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Two generations at home: the time cost of young adults living with their parents in France and Italy

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Abstract

Many studies have been dedicated to analyse the determinants of leaving the parental home by focussing on many determinants: material constraints, welfare support and cultural factors. Conversely, in this paper we concentrate on the conditions of the co-residence of the young adults with their parents, as a possible motivation to stay longer. We argue that if young people benefit from greater domestic comfort in parental home, it is rational that they will prolong their permanence. Italy and France represent two interesting cases for testing this theoretical issue: they show similarities in economic constraints and comparable preference for the quality of domestic life, but Italian young people stay longer in parental home than French young adults (about five years more on average). One explanation for their late departure could be that the young Italian adults enjoy strong autonomy and comfort while living at home with parents (a “gilded cage”) than French people. We focus on intergenerational exchange of time devoted to housework and care activities that contribute directly to increase household production. The latest available Italian and French Time-use surveys are used to examine the individual domestic time of young people (aged 18-35) living in parental home and their participation in total household workload. Specifically we explore hypotheses about the fact that Italian young people contribute less than French young people to total household domestic time; that the marginal cost (in terms of domestic time) of leaving parental home is higher in Italy; and that Italian young adults in parental home receive higher transfers of domestic tasks than their French peers (measured as incremental time cost of young adults for the parents). Results show that Italian young adults, particularly men, contribute less to household domestic task and usually support a higher workload when they leave parental home than the French. This cannot be considered only a composition or a structural effect. Italian parents - especially the mothers - bear a greater incremental cost when one young adult lives at home, whereas Italian young adult benefit from superior domestic well-being. The domestic well-being is always greater for young men than for women in both countries.

Key words: intergenerational exchanges, time use, gender, transition to adulthood

1. Introduction

Leaving parental home is considered as one of the crucial events in the transition to adulthood (Billari et al., 2001). Social scientists have devoted much attention to the age at which young people leave their parental home, since other fundamental life-course events - such as marriage and childbearing - are linked to residential autonomy. Many studies are dedicated also to the determinants of transition to adulthood and to the cross-country differences in the age of leaving parental home in Europe. Conversely, less attention has been paid to the conditions of the co-residence of the young adult with their parents. Only few studies try to evaluate whether a higher well-being of young people in parental home could be a rationale to prolong their permanence in the nest. Studies usually focus on young people characteristics to explain their co-residence with parents' home, while intergenerational exchanges, as well as parents' features and behaviour are always regarded as marginal. Moreover, when intergenerational transfers are taken into account, only monetary resources exchanges are generally examined.

In this paper we change perspective and we focus basically on transfer of time between parents and adult children when they live in the same household. We argue that if young people benefit from higher degree of domestic comfort in parental home than in any other living arrangement, it is rational that they will prolong their permanence in the nest. In particular we concentrate on the time that various family members dedicate to domestic tasks. Housework and care activities are indeed immediately devoted to increase the level of comfort of all family members, even if it is possible that both costs and benefits associated to these activities are not equally distributed among the co-resident generations and among genders. Dissimilar intergenerational exchanges could be at the basis of different timing for the exit from parental home.

Italy and France represents two interesting cases for testing this theoretical issue, as they differ very much in terms of transition into adulthood, but they show similarities in economic constraints that young people may have to face (e.g. high young unemployment rate, the spread of precarious contracts) and some comparable preferences for quality of domestic life (e.g. attention to meals preparation). Italian young people stay longer in parental home than the French (about five years more on average) and usually they pass directly from the family of origin to couple life and parenthood, without experimenting multiple transitions, as their French peers. One explanation for their late departure could be that the young Italian adults enjoy strong autonomy and comfort while living at home with parents than French peers. In order to assess whether young Italian adults have really higher 'domestic well being' in parental home (a "gilded cage") than young French, we focus on intergenerational exchange of time devoted to housework and care activities. Specifically we explore hypotheses about the fact that Italian young people contribute less than French young people to total household domestic time; that the marginal cost (in terms of domestic time) of leaving parental home is higher in Italy; and that Italian young adults in parental home receive higher transfers of domestic tasks than their French peers.

The analysis is carried out on the latest available Italian and French Time-use surveys, which provide very detailed information on time that all family members dedicate to domestic and care activities in the same day. Data are objective as both surveys use the time diary technique, whereby individuals report their time use during 24 hours, providing extremely detailed information on the activities performed during that day. The diary data are based on a grid of 10 minute-intervals of time, with a description of the main activity carried out by the respondent. The diary days are randomly distributed across days of the week, and across the year. Besides the Time use surveys contain rich sets of information on the background and socio-economic situation of individuals and households.

This paper is structured as follows. After this introduction, a paragraph is dedicated to literature review on the main approaches to study the transition to adulthood. The third paragraph illustrates our research hypothesis while the fourth describes the background differences between Italy and France. In the fifth paragraph we assess the contribution of young adult living with their parents to household domestic production, in Italy and in France. Paragraph 6 concentrates on the cost of leaving parental home in terms of increase of domestic work for the young adult, while paragraph 7 is dedicated to evaluate the transfers of domestic work from parents to co-resident children in the two countries. In the last paragraph we provide a discussion of our main findings.

2. A view on those who stay at home: an inverse perspective on literature on transition to adulthood

Leaving parental home is connected with other events, such as the timing of ending schooling, of getting the first job and starting the first partnership (Corijn, 1996; Mazzucco et al., 2006). In Italy, residential autonomy is tightly linked to entry in the first union, while in France leaving parental home is much more connected to getting a job. There are pronounced differences within Europe regarding the age young people exit parental home. Determinants of leaving parental home have been extensively studied and many factors have been taken into account to explain cross-countries differences. Many of these determinants could also contribute to explain differences between Italy and France.

