



Universitat de les Illes Balears

An ethnographic approach to explain how gender influenced youth transition pathways

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Introduction

This paper is part of a broader study, funded by Spanish Ministry (National Plan for R&D&I), which explores the paths of transition to adult life of an initial group young people aged between 26 and 28 years, during the approximately ten years elapsed between finishing compulsory education (2000 to 2001) and data collection (2010 to 2012). The main aim of the analysis is to ascertain the processes of transition from education into working life.



The situation in Spain

- ▶ **Precariousness and instability** as the main characteristics of the Labour Market in Spain.:
- ▶ Economy based on construction and services. The economic crisis (2008) affects to the construction sector (end of “housing bubble”).
- ▶ In the Balearic Islands the economy is based on construction, services and touristic sector. The labour market is characterised for temporality (summer season), instability and before crisis a large number of job demands not requiring a high level of education or skills to workers.



The situation in Spain

- ▶ **High Early school dropout** rate in the Balearic Islands, so the economy has a direct effect on youth level of studies, early dropout rate stood at 36,7%, 28,4% in Spain and 14,1% in EU countries (2010)
 - ▶ **Lack of policies** related to Second Chance Education and Equality
 - ▶ **Unemployment** affects in major proportion to men than women and the gender gap has decreased during last 4 years.
 - ▶ The highest **Youth unemployment** rate in Europe, youth is the collective most affected for the crisis, the evolution rate 2006-2011 is 17,9% to 46,4%. The OCDE average is 16,2%.
 - ▶ Youth unemployment affects more highly to those with low level of education (**level 1 or 2**).
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- ▶ **NEETs** 24% in Spain, 16% in EU countries

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Gender inequalities still present in formally egalitarian societies:

- ▶ Horizontal segregation (education choices and professional careers)
- ▶ Vertical segregation, glass ceiling and the difficulties to articulate family, work and personal times.
- ▶ Lower salaries
- ▶ Educational level Polarisation (low level-high level)
- ▶ The difficulties to become a mother, the choice between a good career and create the own family
- ▶ The work sexual division: male or female breadwinners or dual earners.
- ▶ The heterogeneity of the female collective.



Emancipation model in Spain

Spain is a familist society

- ▶ Living with parents until 29 years of age
- ▶ LAT couples (Living Apart Together)
- ▶ Youth delay emancipation until they find stability in personal and professional spheres
- ▶ Emancipation associated to marriage or with couple
- ▶ Owned houses preference with mortgage, with the end of housing bubble and the bank crisis, there is a preference of rented houses.
- ▶ **Returning kids** at parents' house after losing job (economic crisis influence)
- ▶ Influenced for education level, paid work situations, family background and attitudes.



Motherhood

- ▶ Low fertility rate: 1,38 children per woman
- ▶ Childbearing age is 32,2 years old
- ▶ This rate varies depending on nationality, level of education and paid work situation.
- ▶ Sometimes, young women planned their professional career depending on desire of motherhood



