

*3rd ISA Forum, RC 34, Sociology of youth:
Uncertainty and Precarity in Youth Employment: Public Policies, Institutional
Mediations and Subjective Strategies*

MULTIDIMENSIONAL PRECARIETY: A CHALLENGE FOR YOUNG FRENCH AND ITALIAN ADULTS



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Vienna, Austria

Outline

- I. Framing the topic of study**
- II. Analysis of the contexts**
- III. Main quantitative results**
- IV. Preliminary qualitative results**
- V. Conclusion**

- ❖ **Comparative research thesis** [Sorge, 2007; Esping Andersen,1990] **in young adult housing autonomy in Italy and France** [Cicchelli, 2013; Cavalli and Galland, 2009] **through a mixed method research design** [Small, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009]

- ❖ **We investigate:**
 - **whether the evidence supports the assertion that those in an economically precarious position were more likely to remain living with a parent during the recent recession,**

 - **how young adults manage their lives in the face of employment flexibilisation during adulthood transition and which dynamics they activate to face precariousness.**

- ❖ **We analyse:**
 - **The likelihood of housing autonomy outcomes, which leading to qualitative findings on creative and passive strategies of adaptation based on personal reactions and interpretations regarding flexibilisation and precariousness.**

- ❖ **Our aim is to show:**
 - **Flexibilisation in the labor market through standardised analyses**
 - **Feelings of precariousness through semi-structured interviews**

II. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT:

NEW CHALLENGES IN DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS (1/4)

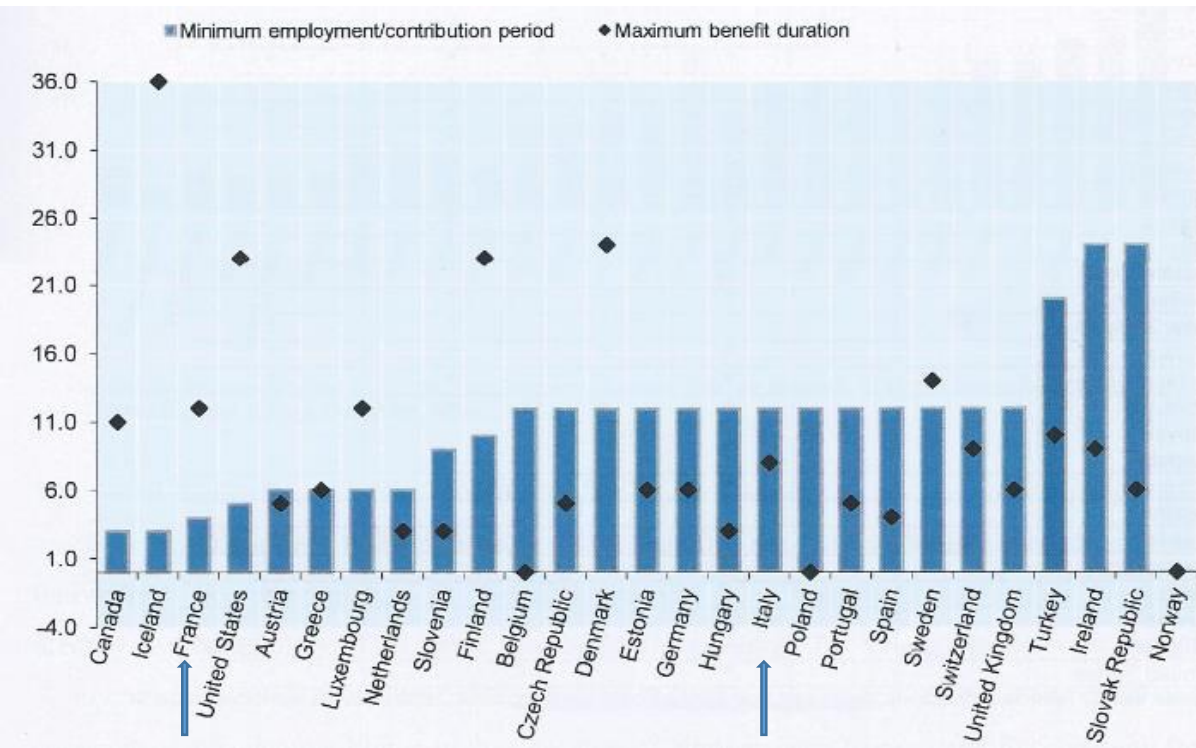
HOW DO YOUNG
FRENCH AND ITALIAN ADULTS
COMPARE?