First, leaving parental home depends on material constraints young people may face. The housing market conditions are key determinants. If the private rental market is fully developed in France (Le Blanc and Wolff, 2004), in Italy where rental market is inadequate and expensive, transaction costs on the housing market are high and young people have difficulties in getting a mortgage if they do not offer guarantees (Alessie et al., 2005; Mencarini and Tanturri, 2006). Leaving parental home depends also on the youth labour market, since job insecurity may prevent young people living on their own. Aassve et al. (2002) have shown that in southern Europe, more than elsewhere, leaving parental home depends on employment and income. Youth unemployment and non-standard work contracts are widespread in both countries, therefore, in that respect, there is little difference between Italy and France.

Timing of leaving parental home also depends on support young people can obtain. Welfare support for young people is certainly more developed in France than in Italy, where the familialist Mediterranean

model prevails and help from the state is scarce. For instance, in France 22% of students receive grants, whereas in Italy only 5% (Oberti, 2000). Housing subsidies for young adults are also well developed in France and give an incentive to parents and children to have independent dwellings (Laferrère and Le Blanc, 2004). Parents' support of adult children's living arrangement plays a multifaceted role in the transition out of the parental home and first housing acquisition. In Italy not only the inheritance of tenure remains an important factor of social inequalities, but also parents may exert a preferential influence on the decision to leave home. Results from survey data (2003-2004 IDEA) on two cohorts of young Italians (aged 23-27 and 33-37) show that 65% of those who left the parental home have been helped by their parents in the first housing. Most of those who are still living in the parental house expect to be helped when they leave, but the extent of this assistance will be higher if they will marry than if they leave home to cohabit or live on their own. Young people's expectations derive from the parental normative system: mothers of those still living at home with parents confirm the intentions to support the process of first housing more likely if the family has the economic opportunity to do so and especially if leaving home is associated with marriage (Mencarini and Tanturri, 2006).

Lastly, residential autonomy depends on cultural factors. Italy has a strong tradition of "strong family ties" while they are weaker in France (Reher, 1998; Dalla Zuanna, 2002); youth is often described as a 'golden age' in Italy since young adults enjoy considerable autonomy and comfort while living with parents (Cavalli and Galand, 1995; Cavalli 2000; Cavalli, et al. 2008).

Less attention has been paid - beyond these constraints - to the reasons why some young adults stay longer in the parental home. Therefore, in this paper we adopt a different strategy focusing on the complementary population - the young adults who live with parents - with the aim to understand the reasons for this longer cohabitation. Obviously, the reverse explanations may be advanced and the constraints prevailing on the labour market, the housing market and the social norms cannot be moved apart. However, we try to show that there is also some additional positive reasons to stay longer, and that young adult staying with their parents are not only residuals from those who were able to quit parental home. The originality of the paper consists of analysing whether young Italian adults benefit from higher domestic comfort while living with parents compared to the French peers. The general material and psychological comfort of the co-residence with parents may be indeed one additional reason to stay or not. There are many indicators to evaluate this level of comfort at parental home: the quality of the relationship with parents, the degree of personal freedom at parental home (Attias-Donfut 2008, Rampazi 2008), the material comfort of the housing (e.g. separate bedroom, possession of a car and so on) are components of this well being. Some studies have directly estimated the happiness of the young adult living in parental home. From the World Value Survey, Manacorda and Moretti (2006) find a negative association in France between child happiness and co-residence in parental home, and a positive association in Italy. For Billari and Tabellini (2008), who used the same database, this association is never significant (for none of the nine countries studied) and the authors explain the divergence with the possible different samples used in the two studies. In addition, the happiness or life satisfaction has the drawback to be subjective: the same objective situation could be perceived in a

different manner according to the young people characteristics (e.g. age and gender) and the national context (e.g. in some countries is less acceptable to complain).

We choose to analyse the comfort of the co-residence with parents in another way: the 'domestic well being' of young adults in parental home. We assume that the young have greater well being in parental home when they perform little domestic duties and when they benefit from more transfers of domestic tasks from their parents. Domestic well-being is then linked to the amount of unpaid work performed at home by the two co-residing generations. Thus this article devotes attention to the time use of young people when they live in parental home, and compares this time use with those living on their own. In addition, we assess also the effect of adult co-residing children on their parents time use in Italy and in France, as the time cost of children when they are grown-up remains mostly an unexplored area in the literature, where these costs are usually examined only in the short term (Tanturri 2010). In a country, like Italy, where offspring stay in the bosom of the family for over thirty years, it seems very useful to extend the analysis also to the long run.

The decision whether to co-reside or to leave parental home concerns two actors. According Billari & Tabellini (2008), "the late transition to adulthood of young Italians is explained essentially by their preference to co-reside with parents or by their parents' to co-reside with children, or both". Most of the studies on the determinants of leaving parental home focus mainly on the young adult characteristics while parents or household characteristics are used - if ever - as control variables. In this line of reasoning, the decision to stay in parental home or not still remain on the young adults who are old enough to decide by themselves and legally authorized to from their eighteenth birthday. Others studies on the consequences of becoming an empty nest for the parents show that parents are more or less reluctant to see their child leaving home. It is not very clear if the cost of having a young adult at home is compensated by the satisfaction to see him daily at this stage: the effects are very country specific (Mazzuco 2006, Manacorda and Moretti 2006). According to this logic, parents may influence children's choice and either encourage or discourage them to leave, but they never play a major role in the decision for young adult to quit home.

Our paper assumes that the decision - sometimes very constrained - to leave home comes from the young adult, but parents' behaviour toward children may act on this decision actively. In this line of reasoning, we argue that allowing the young adult to have a greater level of domestic comfort by providing them high quality meals, the laundry and many other services for free may indirectly contribute to delay their transition into adulthood. To verify this case we compare two countries - Italy and France - where young people face almost similar constraints (for instance very close young unemployment rate, at least for men), but which differ a lot in terms of age at parental home leave.

