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*Fateful Youth Graduate
Employability: Can governmental
policies help?
A Historical Comparison and
Practical Study between China and
Italy*

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Riassunto:

Durante il percorso di vita, uno dei periodi più importanti è senza dubbio il cambiamento dell'identità dallo studio al lavoro, pertanto è estremamente importante fornire una trasformazione migliore e più fluida ai giovani. La nostra tesi inizierà introducendo il concetto di "occupabilità". Storicamente, l'attenzione sull'occupazione giovanile si è concentrata principalmente sulle qualifiche accademiche, le specializzazioni e le capacità individuali, trascurando l'influenza delle politiche nazionali sull'occupazione. Di conseguenza, sempre più giovani attribuiscono le loro difficoltà occupazionali a fattori personali ma non conoscono le politiche sull'occupazione giovanile, che è anche il nostro obiettivo di studio: come le politiche governative sull'occupazione beneficiano i giovani laureati sulla loro occupabilità?

La tesi confronta le politiche occupazionali generali e lo sviluppo delle politiche sull'occupazione giovanile in Cina e in Italia, riassumendo inizialmente gli sforzi compiuti da entrambi i governi per promuovere l'occupazione giovanile. Successivamente, il nostro contenuto approfondisce le specifiche politiche e i quadri sull'occupazione giovanile implementati in entrambi i paesi, delineando come i giovani possano utilizzare le politiche esistenti per cercare il successo occupazionale.

Infine, osserviamo somiglianze e caratteristiche distintive nell'attuazione delle politiche sull'occupazione giovanile in entrambi i paesi, e in particolare, notiamo che le università cinesi svolgono un ruolo sia educativo che di attuazione delle politiche, spingendoci a ripensare profondamente al concetto di "politica" stesso.

Abstract:

During the lifelong process, one of the most important periods is undoubtedly the changing of the identity from study to work, thus it is extremely important to provide a better and smooth transformation to the youth. Our thesis will begin by introducing "employability". Historically, attention to youth employment has primarily focused on academic qualifications, majors, and individual capabilities, while overlooking the influence of national policies on employment, as a result, more and more young people attribute their employment difficulties to themselves but do not know about the youth employment policy, which is also our study objective: how governmental employment policy benefit the young graduates on their employability?

The thesis compares the general employment policies and the development of youth employment policies in China and Italy, initially summarizing the efforts made by both governments to promote youth employment. Subsequently, our content delves deeper into the specific youth employment policies and frameworks implemented in both countries, outlining how young people can utilize existing policies to strive for employment success.

Finally, we observe similarities and distinct features in both countries' implementation of youth employment policy, and in particular, we note that Chinese universities serve both educational and policy implementation roles, prompting us to deeply rethink the "policy" concept itself.

1. Introduction

During the lifelong process, if we make a simple recall, we can easily divide our life into 2 parts, the first one is under the protection of our parents, and the second one is the period starting from our independence. Also, if we think about it carefully and deeply, we would find that in the first stage, when we spend our time with family, we are also under the school; when we are economically independent, it usually means we start working.

This change is so memorable that many people recall their past, they would say: As I remember when I was a student; This change is so universal that every single person has to experience and without any exception; This change is so important because it splits up our life in 2 pieces, and completely turns our life into another mode...

Therefore, we can see the great importance of this changing period, and it also inspired my initial research idea.

“A job, a good job!” Besides, as a Chinese student, I experienced Chinese cultural background and social circumstances, young people were always considered “children” till they find a stable job to feed themselves, thus “how to find a good job” becomes a more and more popular discussion among every generation, in which the discussion is almost thereat as a “daily agenda”, exaggeratedly, “a good job” now is closely related to a family reputation when talking with others; “a good job” is also considered as a decisive factor for those who consider their potential partner when “blind date”. (**Blind date:** *It refers to a date or meeting between two people who have*

not met each other before and are typically introduced by a mutual friend, family member, or a matchmaking service. Blind dates are a common way for people to meet potential romantic partners in China.)

Also In China, people complain that after grabbing a “good job”, they become more arrogant and mean to others, but when it comes to themselves, they become addicted to chasing it.

“A good job!” what a sweet dream!

But currently, for most youths, it is extremely hard to achieve it, compared to the economic booming period in the past decade, China is now suffering the most awful economic depression, as far as I know, the discussion is not about “finding a good job”, but “how to find a job”, the crucial fact forced people to reconsider their employment goal/strategy, this societal hot topic has also become another direct driving force for me to conduct my research.

The outbreak of COVID-19 caused a large negative impact on the labor market in both developed and developing countries, research conducted in 2021 among 39 countries shows that in the early months of 2020, 34 percent of workers stopped working and 20 percent stopped being paid, and 63 percent family’s income decreased(Dhingra & Kondirolli, 2023). relatively young people were more impacted (ILO, n.d.). But in fact, negative influence from the economic environment did not just start with the pandemic, in the period following the global financial crisis of 2008-09, the labor market was stuck in a continually dwindling, along with the increasing unemployment, the significant change also happened in job security,

poverty, and social exclusion (Fornell et al., 2018), during all these economic downturns, the young people are subsequently much more vulnerable (Verick, 2023).

Even China, which had less impact in the 2008-2009 global financial crisis, and relatively had a better performance under COVID-19 in 2020-2021, now is suffering a serious economic situation, in June 2023, China released the youth unemployment monthly rate, the index decreased to a horrible 21.3% (16-24 years old). (*The Spokesperson for the National Bureau of Statistics Answered Questions from Reporters Regarding the Economic Performance in the First Half of 2023.*, 2023) This index is even higher than in 2020, which is under the impact of the pandemic. In the following month, they ceased the publication of data with the explanation that “the statistic method needs to renew and the different social situation should be reconsidered” (*China Suspends Report on Youth Unemployment, Which Was at a Record High*, n.d.). These notifications were widely disseminated among Chinese society and It has caused quite a stir in Chinese society, with growing concerns among the public.

It is pretty clear that the youth employment situation has already become a social concern, we can track back to the end of 1970s when the youth unemployment became a difficult situation in Western industrialized countries (Levin, 1983) which proves again that we need to pay attention to the youth employment problem and treat it as a serious social issue, in this paper, we will more specify our target group as the youth who graduated from a higher education institute, researchers found that the graduates usually mostly continue to be optimistic about their future, but in reality, it

is unclear, in some countries the higher education is less closely coupled with the labor market (Marginson, 2016), which makes more difficult for the student to find a proper job, in China a widespread phrase among social media was “once you graduated, unemployed”, and if we explore the data published by EU authentic institute, it shows the same problem, in Italy the unemployment rate of recent graduates 1-3 years after obtaining their degree (published in 2021) was 1/4, while the average of EU 27 countries was 1/10, Italy was the third to last, just behind Greece and Spanish (Rosti, n.d.).

This discussion also leads to our following work, in this research, we choose Italy and China as nations to study, and by using the comparisons, we hope to study more about the unemployment situation in these 2 countries, as we wrote before, Italy and China now both facing a serious economic challenge and graduates’ unemployment problem. Also, considering that Italy was an individual country in the European Union, it can be used as a porthole to help us estimate on a larger and macro level, which in the end might not only limit the comparison between China and Italy but could have accessibility to explore some differences between Europe and Asia, culturally or structurally. These would be very interesting and helpfully contribute to others’ studies.

To resolve the problem we mentioned before, China and Italy (EU) have released a series of domestic supportive policies, meanwhile, a lot of different investigations/studies were conducted, aiming to provide a better solution, for which some scholars studied the algorithm of pedagogy, trying to change the blaming to

universities as a “factory” (Kahn & Lundgren-Resenterra, 2023), while the psychology theory studies were also very popular in the related researches, for example, the individualism (Holmes, 2023).

In addition, as we noticed before, the youth employment problem is not just a personal problem or an educational topic, but it is a larger, wider political agenda, which must be investigated and instructed by the government. How the external support use different policies to help the graduates move forward? What interested us most is the macro-historical perspective: how have these policies developed in the past years? What about the youth employment policy development? And after the accumulation year by year, what is the real graduates’ employment situation right now?

These are all the main concerns of the thesis.

In the first chapter of the paper, by doing a precise literature review, I will organize the relative studies of different perspectives, and then summarize my analysis framework, step by step we move to the core, the comparison, and the case study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Self-responsible in the Changing Society

The graduates' employment problem is firstly being seen as skills and attributes, it suggested and assumed that the students, during their educational life, must process to enhance their knowledge for the job and career after graduating (Holmes, 2023), under this general idea, the educational institution will provide essential knowledge to students, meanwhile students, in recent years, because of the labor market and global competition the transition of modern society has made a stronger and explicit requirement to meet the new needs from the contemporary employers (Tran, 2019).

In this circumstance, the graduate and undergraduate students were also facing increasing pressure, compared to the experienced workers, they are more delicate to the changing economic and systematical risk, the firms facing a precipitous decline, and their first choice is to reduce or interrupt the hiring of job seekers in the age group from 15 to 25 (Verick, 2023). Given the challenging youth employment scenario, an increasing number of researchers are now focusing on personal factors. Some explore individual sociological or psychological theories, while others primarily investigate personal development during the university years, especially about stress and mental health.

From some researcher's perspective, the job searching process can be seen as a statistical problem, they found that the employment possibility is highly related to the earning expectation (Webbink & Hartog, 2004), in one early research conducted in 2009, the researchers found that a 1000 RMB (100 euro in 2009) reduction in a

graduate's reservation wage can significantly increase the probability of finding a job by 66% and increase the likelihood of being employed six months after graduation by 92% (Po, 2011). So, in this situation, by decreasing their salary expectation, the graduates can much easy to find work.

But we also have to admit that the employment problem cannot be reassumed as a simply mathematic issue, as we find ourselves in the current era, the issue of youth employment is also influenced by today's social environment, leading to a different mindset. Some studies pay close attention to the coping strategies of graduates, Handley and Karen find out that neoliberalism affects the decision-making of graduates, by making them have employment as a “joyful object”, and gamification the interviews, tests, etc., to make the job they compete for as a level-up game and self-satisfied process (Handley & Millar, 2023). In this job-seeking game, other scholars have found that university graduates lacking work experience may enhance their self-presentation by fine-tuning their CV, planning their self-image, and, in some cases, resorting to deception or falsehoods to package their "personal brand." (Mutanen et al., 2023), although the graduates are trying a different way to find a better job, the brutal social situation showed us a fact that the expansion of higher education increased the supply of graduates, and all the certificates have been evaluated, the graduates must pursue higher degrees to earn salaries equivalent to what undergraduate students used to receive (Suleman et al., 2023).

2.2 Higher Education, Higher Achievement

The transformation from school to the labor market, whether good or bad, was not just about a personal problem, people have to consider it as an educational systematic consequence, having a good media education, students could contribute to highly active citizenship, and they can advance some attitudes and skills, for example, the community build, the critical thinking, etc (Fuentes-Moreno et al., 2020).

Basic education shows its value, while an advanced educational level is also important because it relates to a higher socialization level, and therefore the people with higher degrees possess a higher prosocial attitude (Alfirević et al., 2023), it can be concretized as their prosocial value orientation and social competence (Eisenberg, 2014). Another scholar found that there is a positive correlation between a healthy lifestyle and high emotional intelligence (Licata et al., 2023), which is considered to be useful when doing interpersonal communication.

Naturally, all around the world, people tend to emphasize the economic benefit of higher education, as we indicated before, good school education can construct students on their awareness, social skills, and better socialization, which is seen as an assurance of better future work, higher education is becoming a social expectation. However some researchers also found that graduates' earnings are affected by other factors beyond what is mediated by education level, different studies found that some factors for example family, and social networks... (Marginson, 2016) So, achieving a higher income and greater job satisfaction is not solely a matter of attaining higher levels of education, although higher education is generally considered to be associated

with it.

Based on this problem, the researchers conducted more studies, and they started focusing on the concept of “Graduate **Employability**”, under this concept, employability is not mean “to get work”, but it examines if the students are equipped for a job (Tran, 2019), and it underlines the necessary qualities for one to get and maintain a job in the workplace (Weligamage, 2009). Undeniably, as we discussed before, people tend to coordinate the employment issue with “being employed”, but the employability theory showed us a new framework, the research about graduate employability is trying to answer the narrow lens of focusing graduate employment outcomes rather than more holistic, employability success (Healy et al., 2022) and may cause the less recognition of employers as stakeholders in higher education, for example employers, and attribute all the employment problem to the responsibility of higher education (Sin & Amaral, 2017).