	Labour market	Welfare state	Educational system	Housing market
Italy	<p>Strong segmentation [Blossfeld et al. 2011; Barbieri, 2007].</p> <p>Atypical contracts [Bertolini and Torrioni, 2014]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stepping stones effect for the highly educated, - a trap for lower educated people. 	<p>Mediterranean regime [Guerrero 2001; Ferrera, 1996].</p> <p>Lack of a coherent welfare reform [Maestriperi and Sabatinelli, 2014; Berton et al., 2009]</p> <p>Family as intergenerational safety valves [Naldini and Saraceno, 2011]</p>	<p>Weak connection system of education and labour market;</p> <p>Vocational and training paths separated from LM demand;</p> <p>Lower EU percentage of highly educated people [Ballarino and Scherer, 2013].</p>	<p>The largest «class of homeownership in Europe» [Filandri, 2015; Poggio and Baldini, 2010]</p> <p>Lack of social housing stocks [Six and Tahiri, 2014; Hoekstra, 2013]</p> <p>Lack of substantial benefits for tenants in the private rental sector [Pittini and Laino, 2011]</p>
France	<p>Strong segmentation [Palier and Thelen, 2010; Grelet et al., 2007];</p> <p>Atypical contract [Di Paola and Mullet, 2010]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - entry ticket for the highly qualified, - a trap of precarious jobs for low educated and unskilled people. 	<p>Conservative regime [Chauvel, Schröder, 2014 Magnusson, 2014].</p> <p>Structured system of labour policies [Barret et al., 2014; Busemeyer and Trampush, 2012];</p> <p>Policies to empower young people in the labour market to achieve adulthood.</p>	<p>Standardized path but differentiation in the kind of University</p> <p>VET paths introduced in University programs [Brochier and Romani, 2015; Verdier, 2013].</p> <p>Public engagement in supporting networks between schools and large companies [Issehnane, 2001; Fougère et al., 2000].</p>	<p>Specific legislation regarding social housing in line with the «collectivist ideology» [[Arundel and Ronald, 2015; Kemeny, 1992]</p> <p>Housing policies [Fijalkow, 2013; Baloup and Pittini, 2012]</p> <p>Structural lack of affordable dwellings to rent [Bugeja-Bloch, 2014].</p>

II. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT: SIMILAR LABOUR MARKETS BUT DIFFERENT PROTECTION SYSTEMS (2/4)