Economic crisis influences

Youth
unemployment
57%

Unemployment
rate: 30%

Decreasing Fertility
rate

Overqualification
31%

Early School
Dropout is
decreasing

Youth Emancipation
model is changing

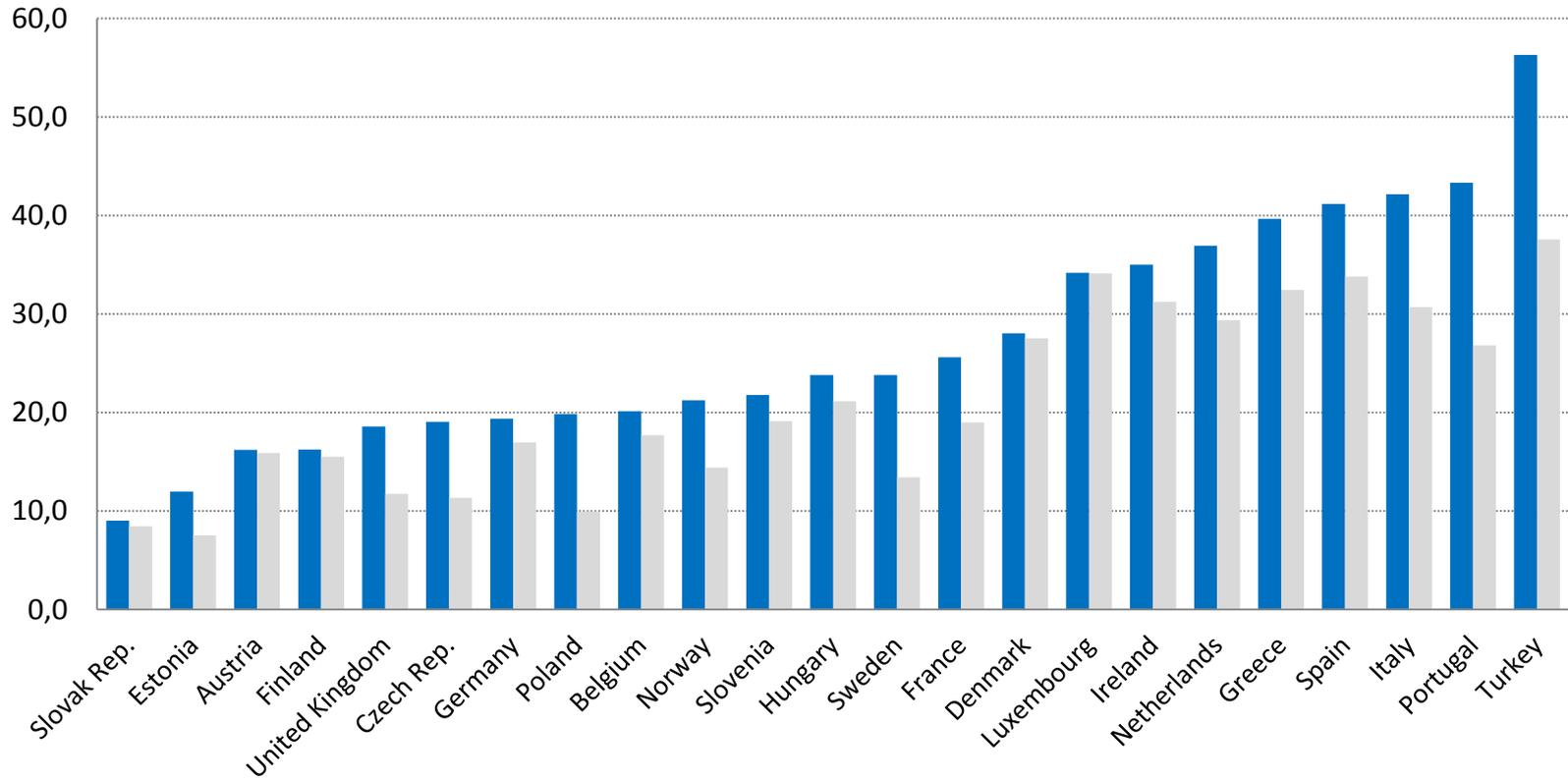
The end of Middle
class and
meritocracy model

Austerity polices
affecting specially to
Education, Social
Welfare and Equality



Overqualification (OECD, 2010)

■ Over-qualified 25-34 ■ Over-qualified 35-54



Theoretical dimensions

Intersectionality

Women as a diverse and heterogeneous group.

How gender interacts with other variables such as race, age, social origin, religion, educational level and occupational status.

Youth transitions sociology

Youth transition to adulthood as processes: constructed by individual elections and decisions but under familiar and environment determinations, structural context, cultural and symbolical determinations

A non-androcentric view

Global definition of work: paid and domestic/care work

Both important for social Well being

Invisible women/Inactive women?



The research objectives

1. To describe young women educational, labour and personal pathways at the end of compulsory education (16 years old) and their evolution during 10 years (2000-10).
2. To describe perceptions, meanings and attitudes of young women along the vital sequence analysed and how influenced young women educational, labour and personal pathways and the influences in these perceptions (ruptures and bifurcations).
3. To describe future expectations and aspirations of young women and interpret the factors that have influenced its configuration.
4. To identify the factors involved in shaping the educational, work and personal pathways taking into account the social and historical context.
5. To analyse how these factors interact and how contribute to the configuration of young women transitions to adulthood during the 10 years analysed.



The method

- ▶ Qualitative or interpretive methodology, based on the biographical method with an ethno-sociological approach (Bertaux, 2005) and with an analysis of paths as processes (Bidart, 2006a, b, 2008). In this study we use the biographical method, analysing and describing youth pathways during 10 years since they finished compulsory education with or without any educational credential.
- ▶ Life stories as a central element constructed by biographical interviews.
- ▶ Retrospective longitudinal analysis: interviews were conducted in 2010 and we asked young women about educational, work and personal paths developed since 2000 (when they finished compulsory education)