2.3 Employability, Rethink the Employment Problem

How we can define the concept of employability? First, employability is a consensus acknowledgment of multiple dimensions (Guilbert et al., 2016), many studies acknowledge the role of individuals in taking charge of their career paths, while simultaneously recognizing the responsibility of employers and labor policies aimed at bolstering employee employability. Consequently, contemporary perspectives increasingly describe employability as a "multifaceted mosaic," reflecting the interconnected aspects involved (Gouvier et al., 2003).

Figure 1, shows the three main dimensions of employability including their relationships with other concepts, as shown, employability is related to a person, organization strategies, and governmental and educational policies, all three main dimensions have to be considered in a global and cultural context.

The personal sector appears to have the highest complexity and most branches, with the developing and socio-economic sharp change that happened in recent decades, the dwindling guarantee of permanent employment and more time-limited employment placed individuals in a position of mobility and constantly keeping updated the employment (Clarke, 2008), in this circumstance, all the relational, contextual determinants have to be count, they are written also in the figure, for which multi-discipline need to be studied, for example, sociology, psychology, family, gender, intersectionality... and they are far beyond my capability, so we would not conduct in-depth discussion, and we will consider the complex collection “person” as a holistic concept.

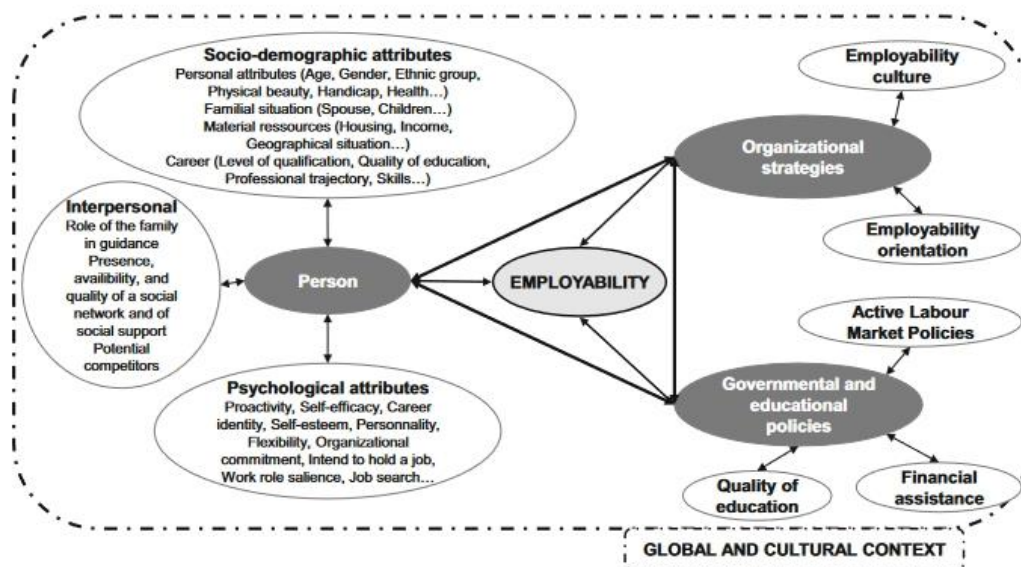


Figure1 (Employability and its links with other constructs) (Guilbert et al., 2016)

2.4 Building a Comprehensive Employability Framework

Except for the personal dimension, the “external” dimension plays the rest part of employability, the organization, which is the market or employers, has been ignored for a long time, but history fact reminds us that when jobs are plentiful finding employment is relatively easy, when there are few jobs, employers can afford to be much more selective in deciding the level of skills, qualifications and experience (BROWN et al., 2003). Employability can also be constructed during the work practice, in the workplace, the accountancy trainees were ‘expected to display enthusiasm and commitment at all times, regardless of the tediousness of the chores assigned to them’ (Handley & Millar, 2023), the interaction between employee and employer in certain workspace, dynamically people are reshaping their emotional life and employability understanding. Thus, employability can be described as both relative and absolute, it can be independently seen as a personal attribute, or variable as a function of both the supply and demand sides of the labor market (Clarke, 2008).

Another factor of external dimension is governmental and educational policies, including education quality, financial assistance, and active labor market policies, it's worth noting that, due to the macro-policy focus of this field, what we mentioned above about the theoretical research on individual psychology and group behavior is different from policy studies, as a result, there is a natural disciplinary gap, which may cause a bias focus point.

For the quality of education, researchers are endeavoring to go beyond

conventional formal education, which takes the discipline curriculum as an employability-improvement method, they started to focus on the “non-academic” professional staff, they are skilled, experienced, qualified (Schneijderberg & Merkator, 2013) and some of them work as a career development practitioner, and they are contributing to the students’ employability strategy (Bridgstock et al., 2019). They usually can play an important role when consulting career development, student development, and integrated knowledge connected to enterprise, industry liaison... (Healy et al., 2022), the career development department usually handles the responsibility of internships, co-ops, and other forms of pre-graduate activities, and throughout a series of studies related to employability, they have been consistently demonstrated as highly significant (Tran, 2019).

In our study, we will mainly focus on governmental policy, while as the part of research, we will examine how these policies come into practice which is a case study, to find out how universities receive the policy and integrate it into their strategies.

2.5 Employment Policies: Between Theory and Real-World

Practice

Besides, we need to underline the importance of financial policy and labor market policy, especially under the social awareness that employment failure is attributed to individuals rather than to the policies themselves (Sin et al., 2016). However, policies inevitably wield significant guiding influence, extending far beyond the individual realm. Policies often undergo changes that impact millions of

people. For example, reducing product and labor market regulation policies can foster employment growth, in detail, a country moving from median levels of regulation to a level on par with the lowest decile of OECD countries stands to gain about 1 percentage point in annual employment growth (Berger & Danninger, 2007). Moreover, certain researchers have identified the potential of specific financial policies in enhancing employability. For instance, considering the employment voucher as an example, the implementation of varied distribution strategies tailored to specific target groups can result in an optimized utilization of employment vouchers. It can significantly decrease the unemployment rates of young people and reduce additional government expenditures. (Orszag & Snower, 1999).

From a macro level, policy formulation is most discussed among the politician. In 2010, the European Parliament emphasized the necessity of member states implementing transformative policy interventions to facilitate the employment access of their youth populations, and in 2012 European Commission carried out the **Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)** as a reply to the increasing youth unemployment rate (Boutsiouki, 2022). The member states of the EU are also keeping on the policy reform for example in the topic of employment protection legislation (EPL), unemployment benefits, active labor market policies (ALMP), and working-time flexibility... (Eichhorst et al., 2017).

For a more in-depth investigation, in addition to economic subsidy policies for employment, Guilbert summarized a comprehensive employment policy analysis framework. **Primary prevention** schemes are generally offered by the state and seek

to prevent the population's general level of employability from deteriorating. **Secondary prevention** policies aim to ensure that those concerned can anticipate or face changes in the labor market and that they can satisfy the requirements of potential or effective future professional integration. **The tertiary prevention measures** are characterized by the development of know-how to rapidly integrate the labor market (Guilbert et al., 2016).

	Primary prevention	Secondary prevention	Tertiary prevention
Level	Population's general level	Concerned group level	Supplement level
Aim to	create or avoid the destruction of jobs	Anticipate or face the change labor market	To rapidly integrate them into the labor market
Form	Aid (reduce contribution...)	System reform, skill improvement...	Government-led-program...

Table 1

After we present the related literature, we can find out that as we mentioned earlier, there are significant differences between the policy and the individual or organizational level. The latter treats individual entities as separate subjects of study, allowing for the use of various theories and analytical approaches. However, education and governance policies require substantial data, information, and documentation, necessitating greater resources and investments.

Finally, since this paper will mainly adopt comparing policy research from

different countries, it is also necessary to understand how to conduct cross-national policy analysis. In the article of Harashima and Yohei about the comparative environmental policies in East Asian countries (Harashima & Morita, 1998), they used the following framework:

1. National experience	(1) Events of Policy Development and Respective Sociopolitical Background
	(2) Division of Development Stages
2. Comparative Analysis of Policy Development	(1) Similarities and Time-lags
	(2) Comparison of Characteristics in Each Country
3. Examination of Economic Growth	(1) National Experience
	(2) Comparison of Relation between Economic Growth and Policy Development
4. Conclusion	

Table 2 (comparative structure by Harasshima and Yohei)

The literature review of employability is very inspiring to our framework construction, but in Figure 1, Guilbert mentioned the governmental and educational policies, and divided them into 3 branches, but didn't make further discussion, as far as we know, the financial support is usually named as passive policies (Gualmini & Rizza, 2013), we mean it can be considered as the range of "policy", in which we also refer "active policies", still, thanks Guilbert's integrative research, he introduced 3 different levels to exam employability, which can be used to construct our analyses framework.

Finally, the writing method provided by Harashima was very practical, and it can be adopted in our research, but to be notable, our study is not about the relationship

between employability and economic growth, so we have to cancel the no.3 in Tabel 2 and do some modifications.

3. Research Method and Framework

This study aims to find out, in now-day society, in addition to constantly pursuing higher academic qualifications and constantly improving one's employability in a technic and mental/physical way, and learning from study and pre-working environment, what also methods could help the youth graduate's employment?

Based on the literature review, we find out another important factor, which is the governmental policy, can have a remarkable influence on one's employment, as we discussed before, publishing policies have become an effective resolution facing the inoccupation problem and youth graduate difficulties on employment. Our concern, is what policies? How do they work?

To answer these concerns, we need to have a vertical study not only on the national historical policies but also the horizontal comparison of the similarity and differences between these 2 countries, thus we have these research questions:

1. What are the Governmental policies for employability like in these 2 countries?

2. How do the youth graduates benefit in 2 countries?

3. How do they come into practice in 2 countries?

In this research, we aim to conduct a comparative analysis of governmental policies related to graduate employability in Italy and China. Our approach involves integrating the frameworks identified in the literature review. The study will primarily utilize a combination of literature surveys and historical data collection methods. Additionally, we will employ a comparative research methodology to analyze the

policies implemented in both countries. To gain deeper insights and perspectives, we plan to conduct interviews as part of our case study analysis.

This article is based on books and historical materials, primarily focusing on descriptive research. The materials we consult including 2 books “40 Years of Employment Reform and Development in China” (中国就业改革发展 40 年), and “The Employment Policies” (Le Politiche di Lavoro); official website; conference recording; historical article database; national statistical database; important writing productions. Along with the study of the materials, this thesis also interviewed with the representative of the Unipd Career Office in November 2023.

National experience	
introduction to the economy	
social-political introduction	
employment	
Comparative analysis of policy development	
	Comparison of policy
	(1 st level, general employment time-lag)
	(2 nd level, graduates'/youth employment)
	(3 rd level, national led program)
	Comparison of characteristics
	Nowadays policies
	Case study
	China Agriculture University case
	University of Padua case

Table 3 (research structure)

4. Comparison between Italy and China

4.1 Overview of National Economy and Employment Situation

4.1.1 China's experience

China is a socialist nation with its political regime established in 1949. The political system is based on the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC). The President of the country serves as the head of state, and the National People's Congress (NPC) is the highest legislative authority. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the country's government adheres to a socialist market economy model. This socio-political structure has been pivotal in shaping China's governance and economic policies since its establishment.