3. Research perspective and hypotheses

All the events that characterize the transition to adulthood (i.e. the passage from end of studies to job market, leaving parental home, cohabiting with a partner, having a child) result in major changes in lifestyle, involving different degrees of responsibilities and autonomy, which are likely to correspond to different pattern of time use. Time use research and studies on transition to adulthood lack of mutual integration, even though – as underlined in a comparative study on the time use perspective on transition to adulthood by Gauthier (2002) – the transition to adulthood is reflected by major shifts in the patterns of time use of young people. Usually studies focus on one hand, either on children or adolescents, and not on young adults, on the other hand they analyse only leisure time and working time (e.g. in Gershuny 2000), and not unpaid work in the household.

Gauthier (2002) looked at the time spent on housework by young people aged from 18 to 34 (without considering the living arrangement), finding that unpaid time spent differs substantially between men and women, being flatter for men (with only a small increase associated with the transition to parenthood) whereas for women time on housework increases with the transition to partnership and significantly with the transition to parenthood. She noted that “the transition to adulthood appears to be associated with similar changes in the patterns of time use of young people across countries”: the transitions (from school to work, to partnership and to parenthood) involve very similar reallocation of time in the different countries, and this is remarkable considering that large cross-national differences in the timing of the transition to adulthood. However –as she also underlined – there are open research questions on the extent to which cross-national differences in the timing of key transitions to adulthood translate into different patterns of time use of young adults and the extent to which historical postponement in the transition to adulthood also translate into different patterns of time use of young adults. Also patterns of time use may results from cross national differences in opportunities, constraints, norms and preferences

Another comparative study on life-course time use (Anxo et al. 2008) distinguishes time use variations not only according to age, but also to living arrangement. It evidences that the time use varies across countries (and also between Italy and France), but everywhere gender differences are relevant in the whole life course, including the early stage, when young people still live with their parents or when they live on their own. Specifically for young people in both living arrangements (at home with parents or on their own) gender gaps on time spent in unpaid work are remarkably wider in Italy than in France (Anxo et al. 2008). This can be the result of a differentiated socialization process by gender in those countries and can affect not only the time use of young people, but also their perceptions of the wellbeing associated with living wit parents or not.

In this paper, we would like to shed lights on the life of young people using time use data, focusing in particular on unpaid work (housework and care activities), with the idea that the use of time is one of the missing characteristics of differential timing in transition to adulthood across countries. Analysis of the time spent by young people on domestic tasks requires precise information on their time use. Time Use Surveys represent a unique and precious source of information on daily activities. They use the time diary technique,

whereby individuals report their time use during the previous 24 hours, providing extremely detailed information on the activities performed during that day. The diary days are randomly distributed across days of the week for both men and women. The diary data are based on a grid of 10 minute-intervals of time, with a description of the main activity carried out by the respondent, the second (or concurrent) activity, their location and the presence of other persons. Besides the diary, all the data sets contain rich sets of information on the background and socio-economic situation of individuals and households. Therefore in this paper, the data used are the most recent available Italian and French Time-use surveys (Istat, 2003 and Insee, 1998-1999). The French Time-Use survey was conducted in 1998-1999 by the French National Institute of Statistics (INSEE). 16,136 respondents (belonging to 8186 households) were interviewed about their time-use organisation. 15,441 individuals filled in the daily booklet. The Italian Time-Use survey was conducted in 2003 by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT): 57,773 respondents (belonging to 21075 households) filled in the daily diary.

Usually time use studies divide the time in three large categories: time devoted to market work, time devoted to unpaid work and leisure time. Here we are interested in unpaid time and we use a wide definition of the domestic time calculated from the time-use booklets. It takes into account the classical domestic chores, such as cleaning, cooking, dish washing, food shopping, but also it includes care activities of all types, i.e. child-care and adult-care. One motivation is that young adults may be very useful for babysitting their young brothers and sisters. We also include activities sometimes considered as semi-leisure, such as looking after pets or gardening and maintenance. These types of activities are supposed to be easily performed by young adults to help other household members.

With the aim of investigating the link between time use, home wellbeing, cultural norms on time use and the timing of leaving home, we explore the following three hypotheses.

H1: Italian young people contribute less than French young people to total domestic tasks of the household.

In order to answer this first research question, on whether Italians contribute less than French young adults to household domestic tasks, we use two indicators: 1) individual domestic time, and 2) the share of individual domestic time within total household domestic time (all household members). Our sample is composed of all single young adults aged between 18 and 35 years old and living with their two parents or step-parents. Three-generation households are excluded. The sample size is 1,161 young adults living with their parents in France (629 men and 532 women) and 5,551 in Italy (2,985 men and 2,566 women).

H2: Marginal cost (in terms of domestic time) of leaving parental home is higher in Italy than in France.

In other words, Italian young adults stay longer in parental home because living the nest would imply a higher increase in domestic time than in France. In order to answer this second research question, on whether the marginal cost of leaving parental home is higher in Italy (in terms of domestic time), we use the

incremental domestic work when leaving parental home. Since we have only cross-sectional data, we compare the time-use of different young adults according to their family situation, in particular whether they still live or not within parental home. Once having left parental home, the domestic workload will also depend on the new situation. Our reference category is the young adults living with their parents and we distinguish three other possibilities: singles living alone, childless couples, couples with children. The sample size is composed of all young adults from 18 to 35 in the above situations, that is to say 3,924 in France (1,896 men and 2,028 women) and 10,102 in Italy (4,861 men and 5,241 women).

H3: Italian young adults receive larger transfers of domestic tasks than the French young adults when living at their parent's home.

Since the housework contribution of parents dedicated to young adults cannot be measured directly, because it cannot be isolated from other domestic tasks, we here use an indirect measure, i.e. the incremental time cost for the parents of having a young adult at home.

Therefore, this third hypothesis becomes:

From the parents' point of view, the incremental cost of having a young adult at home is higher in Italy than in France.