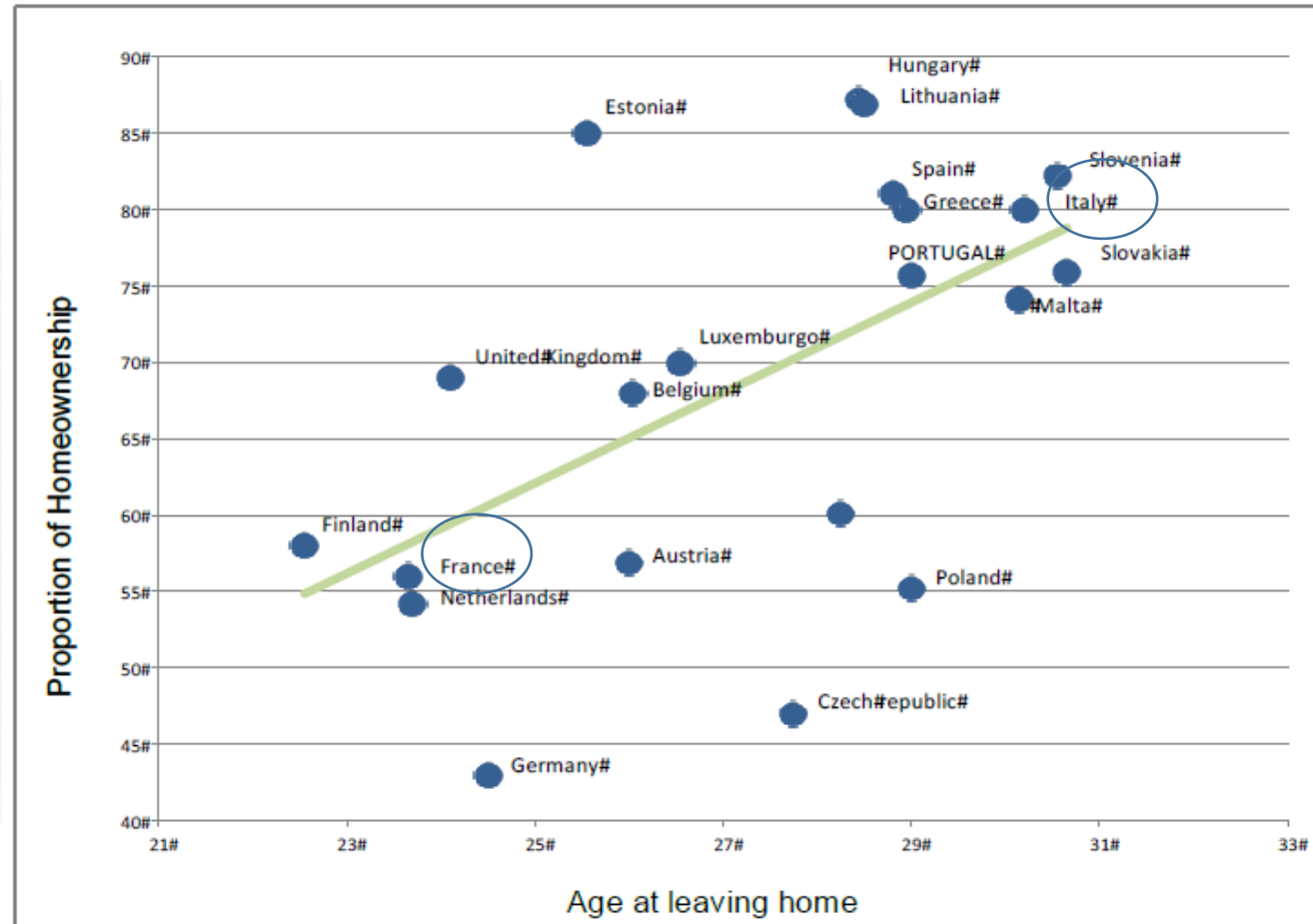
HOW DO YOUNG
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Fig.1 Contribution period required to qualify for unemployment benefits and maximum benefits duration (in months)



Source: Thévenon (2015)