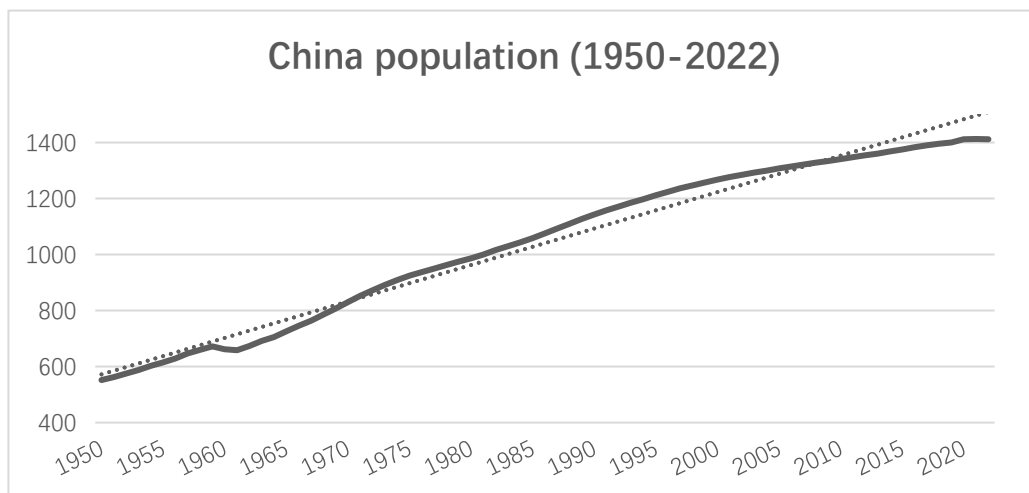


Figure 2 (<https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh/中国大陆人口#历年人口总数和自然变动情况>)

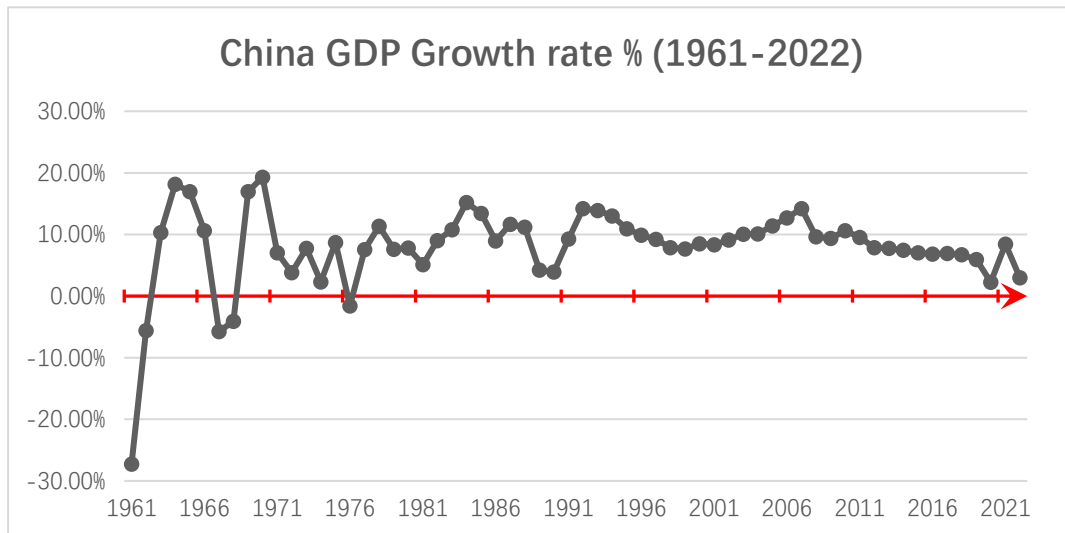


Figure 3 (Recourse: www.macrotrends.net)

During the initial decades known as "Mao's era" or the "communist years," China's economy operated under national five-year plans, driving substantial development. However, frequent political movements and natural disasters led to an economic crisis from 1959 to 1961 and increased instability between 1966 and 1976.

Following the opening-up reforms, the Chinese economy generally progressed, but challenges persisted, including the 1989 political-economic risk, the 2008 global crisis, and the onset of COVID-19 in 2020.

What interesting most is that, even though China did suffer unemployment problems in its history, China didn't admit the existence the unemployment from 1952 to 1976. Because of the ideology battles, the socialist country would consider: "uniquely, the economic crisis and unemployment are the specialties of capitalism". And even in the 1980s and 1990s, government statements still used "between jobs", instead of "unemployment" to summarize all the unemployment issues (*Interpretation of the Social Insurance Law of the People's Republic of China*, n.d.). The

acknowledgment of employment or unemployment problem was officially released in the 1995 edition <labor code>, and in 1999 <Unemployment Insurance Ordinance>.

We can say that the “employment” problem was officially “given name” and emphasized starting from the new century.

Anyhow, in the economic research, some scholars and social public affairs researchers still identified several massive unemployment waves in the history of China:

1. In the early 50s, with the new foundation of the country, the civil war has just ended, leading to a large number of unemployed people who need to be resettled.

2. Around the 1960s, financial difficulties prevented the expansion of production, leading to a significant urban unemployment issue, the strategy of “educated youth to the countryside.”

3. In 1978, the implementation of economic system reform coincided with the return of educated youth to urban areas.

4. At the end of the '90s, the reform of Chinese state-owned enterprises and the Asian economic crisis caused together a massive unemployment issue.

5. In 2008, the global economic crisis coincided with a systematical employment problem.

6. Due to COVID-19 and changes in China's domestic economic situation, the economic downturn pressure and unemployment rates.

4.1.2 Italy's experience

In 1861, Italy achieved unification through the Treaty of Cavour, becoming a singular nation-state. Following the conclusion of the two World Wars, Italy transitioned into a republic and is currently a member of the European Union. Italy functions as a parliamentary republic with a governmental system based on a constitution. The Parliament operates as a bicameral legislature, consisting of the Chamber of Deputies (Camera dei Deputati) and the Senate of the Republic (Senato della Repubblica). The President serves as the head of state, appointing a Prime Minister to lead the government.

After the Second World War, Italy started an economic blooming period, along with economic, the Italian population started increasing, from 46,6 million in 1950 to 53.52 million in 1970, but began at the end of the 1970s, the growth rate downturn, till the 21st century, the foreign immigration improved the situation.

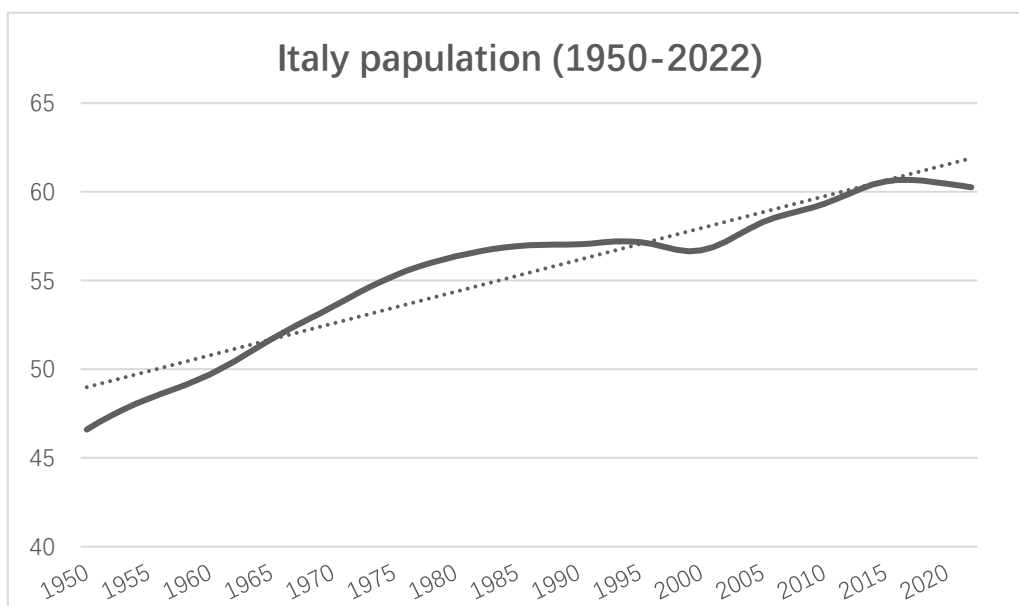


Figure 4 (Recourse: <https://zh.zhujiworld.com/it/>)

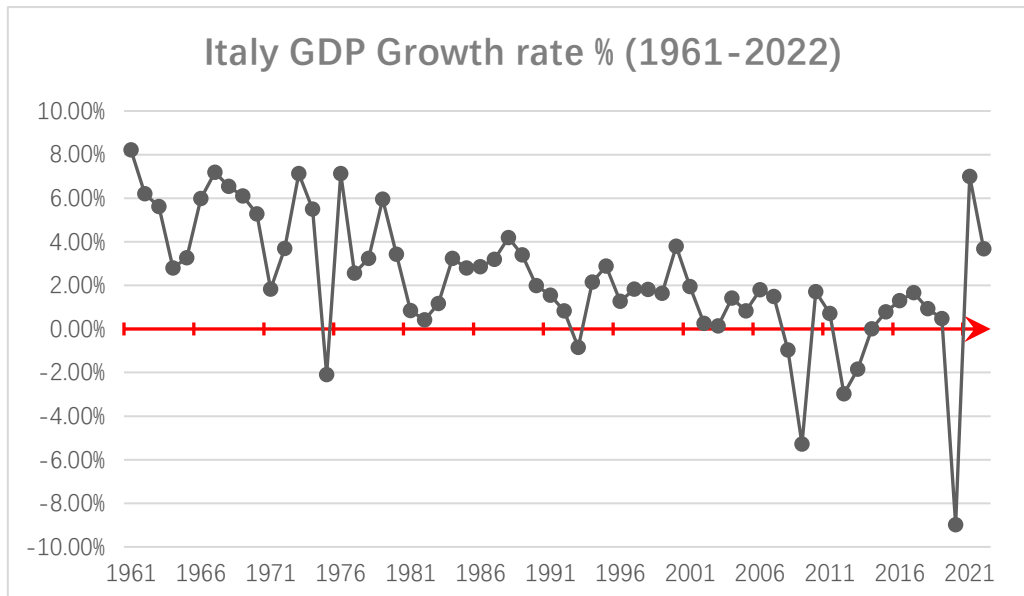


Figure 5 (Recourse: www.macrotrends.net)

Talking about Italy’s development, we generally refer to the after-war development, with the financial aid “Marshall”, the quick growth of the European common market, and Italian domestic supportive policy, the economy of Italy has entered a period of vigorous development, the rapid growth momentum continued to the end of 60s, this period was called: “Italian economic miracle”.

However, after entering the 1960s, the Italian labor movement began to gradually rise, and the climatic event was the “Autunno caldo”, the huge number of workers group who birth and benefited from the “Italian miracle”, raised e series of protests, but it also prompts the publish of “workers law”.

From the 70s, because of the inflation, the debt, and the global market changes, for example Japan, the expansion of the Italian economy slowed down, and gradually entered the normal state of low growth. After entering the 21st century, various economic crises have had a huge impact on the Italian economy.

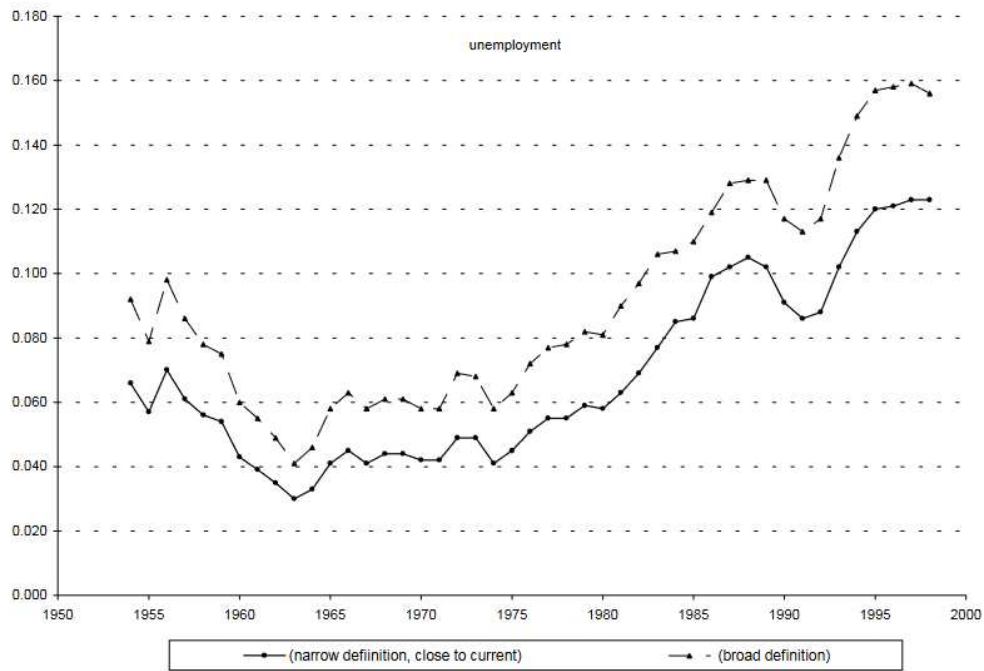


Figure 6 (Italy employment 1950-2000) (Bertola & Garibaldi, 2003)

Thanks to the complete study, we found a lot of information about the Italian employment situation, from the study of Bertola (Table 3), we could find that the unemployment rate was high in the first few years after the war, then dropped rapidly (Italian miracle), and remained at a low level for a long time. It was not until the late 1970s that it began to rise rapidly and continued to worsen, in a fluctuating state that continues to this day, from 2000 to 2007, unemployment was significantly optimized, from 10.83% to 6.08%, reaching the lowest peak since the 1970s. But then it increased after that. After being severely hit by the European debt crisis, Italy's employment rate rose to a maximum of 12.68% in 2014. It did not gradually decline until these years, falling to 8% in 2022 (*Italy Unemployment Rate 1991-2023*, n.d.).