A corollary of our research hypotheses derives from the significant gender gap in age at leaving parental home observed in both countries:

since girls leave parental home earlier than boys, we also expect that domestic well-being at parental home is greater for boys than for girls.

To answer this last research question, and test whether young Italians receive more transfers from their parents than their French peers, we concentrate on a sub-sample of parents, by selecting couples aged 40-65 years old (2,258 French and 11,766 Italian). The indicator used in our analysis is the additional domestic work (incremental cost) for parents having an adult child at home, with respect to childless or empty nest households.

4. Background: young adults living with their parents in France and Italy

In term of transition to adulthood France and Italy belong to two different behavioural models (Iacovu 2002). France fits in the northern European model (with United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, and Austria) characterized by early home leaving and multiple transitions on the way to marriage and parenthood; Italy is in the “latest-late” (Billari 2004; Billari and Liefbroer, 2007) group, with a late home leaving and more direct transitions from the family of origin to couple life and parenthood.

Italian young adults stay longer in parental home than French ones. The median age at first leaving from parental home is 24.1 for French men and 22.2 for women, against 29.7 for Italian men and 27.1 for Italian women (from ECHP data : Iacovu 2002, Van de Velde 2004). According to most recent data (2005

French and 2003 Italian Gender and Generation Surveys), 70% of Italian men between 25 and 39 are still at parents' home against 10% of their French peers. The difference is particularly high starting with late 20s: in the 25-29 age class more than 70% of Italian young men and more than 53% of women live in their parental home, against less than 10% of their French peers. The intentions seem to drive behaviour, 80% of French men and 90% of French women, aged 25-39 declared to intend to exit parental home within the next three years, as against 50% of Italian men and 70% of Italian women (GGS data).

Table 1 and figure 1 show the proportions of young women and men in France and in Italy according to their family situation and living arrangement, calculated from French and Italian time use surveys. The results in term of single young people living with parent between 18 to 25 years old are slightly different from those of GGS because of different sample (particularly small in the French case) and sampling strategy. As it is noticeable, at all ages, Italians are the least likely to have left home. The so-called “delay syndrome” (Livi Bacci 2001) invests, in fact, all the steps of transition to adulthood. Living alone is a largely less frequent outcome of leaving the parental nest in Italy. Partnership formation and first child also arrive later in Italy compared to France.

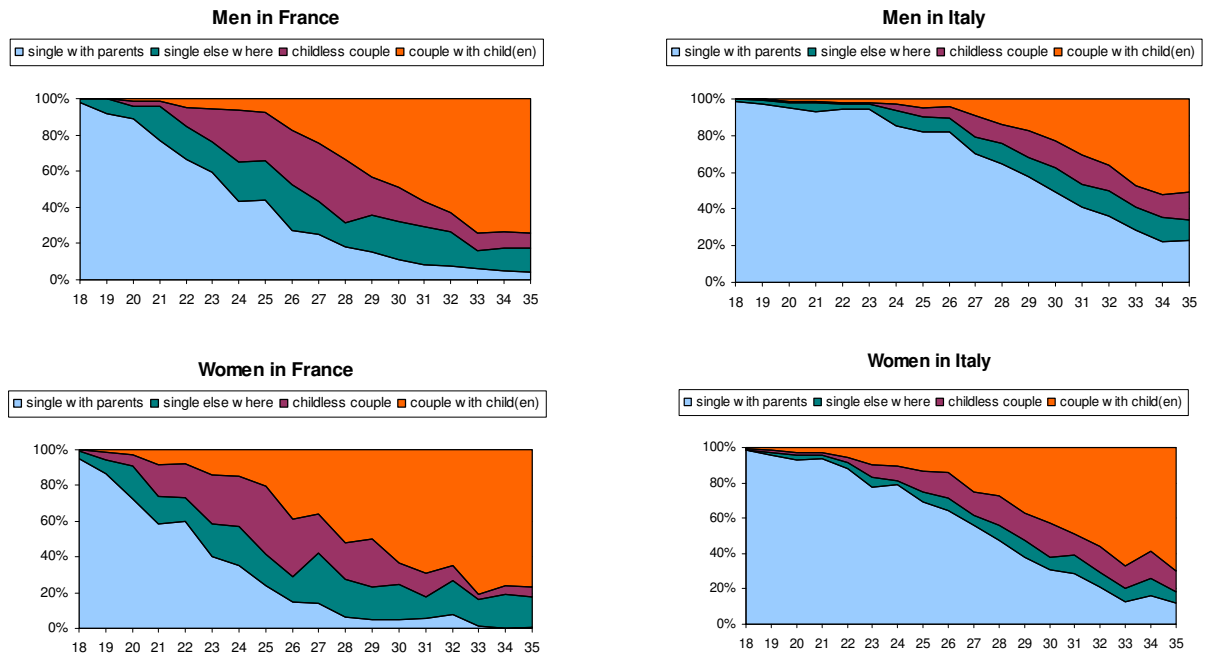
The differences in the timing at the transition out of the parental home affects also the composition of those living at home. The table 2 shows some descriptive statistics about the young adult living with their parents in both countries by sex and it is clear that there are marked differences of the characteristics of the two population studied (i.e. young people age 18-35 leaving at home with parents). These differences are likely of course to affect the behaviour of young people at home, and they have to be taken into account in our in depth study of time use. First of all, we can notice that since Italian young adults stay longer at home, they are on average older (25 years) than French young adult (22). They are also more likely to have already a job: 58% of Italian young adult at home are in the labour market against 25% of French ones. Half of French men are still in education. Not only the young living at home are different between the two countries, but, on average, also their family. The most striking difference is that Italian young adults are less likely to have a working mother than French ones (less than 40% against about 75% of French) and this characteristic can affect the time use of the young people widely, as we will show in the following paragraph.