The sample

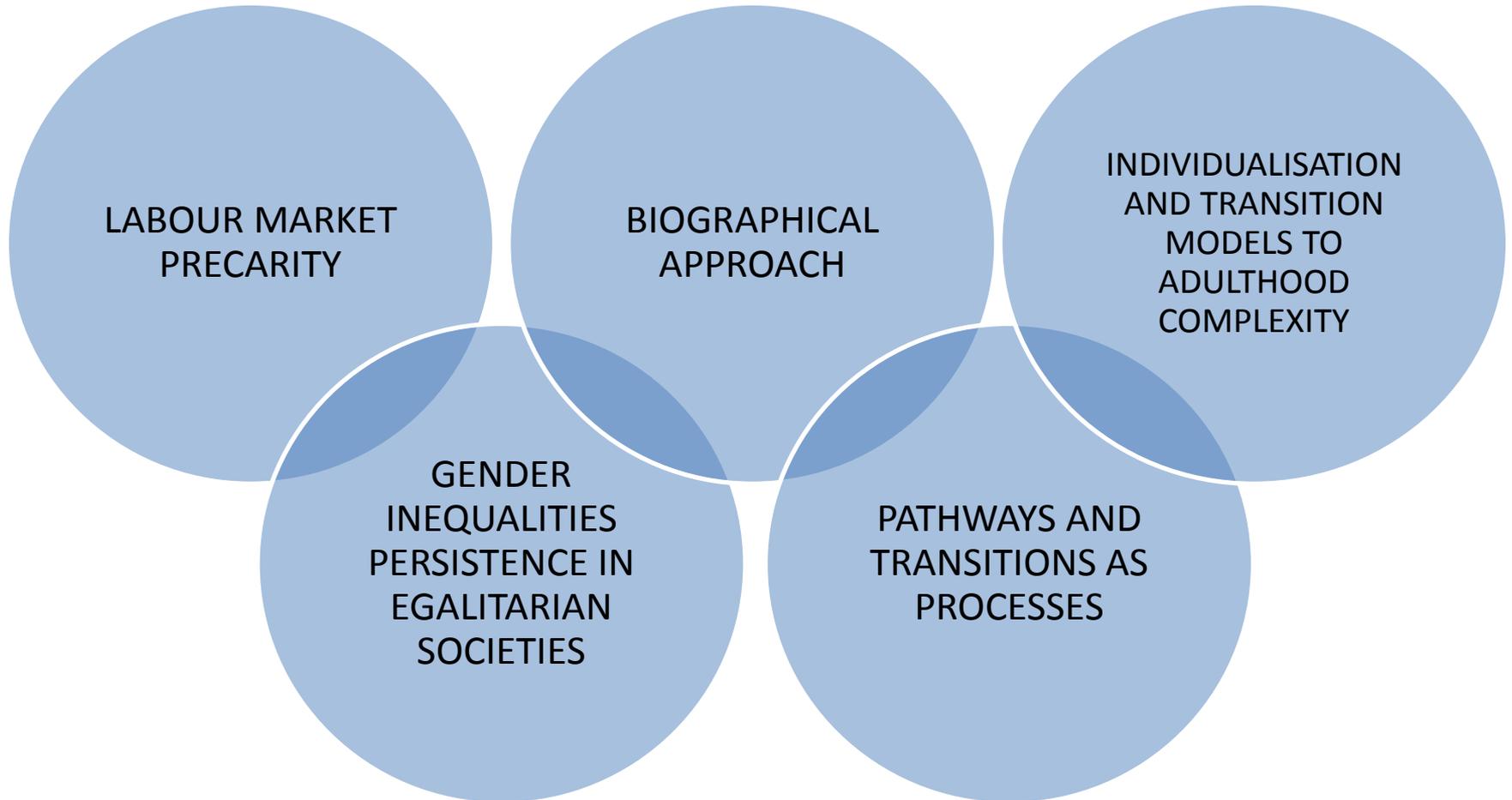
- ▶ The sample is conformed for 23 young women aged 26-28 years old with different educational levels, social backgrounds, nationality and who have followed different patterns of transition to adulthood
- ▶ Selected from secondary schools, training and counselling services for job placement both public and private.
- ▶ Young women who had finished in 2000 compulsory secondary education with or without any educational credential.
- ▶ The period of study is 2000-2010, so we can also analyse the initial effects of economic crisis started in 2008 in their transitions. All of them are living in Palma de Mallorca (Mallorca-Balearic Islands) in urban area, so Palma is the biggest city in the island with around 500.000 habitants.