Finishing a brief recall of these 2 national experiences, we could slightly find some clues replying to these 2 countries, in China, the normative employment study began from the “open-reform”, thus it is very hard to access the statistical data before

that, it is obvious that from 1949 to 1978 in China it did exist the employment phenomenon, the “educated youth to the countryside” was a clear example, but what we need to emphasize is that this historical event “educated youth to the countryside” was also a government policy, but limited by the ideology, people can’t directly name it, or even recognize it as an unemployment problem, while, it combined closely to other social-political movements, which advocating the youth citizens to reeducate from the countryside, to eliminate the negative effect of “corruption capitalism”, to completely eradicate the “peaceful evolution” from the American-western force. Further discussion will proceed in the following chapter.

After “open reform”, the employment problem was starting seen as an important social concern, but there were also many critical voices, mainly about the “employment calculation”, employment refers to those who work paying a minimum 1 hour per week, this method might highly arise the employment rate in China, and blind the real situations. Secondly, in the Chinese system, the employment rate is assigned to the local government, and is a part of the performance appraisal tool, the subordinate agency (the universities) therefore, would consider the students who have graduated, “preparing for master's degree”, “preparing for the national exam” as the status “employment”.

In Italy, the importance of employment was realized in the 19th century, in the website of ISTAT, we can find out the labor report from 100 years ago, thanks to the complete and long, normative development of the relative investigation, we can see all the categories for example “occupati”, “disoccupati”, “in cerca di primo lavoro”,

“con attività lavorativa occasionale” (ISTAT), besides, Italy is the member of OCED and EU, within the framework of international organizations, all types of Italian data need to be shared with them, thus ensuring authenticity and credibility of the source.

In our research, there are many challenges, we already mentioned some of them above, lots of data were not open access, some data were incomplete, and we had to reorganize and settle them by ourselves.

In the following writing, we have to overcome more obstacles, including how to find the documents we need, how to get access, and how to translate Italian and Chinese languages into English professional writing form... To resolve these challenges, our writing will follow 2 books: “*40 Years of Employment Reform and Development in China*” (中国就业改革发展 40 年), and “*The Employment Policies*” (Le Politiche di Lavoro), by reading these reference books, we can be guided systematically to the documents and policies we need, then having more deep study around it, we will also refer to official websites to obtain the most direct information.

We will prioritize using official translations for documents, such as the translation of Italian policies available on the European Union's official website. If there is no official translation available, we will utilize translation software to ensure accuracy.

4.2 Comparative Analysis of Employment Policy

To integrate our study, we need to start working on the construction of the whole concept of governmental policies, policy is a set of ideas or plans that is used as a basis for making decisions (*Collins Dictionary*, n.d.), both Chinese and Italian governments have adopted numerous policies in the past decades, but their policies strategies meanwhile presented an evolutionary characteristics (seen in the figure), and not set in stone.

The creation of this timeline is based on the content of two books, both of which use chronological order in their writing. We will merge the content of the two books into one, then, based on the timeline's position, the content of policies, and their frequency, we have initially divided them into four periods.

- Initial period (1950-1960s)
- Twisted development (middle 1960s - end 1980s)
- Intensive reforms (end 1980s-2008)
- After crisis (2012-)

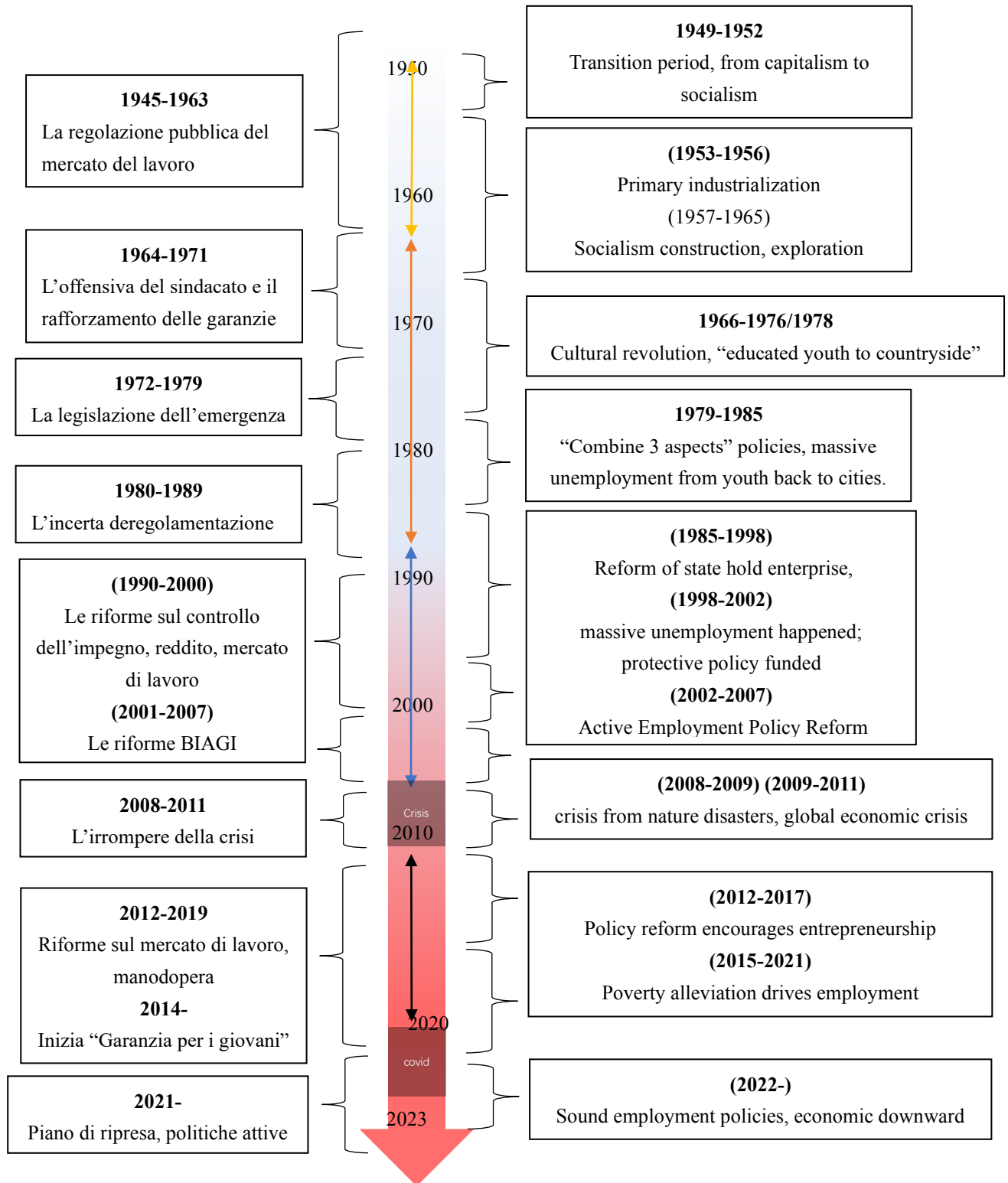


Figure 7 (Italy and China employment policies development timeline, combined by Ye Duan)

4.2.1 Initial period (1950-1960s)

The initial period could be defined from their foundations to the middle of the '60s, in this period, these 2 countries, faced a difficult working problem, partly because both of them suffered a long time of war, which harshly damaged the national employment system, but moreover, compared to the countries which finished industrialization in the 19th century “il processo di modernizzazione si era prevalentemente compiuto nel corso del diciannovesimo secolo”, the industrialization of Italy was behindhand and unbalanced, which means it could absorb all the labor, for example, in the first year of 1900s, the Italy industrial department created about 700,000 working places, but meanwhile, during this period, more than 500,000 workers lost their work (Gualmini & Rizza, 2013).

Talking about China, because of the unstable political environment and continual wars, China didn't have a complete basic industry sector (www.gov.cn, n.d.). the majority of Chinese people still live on simple agriculture activities. To develop the economy and resolve the employment challenges, the Chinese and Italian governments choose two different roads.

China Since the foundation of the People's Republic of China, the collective central policies started working to resolve the unemployment problem from 1949 to 1952, firstly, using the active policy called 'guaranteed employment' will be implemented for all, secondly, combining relief and placement methods, in which the individual self-employment became the primary channel for employment during this

period. The country advocated a policy of 'combining introduced employment with self-employment,' and enterprises recruited through the market, while workers sought employment through the job market, in this period, the labor market didn't decrease, and even strongly expanded due to the recovery of the economy.

Starting in the later year 1952, the “Three Antis” and “Five Antis” political campaigns targeted capitalist business owners completely changed this situation, and promoted the transformation of the capitalist free market into a socialist economy

Accompanying that, a planned economic system was chosen and implemented, with labor resources centrally allocated by the state, all the unemployed people caused by “Three Antis” and “Five Antis” was be registered, received employment training from the government, and then centrally allocated by the state. Employment in urban areas was managed through planned control, the labor force in rural areas should be absorbed and utilized locally through the development of agricultural operations. A small portion, due to the needs of industrial development, was able to enter urban areas to participate in the construction, During this period, all the laborers should be assigned according to the planned plan.

By 1957, the transition to the socialist planned economy was essentially finished, and the labor market disappeared accordingly.

During the Great Leap Forward movement in the 1960s, due to the extensive production campaigns, there was a surplus of labor, leading to a situation where the supply exceeded demand. However, after the movement ended, the abundance of labor compelled the government to address employment contradictions through

administrative measures such as layoffs, streamlining, and sending people back to their hometowns.

Italy compared to China, Italy represents a completely different situation, after the Great War, Italy started to rebuild the national economic system. The initial intervention was basically about contributing to the complete market environment.

After, more and more stronger governmental policies started working.

During this period, we observe the establishment of the department responsible for labor placement and management. Labor unions were dissolved, and a new labor and employment office UPLMO (uffici provinciali del lavoro e della massima occupazione) was created through the devolution of powers to the provincial level. It is crucial to note that, during this time, the labor and employment office played a significant role. Workers needed to register with the local labor office, and the office, considering factors such as enterprise manpower needs, workers' expertise, production skills, family situations, age, etc., would allocate them. In this process, companies did not have the power to choose their employees; they could only indicate the quantity needed, and the office allocated workers based on their comprehensive ranking.

Alongside, the state initiated extensive infrastructure investments in the economically lagging southern regions.

With the successful state work on promoting employment, in 1954, a 5-year-plan was proposed by Vanoni, it could provide 4 million working places in 5 years (Gualmini & Rizza, 2013), however, due to its resemblance to the planned economy

of socialist countries, considering that any term containing "plan" would trigger significant dissatisfaction among politicians and be swiftly rejected. Simultaneously, with the integration and development of the European market, Italy achieved rapid economic growth and increased employment rates through participation in import and export trade within the European market.

In 1963, Italy's unemployment rate reached 3.9%, marking the best historical data up to that point.

China	Italy
	Cass integrazione ordinaria (1945)
	Sussidio straordinario di disoccupazione (1946)
	Collocamento pubblico (1949)
	Apprendistato (1955)
	Regolazione tempo determinato (1962)
Directive on Disaster Relief in Production (1949)	
Directive on Relief for Unemployed Workers (1950)	
Interim Measures for the Relief of Unemployed Workers (1950)	
Regulations on Labor Insurance (1951)	
Interim Measures for the Allocation of Construction Workers (1954)	

Table 4 (initial period)

In the first period, to resolve the serious employment problem, Italy and China both adopted a series of governmental policies.

In the earlier stages, China addressed some lingering unemployment issues through direct state intervention. Besides, the recovery of the labor market absorbed the majority of unemployed people, policies were formulated to integrate the labor

market and assistance, enabling a significant portion of the unemployed individuals to quickly enter the workforce. However, through political movements, China's employment policies swiftly shifted from a moderate, transitional period where planning coexisted with the market to a short-term transformation into an era of centrally managed labor under planned distribution, characteristic of planned economies.

Interestingly enough, during this period, Italy initially also underwent significant state intervention. For instance, the Labor and Employment Office (UPLMO) implemented policies similar to those in China, directly allocating workers based on enterprise demand. Additionally, there were measures resembling planned economies, involving extensive investments to boost the economy and employment. But we also noticed that, in 1954, the Italian version 5-year-plan proposal got denied, meanwhile Italy got integrated into the European market, the trade and economic activities became increasingly significant in promoting employment.

4.2.2 Twisted development (middle 1960s - end 1980s)

From the middle of the 1960s to the end of the 1980s, China suffered a tough period of cultural revolution, the huge unemployment wave from the “educated youth to countryside”, and the turning point of the transition to the market economy; while in Italy, the 1960s witnessed a strengthening of the planned economy with unprecedented focus on the workers' movement, guarantees, welfare, and state

planning. The 1970s were marked by crises and soaring unemployment rates. In the 1980s, amidst economic challenges, the era of employment reforms was ushered in.

