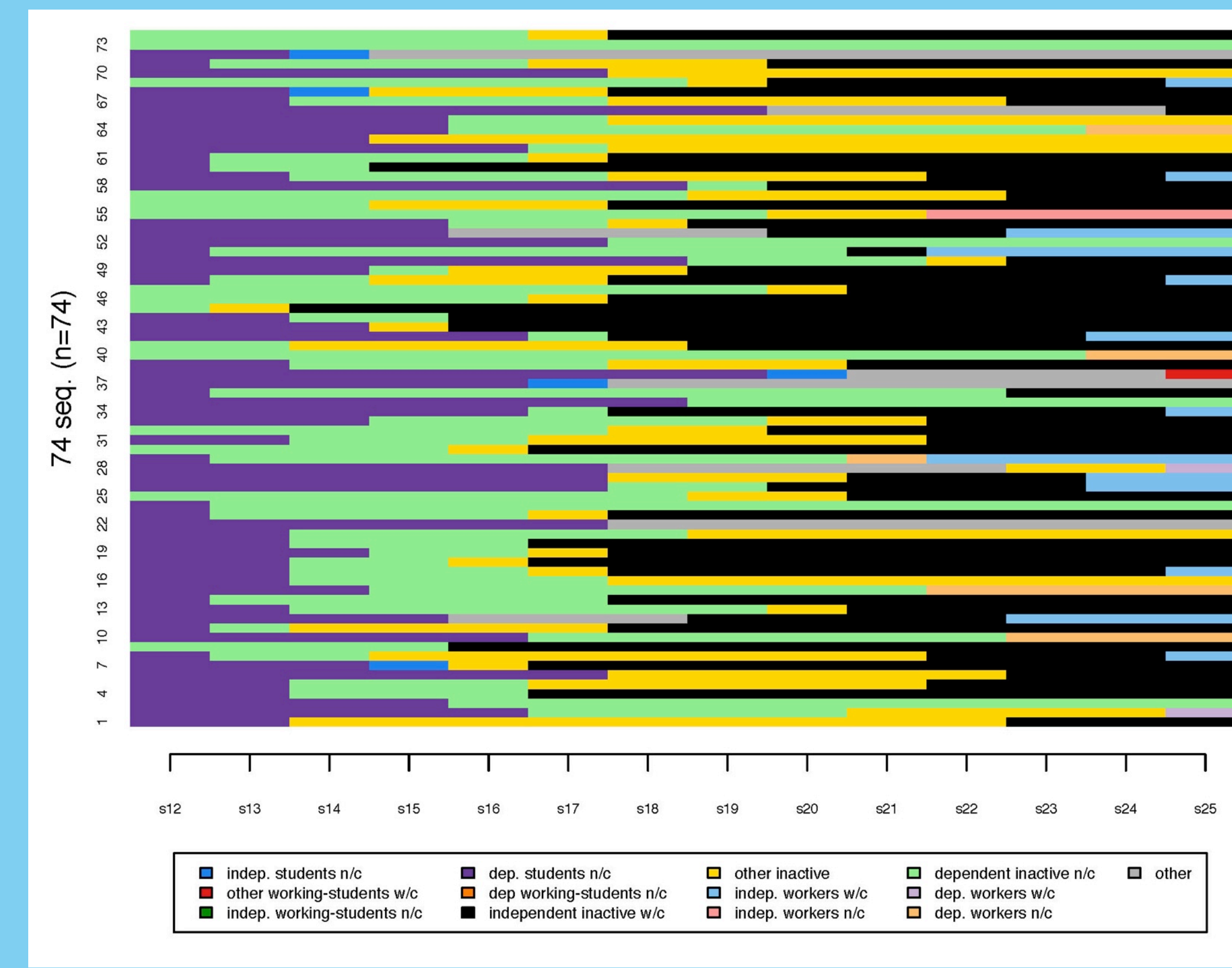
### Early school leaving, short spell without formal activity, with independent household formation, 1979-1983 cohort