Sample distribution by level of studies

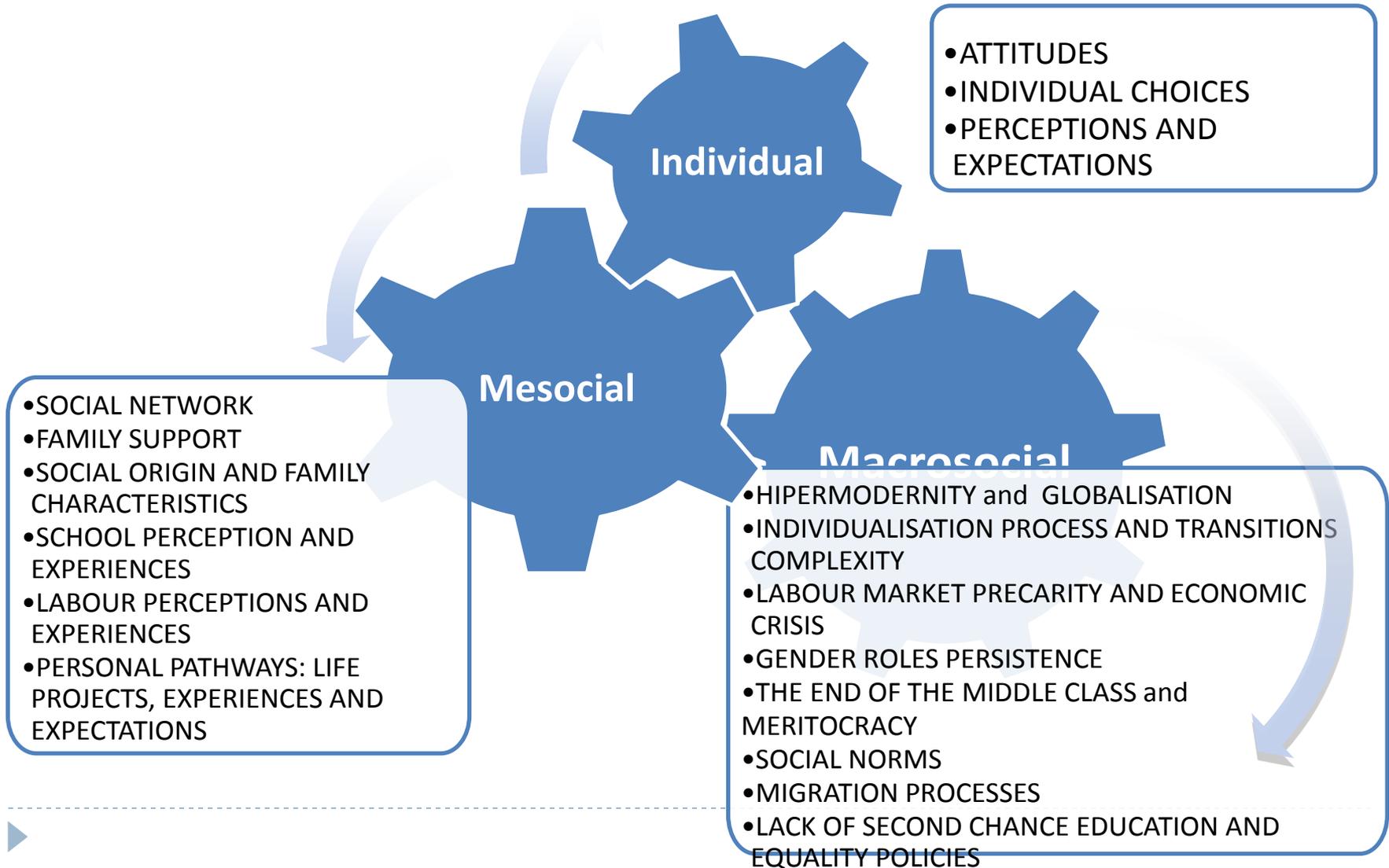
| Education category | ISCED Level | Spanish qualification | Number of individuals |
|---------------------------|-------------|---|--|
| Without studies | Level 0-1 | Pre-primary education / Primary Studies | Valeria, Diana, Margalida |
| Low level of Education | Level 2 | Lower secondary education | Pepi, Lidia, Pilar, María, Raquel, Julia |
| Upper Secondary Education | Level 3A | Direct access to 5a | Merche, Victoria, Jennifer, Micaela |
| | Level 3B | Vocational training | María Antonia |
| Tertiary Studies | Level 5A | Bachelor or equivalent | Marta, Lola, Katherine, Nora, Montse |
| | Level 5B | Upper vocational training | Amelia, Carla |
| | Level 6 | PhD and Master | Aina, Josefa |