China During the Cultural Revolution, employment policies were paralyzed or partially paralyzed, even normal productive activities could not be maintained, so the worker system was forced to “reform”, the recruitment of employees was not based on choice; once hired, there could be no layoffs. This further reinforced a singular employment system characterized by centralized control, where individuals were accepted but not allowed to leave.

Meanwhile, the "sending educated youth to the countryside" was adopted. Around 17 million young people were affected in 10 years (Wu, 2019). Once the cultural revolution finished, other challenges quickly came, the return to cities of “educated youth to the countryside” caused a huge wave of employment crisis. By 1979, over 20 million individuals were seeking government assistance in finding employment (Ren, 2010).

Facing this problem, the government first tried to adopt the same methods, including undertaking the employment responsibility to all the state-hold enterprises, secondly, an important policy, the pre-retirement policy was intensified, and published as a government decision: “The cadres and employee of state hold enterprises could retire before and having one of their children to enter as a replacement.” Later, the policy was broadly enlarged. From 1978 to 1983, there were 12.20 million retired workers, of which 9 million were replaced by their children (CCP Newsweb, 2009).

But considering the huge amount of awaiting unemployed youth, the governmental system couldn't meet all the requirements thus the local government initiatively looked to arrange the workers in the cooperations of production under the frame of collective economics. In 1980, the Central Government of China convened the National Labor and Employment Conference in Beijing, and started the relaxation of controls on individual economic activities, further, In 1981, the document titled *"Several Decisions on Broadening Pathways, Energizing the Economy, and Resolving Urban Employment Issues"* was issued. This document emphasized the protection of individual economic endeavors, effectively acknowledging the legitimacy of the individual economic sector.

In 1982, the new modification of the national constitution legally confirmed the private sector's role. Finally, the Third Plenum of the 12th Central Committee held in 1984, officially established the goals of economic reform in China.

In Italy from 'the 60s to the '80s, the employment problem became more and more serious, not only reflected in the slowdown of economic development and sluggish employment rates but also reflected in the social stability.

From 1964 to 1971, The state's role in employment became increasingly prominent, for example, in 1967 with the implementation of the '1967-1971 Five-Year Development Plan.' However, concurrently, due to the development of labor unions and workers' movements, the state had to undertake more policy reforms. For example, the reforms against the illegal layoff of the workers. In 1970, the Labor Law

heralded the end of a period of turbulence and also signified a victory for labor rights demands.

During the 70s, because of the consequence of the oil crisis, Italy's unemployment rate was remarkably decreased, the emergence of an economic crisis and the rigidity in labor sectors have given rise to more flexible forms of employment, such as part-time and informal employment. Italy has further undertaken labor and wage reforms, with a focus on enhancing flexibility and market dynamism. During this period, youth employment has been identified as a key priority.

Starting from the 1980s, Italy's economy faced greater challenges. National policies adopted measures similar to China's early retirement approach to promote labor market mobility and attract youth employment. Additionally, various reform measures were implemented to protect diverse categories of workers, especially ensuring the living standards of seasonal and short-term workers. Furthermore, policies targeting youth received impetus, and national legislation was enacted to support youth entrepreneurship initiatives.

China	Italy
	Licenziamento individuale (1966)
	Cassa integrazione guadagni straordinaria. Trattameto speciale di disoccupazione (1968)
	Statuo dei lavoratori. Collocamento agricolo (1970)
	Istituzione della GEPI (1971)
	Legge sul lavoro a domicilio (1973)
	Estensione indennità ordinaria lavoro a domicilio a domestico (1973)
	Provvedimenti per la garanzia del salario (1975)
	Formazione professionale (1978)
	Prepensionamenti (1981)
	Contratti di solidarietà interni. Contratti di formazione e lavoro. contratti di solidarietà esterni (1984)
	Riforme del collocamento (1987)
	Riforma dell'indennità di disoccupazione (1988)
Directives on Sending Intellectual Youth to the Countryside for Reeducation among Poor and Lower-Middle Peasants (1968)	
Interim Measures on the Placement of Elderly, Weak, Sick, and Disabled Cadres (1978)	
Interim Measures on Workers' Retirement and Resignation (1978)	
Reply Regarding the Issue of the Employment of Children of Capitalist Entrepreneurs After Retirement (1979)	
Measures for Clearing and Streamlining Non-Plan Staff (1979)	
Notice on Managing the Retirement and Resignation of Workers within the Military (1980)	
Further, Enhance Urban Employment Efforts (1980)	
Several Decisions on Broadening Pathways, Energizing the Economy, and Resolving Urban Employment Issues (1981)	
Constitution modification (1982)	
The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China's Decision on Economic System Reform (1984)	

Table 5 (twisted development)

Over this period, both China and Italy underwent significant transformations. China went through a prolonged political movement during which employment policies were entirely replaced by state commands. Later, China underwent massive reforms that almost completely overhauled its previous employment guidelines. During the same period, Italy experienced a shift from a golden era of low unemployment and high welfare to a period marked by frequent crises. In this new era, instability and frequent policy changes became the prevailing themes.

4.2.3 Intensive reforms (end 1980s – middle 2000s)

From the end of the 80s to the period before the global economic crisis in 2008, both Italy and China started a series of intensive employment reforms. Although the economic situation in these 2 countries was completely different, they were all toward the tendency to enhance market vitality and stimulate economic liquidity. But the noteworthy differences when it came into practice sufficiently to bring us more reflections on political economy and labor.

China With the continuation of reform and the changes in the economic system in China, the contract system began to be implemented. This led to a significant increase in the number of unemployed individuals due to downsizing. Therefore, in 1993, the Chinese Ministry of Labor initiated the "Reemployment Project." This project aimed to harness the initiatives of the government, enterprises, and workers,

implementing various positive policies such as training, loans, job placement, and extending probationary periods.

In the early 2000s, numerous key state-owned enterprises in China faced substantial losses, leading to a total of 25.52 million people being laid off in 4 years (Zhang, 2019). The Chinese government responded with political mobilization, allocating significant resources in the short term and adopting a proactive stance towards labor protection, implementing emergency compensation, and establishing reemployment services. Importantly, the government incorporated the issue of unemployment into administrative divisions, gradually standardizing the laws related to employment and unemployment protection. The term "unemployment" appeared for the first time in legal texts.

From 2002 to 2007, a new round of policies was introduced, deepening and broadening the formulation of various employment policies. Tax policies, insurance subsidies, enforcement procedures, public services, legal protections, and other aspects were continually refined during this period.

Italy Starting from the 1990s, Italy's domestic labor market was continually depressed, multi multi-sector pressures made Italian companies have to resolve not only the inflation but also the higher international competition. In the 1990s, the Italian labor policies mainly worked in 3 directions: the determination of employment conditions; the return of tripartite concertation and income policy; and the discussion about the "big reform" to the labor market. Flexible regulation became the foundation

for policymaking, while the European community also started instructing the implementation of labor policies. Furthermore, the government has significantly increased unemployment benefits, while at the same time, the pressure on businesses to pay wages has been greatly reduced through policies, further enhancing labor flexibility.

Entering the new millennium, the reforms led by economist Biagi in 2003 further changed the regulation of the labor market. Firstly, there were changes in contract types, with the introduction and continued use of fixed-term contracts and permanent contracts. Additionally, new forms of employment emerged during the reforms, such as part-time contracts allowing two individuals to share one job. Moreover, the integration of governance models between public and private sectors deepened. The era of a monopoly on a single public employment policy came to an end. The reforms encouraged various entities, including unions, bilateral institutions, university unions, etc., to participate, leading to the establishment of multifunctional employment agencies.

China

Italy

- Abolizione chiamata numerica (1991)
- Licenziamento collettivo. Pari opportunità (1991)
- Modifica applicazione e durata CIG straordinaria indennità di mobilità (1991)
- Istituzione comitato per il coordinamento delle iniziative per l'occupazione (1992)
- Abolizione indicizzazione dei salari (1992)
- Innalzamento dell'indennità di disoccupazione (1993)
- Riforma della contrattazione collettiva (1993)
- Incentivazione contratti di solidarietà (1993)
- Innalzamento dell'indennità di disoccupazione (1993)
- Incentivazione part-time (1994)
- Revisione contratti di formazione e lavoro (1994)
- Lavori socialmente utile (1994)
- Piani di inserimento (1994)
- Premio di assunzione (1994)
- Fondo speciale per l'occupazione (1995)
- Pati territoriali (1995)
- Stage per l'orientamento profess. (1995)
- Introduzione del lavoro interinale (1997)
- Modificazione della normativa del lavoro a tempo determinato (1997)
- Nuova regolamentazione del lavoro part-time (2000)
- Modificazione della disciplina del contratto di lavoro a tempo determinato (2001)
- Introduzione del contratto di somministrazione di lavoro (2003)
- Modificazione del lavoro part-time (2003)
- Introduzione del lavoro a chiamata e del lavoro ripartito (2003)

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- Introduzione del contratto di inserimento (2003)
 - Riforma dell'apprendistato (2003)
 - Introduzione del contratto di collaborazione a progetto nel settore privato (2003)
 - Privatizzazione del collocamento (2003)
 - Incremento degli importi dell'indennità di disoccupazione a requisiti pieni a requisiti ridotti (2007)

- The Decision on Economic System Reform (1984)
- The Interim Provisions on the Recruitment of Workers in State-Owned Enterprises (1986)
- The Interim Provisions on the Dismissal of State-Owned Enterprise Employees for Violations (1986)
- The Interim Provisions on Unemployment Insurance for State-Owned Enterprise Employees (1986)
- The Regulations on the Transformation of Operational Mechanisms for State-Owned Industrial Enterprises Under the System of People's Ownership (1992)
- Labor Law (1994)
- The Report on the Implementation of Reemployment Projects (1995)
- Notice on the Establishment of Reemployment Service Centers in Pilot Cities (1997)
- Notice on Effectively Ensuring the Basic Living Security and Reemployment of Laid-Off Workers in State-Owned Enterprises (1998)
- Notice Regarding Further Improvements in the Basic Living Security for Laid-Off Workers in State-Owned Enterprises and Issues Related to the Payment of Pensions for Enterprise Retirees (1999)
- The Unemployment Insurance Regulations (1999)
- The Interim Regulations on the Collection and Payment of Social Insurance Premiums (1999)
- The National Reemployment Conference (2002)
- Notice on Further Enhancing Employment Assistance for Laid-off and Unemployed Individuals (2002)
- Notice on Further Strengthening Employment and Reemployment Efforts (2005)

Table 6 (intensive reforms)

What is interesting is that, during these 20 years, we could see both 2 nations kept developing their employment policies in a distinct direction. In China, the policy direction was towards regulating the emerging market order, ensuring the rights of workers, and introducing new tax, welfare, and legal regulations.

In Italy, the primary policy objective was to increase market flexibility. In labor reforms, there was recognition and protection of the rights of flexible workers, optimizing and challenging previous legal policies. During this period, there was also a focus on youth employment, and encouraging entrepreneurship has also become a significant policy in Italy, which will talk about it later.

4.2.4 After crisis (2014-)

The global economic crisis of 2008-2009 originated from the subprime mortgage crisis in the United States. This was triggered by the collapse of the U.S. real estate market and defaults on subprime mortgages, leading to a financial crisis that subsequently spread worldwide.

From 2009 onwards, the European continent experienced the outbreak of the European debt crisis, characterized by significant challenges in government debt and the financial system. The crisis led to economic stagnation, increasing unemployment rates, and financial instability across the region.

The global economic crisis harshly damaged Italy and China, during the crisis, multi-emergency financial measures were adopted in case to pass through the crisis. But after that, the true and tough challenges emerged: how to restore a battered economy and wealth, how to quickly emerge from a recession, and achieve robust economic growth?

China After the crisis, the issue of employment has gradually evolved from being merely an economic problem to becoming an economic goal, specifically embodied in the national "employment priority strategy." This strategy has abandoned the traditional sole emphasis on "GDP," and during this period, youth employment issues have received recognition and attention. In 2015, with the development of the Internet economy, China officially introduced the primary guidelines for employment during this period: increasing investment, reducing financial regulation, expanding subsidies, and encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation. Concurrently, China

underwent another round of administrative system reforms aimed at streamlining governance and enhancing flexibility. By 2016, the output value of the service industry in China exceeded fifty percent for the first time (Zhang, 2019).

In this period, under the support of policies, a large number of small and micro-enterprises, as well as internet enterprises, have emerged and grown.

After that, starting in 2015, China initiated another round of governmental policy guided by poverty alleviation, combined with innovation and entrepreneurship policies, which has further encouraged industrial development in rural areas and entrepreneurial activities among young people in rural areas.