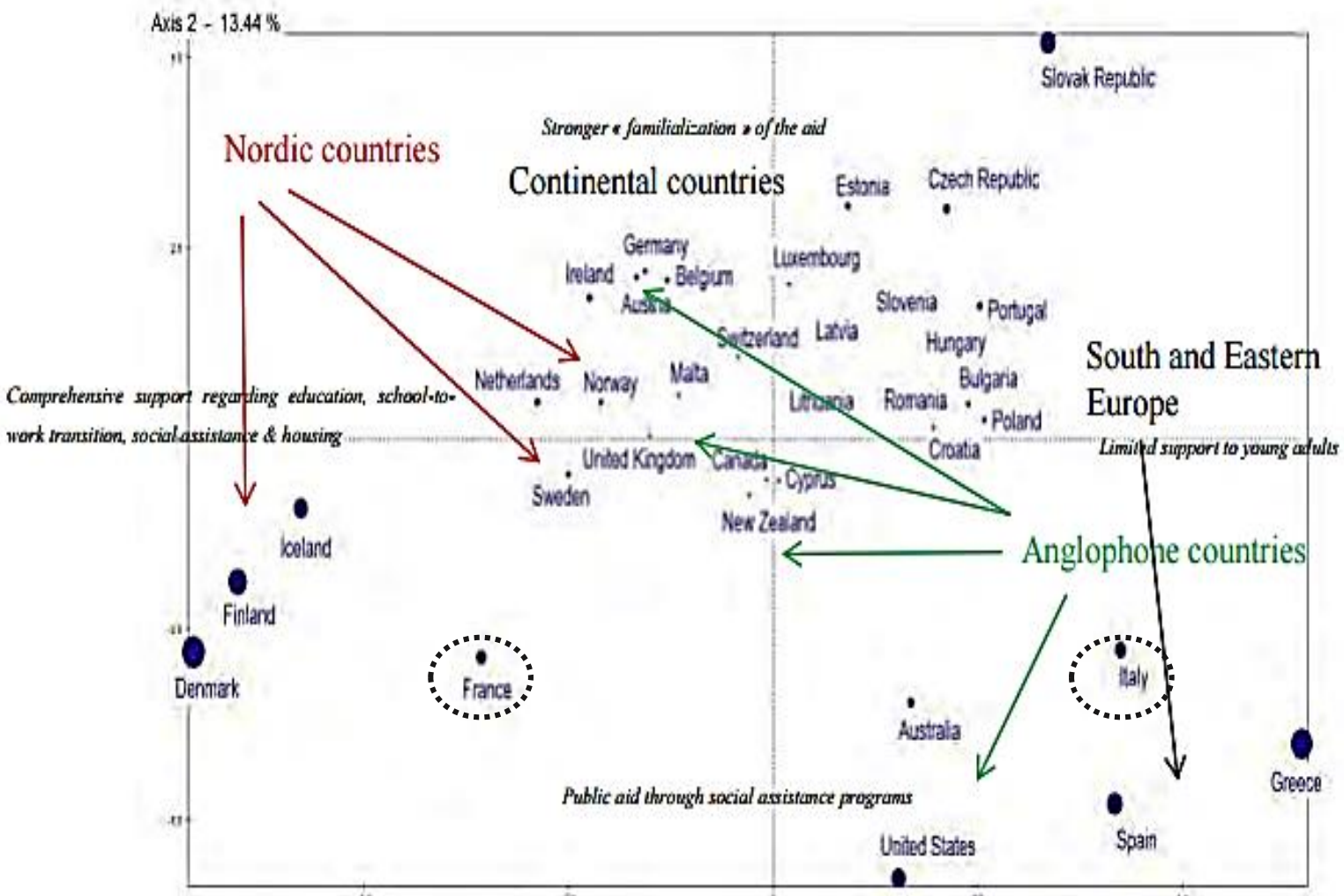
Fig.2 Relation between the proportion of homeownership and the age of leaving home



Source: Eurostat (2007) for the mean age of leaving home; Norris and Shiels (2007) for proportion of homeownership

II. DIFFERENT WELFARE STATE REGIME AND DIFFERENT LOGIC OF ACHIEVING ADULthood (3/3)

Fig.3 OECD countries by type of policy supporting young adults



Source: Thévenon (2015)

Tab.1 Transition regimes in EU and youth conception

WELFARE STATE-SYSTEM	COUNTRIES	* YOUTH CONCEPTION	AIMS OF ADULthood TRANSITION POLICIES
Universal	Denmark, Sweden	Logic of personal fulfilment	Educative and specific youth policies
Centred on employment	Germany, France, Netherland	Logic of social integration in accordance with social position	Training and vocational education
Minimal-liberal	Great Britain	Logic economic independence	Employability
Protective	Spain, Italy	«Settle down logic»	Not clearly defined

Source: My adaptation from Mac Neish & Loncle (2003) and *Cecile Van de Velde (2008)

IV. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES: SOME DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES

HOW DO TEMPORARY CONTRACT &
UNEMPLOYMENT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH
YOUNG HOUSEHOLD AFFILIATION?