Analitical dimensions



Influencing factors in transitions



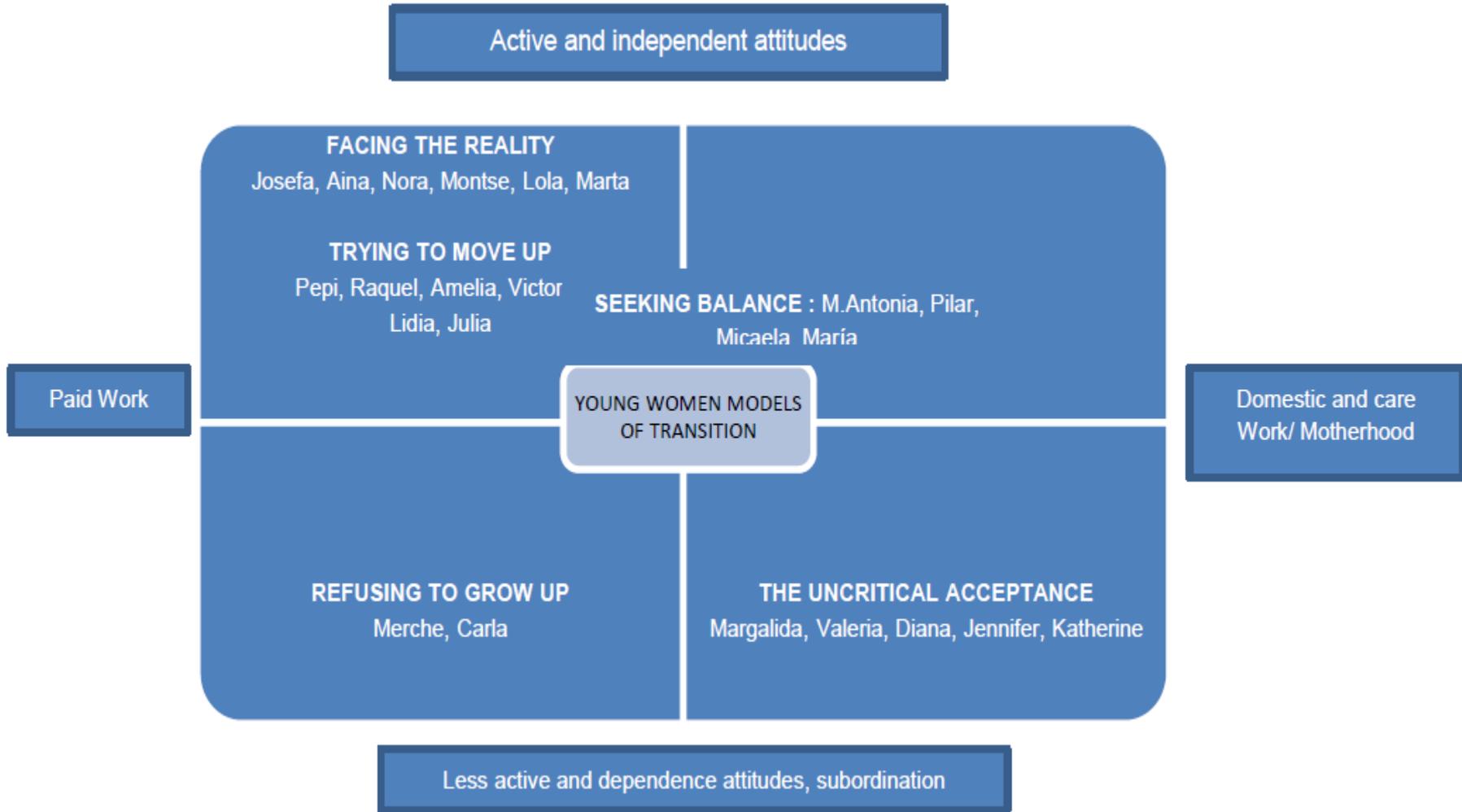
Results

- ▶ After being interpreted each educational, work and personal pathway and being analysed which factors and how they interact to conform these transitions, we observed five models of young women transition to adulthood.
- ▶ The modalities of transition followed by this group of young women have been structured around two central axes of analysis:
 - ▶ The centrality of paid work/domestic and care work
 - ▶ Attitudes (active and independent / less active, higher level of dependency and subordination).

All of these factors framed in a macrostructural context characterized by Spanish labour market instability and the lack of equality policies; situation that now is worst for the influence of the economic crisis and the austerity policies.



Transition models



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- ▶ While horizontal segregation is present in the five categories found, we will set our analysis in those categories in which perceived a higher prevalence of gender roles, especially in the reproduction of work sexual division, the subordination of women to men in paid work and the assumption of double burden as a compulsory social role.
 - ▶ We will analyse and document those models throughout the years have been more invisible in research, that is, those transitional models whose main characteristic is the absolute or relative centrality of domestic/care work: Uncritical acceptance and Seeking balance.
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Trying to move up

- Meritocracy model
- ISCED 2-3
- After being working nearly 10 years, they decided to return to educational system, normally at university
- Studies as the way to move up in the social scale and escape from precariousness
- Active attitudes, clear future projects

Facing the reality

- Origin family and meritocracy
- ISCED 5-6
- After being studying, linear educational path, now they are facing the reality of the labour market
- Precariousness, instability and no work
- Changing expectations: find a job at any cost
- Personal crisis
- Generally not emancipated

Refusing to grow up

- Eternal adolescents
 - Working families
 - ISCED 3
 - Working in precarious jobs with no future expectations
 - Fear to change
 - Accommodation attitudes, passive
 - Dependence
 - Refusing to assume adult responsibilities
 - No thinking in having kids
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The uncritical acceptance

- Reduced social network
- Family support
- Traditional families
- Origin family with a low level of education, fathers in Qblue jobs and mothers NQ Blue or dedicated to domestic and care work.
- Early dropout of educational system (Spanish): 13-15 years old
- Immigrant women dropout school due to migration process or for cultural reasons
- Different levels of education (migration and Spanish women)
- Early emancipation and motherhood (2-3 kids)
- Unstructured families in some cases (Spanish)
- Neighborhood high vulnerability rate
- Ruptures and bifurcations
- Non linear labour pathways in non formal economy (gendered jobs)

Mesosocial

Individual

Macrosocial

- Less active attitudes
- Emotional and economic dependence and subordination
- Male breadwinner
- Instrumental vision of paid work
- Uncritical acceptance of Sexual Work Division
- Unclear life projects and future expectations (all is depending on)