Table 1: Family situation of the 18-35 years old in both countries by sex

	Men		Women	
	Italy	France	Italy	France
Single living with parents	61.4	33.2	49.0	26.2
Single living alone	7.8	16.1	4.9	13.2
Childless couple	9.3	16.0	11.0	16.9
Couple with child(en)	21.5	34.7	35.1	43.7
<i>N</i>	<i>4861</i>	<i>1896</i>	<i>5241</i>	<i>2028</i>

Source: own calculation on Time Use Surveys (Italy 2002-03, France 1998-99)

Figure 1: Living arrangements between 18-35 in France and Italy



Source: own calculation on Time Use Surveys (Italy 2002-03, France 1998-99)

Table 2: Description of young adults living with parents

	Men		Women	
	Italy	France	Italy	France
Young adult characteristics				
Age	25	22	24	21
Education				
<i>High</i>	8%	16%	10%	20%
<i>Medium</i>	49%	28%	61%	33%
<i>Low</i>	42%	56%	29%	48%
Professional situation				
<i>student</i>	25%	51%	37%	61%
<i>unemployment OLF</i>	17%	14%	22%	14%
<i>Employed</i>	58%	35%	41%	25%
Household characteristics				
Number of child(ren) <18	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.7
Number of young adults	1.9	1.6	2	1.7
Only sisters			58%	51%
Only brothers	62%	61%		
Mother's work= yes	36%	74%	38%	75%
Mother's education				
<i>High</i>	6%	14%	6%	15%
<i>Medium</i>	18%	9%	19%	8%
<i>Low</i>	76%	76%	75%	76%
Number of rooms	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9
Garden	50%	75%	50%	75%
Paid domestic help	4%	7%	3%	6%
N	2985	629	2566	532

5. The contribution of French and Italian young adults living at parental home to household domestic tasks.

The time young men living in parental home devote to domestic tasks varies considerably between the two countries (table 3 and figure 2). On average, Italian young men spend around half time to these activities than their French counterparts (respectively 35 and 54 minutes per day). There is not such a difference for young women who spend roughly the same amount of time to domestic tasks in Italy and France (respectively 102 and 99 minutes per day). Thus, the contribution of young women to the household total domestic tasks is substantial, i.e. they contribute to nearly one fifth of the total domestic time (16% in Italy and 18% in France). Conversely, male contribution is much lower in both countries, but in Italy where young men take part to only 5% of the total domestic workload of the household, is almost negligible. It is twice as much for young French men (10%).

The low average time devoted by Italian young men to domestic labour partly results from the low share of participants. Only 42% of young Italian men living in parental home performed at least one domestic task on the interview day, while in France is higher (54%). The proportion of young women taking part in domestic activities is much higher in both countries (79%). The time spent by young men who participate is sizeable (82 minutes for Italian young men and 100 minutes for French young men), but gender inequalities persist since young women who take part into domestic labour still spend about half an hour more than young men. The sexual division of tasks is therefore already noticeable at young ages and we think that it might be the product of different educational norms by gender in the examined countries. Moreover, these descriptive statistics show that behaviours of French and Italian women are quite similar at young ages, but from previous studies we are aware that they will differ later when they enter a couple, whereas Italians men do fewer tasks than French ones (see Anxo et al., forthcoming 2011).

These results invite us to control for country-specific effects, to assess how much of these country-differences among young men can be explained by structural effects. We have already seen that the characteristics of the population of young adult living with their parents vary a great deal between the two countries: in Italy they are older, more likely to have a job, and their mother is less often in employment than in France. We compare the participation of young people to domestic tasks between the two countries using a pooled dataset² and estimate a multivariate Tobit model³ on the amount of domestic time performed by young adults living at parental home. Since behaviours regarding participation to domestic tasks greatly differ by gender, two models, one for young men, one for young women, are performed. Our interest variable is a dummy variable for Italy. We first start with a basic model controlling only for country and then introduce step by step covariates related to individual and household characteristics. As regard individual characteristics, we control for age and age squared, education level (with three dummy variables: low education, i.e. primary or lower, medium level, i.e. secondary and high education, i.e. university), and

² This solution is feasible thanks to the similarities of collecting time-use data in the two surveys.

³ A Tobit model is estimated since the distribution is left censored, with many individuals for whom domestic time is null.

activity status (with three dummy variables: employed as a reference, student⁴ and unemployed or homemaker). As regard household variables, we control for the household composition (number of children under 18, number of young adults, sex composition of the young adults siblings (only masculine siblings for men, only feminine siblings for women), the mother's employment status (whether she works or not), her level of education (the same three dummy variables), and some characteristics of the dwelling (number of rooms and presence of a garden), and finally access to domestic services (housekeepers).

Whatever the specification, the country coefficient is always significant for men (table 4): Italian young men do fewer domestic tasks than their French counterparts. When all structural effects are controlled for, they spend 15 minutes less per day to domestic duties in Italy than in France. On the other hand, the country coefficient is always non significant for women. Even controlling for structural effects, young women spend as much time to domestic activities in Italy as in France. Thus, observables characteristics and structural effects do not explain all the differences observed between Italian and French men. Our first hypothesis is validated, but only for men. Young Italian men with the same characteristics of the French spend less time to domestic tasks, and thus their well being at parental home may be greater. This greater domestic well being is a potential explanation for their higher propensity to stay in the parental home.

Analysing the changes of the value of the country dummy when the other covariates are added step by step in the model displays how structural characteristics affect the difference in male participation to domestic duties between the two countries. The main changes occur when controls for age, mother's characteristics and home characteristics are added. Controlling for age increases the negative country-specific effect since young people living in parental home are younger in France, and since the younger spend less time on domestic activities than the older. On the other hand, controlling for mother's characteristics (her employment status and level of education) reduces the gap between countries. Hence, in France, the young people's mother works more frequently and those whose mother works spend more time in domestic duties. Finally, higher access to domestic services in France (which reduces domestic time) explains also the decrease of the country dummy.