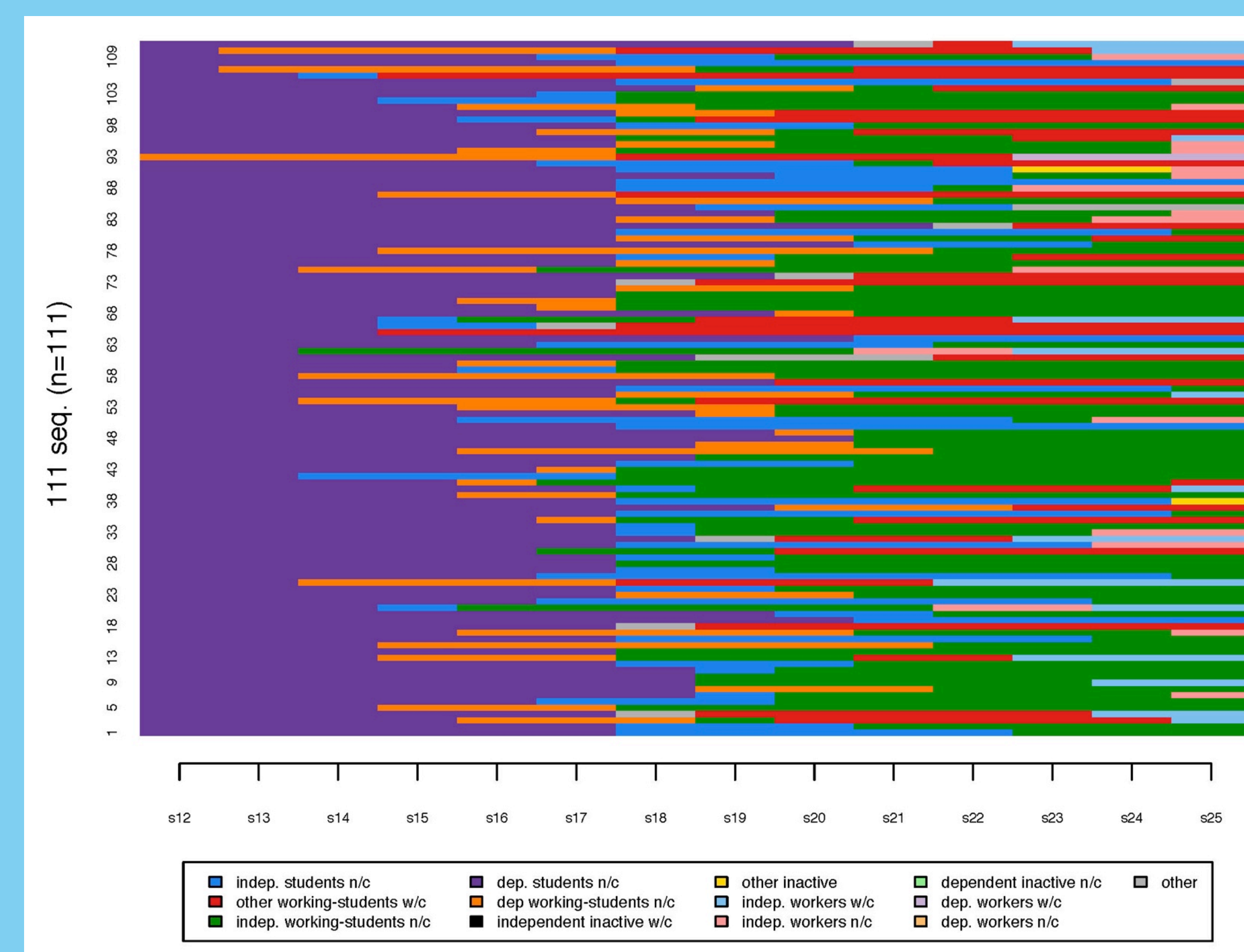
### Postponement of family events, extended schooling-work, 1979-1983 cohort