- HIPERMODERNITY
- GLOBALISATION
- INDIVIDUALISATION PROCESS AND TRANSITIONS COMPLEXITY
- LABOUR MARKET PRECARIETY AND ECONOMIC CRISIS
- GENDER ROLES PERSISTENCE
- THE END OF THE MIDDLE CLASS
- SOCIAL NORMS
- MIGRATION PROCESSES
- LACK OF SECOND CHANCE EDUCATION AND EQUALITY POLICIES

- ▶ **Margalida, 26 years old, without studies, two kids.** Her parents do not have studies, her father work as hotel maintenance and mother as a cleaner. She has an older sister and younger brother. Margalida remembers her childhood alone, so her parents were working all the day. She left studies when she was 13 years old, she is not motivated and she was all the day alone so her father and mother were working all the day. She does not know the reason why she left studies so she was a good student and she said “...I don't know if the reason is because my sister went to another school and I felt alone....I do not have problems with anybody. There is....no reason to say I do not want to go to school for that reason. No, I don't want to go to school and that's all”. “I had always the support of my parents. Since I was a child they wanted me to finish studies, It was me who left it.....I do not know if I would like to study how my parents could manage it so we are humble and normal people”.
- ▶ Her mother got pregnant and Margalida decide to take care of him, she did it during four years. At 17 she got pregnant and went to live in a rented flat with her couple. She worked in a few occupations in non formal economy taking care of kids or cleaning. She tried to restart compulsory education, but she left it for administration difficulties. In 2009 start a cooking occupational course, but she did not finish it
- ▶ Her couple is Muslim and now he is in prison, he was traditionally the person who earns money for the family working in the construction sector. Margalida, has the support of her family, she regret about left education and she wants her kids study more than her. “Now, I think when you are younger you don't give importance to anything, you think everything is so easy, but nothing is easy..I had bad moments in my life, with two kids and not having studies and work experience...Now I am 27 years and I want to get a job and I don't have experience at all...I could return to the past I will study...This is the think that I said to my daughters, study!”.
- ▶ She affirmed that sometimes she was thinking about working or study again but she did not know who is going to take care of her kids “...sometimes I said to him (husband) I am going to work. And my husband said: and the girls?. And my mother and sister were working at this moment and I thought who is going to take care of the girls?”.
- ▶ Now, Margalida is depending on Social Services, Minimum Insertion Salary, but she must study or search a job. She is dependent on her husband situation and she has a non-clear future plans “..I want to finish compulsory education, study languages and trying to find a job. Now I have the social services choice, they give me economic help but I must study or find a job...”“Now...I am waiting my husband....goes out prison as soon as possible and if he will have a job offer, if he will start to work I will be more relaxed so if I will not find a job I know I will have my husband support...”

The uncritical acceptance

- ▶ The main characteristic of this model is the sexual division of work uncritical acceptance .
- ▶ Different levels of education. In the case of Spanish women (ISCEDI) they dropped out school early (13 and 15 years old) without obtaining any educational credential. They left school for different reasons such as the lack of parental supervision due to the large working hours, the lack of motivation and frequent school changes.
- ▶ Young immigrant women present a level of studies polarization (ISCED 1, 4 and 5), in the cases of a low educational level they left studies for cultural reasons and the presence of gender roles in the origin country (African)



The uncritical acceptance

- ▶ In the cases with a higher level of education, young immigrant women finish their studies in the origin country and they started a migration process with their couples, then material constraints (language, motherhood and the lack of conciliation politics) stopped or paralysed their entry in the labour market.
- ▶ Low relation with paid work and following non-linear labour paths, they worked punctually in low qualified and gendered occupations (cleaning and taking care of others) and generally in non-formal economy. In some cases they did not have any relation with paid work.
- ▶ Paid work as a complement of their couple's occupations, so they give more importance to domestic and care work.

The uncritical acceptance

- ▶ In 2010 all of them are working the whole time in domestic and care work. They explain different argumentations; not needing to work (so couples were working), the childcare services cost and the culture or material constraints in the case of immigrant women
- ▶ Emancipated in an early age (17 to 21 years old) at the same time that where emancipated with their couples, in all the cases motherhood is something desired and expected. Motherhood in an early age.



The uncritical acceptance

- ▶ Related to social origin, fathers work or have been working in blue collar qualified jobs and mothers in blue collar non-qualified jobs (cleaning and domestic/care work).
- ▶ Young women present a reduced social network and find the main support in their family. In the case of immigrant women family network is conformed for their direct family (couple/husband and kids). In general they have traditional families where gender roles and the sexual division of work are still present.