Fig.4 French young adult labour market position, ages 25-34 (% , 2011)

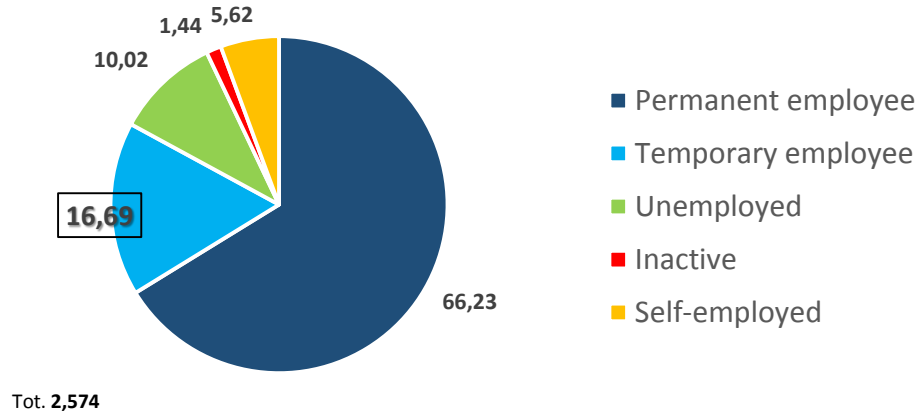


Fig.5 Italian young adult labour market position, ages 25-34 (% , 2011)

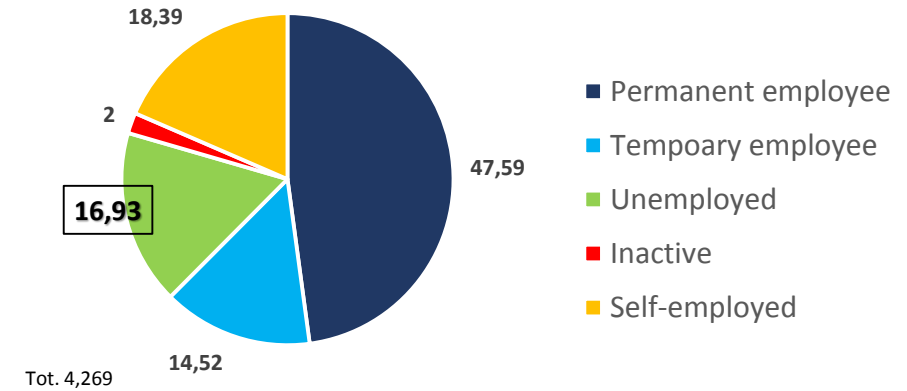
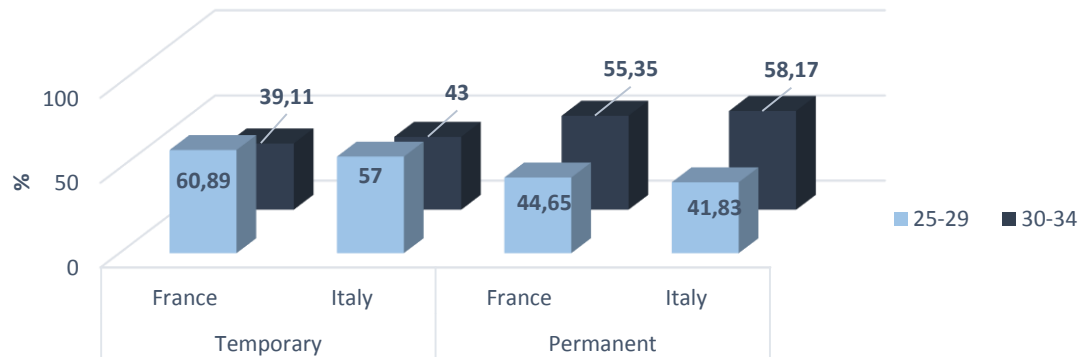