Italy the global economic crisis greatly attacked the whole European countries, after the crisis, Italy's employment policies appeared a new characteristic: following and applying the European Union's policies and structures. The detailed policies included flexible regulation of labor's mobility and positivity.

These policies were reflected in exemptions, incentives, and subsidies across various industries, as well as in direct assistance to low-income populations. Italy underwent a reform of the "I see" index in 2015 to make it more comprehensive and accurately reflect the actual economic situation. This improvement facilitated targeted subsidies, ensuring that assistance effectively reached the intended individuals or groups.

The European Union has established EU labor laws and continuously improved them over the course of several decades. The EU adopts directives that its member

countries incorporate into national law and implement. This means that it is national authorities (labor inspectorates and courts) that enforce the rules (European Commission, n.d.).

Compared to the prior policies, the new policy-making strategy followed the European strategic projects. In 2013, the European Commission presented specific country recommendations, and the Italian government took action in the fields of labor and social policies, adopting measures for each of the recommendations expressed by the Council. During the same period, Europe initiated protective actions targeting the NEET youth (no employment, education, or training). Italy implemented these measures in 2014 within its borders.

China

Italy

- L'Assicurazione Sociale per l'Impiego (ASPI) (2012)
- Programma nazionale di riforme e programma di stabilità 2012-2017. (commissione europeo) (2013)
- Interventi urgenti per la promozione dell'occupazione (2013)
- La Legge di stabilità (2014)
- La riforma dell'apprendistato (2014)
- Garanzie per i Giovani (2014)
- Riforma ISEE (2015)
- Nuovi ammortizzatori sociali in caso di disoccupazione involontaria (2015)
- Riordino dei contratti agli indeterminati (2015)
- la fondazione dell'Agenzia Nazionale per le Politiche Attive del Lavoro (ANPAL) (2015)
- Riduzione dei contributi previdenziali (2018)

- Notice on Establishing Demonstration Counties for the Transfer and Employment of Rural Labor (2010)
 - Opinions on Vigorously Promoting Policies for Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation (2015)
 - Decision on Winning the Battle Against Poverty (2015)
 - Guiding Opinions on Effectively Implementing Employment Poverty Alleviation Work (2016)
 - Opinions on Further Enhancing Employment and Entrepreneurship Work under the New Situation (2017)
 - Opinions on Doing Well in Employment and Entrepreneurship Work in the Current and Future Periods (2017)
 - Guiding Opinions on Winning the Three-Year Action Campaign for Precision Poverty Alleviation (2018)
-

Table 7 (after crisis)

The development of 2 countries' policies was not linear, but complex, by comprising, we could have more reflections about the logic behind these policies.

Firstly, is the language used, it is notable that in the list of Chinese policies, the statement of policy was mostly announced as “opinions, guiding, decision and order”, while in the list of Italy was as a form of law. In practice, the policy “decision” in China has the same power as the legal code, the local government could formulate its service regulation based on the idea transmitted by the bureaucratic policy statement.

From the language used, it's not difficult to see the differences between the two cultures and economic systems. China still retains many characteristics of a planned economy, where the habit of "waiting for notices" is prevalent throughout society.

Secondly, if we compare both China and Italy, we can find out that the Italian policies were forward-looking, it has forecasted some of the policies that could have been executed in China. For example, in China, the policy reform after the crisis was highly referenced to Italy's experience (or Western countries) in the 1990s

Finally, we also have to notice that, in China, the recovery of the market was just 45 years (starting from the open reform in 1978); only 30 years since the foundation of the current economic system (1993); less than 20 years since the complement of labor, employment and retirement policies (the 2000s). In the last 10 years, many of the details were re-edited and were able to arrive at the level of some other developed countries.

4.3 Youth Policy Comparison

After we finished the time-log comparison of 2 countries' employment policies development, we needed to change our concern from the national policy level to the concerned group, the youth, and neo-graduates. Back to history, when a country was in a period of rapid development and ascent, the youth was never considered an employment problem, however, on the foundation of ensuring basic education, the young attended early on the labor markets, the employment requests were always digested by the growing labor market, therefore, the publication of youth employment policy also reflected the obstacle happening in the national economic.

In this part, we will focus on the governmental youth employment policy that has been adopted in history. By comparing Italy's and China's youth policies, we will also try to list the main youth policy-making time-log, and clarify the challenges in different periods, by examining better the archive data, we could contribute to our study on the current policy and situation.

4.3.1 China

Same as other policies, China's youth employment policies also follow the same logic. Due to historical reasons, before the initiation of open reform in China, the youth employment policy was virtually nonexistent. The allocation and regulation of the youth labor force were entirely contingent upon state planning. A strong characteristic is following the superior directive and appeal, making the group action

or movement (Xu & Zhu, 2023). Here we can see certain cases.

“Youth Assault Team¹” (1954-), Its primary responsibilities include proactively facing urgent, challenging, significant, and hazardous tasks in production. The teams undertake missions in harsh environmental conditions, involving strenuous physical or intensive intellectual labor.

The first "Youth Assault Team" was established in 1954 in Beijing by 18 young construction workers. Subsequently, an editorial was published in the People's Daily, primarily focusing on promoting the experience of the Youth Assault Teams. In the same year, Youth Assault Teams were widely launched on a large scale across various regions in China. The interest is that, as a strong reflection of the communist period, the “youth assault team” remains after Mao’s death.

Nowadays, this form of organization is widespread in China. For example, during the previous COVID-19 pandemic, various “Youth Assault Teams” played a significant role in China's efforts to combat the outbreak.

“Youth Land Reclamation Team²” (1953-1978), In response to the call of the Party Central Committee, young people from various regions voluntarily left the cities to engage in land reclamation, production, and construction in remote or undeveloped areas of China. Subsequently, the Youth Land Reclamation Teams effectively became a form of population allocation, with many young individuals needing to settle in different regions. The gender ratio among land reclamation team members also

¹ The " Youth Assault Team " refers to an organization or group composed of young people, who are mobilized by the party or youth organization to participate in various activities such as large-scale construction projects, planned initiatives, and other collective actions.

² "Youth Land Reclamation Team" refers to a group composed of young people who are organized to reclaim wasteland and engage in agricultural production, among other activities.

became an important consideration, which raised the number of women members' numbers (Hu, 2019).

These youth organizations are mobilized, voluntarily or collectively, with a pronounced communist character. A substantial amount of the young labor force is treated as a resource and allocated to various regions and projects. As we discussed earlier, during the planned economy era, the movement of youth labor directly reflected the will of the state, given the absence of a job market.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) 17 million youth were arranged to the countryside following the central committee order.

Retirement Succession System (1980s) The succession system in China began to emerge in the 1960s and was widely implemented in the late 1970s as a means to address the significant issue of widespread youth unemployment. According to this system, if a worker meets the retirement conditions, they are allowed to have one of their children take over their position (CCP newsweb, 2009), under this policy, which the qualified youth could benefit from, the only thing to do is waiting for the job arrangement. At the end of the 1980s, this policy was abolished.

Job Allocation for University Graduates (1980s) The distribution system began in 1950, and after the end of the Cultural Revolution, China's higher education experienced a revival. During this period, the youth employment model in China had

a distinct directive feature. Universities followed the directives, conducting talent development entirely according to the national plan. Employers recruited graduates based on the national plan, and university graduates did not need to worry about employment; it was all assigned in the end by the educational institutions (reformdata.org, 2008). Starting from 1985, the Chinese government initiated the education reforms, and in 1996, the graduate's job allocation was finally abolished.

Expansion of College Enrollment (2000s) Under the pressure of the unemployment wave caused by the state-hold-enterprise reform, and the requirement for a national economic reform goal, 1999 China implemented a college enrollment expansion policy, in 1999, the enrollment marking an unprecedented growth rate of 47.4%. Subsequently, in the year 2000, the expansion rate was 38.16%, followed by 21.61% in 2001 and 19.46% in 2002. At the same time, the allocation system for college graduates also came to an end, and the majority of young graduates were required to independently seek employment in society.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship for College Students (2010s) After the financial crisis, the government continuously refined various laws and improved the rules of the job market. Simultaneously, it gradually promoted a new economic model with entrepreneurship and innovation at its core. This initiative particularly targeted college students and graduates. Measures included broadening financing channels for youth entrepreneurship, assisting businesses in connecting with financial institutions,

establishing entrepreneurship mentors, providing entrepreneurial training, and implementing various policy facilitations such as entrepreneurial loans, subsidies, and tax incentives.

China's Youth Employment Policies

1953-1965 (youth labor arranged according to the national plan)

Policy: In Response to Calls, self-organize, deploy and arrangement

File: --*Several Opinions on Mobilizing Youth to Participate in Land Reclamation in Response to the Party's Call (1955)*
--*Decision on Mobilizing Youth to Participate in Socialist Construction in Border and Minority Regions (1958)*

1966-1977 (educated youth in the countryside)

Policy: In Response to Call, self-organize, deployment, and arrangement

File: --*Directives on Sending Intellectual Youth to the Countryside for Reeducation among Poor and Lower-Middle Peasants (1968)*

1978-1984 (waiting for the work)

Policy: Awaiting for work assignment, early retirement

File: --*Interim Measures on the Placement of Elderly, Weak, Sick, and Disabled Cadres (1978)*
--*Interim Measures on Workers' Retirement and Resignation (1978)*

1985-2007 (formation of marketization, free job choice)

Policy: Two-way choice, autonomous employment, abolishing retirement-succession system, encourage youths to work in small private companies.

File: --*Opinions on Further Deepening Reforms in the Employment System for Graduates of Regular Higher Education Institutions (1985)*
--*Interim Measures for the Non-centralized Allocation of Graduates with Higher Education by the State (1996)*
--*Opinions on Guiding and Encouraging College Graduates to Seek Employment at the Grassroots Level (2002)*
--*The State Council's Several Opinions on Addressing the Issues of Migrant Workers (2006)*

2008-2022 (diverse employment, encouraging entrepreneurship, poverty alleviation, and reviving the countryside policy)

Policy: free job choice, entrepreneurship, government support, and market reform.

File: --*Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Talent Development Plan 2010-2020 (2010)*
--*Opinions on Promoting Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation with Various Policy Measures (2015)*
--*Notice on Implementing Entrepreneurship Guarantee Loans to Support Entrepreneurship and Employment (2016)*
--*Opinions on Further Guiding and Encouraging College Graduates to Work at the Grassroots Level (2017)*

Table 8 (China Youth Employment Policy Development)

4.3.2 Italy

When we conclude the historical review of China's youth employment policies and turn our attention to Italy, a significant difference becomes apparent almost immediately, when adopting the governmental policy, in Italy, policies are typically adopted in the form of legal texts through proposals and parliamentary processes, ensuring the legitimacy and legality of the implemented measures.

After the Second World War, Italy quickly began its economic recovery, in a short time Italy reached an accomplishment altitude never before, in this long process, by operating various economic and employment policies, Italy has roughly passed through different crises and challenges.

Apprenticeship The first policy document on the apprenticeship system was introduced in 1955 (Gualmini & Rizza, 2013). With sustained rapid economic growth, the market witnessed a significant increase in demand for labor. Additionally, the ongoing processes of industrialization and urbanization led to a surge in the youth population, resulting in younger workers entering the job market with comparatively lower wages and weaker professional skills. The introduction of the apprenticeship law aimed to protect these new entrants to the labor force. This marked the first instance of proactive intervention to ensure the needs of specific groups were met

In the 1955 version of the apprenticeship, beneficiaries were aged between 16-20 years old, and apprenticeships should not exceed 5 years, entailed a maximum of 44

working hours per week.

In 1996, the apprenticeship underwent a significant update. The age limit was raised from 20 to 24 years, and in economically disadvantaged southern regions, the limit was extended to 26 years. Additionally, the apprenticeship duration was modified to a minimum of 18 months and a maximum of 4 years.

In 2003, the apprenticeship underwent a substantial reform, categorizing apprenticeships into three types:

1. Apprenticeship for youth aged 15-25, leading to a vocational certificate, high school diploma, or advanced professional certificate;
2. Professional Apprenticeship for individuals aged 18-29;
3. Training o internships for young people aged 18-29 in universities and research institutions.

It is worth noting that the apprenticeship system, as a significant policy, has been continuously adjusted in subsequent years, with the most recent changes occurring in 2014/2015 (Chellini, n.d.).

Innovation and entrepreneurship for youth (the 1970s) In the 1970s, to respond to the passive economy caused by the petrol crisis, Italy implemented a series of youth employment policies to stimulate the economy, especially in encouraging youth entrepreneurship and working in autonomy (Gualmini & Rizza, 2013).