When we estimate the same complete Tobit model separately for each country the determinants of young people domestic time slightly differ in France and Italy (table 5). Italian men increase their domestic participation as they get older, when they are highly educated or have more time. Students, and especially unemployed people, spend more time performing domestic duties than men in employment. Results are less significant for French men⁵: being unemployed only has a positive effect on domestic time. Job status plays an important role also for both Italian and French women. Thus, it is evident that the domestic participation of young adults depends on the availability of time itself.

Above individual characteristics, youth participation is mainly driven by the employment status and education level of the mother. Having a working mother increases young Italian participation in domestic activities, for men as for women. The larger time constraints of the working mothers favour their children's participation into domestic duties. Moreover, growing in a less traditional family, which marks the break

⁴ A separate category is used for young people in education since studies are time-consuming.

⁵ The smaller sample size may explain why coefficients are not significant.

with the male breadwinner model, seems to give and transmit different norms about the participation of young people into domestic activities. Having a highly educated mother has a negative effect only on female young adults' domestic participation, in France and in Italy. This can be explained by the fewer amount of domestic tasks performed in such households, but also by the transmission of the lower valuation of such activities to the daughters. Highly educated mothers may also act as reducing the sexual division of roles by alleviating their daughter's participation into domestic chores. Finally, the time young women spend on domestic activities depend on the number of siblings of the same age. In particular, there are some economies of scale for girls of having exclusively sisters.

We can conclude that the participation of young adults to domestic tasks is a "secondary" participation, highly dependent on their free time and on their mother's participation.

Table 3: Young adult domestic participation in France and Italy, by gender

	Men		Women	
	Italy	France	Italy	France
All				
Domestic time (min per day)	35	54	102	99
Share of household domestic time (%)	5%	10%	16%	18%
% of participants	42%	54%	79%	79%
<i>N</i>	2985	629	2566	532
Participants				
Domestic time (min per day)	82	100	129	127
Share of household domestic time (%)	13%	19%	21%	22%
<i>N</i>	1268	340	2039	418

Table 4: Country-specific effect of Italy according to control covariates introduced step by step (Tobit model)

	Only country variable	+ age	+ education	+ employment status	+ siblings size and composition	+ mother's characteristics	+ home and domestic help
Men							
Italy (ref=France)	40.184**						
se	(-6.386)						
Marginal effect	-18.48***	-47.556***	-46.328***	-44.595***	-43.125***	-37.787***	-34.344***
Women							
Italy (ref=France)	3.641	-5.54	-3.438	-10.542	-9.206	-6.96	-6.737
se	(-6.322)	(-6.466)	(-6.638)	(-6.414)	(-6.623)	(-6.939)	(-7.039)
Marginal effect	2.71	-4.17	-2.59	-8.09	-7.07	-5.34	-5.16

Controlled for: age, age squared, education level, activity status, number of children under 18, number of young adults, sex composition of the young adults siblings, mother's employment status, mother's level of education number of rooms, presence of a garden, access to domestic services.

Standard errors in parentheses. * Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Figure 2: Domestic time of young adult living with their parents in France by age

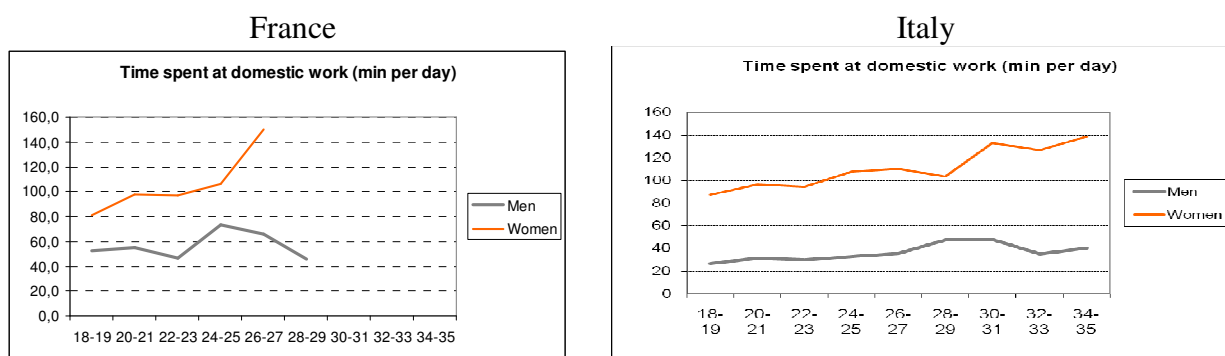


Table 5: Determinants of young people participation in domestic work in Italy and France (Tobit model)

	Men		Women	
	Italy	France	Italy	France
Age	23.119*** (7.032)	-18.310 (18.743)	3.698 (6.854)	7.680 (21.305)
Age squared	-0.378*** (0.135)	0.439 (0.373)	0.011 (0.135)	-0.057 (0.444)
Medium (ref= low)	0.512 (6.096)	14.269 (15.347)	-2.815 (6.127)	-25.584* (13.578)
Education= high (ref= low)	19.494* (10.684)	15.374 (19.670)	-14.089 (9.891)	-11.941 (17.532)
Student (ref=employed)	26.852*** (7.988)	21.786 (17.644)	11.579* (6.419)	16.939 (16.965)
Unemployed/ OLF (ref=employed)	49.839*** (7.588)	74.584*** (19.517)	89.492*** (6.693)	101.819*** (18.368)
Number of children <18	9.926 (6.341)	-8.300 (8.148)	3.800 (5.656)	0.747 (6.911)
Number of young adults	-4.972 (4.777)	-9.711 (9.171)	5.125 (4.209)	-13.257* (7.154)
Feminine siblings			-10.979* (5.951)	-23.448* (13.535)
Masculine siblings	2.085 (6.772)	-0.148 (15.496)		
Mother in employment	11.692* (6.013)	21.013 (16.569)	16.443*** (5.417)	10.693 (14.417)
Mother's education= medium (ref= low)	-10.508 (7.698)	10.102 (20.939)	-20.183*** (6.896)	-24.945 (21.032)
Mother's education= high (ref= low)	-2.927 (12.710)	-23.561 (20.459)	-61.182*** (11.579)	-37.142** (17.092)
Number of rooms	5.818*** (1.807)	7.344 (6.019)	0.719 (1.618)	-4.591 (5.241)
Garden	10.515* (5.675)	17.748 (15.594)	-2.827 (5.272)	19.841 (13.791)
Paid domestic help	4.929 (15.072)	5.665 (27.058)	16.768 (14.712)	-4.629 (25.725)
Constant	-412.523*** (90.631)	114.697 (231.965)	-34.908 (85.010)	-24.475 (253.177)
Observations	2965		500	