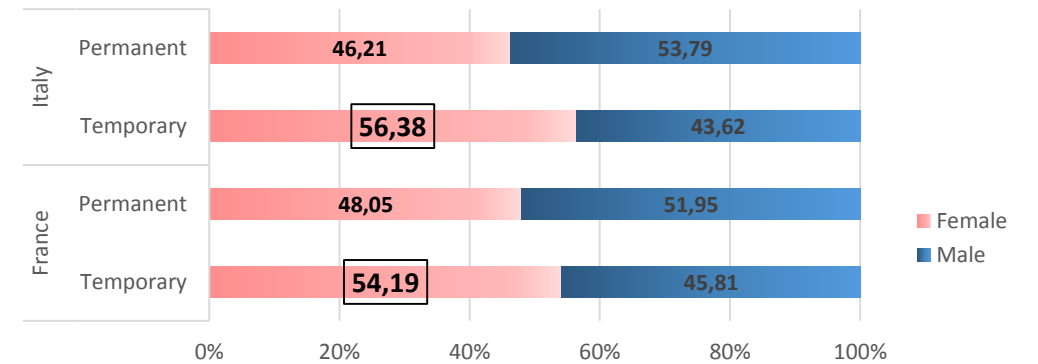
Fig.6 Types of contracts by age group in France and Italy, ages 25-34 (% , 2011)



Tot. Temporary: France: 537; Italy: 972

Tot. Permanent: France: 1,773; Italy: 2,240

Fig.7 Types of contracts by gender in France and Italy, ages 25-34 (% , 2011)



Tot. Temporary : France: 537; Italy: 972

Tot. Permanent: France: 1,773; Italy: 2,240

IV. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

MULTINOMIAL LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODEL ESTIMATIONS

HOW DO TEMPORARY CONTRACT & UNEMPLOYMENT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH YOUNG HOUSEHOLD AFFILIATIONS?

We assume that to a certain degree and comparing them to the propensity to live with a partner, the same characteristics that correlate to the propensity to live with parents in Italy are correlated to the propensity to live alone in France

1. FLEXIBILISATION HYPOTHESIS

temporary contracts (as compared to permanent contracts) increase the propensity of living with parents (as compared to live in partnership) for Italians and the propensity of living alone for the French (as compared to live in partnership).

2. LABOUR MARKET EXCLUSION

being unemployed (as compared to being employed) increases the relative probability of living with parents in Italy and the relative probability to live alone in France decreases.

The most significant individual characteristics positively related to the various household types of young adult women and men in Italy and France

Household affiliation	Country	
	Italy	France
Live with parents	Male	Male
	25-29 years old	25-29 years old
	Temporary employment (only women)	Parents as managers (only men)
	Self-employed (only women)	Temporary employment
	Unemployed (only women)	Unemployed
	Native born	Not low prof.skills
	Living in the South (only women)	Increase in n.children (only women)
Live alone	Increase in n.children (only men)	Low income (only men)
	Low income (only men)	
	Male	Male
	25-29 years old (only female)	25-29 years old (only men)
	Not low edu. (only men)	Not self-employed (only women)
	Temporary employment (only women)	Not unemployed
	Increase in n.children (both)	Living in densely populated area
Live in couple	Female	Female
	30-34 years old (only female)	30-34 years old (only male)
	Permanent employment	
	Increasing income	

The characteristics are significant at 0.01 level

QUALITATIVE ANALYSES are based on:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Young French and Italian adults aged 25-34.
- Snow-ball sampling
- How do feeling of precariousness and family resources frame different home-leaving strategies and which coping-mechanisms they activate?