During this period, the Italian government introduced a comprehensive policy package. Financially, it facilitated local financing for youth, and in terms of

recruitment, it streamlined contracts, providing employers with incentives and discounts.

Furthermore, to encourage youth entrepreneurship, youth cooperatives, and social work were established. There was also a specific encouragement for young people to engage in agricultural cooperation in impoverished areas.

Retirement succession system (1980s) In the early 1980s, similar to other European countries, Italy began to address the challenging employment situation through early retirement. The primary objective of early retirement was to stimulate intergenerational mobility in the labor market, allowing more young people to access job opportunities.

Special measure on promoting youth employment (2013) This is a comprehensive youth employment policy package implemented by the Italian government (Gualmini & Rizza, 2013).

It includes financial support: For the first-time hiring of youth aged 18-29 who have been unemployed for over 6 months and do not possess a high school or vocational high school certificate, businesses can receive a subsidy of 650 euros per month for a total of 18 months. For older employees, if a company converts a fixed-term contract into a permanent one, they can also receive the same amount of subsidy for 12 months.

Regional support: Public sector support is provided for young people in the

southern regions (NEET: no employment, education, training), including inclusive programs that offer free training and internships.

Occupational support: Implementing intergenerational employment relay, gradually reducing working hours for older workers until retirement, and allowing the hiring of young people on part-time contracts to fill vacant positions.

Youth Guarantee Project (2014)

The Youth Guarantee Project is a European initiative born out of the need to address the challenges of employment integration and youth unemployment. Funding is directed towards countries with a youth unemployment rate exceeding 25%.

The project works in whole regions of Italy for the youth between the ages of 15 and 29 years old, for the youth from the South (Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicilia), the age requirement is raised to 34 years old (ANPAL, n.d.).

The Youth Guarantee project provides free opportunities for job orientation, formation lessons, apprenticeships, internships, civil service, Self-entrepreneurship, and European mobility.

Italy's Youth Employment Policies

1955 (apprenticeship/apprendistato)

Policy: Expand the job positions, standardize and increase youth worker supply

File: --*Disciplina apprendistato (l.155/1955)*

1972-1979 (encourage the youth entrepreneurship and giving favor to youth workers employers)

Policy: Providing social security contribution exemptions for entrepreneurs hiring young workers, and establishing youth cooperatives to promote youth employment.

File: --*provvedimenti sull'occupazione giovanile (l.285/1977)*

1980-1989 (early retirement, prolonging compulsory education, developing underdeveloped areas)

Policy: reduce the retirement age to 50(f) and 55(m) to expedite the entry of the young; prolong the compulsory education from 14 to 16 years old; financial incentives for the establishment of companies in the South by individuals aged between 18 and 29 years old

File: --*Prepensionamenti (l.155/1981)*

--*Southern Youth Entrepreneurship Law (l.113/1986)*

1996 (Adjustment and standardization of youth policies)

Policy: prolong the apprenticeship benefit age up to 24 (26) years old, prolong the training year up to 4 years

File: --*Cfr.Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministeri (1996)*

2003 (Further reforming apprenticeship system)

Policy: abolish the previous apprenticeship, redivide into 3 different types of apprenticeship

File: --*Riforma dell'apprendistato (d.lgs.276/2003)*

2013 (Crisi, comprehensive policies promoting youth employment)

Policy: providing subsidies for youth and businesses, driving funds and young talents towards the South.

File: --*Misure straordinarie per la promozione dell'occupazione, in particolare giovanile, e della coesione sociale (2013)*

2014 (Under European structure cooperation on youth employment)

Policy: the youth guarantee project

File: --*la legge delega in materia di lavoro (c.d. Jobs act) (2014)*

--*Programma italiano su Garanzia Giovani (2014)*

Table 9 (Italy youth employment policy development)

Comparing China and Italy's youth policy evolution, the 2 nations exhibit different characteristics, in the formulation of youth policies in China, the forms include national **commands**, **opinions**, and **guidance documents**. In contrast to Italy's policies, which are often specified in legal or special measures. We observe that China's model allows for the rapid implementation of policies through intensive documents in a short period. However, due to the lack of detailed regulations in such documents, there is considerable variation in practices across different regions, and there may even be completely different interpretations of policies. On the other hand, Italy, through legal means, can avoid similar situations.

Besides, the "Youth Assault Team" organization started in 1954 in China, "Apprenticeship" law was approved in 1955 in Italy, these 2 policies represent their country's attributes: socialism and capitalism, although the youth policies in Italy and China have continued to evolve since then, and there were even some similarities and overlaps, the focus on the attributes of the state was far less important than during the Cold War period. However, these two policies, persisting to this day, still remind us of the essential differences between these two countries.

We could see that in the development of policies, especially coincidentally, starting from the late 1980s until the 2000s, which is the so-called "intensive reform period" that we talked about before, both Italy and China moved towards the goal of relaxation and increased fluidity. For example, the series of apprenticeship reforms in

Italy and the educational system reforms in China were aimed at breaking the existing system's unfavorable constraints on employment and the economy, promoting labor mobility in the market, and optimizing allocation.

In the previous part of our study, with Table 1 we showed an analysis method for employment policies, which divided employment policies into 3 levels: general level, youth group level, and rapid-program level, here is the form based on our comparison and analyses.

The general level refers to the employment policy targeting the whole population, here we mainly consider the youth policy, so it will be neglected.

	China	Italy
Concerned group level System reform, skill improvement...	Autonomous employment (1996) <u>Youth Entrepreneurship Support (2015)</u>	Apprenticeship (1955) <u>Encouraging the youth entrepreneurship (1977)</u> <u>Early retirement (1981)</u> Southern Youth Entrepreneurship (1986) Adjustment on apprenticeship (1996) Apprenticeship reform (2003)
Supplement level Government-led-program...	Youth labor arranged to national plan (1953) Educated youth in the countryside (1966) <u>Early retirement and succession (1978)</u> Graduated job arrangement (1980) Educational system reform (1985)	Special measures for youth unemployment (2013) Youth Guarantee Project (2014)

Table 10 (China and Italy policy genre comparison)

In addition, we find that the youth policies in China and Italy are undergoing almost opposite evolutions. China initially was led by national plans and projects,

gradually developing into guiding and supportive employment policies. In contrast, Italy, in terms of youth employment policies, initially relied on the formulation of laws and regulations for support and guidance. However, after the economic crisis, it gradually began to implement national plans to address the employment crisis.

Therefore, from here, we can see that similar policies may have completely different practical implementations, such as the early retirement policy, this policy aimed to resolve the youth unemployment problem both in two countries during the 70s-80s, in Italy, it manifests as employees retiring early, for being able to provide more job spots for youth generation. In contrast, in China, it manifests as employees retiring early while directly arranging for one of their children to take over. Some scholars argue that this is a result of the lifetime job allocation under the government-planned economy, where family and their working unit are integrated, providing legitimacy for the policy of offspring inheritance.

Interestingly, through a comparison of youth employment policies in Italy and China, combined with the previous overview of the overall employment processes in both countries, we can find more points worth pondering:

For example, although the timing of promoting youth entrepreneurship differs between the two countries, their policies were both introduced approximately 30-35 years into the operation of a market economy;

In times of economic downturn, encouraging youth to develop lagging regions (Southern Italy) (rural China) serves as a means for both countries to achieve economic growth.

Lastly, it's worth noting that in recent years, compared to Italy, China's youth employment policies seem to be increasingly focused on university graduates, in China, there will be 3012 universities by the end of 2021, and in 2023, the current students in the universities are about 200 million, facing with such a huge number, Chinese universities have adopted a different role compared to Italian universities. They have become both the service recipients and implementing agencies of youth employment policies. Regarding this phenomenon, we will explore more in the next chapter through case studies.

5. Nowadays Policies Implements: two cases in two countries

5.1 Today's Policies: What Graduates Can Rely On?

Under the structure of the governmental policy, we compared the comparison 2 nations' youth policies, some new findings were being able to make, Italy and China have significant differences in the policy field of “concerned group level” and “supplement level”, meanwhile it also reflects the differences of the economic system, political system, finally in the previous chapter, we mentioned the phenomenon of China's policies which favoring the college students.

It can be said that we have conducted both vertical and horizontal comparisons and analyses. By analyzing the tendency and policy evolution, indeed, we can obtain numerous interesting findings by summarizing our comparisons of employment policies and youth employment policies, both at the macro and micro level, we can observe the changes in the economy, as well as the intricate cultural, political, and other complex communication phenomena underlying them.

However, we have found that due to a lack of detailed interpretation of youth employment policies, many of the conclusions we have drawn lack intuitiveness.

Therefore, in the following writing, we will first present the current youth employment policies of both countries and then proceed with case studies to examine how they come into practice. This approach will address our third research question, make our research more comprehensive, and better respond to current societal concerns.

5.1.1 China

Policy making structure

The current youth employment policy in Italy is primarily shaped by the collaboration of one structure, the notice is issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, and the Ministry of Education, the local bureaus of human resources and social security are responsible for the implementation (General Office of the State Council, 2022).

Unlike Italy's establishment of a youth agency, China has not set up a separate institution for youth programs. Instead, all youth activities, various training programs, and cultural events are managed by the Communist Youth League (CYL) (Beijing Communist Youth League, 2023). CYL branches are established in universities across China and are fully responsible for student affairs, student activities, volunteer activities, and providing support such as youth entrepreneurship funds.

On the administrative level, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security provide support for youth employment through the university institution from top to bottom organizationally, focusing on the whole graduate group. Meanwhile, the Communist Youth League assists from the central to local levels, from top to bottom, focusing on individual university students.

University's role

Besides, as we mentioned before, in the policy-making structure, the universities in China play an essential character, indeed, we can even say that all youth

employment policies in China are targeted towards universities. Universities serve as the executing and implementing institutions for all policies.

After reviewing the major policies and documents related to youth employment, we found that university graduates are classified as an individual category alongside vulnerable groups and migrant workers (Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, n.d.). For example:

*“Notice from the General Office of the State Council on Further Strengthening the Work of Employment and Entrepreneurship for **University Graduates and Other Youth**” (2022)*

*“Notice from the Office of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security on Launching the 2023 Action Plan for Employment Services for **University Graduates and Other Youth**” (2023)*

Although the policies also named unemployed youth, the main focus of the policy remains on efficient graduates. Unlike the youth policy formulation in Italy, which targets the entire youth population, including university graduates, China's youth policy directly targets university graduates.

Therefore, we can preliminarily summarize the implementation schematic of China's youth policy as follows:

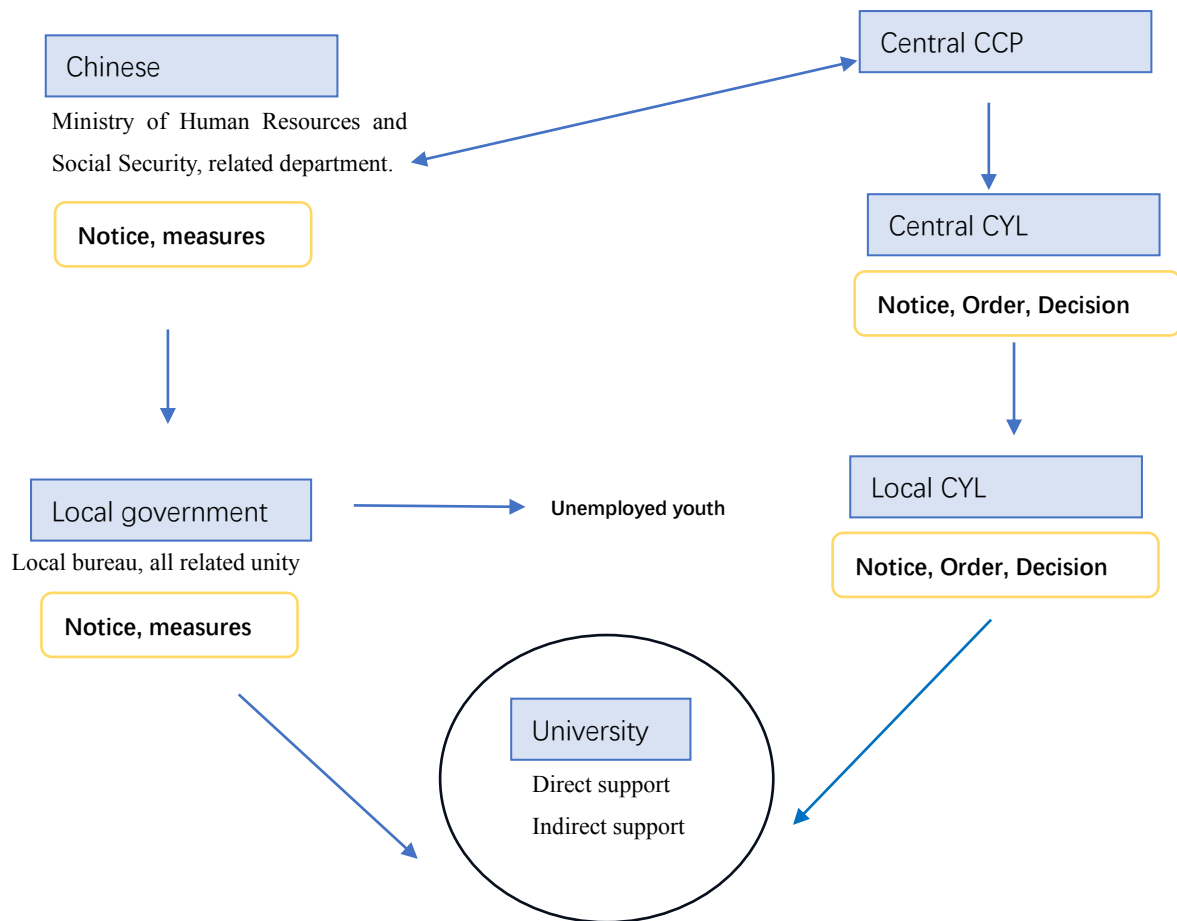


Figure 8 (China youth policy-making structure)

Current main youth employment policies

As the same approach, in this part we will list the major policy that is implemented now among Chinese institutions, thus we will focus on the current policy. Unfortunately, just because of the reason that we repeated in the first half part, which is that many policies in China are in the form of notices and decisions, therefore it can be challenging to find the relevant legal provisions.