Standard errors in parentheses. * Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

6. The cost of leaving parental home

According to our second hypothesis, Italian young adults may stay longer in parental home not only because they perform less domestic duties while they are living in parental home, but also because leaving the nest would imply a higher increase in domestic time than in France. We assume here that young people trade-off between their well-being when they live in parental home and when they live on their own, and thus evaluate the marginal cost of living the nest (in terms of domestic time). Young adults who expect a decrease in domestic well-being when out of parental home will stay longer in.

In order to test this hypothesis, we estimate the incremental domestic time when leaving parental home. Since we have only cross-sectional data in hands⁶, we compare the time-use of different young adults according to their family situation, i.e. living alone, being in a childless couple, being in a couple with children⁷, by estimating a Tobit regression on the amount of domestic time on a sample of all people aged 18-35 years. The reference category is the group of young adults living with their parents. As control covariates a polynomial form of age, the level of education, work status, number of rooms, existence of a garden, a dummy if the household use paid domestic help, an indicator of town size, and indicators distinguishing week-end days (Saturday, Sunday) are introduced. We first observe how the family situation affect time use in each country (table 6). Since the participation of the reference group differs by country, we run in a second step the estimate on a pooled sample with a country dummy to analyse whether the family situation has a specific impact in each country (table 7). Like previously, we estimate these models separately for young men and women.

In both countries, young people out of parental home spend more time doing household tasks (table 6). Not surprisingly, this additional time is higher for young people living in couple with children (about 1h40 a day for men, more than 4 hours a day for women), since children increase the demands on domestic time (Craig and Bittman 2008). But it is also higher for childless people living in couple, and also for singles. So leaving parental home implies additional housework. In Italy, this extra domestic work is higher for men than for women: singles young men spend 74 minutes more on domestic tasks than men living in parental home, while this difference reaches 55 minutes for women. The lower participation of men in domestic tasks when living in parental home explains these differences.

The incremental time devoted to housework by single young men compared to young men living in parental home is lower in Italy than in France (table 7). It is 28 minutes lower. Similarly, the additional domestic time related to living in partnership or having children is lower in Italy than in France for men (17 minutes for both situations). So Italian young men still continue to participate less to domestic tasks than

⁶ To observe such variation, holding time-use panel data would allow observing domestic participation before and after leaving parental home for the same individuals. Unfortunately, panel time-use data are still very scarce, and not available for France and Italy

⁷ We do not compare exclusively to the group of young people living on their own, since some young adults quit their parents and form a couple immediately. Moreover, since leaving parental home has at least medium term effects, we can reasonably assume that young adults make a cost-benefit trade-off between their current situation in parental home with all the possible future scenarios. For instance, a woman can decide to postpone couple formation because she implicitly knows she will bear a large part of domestic duties once cohabiting.

their French counterparts, whatever their family situation, but particularly when they are single. The preservation of strong family ties with parents after leaving parental home, allowed by residential proximity (very common in Italy), frequent visits to parents and the ongoing role of the Italian 'mamma' - even when children have left the home - explain this lower participation of young singles men in Italy. For instance, more than half of adult people in Italy live at one kilometre or less from their mother, while in France only slightly more than one third (Multi-countries Survey 2005).

The cross-country differences vary for women. First, the additional domestic time of singles compared to young women living in parental home is equivalent in both countries. But Italian young women participate more than the French ones to domestic activities from the couple formation (31 minutes more per day). Entering a union deteriorates the domestic well-being by increasing sensitively the domestic workload. This gap between Italian and French young women increases with the births of children (the difference equals 41 minutes).

To summarize, living parental home implies a huge additional domestic time. This marginal cost of leaving parental home to become single is higher for men than for women (and this may be one reason why they postpone leaving parental home and even skip this phase of the life-course). However, the marginal cost of leaving parental home is lower for Italian young men than for French men. These results in terms of marginal costs seem not to corroborate our second hypothesis, as they do not help to justify the longer delay of the Italians with respect to the French.

Table 6: Domestic time by family situation for young people aged 18-35

	Men		Women	
	Italy	France	Italy	France
Ref = young people in parental home single	74.21*** (8.25)	76.29*** (14.75)	61.12*** (10.06)	55.27*** (15.30)
childless couple	98.10*** (7.70)	78.81*** (14.24)	125.49*** (7.39)	93.83*** (13.64)
couple with child(ren)	156.65*** (6.50)	138.08*** (13.17)	297.02*** (6.18)	237.84*** (12.77)
Observations	4861 1896		5241 2028	

Standard errors in parentheses. * Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Control covariates: age, age2, education, work status, number of rooms, garden, paid domestic help, town size, Saturday, Sunday

Table 7: Domestic cost of leaving parental home (country effect)

	Men	Women
Living with parents * Italy	-54.41*** (7.08)	-12.24 (7.53)
Single	75.96*** (10.84)	37.46*** (11.85)
Single * Italy	-54.25*** (11.15)	13.52 (12.92)
Childless couple	75.91*** (10.74)	80.81*** (10.87)
Childless couple * Italy	-30.74*** (10.74)	32.11*** (10.23)
Couple with child(ren)	133.07*** (9.20)	238.24*** (9.31)
Couple with child(ren) * Italy	-29.61*** (7.10)	43.48*** (6.17)