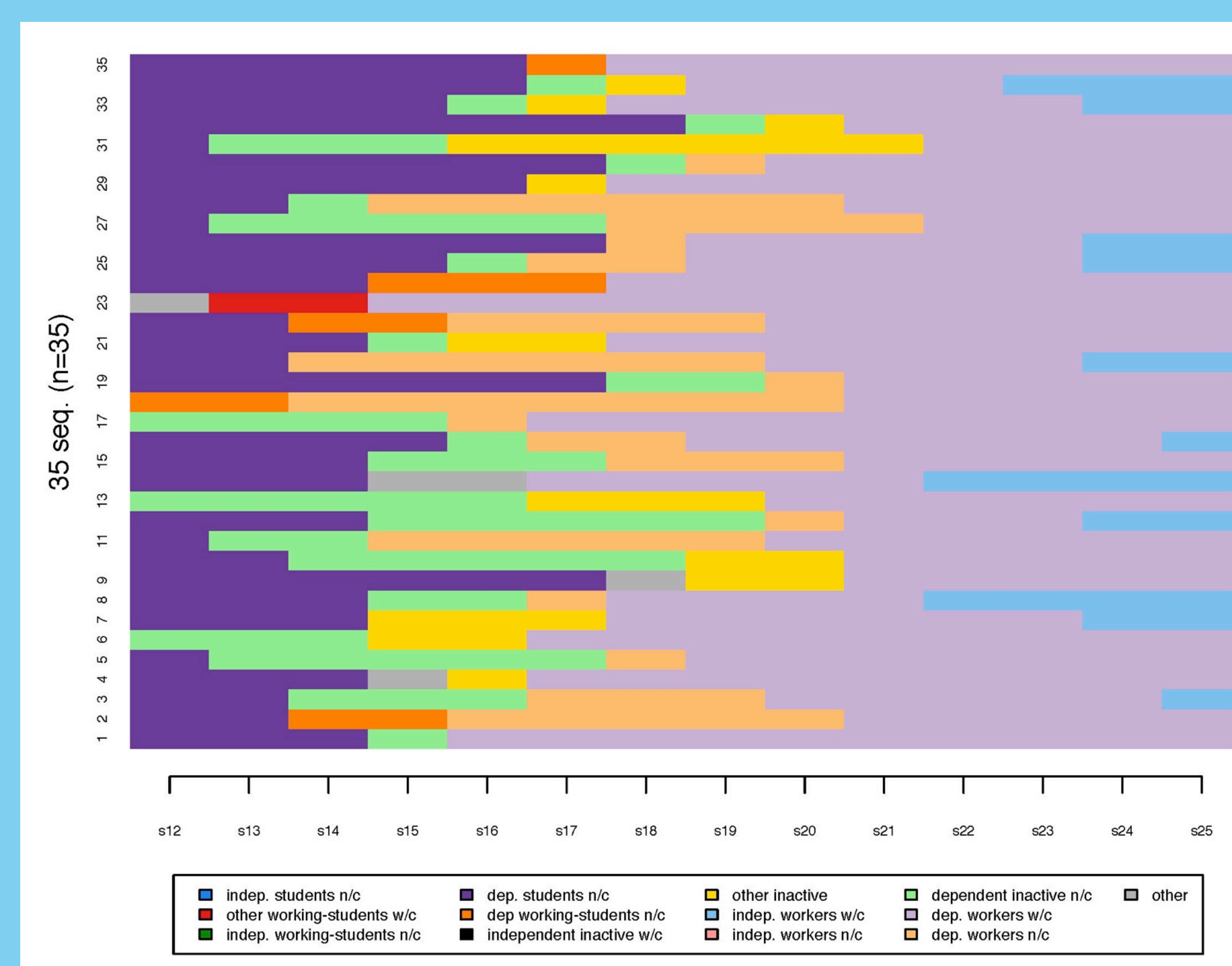
### Early school leaving, prolonged period without formal activity, with independent household formation and children, 1979-1983 cohort



### Extended schooling-work in independent households without children, 1979-1983 cohort



### Early school leaving, spell without formal activity, then first job and children in extended households, 1979-1983 cohort



## Method

Firstly, the evolution of typical sequences in the pathway to adulthood of Uruguayan young women from two cohorts (1961-1965 and 1979-1983) is analysed through sequence analysis. These analyses address four events indicating the pathway to adulthood: home leaving, school leaving, first job and first birth.

Secondly, the variations in the timing of the first birth are analysed using the combination of the other three events by order of occurrence as the main independent variable. Such combination is introduced in the survival analysis as a time-varying variable and it enables identifying states that are more likely to delay or induce the first birth.

## Findings

We find a high degree of heterogeneity in the trajectories to adulthood in both cohorts, regarding the type of key events experienced, the duration of states and the order in which the events happen. Trajectories that include family events, particularly the first birth, early school leaving and periods without formal activity (in the school system or the labour market) are experienced by women from lower social origins, with low educational attainment and who tend to currently live in poor households. On the contrary, trajectories with long periods of schooling or combined schooling and labour market insertion are experienced by women from middle or high social origins and who tend to currently live in households above the poverty threshold.

There is a reduction of trajectories that lead to domestic roles and which imply long periods without formal activity between the two cohorts analysed. On the other hand, there is an increase in trajectories that include long periods of schooling, that combine work and studies and that involve independent household formation without childbearing.

The *order* in which key events are experienced matters for the timing of the first birth. For instance, leaving the school system entails an increased risk of childbearing by itself, but not when labour market insertion follows the end of schooling. Also, in the most recent cohort, independent household formation does not entail an increased risk of childbearing as long as women are still in school. Starting a first job has a negative effect on childbearing, which is greater when it happens before school leaving.

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