

# The Diversity of Pathways to Adulthood: a holistic approach

Some issues on transition to adulthood are often neglected by traditional atomistic approach using markers/events (Shanahan, 2000) :

- markers are getting more difficult to bound clearly (leaving parental home, first stable job...), more frequently reversible or sometimes never occur (marriage, stable job...)
- the trajectories of young adults are becoming more diverse (individualization)
- familial and occupational spheres are closely linked
- aggregated results partially hide the heterogeneity of individual pathways

→ Necessity for a holistic approach (Billari, 2001), using trajectories as units of analysis (« trajectory as a whole »)

## DATA

Families et employeurs survey, France, INED-INSEE, 2004-2005

Annual calendar retracing 4 distinct trajectories:

- **Residential:** ever lived in a self-paid accommodation; never
  - **Conjugal:** single; unmarried cohabitant; married; separated
  - **Parental:** 0; 1; 2; 3 or more children
  - **Occupational:** student; salaried student; national service; unemployed; part-time worker; short jobs; job > 6 months; other inactive
- One multi-dimensional trajectory, integrating the four dimensions
- Population selected: individuals older than 35 (born between 1954 and 1969)
- 2749 women and 2428 men histories between 18 and 35

## METHOD

### Sequence analysis

1. Individual trajectories are built as sequences of states, integrating residential, familial and occupational situations
2. Grouped together according to their degree of similarity by Optimal Matching Analysis (OMA)
3. Hierarchical Clustering Analysis (HCA)
  - Typology of trajectories

### Optimal Matching Analysis (OMA)

Introduced in social sciences by Andrew Abbott in the 80's

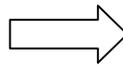
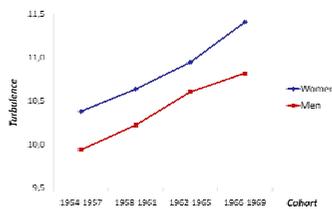
Principle → measuring dissimilarity between pairs of sequences by calculating the cost of the transformation of one sequence into the other

3 basic operations: Insertion; Deletion; Substitution

Each operation is assigned a cost

The distance between two sequences is equal to the minimal cost needed to transform one sequence into the other

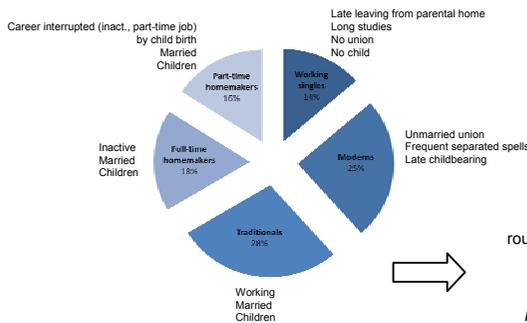
## Differentiation\* of pathways to adulthood, by sex and cohort



- ✓ Differentiation of pathways to adulthood is increasing, for both sexes
- ✓ Women's pathways to adulthood are more differentiated than men's

\* Differentiation (Brückner, Mayer, 2005) is measured by a turbulence index (Elzinga, 2006), taking into account the number of transitions, the number of distinct states and the variation in duration of events

## Women's 5-cluster typology

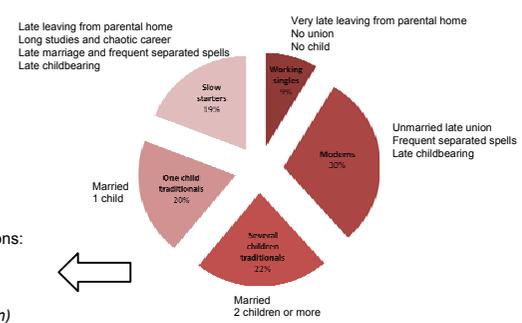


roughly similar types with different proportions:  
Traditionals, Moderns, Working singles

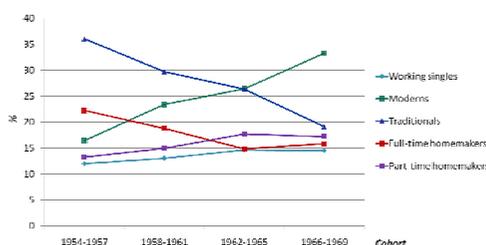
distinct types:

Homemakers (women), Slow starters (men)

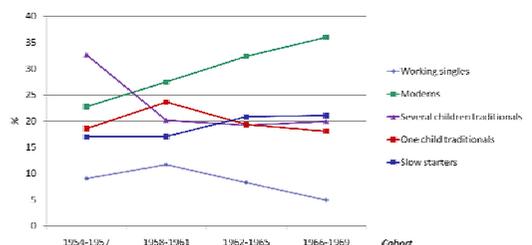
## Men's 5-cluster typology



## Women's cluster distribution by cohort



## Men's cluster distribution by cohort



- Decrease of the Traditionals and (slightly) of the Full-time homemakers
- Increase of the Moderns and (slightly) of the Part-time homemakers and the Working singles

- Decrease of the Several children traditional and (slightly) of the Working singles
- Increase of the Moderns and (slightly) of the Slow starters

Sequential approach and typologies give a new insight into pathways to adulthood and their evolution:

- Differentiation of pathways is increasing
- Distinct patterns of pathways come to light, with differences between women and men
- Traditional pathways (marriage, children, work) are being replaced by modern ones (unmarried unions, late childbearing, work)