Standard errors in parentheses. * Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Control covariates: age, age2, education, work status, number of rooms, garden, paid domestic help, town size, Saturday, Sunday

7. The time benefits to leave at home (i.e. the time cost for parents of young adults living at home)

In the last part of this paper we address our third hypothesis: we are interested to test whether young Italians receive more transfers from their parents in terms of time than their French peers. Our idea is that co-residence with parents allows adult children not only to save money and time, but also to gain a net transfer of time from parents in terms of domestic services, which increases their domestic comfort. In other words, we wonder whether Italian parents do bear a greater cost in terms of domestic work when they have a young adult at home than the French parents. For the methodology we largely rely on a seminal paper by Craig and Bittman, on Australia, which have been published in 2008.

We select a sub-sample of couples aged 40-65 years old: 2,258 in France and 11,766 in Italy. The marginal time costs of adult children is assessed by comparing the daily workload of childless couples with couples (in the same age bracket) with different number (1, 2, 3 or more) and age of children (adult or less than 18 years old). The additional domestic work for parents having an adult child at home is the dependent variable in this analysis. The variables of interest are different family typologies that are built combining the age and the number of children in the family. Childless couples are the reference group in this case. We run OLS models controlling for women's age, men's age, couple employment status, couple educational level, day of the interview. After running the model for the couples on the whole, we examine how the cost of adult children is distributed between parents in a gender perspective.

Ceteris paribus, having young adult children at home increases domestic work for the parents: in Italy in any case and usually at greater extent, while in France only if there are at least three adult children, or when there is one adult and one younger child (table 8). In both countries having adult children at home affects essentially mothers' time use, but in most cases the cost is larger for the Italian mothers than for their French peers. Conversely, the effect for fathers in France is never significant, except in the case they have either one young child or one young and one adult child, while in Italy it is not significant for those fathers having one or two adult children, but significant and even negative when adult children are three (table 8). This result might suggest that adult children can substitute their father in performing domestic tasks. On the contrary, Italian fathers increase their participation only when they have younger children (table 8).

In sum, we can conclude that Italian young people benefit from larger transfers of domestic work from their parents when they live at parental home, but this is mainly thanks to their mother's greater commitment. In France, only when adult children are three, they do benefit from larger transfer of domestic work, basically from their mothers. The presence of a young adult implies an even more unequal sharing between men and women, than the presence of a young child, other things being equal.

Table 8: Family composition effect on parents' domestic work

Ref = no child no young adult	France			Italy		
	Couple	Mother	Father	Couple	Mother	Father
1 young adult	16.51	18.34*	-1.83	23.75***	28.75***	-5
1 child <18	63.52***	34.99***	28.53**	67.65***	52.55***	15.10***
2 young adults	15.02	11.87	3.15	46.39***	44.42***	1.96
2 =1 child + 1 young adult	64.66***	41.97***	22.69*	66.88***	60.03***	6.86
2 children	74.18***	73.10***	1.08	120.47***	88.56***	31.91***
≥ 3 young adults	90.40**	84.92***	5.48	38.15***	56.36***	-18.21**
≥3 at least 1 child 1 young adult	79.32***	79.15***	0.17	71.97***	79.89***	-7.93
≥ 3 children	150.89***	124.21***	26.68	151.21***	111.47***	39.74***
Observations	2258	2258	2258	11766	11766	11766
R-squared	0.15	0.20	0.13	0.13	0.17	0.11

* Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Controlled by women's age, men's age, couple employment status, couple educational level, day of interview

8. Conclusions: youth golden age and home gilded cage?

Our study is an effort to understand how the norms and the practices of time exchange between generations can be one of the possible explanations for the Italians' delayed transition to adulthood. The comparison between Italy and France, similar in many respects, provides useful insights to understand the reasons behind different timing for the exit from the parental family.

Our main hypothesis is that young Italians co-reside longer with their parents because they benefit more than their French peers from this situation, not only for merely economic reasons but also in terms of domestic tasks. Time use budget surveys are a precious source for analysing in detail how unpaid work is shared among co-residing generations and gender. Unfortunately there are no longitudinal time use data allowing dynamic analyses to verify the increase of workload for the young that leave parental home. Nevertheless, they provide interesting static comparisons between young men and women in different living arrangements.

Our results seem to confirm that Italian young adults living with parents perform fewer domestic tasks than the French. Our findings prove that this result cannot be considered only a compositional or structural effect, but rather a really different cultural practice. The scarce contribution is particularly evident for Italian men that perform only 5% of the whole domestic production, while the French men 10%. Inter-country differences between young women are smaller and their contribution is more relevant (between 16 and 18%). Therefore we can state that domestic well-being in parental home is greater for boys, especially for Italians. We assess a leaving cost for the young in terms of an increase of the quantity of domestic tasks, greater for men than women. However this cost is lower for the Italian men than for their French peers, equal for single women, greater for women in partnership. Italian parents especially the mothers, bear a greater incremental cost, when one young adult lives at home. Again, Italian young adult benefit from superior domestic well-

being. The domestic well-being is always more important for young men than for young women in both countries.

In synthesis, our results appear to confirm the idea that parental family is a sort of “gilded cage” (Cook and Furstenberg, 2002), for the young Italian that perform only a small quantity of daily unpaid work and benefit from their parents (above all mothers) intensive activity, that presumably makes their permanence very comfortable. Such an high quality domestic life (e.g. good home-made meals, ironed clothes, ...) is very difficult to be experimented living as a single or even in couples. Therefore, at least from this point of view, can be perfectly rational postponing the exit from the family of origin in Italy. In France, a family demanding more participation in domestic activities and providing fewer services could make the co-residence less beneficial for the young.

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