- ❑ **Mixed-method research design** [Small, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009; Cronholm and Hjalmarsson; 2009; Creswell, 2003]
- ❑ **Complementary techniques**: “The greatest value in combining types of data lies in the ability of one type to compensate for the weaknesses of the other.” [Small, 2011; p.64]
- ❑ **Quanti-Qualitative sequential approach**: “The research phases occur in a consecutive order [...] The research questions addressed as well as the procedures used in one phase depend on the previous phase” [Ivankova et al., 2006]

→ From interviews, atypical contracts are considered to be **established recruitment practices** and finding a **job is felt to happen through sheer lack**.

Ivan: *“I don't have a diploma, I don't have any skills, I know how to do everything and nothing, and I don't know anybody [counting with his fingers]. It's a miracle if I manage to work two months in a row.”* (Italian man, 26 years old with government-subsidized contract)

Mario: *“It came along just out of luck right when I was completely fed up with looking and would have settled for any old job.”* (Italian man, 31 years old, exhibition organizer)

→ For flexible workers, it is **the accumulation of atypical contracts** that generates the feeling of precariousness, which frames uncertainty in professional and private life.

Alessia: *“In short, at the end of every month, I'd be afraid that I wouldn't have a job the next month, but after 6 months [sneering at me] I knew the game they were playing, and I wasn't afraid any more. Now I've been working there for 4 years and I'm getting by, but at a certain point I said to myself, “I can't do this anymore, it's been four years now and I'm always back at square one, without anything, just like before.”* (Italian woman, 27 years old, travel agent)

→ «**Paradoxical precarity**»: young people continue to be employed despite having short-term contracts.¹⁰

→ The idea regarding flexible employment is not necessarily associated only with negative aspects. This is the case of middle-class young people in France with higher qualifications, who especially appreciate **the creative aspect of being flexible workers**.

Eleonora: "Well, I'm looking for work as a nurse and in fact there aren't many permanent job contracts, But it's not really a full-time contract that interests me, because...I'm single, I don't have children and I like moving around and I can afford to be somewhat precarious.... So at this time, my ideal job would be a sort of mid to short-term temporary job [she laughs]. That is, a temporary contract, because I don't really want to have to settle down and in any case a permanent contract is more difficult to leave once you are in the mechanism of a permanent contract...instead, a temporary contract would be better." (French woman, 26 years old, unemployed, father in a managerial position)

→ The **possibility of choosing the quality of the job**.

Colin: "I could have worked for my father. I could have continued on there for the rest of my life, but I wanted to push myself to take a risk, and look for some good jobs, doing something I truly wanted to do." (French man, 26 years old, unemployed, his father has his own small business)

Some young people in both France and Italy complain of **constant refusals by companies**, which only propose unpaid or minimum-wage internships, justifying such by claiming to provide the young people with skills and experience.

Lucia: *“There were days when I was totally depressed [she is moved to tears] I didn't want to out anywhere, and I didn't feel like eating either. I remember I would send about 20 CVs a day, and never get any replies. I wondered how I'd get by without a job.”* (Italian woman, 30 years old, unemployed, bachelor's degree)

→ Stepping stone effect? No, just **stopping effect**

Thibaud: *“It was always the same thing. They'd look at my CV and say: “You have a good CV , but right now, all we can offer you is a workshop for a start, and check out your skills”. Great! Just what I need, another workshop to add to the fourth page of my resumé. Pretty soon, I'm going to be a professional intern [with ironic tone] .”* (French man, 27 years old, temporary contracts, master's degree)

→ From passive welfare state employment policies to **Workfare**

→ People with a lower level of education are also the victims of the effects of the current **social dumping**, allowing those with a higher education to play the card of self-déclassement, in order to obtain a position for which they are **over-qualified**.

Jennyfer: “On the other hand, for those with a higher level of education, there aren't any job openings, so being highly qualified doesn't even really matter...There are under-qualified jobs, but your diploma or degree makes you over-qualified...so your diploma is very important, but it always worth less and less [puzzled expression].” (French woman, 30 years old, undeclared worker/ unemployed, working-class parents)

→ This is a new form of social dumping that pits **the more qualified against the less qualified** when vying for the same job, which forces the less qualified out of the work market, who then see their last hope vanish.

