

## The Life Courses of Young Adults in France: Changes in Social and Gender Differentiation over the Long Period – *Nicolas Robette*

[Link to the article](#)

The article on one page

### o Key Question

This paper examines the life courses of young adults in France, the differences between courses according to gender and social background, and their evolution. Has the expansion of female education and women mass entry into the labour market paved the way for the standardisation of female and male life courses? Has the institutionalisation of life courses led to a process of standardisation? Has the individualisation seen over the past few decades had an impact on this trend? Do these trends vary by gender and social background?

### o Methodology

These questions are addressed using the *Santé et itinéraire professionnel* survey (a survey on health and professional career carried out by DREES and Dares – the statistical services of, respectively, the French Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Labour). The survey provides information about life courses between the ages of 14 and 35 for individuals born between 1932 and 1975. Optimal matching methods are used to complement a traditional threshold approach by studying life sequences rather than events.

### o Main Results

- Decohabitation is more associated with the family sphere than with the professional sphere and the family and professional spheres have little correlation with one another.
- The impact of social background on life courses has increased since the late 1960s.
- This impact is more pronounced in the family sphere among women and in the work sphere among men.
- Gender differences are on the decline.
- The results show no evidence of a clear trend towards a de-standardisation of life courses. However, the evidence suggests that they are becoming increasingly complex.