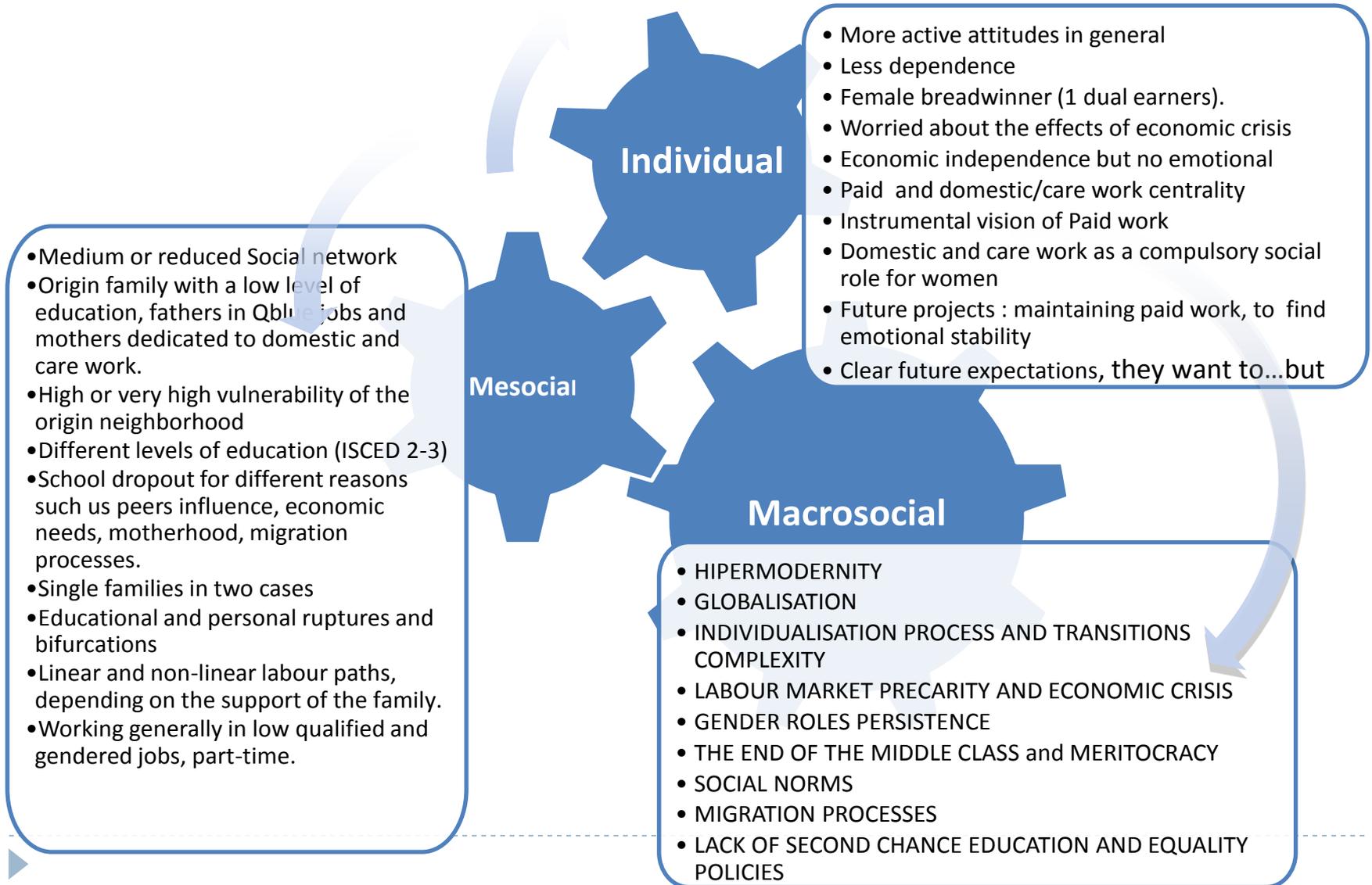


The uncritical acceptance

- ▶ In general, they present economical and emotional dependence on their partners, family and sometimes social services. Throughout the 10 years analysed subordination roles and uncritical acceptance of the sexual division of work have been present. In some case, due couples stopped working they present an active attitude for trying to get a paid job, worried because the precariousness of Spanish labour market and the consequences of economic crisis.



Seeking balance: the double burden



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- ▶ **Micaela, 27 years old, pre-university studies, from Ecuador.** She started at the university studying Medicine, but she fell in love and decided to immigrate with her boyfriend to Spain when she was 19 years old. She explain *“I left my studies because of I got married, I got married so young...but...I thought about study again...but now I must pay it by myself, before my father gave me everything, I did not work and I was responsible. I was with my parents and since I’ve got married I depend on another family and....now I have a kid and I must take care of him...”*
 - ▶ She arrived to Mallorca in 2005 after living in another Spanish region and started to work as a shop girl and cleaner. Few months she had a work as hairdresser, then she study (coiffure) and work at the same time. In 2008 she got pregnant (25 years old) and stopped her work for one year to take care of the baby. Now in 2010, she is working again in a part time job as a hairdresser.
 - ▶ Now she regret to left studies. She is worried so their parents do not accept her profession; they think she needs to be something “more” and she is fighting to her parents’ aspiration and her own desire. In a long term she wants to have her own coiffure and maybe study again *“Nowadays and because of the economic crisis, everything is very complicated. But...if a person is well prepared (she is referring to education)...then he/she will have a better future”*.
 - ▶ Her husband is unemployed since two years ago, working in non-formal economy. Micaela is optimistic, motivated and active despite of her family situation. Now she is a female breadwinner.
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Seeking balance: the double burden