Marika: “Now it's hard even to be a babysitter. The parents ask you if you have a master's. What's does that mean? That you have to know all about Shakespeare just to be able to play with kids? [ironic tone].” (Italian woman, 30 years old, unemployed, working-class parents)

In France and Italy, it is primarily the **structural condition** of the labor market and housing market that hinders the transition to housing autonomy. These are more marked in Italy, where housing policies are absent and rental market is slightly regulated

Ivan: *“You ask if I think about leaving my folks? How can I! I told you already that it's a miracle if I work two months straight....think about paying rent? No thanks, that's the last thing I need.”* (Italian man, 26 years old with government-subsidized contract, at the parental home)

Even though it would be relatively simple to limit the structural difficulties in achieving housing autonomy, there are various **cultural and psychological** factors in play that affect this choice.

In Italy, young men tend to live a **Bohemian life-style**, compensating their job precariousness with the security of living at home with their parents. Their housing trajectories are linear and marked by their **acceptance of having to adapt**.

Ludovica: *“I have a colleague whose mother makes lunch for him everyday. He earns well, but says, “why should I leave home?” You know what I mean? [annoyed expression]. In some ways, living at home is a lot easier but leaving home is a natural thing that has to happen. [...]. The family is lovely, comforting...but only when I come back home at the weekend [she laughs].”* (Italian woman, 26 years old, lawyer, lives alone)

→ In France, young people's trajectories of leaving home are more varied and reversible.

The interviews have shown that young French people are willing to do **without basic necessities**, which means that the new generation experiences forms of fragility with regard to entering adulthood.

Eleonora: *"Yes, I'm lucky because my father can afford to and he'll never leave on our own...If he ever knew that I never turned on the heating last year, I think it would make him quite angry...But at a certain, you want to make it on your own, also dealing with situations that aren't all that bad, you want to say, 'I can deal with managing with my own money even if...', you want to be at least slightly independent. I really can't do it any more, to be dependent on my father, on a scholarship and housing benefits...: 'oh, you never didn't deposit any money for me, now I'm broke."* (French woman, 26 years old, unemployed, father in a managerial position)

→ The **cultural valorization of early independence** comes up against the existence of financial conditions that slow down its achievement. However, the departure from the parental home is not always synonymous with **having made the 'best' choice**, and is often seen as **a choice of 'no-return'**, unless there are some specific reasons to return.

Lise: *"In fact, even though I'm part of the minority of the privileged, I have friends younger than I am who are still living with their parents, to whom I always say: If you want to leave home, I understand that you want to become emancipated, but I'd advise you against it, because life out there is really hard, it stinks!"* (French woman, 26 years old, unemployed, father in a managerial position)

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France

- ❖ Differences in active and passive logics of adaptations reflect a more heterogeneous young society;
- ❖ They are some of the consequences of skill-centred LM and strong reproduction of inequalities within generations;
- ❖ Achievement of adulthood by labour market integration at any cost because it endows a social status, which is considered a key-element of personal development;
- ❖ The logic of social integration stems from the conception of youth “as the age of the definitive choice”;
- ❖ 1st home-leaving transition = an experimental phase, but not for all them, and coming back is a personal failure for some of them;
- ❖ Reversible trajectories with turning point and fragility point;

Italy

- ❖ Being flexible = being precarious;
- ❖ While some «throw in the towel» and accept the bitter reality, others actively turn things around and «leap before they look» , and hope for the best;
- ❖ The permanent contract is always desirable because their country’s entire system work according to organisation logics of Fordism’s;
- ❖ The Italian logic of “Settling down or the logic of family membership” lead to situations of prolonged permanence in the family home;
- ❖ However, delayed departure no longer means that young Italian adults have to comply with an archaic family model;
- ❖ The absence of policies that make longer permanence at home socially acceptable.

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of a modern glass skyscraper. The building's facade is composed of a grid of dark metal frames and reflective glass panels. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The perspective creates a sense of height and architectural scale.

Thank you for your attention!