- ▶ These young women present a relative centrality of paid work so they are trying to balance care/domestic work and paid work.
- ▶ Early motherhood, generally unexpected, paralyse their educational and work pathways. For all of them paid work is so important in all cases as a way to maintain their families and to be independent.
- ▶ Different levels of education (ISCED 2, 3A and 3B), they left studies or break their educational pathways for economic needs, desire to live with couple or unexpected pregnancy .
- ▶ They were good or regular students and they did not present problems at school. Actually they do not think in restart or improve their studies in a short term so they do not have enough time to conciliate paid and domestic work with studies



Seeking balance: the double burden

- ▶ Those who have the family support followed linear work paths in family companies or supported by friends to get a stable job.
- ▶ Those with no support from their family follow non-linear labour paths, instable and precarious jobs.
- ▶ They were mothers at an early age (19-21 years old), and all of them have one kid at the moment, they were emancipated at the same age as mothers (less in one case, she got emancipated at 22 alone and had her kid alone at 26 years old)
- ▶ Two cases of single families at the moment
- ▶ Related to social origin, Fathers with Qblue jobs and Mothers dedicated to domestic and care work generally.



Seeking balance: the double burden

- ▶ Related to the family social origin, generally their fathers work in Qualified Blue Collar jobs and mothers are working in domestic and care work, only one mother is working in Qualified White Collar Job.
- ▶ In nearly all the cases the main support is the origin family and they have a reduced social network so they are centered in paid and domestic/care work, Maria only have the support of her reduced group of friends.



Discussion

- ▶ Female low employment rate in Spain can be explained by structural factors such as education, the permanence of gender roles associated with the figure of the male as breadwinner and an institutional context that provides little support for work-life balance. (Moreno Mínguez, 2012; Martín García, 2010).
- ▶ Spain has been characterized since 2007 by a major investment and development of equality policies, but this has been reduced and even paralyzed as a result of the change of government and the austerity policies promoted in our country to reduce the economic crisis effects that began in 2008.
- ▶ The cost of motherhood and childcare is visible in transition models analysed, paralyzing women careers and decreasing their presence in the labour market.



Discussion

- ▶ In the case of migration processes women use to follow transitions models like national women with a low level of education independently of their level of education, so material constraints as the language (Catalan and Spanish, in the case of Mallorca) and a major prevalence of gender roles influence greatly their transitions
 - ▶ Torns, Moreno, Borràs, and Carrasquer (2012) explains how immigrant men show a reticence attitude to change the male breadwinner model, men accept women paid work but only a part-time job. This model is more prevalent in African and Latin-American immigrants. In these cases nationality and gender explains the sexual division of work in Spain, division reinforced in the Mediterranean societies where previous years ago domestic and care work was seen as a unique responsibility of national women and now is assumed for immigrant women. This situation reinforces the sexual work division and limits the politics development in favor of immigrant people.
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Discussion

- ▶ The motherhood age average of these young women is 20 years old, earlier if we take into account the average in Spain stood at 32.2 years. Delgado (2009) in a study of fertility in Spain claims that women with less education level tend to advance their maternity and women with a higher level of education tend to delay their motherhood and waiting to have a good job position.
- ▶ According Berga (2001), early childbearing has meaning beyond the reproduction of traditional gender roles, with a strong young women active role in this decision. Motherhood would be a way that adolescent has (usually girls with low level of education or at a social risk) to normalize their lives and accelerate their transition to adulthood. Motherhood implies for them a future projection.

Discussion

- ▶ In other cases, unexpected pregnancy broke their paths but in the cases that they have the family support it influences in the stability and conciliation process.
- ▶ We can also observe young women with a total dedication to care and domestic work; have more kids (2 or 3) than young women who are trying to balance paid and domestic/care work.
- ▶ Work sexual division is still being reproduced for young women and especially for those with a lower level of education.



Discussion

- ▶ Ruptures and bifurcations are present in all the cases due to early school dropout, unstructured families, migration processes or unexpected/expected motherhood.
- ▶ We have observed that the most influential factors in the reproduction of gender roles and the persistence of the sexual division of work are the structural factors (the precariousness of Spanish labour market, the lack of development of equality policies) and personal variables such as the social origin (blue collar jobs), low educational level and migration processes.
- ▶ Personal attitudes also present an influence on young women transitions so we observed a major prevalence of dependence and subordination attitudes in models centred in domestic and care work. In some cases, optimistic, active and positive attitudes helped young women to overcome social, contextual and family barriers (Trying to move up).



To think about it....

- ▶ **Have traditional models changed?**
- ▶ **What more in the name of the crisis?**

Thanks for your attention....