More importantly, during our research, we found that, due to this reason, a document may be repeatedly circulated by central, local, and various levels of government departments, even down to the university institutions, to ensure that

policy notifications are effectively disseminated.

Also, due to this reason, the interpretation of policies varies among different regions and departments. As a result, there are significant differences between various areas and cities in the implementation of policies, we will try to outline the primary policies that are implemented.

Employment Policies	Contents of measures	note
1. Increase job opportunities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand the scale of enterprise employment 2. Broaden employment opportunities at the grassroots level¹ 3. Support independent entrepreneurship and flexible employment 4. Stabilize the scale of public sector² positions 	1 general level 2,3,4 reserved for university
2. Enhance continuous employment services.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Precisely carry out targeted assistance for those in need 2. Optimize recruitment service 3. Strengthen employment counseling 4. Implement real-name services and protect employment right 	1,2,3 reserved for the university 4 general level
3. Simplify and optimize job application procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote the abolition of <u>employment registration certificates</u>³ 2. Provide convenient job-seeking and employment services 3. Actively and prudently transfer <u>files</u>* 4. Improve registration of graduates' destinations 5. Promote mutual recognition of <u>medical examination results</u>* 	1,2,3,4 reserved for the university 5 general level
4. Focus on strengthening youth employment assistance.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen the youth employment service mechanism 2. Enhance vocational skills 3. Expand the scale of employment internships 	1 general level 2,3 reserved for university
Strengthen and implement work responsibilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance organizational leadership 2. Strengthen job security 3. Do a good job in publicity and guidance 	1,2,3 general level

Table 11 (Circular from the General Office of the State Council 2022)

¹ refers to frontline service and management roles in communities, villages, streets, and schools

² refers to professional or managerial roles requiring examination selection, with responsibilities for management and execution to serve society

³ the employment registration certificate records graduation time, start of work tenure, retirement age, and years of pension contributions.

Under China's administrative system, various types of documents have become the means of policy transmission and implementation, this maximizes the timeliness of policy implementation and ensures that policies are continuously disseminated to the grassroots level.

But the most interesting part is perhaps seeing that the majority of policies are reserved for the university, as we mentioned before at the end of the last chapter. “Reserved for University” means the university plays a vital character as executor.

For example:

“Stabilize the scale of public sector positions”

--increasing the scale of recruitment of university graduates by government agencies and public institutions.

“Optimize recruitment service”

--Promote public employment services in the university, with service agencies and employers entering campuses for recruitment.

“Provide convenient job-seeking and employment services”

--Eliminate the requirement for university graduates to sign documents or report for duty before graduation.

There is a great difference compared to Italy, in China a strong administrative operation is always remaining, and it deeply affects the graduates' fates. Meanwhile, we have to admit that such a job recruitment system has expanded much, and a large number of industries that provide government job exam coaching and employment services have emerged. Various tutoring institutions offer specialized courses, so in

China, tutoring centers cover almost all age groups from primary school up to 30 years old.

5.1.2 Italy

Policy making structure

The current youth employment policy in Italy is primarily shaped by the collaboration of three levels: the European Union, the national government, and local authorities. The Italian constitution establishes a framework for supporting young people. Under this framework, 17 out of the 20 regions in Italy have passed relevant local legislation.

The Department for Youth Policy and the Universal Civic Service (YPUCS department) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies (MLSP) constitute the operating arm. YPUCS is also responsible for controlling and monitoring the funding of youth policies, it closely collaborates with the departments of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and all the ministries.

Additionally, The **Italian Youth Agency** has been established, primarily responsible for the European Erasmus program and the ESC (European Solidarity Corps) initiative.

In the implementation of policies, after the legal and regulatory framework is established by the European Union or the Italian government, each locality adapts and formulates local legislation according to its specific conditions, it is worth noting that

Italy does not have a national youth law, and local governments can directly refer to EU regulations for legislation.

University's role

Within this context, we find that universities have a considerable degree of independence, enabling them to flexibly leverage support from businesses, local institutions, university networks, the Italian government, EU programs, international exchanges, and more to provide diverse employment support for students.

However, it's important to note that support from Italian universities often takes the form of indirect employment assistance. It involves utilizing university resources to facilitate communication with businesses (job open day), providing introductions (workshops), offering support (scholarship information), and enhancing students' overall organization and competitiveness (Erasmus programs, university projects, etc.)

Similarly, the Italian government also has similar youth support programs, where the government allocates funds to provide bonuses, subsidies, credit funds, and volunteer opportunities for young people (generally aged 14-35), aiming to ensure their well-being and enhance their prospects.

Therefore, we can preliminarily summarize the implementation schematic of Italy's youth policy as follows:

Within the frameworks of both the national government and the European Union, laws are established to provide the legal basis for youth employment policy implementation. Local governments enact policies based on existing legal provisions,

and relevant departments at the national level coordinate efforts. Universities, possessing autonomy, engage in extensive collaboration with various levels to provide employment assistance to graduates.

In Italy, universities are not responsible for the implementation of governmental policies; instead, they utilize their resources and means to serve as bridges.

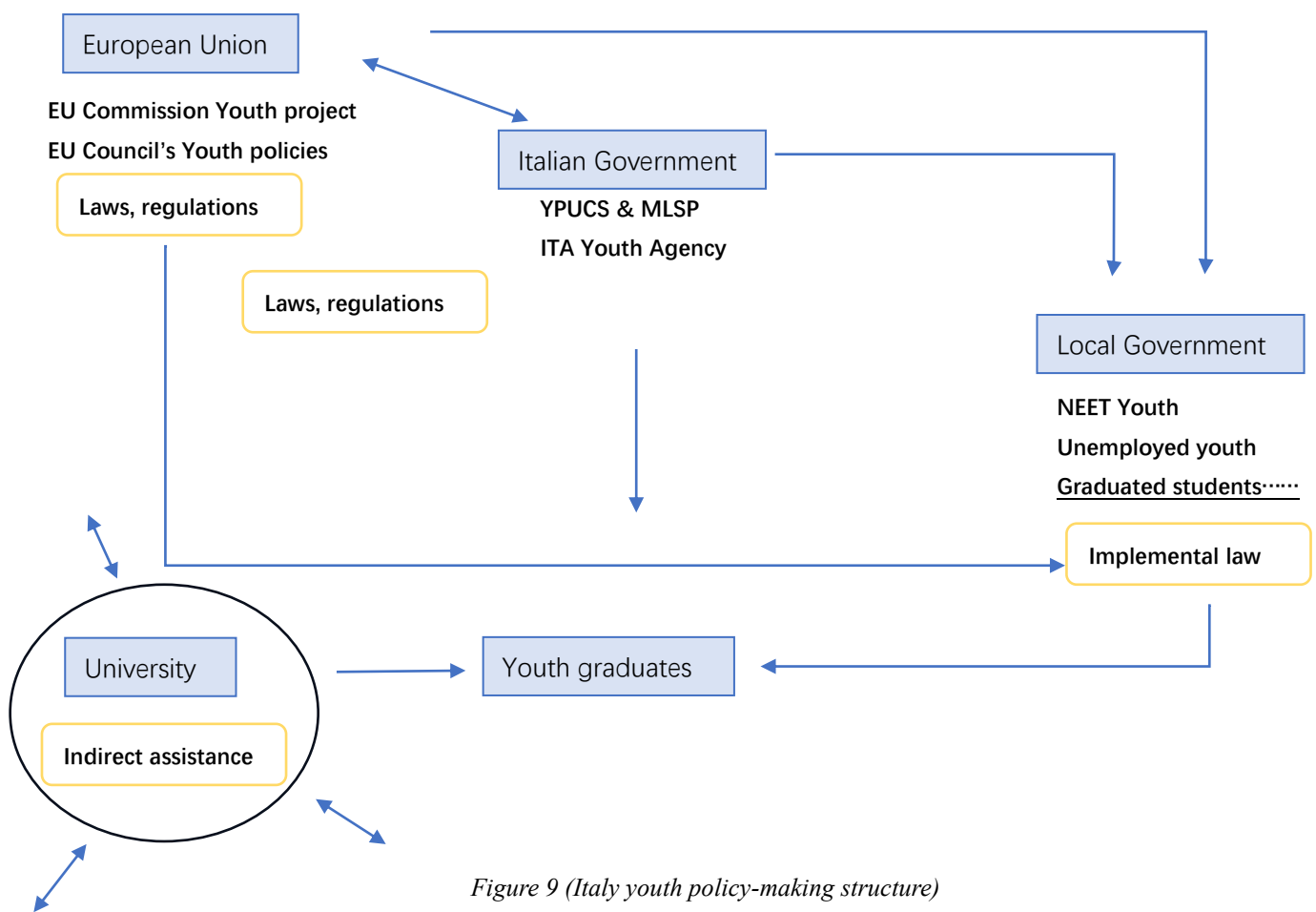


Figure 9 (Italy youth policy-making structure)
 (<https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/italy/12-national-youth-law>)

Current main youth employment policies.

After explaining the policy-making logic, which conveys also how different institutions around the youth could effectively work to support their employment. Now, let's shift our focus to the youth employment policies currently being implemented in Italy, as we discussed before, in Italy there is there is dedicated institutions for youth affairs in Italy, and certain policy will be must involve many other sides. One brief introduction wrote like this:

“Several measures have been taken by the Government and public authorities to promote youth employment: tax incentives and hiring subsidies for employers taking on young people; work-based learning programs and measures to facilitate job placement (skills certification systems, continuous vocational training, school-work experience, internships, apprenticeships); self-employment. The main pillar of youth employment policies is represented by the Youth Guarantee program, managed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies through the National Operational Program (PON): Youth Employment Initiative. Some other significant measures aimed at sustaining employment and, in particular, entrepreneurship, are not specifically targeted at young people, since there is no age limit, even though young people are often among the main recipients.” (<https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/italy/3-employment-entrepreneurship>)

National Policies	Contents of measures	note
Traineeships and apprenticeships law	<p>1. Extracurricular internships</p> <p>2. Curricular internships</p> <p>3. Dual system (creating an ongoing and coherent relationship between the education, professional training, and work systems)</p>	<p>“Guidelines on training and orientation internships” (State-Regions Agreement of 25 May 2017)</p> <p>18 of Law 196/97 and its implementation regulation (Interministerial Decree 142/98)</p> <p>Law 107/2015 and Legislative Decree 81/2015 - implementing decree of the Delegated Law 183/2014</p>
Cross-border mobility program	<p>1. Cross-border internship mobility under the European Erasmus framework</p> <p>2. The European Employment Plan under EURES</p> <p>3. Internship mobility under Italy's Youth Guarantee Plan</p> <p>4. Cross-border internships facilitated by opportunities provided by Stage4EU</p>	EU-ITA program
European Youth Guarantee program	<p>The youth guarantee program is a collective-policy-pack which includes different measures:</p> <p>1. Career orientation and counseling</p> <p>2. Career training/ formation</p> <p>3. Apprenticeship</p> <p>4. Internship</p> <p>5. Civil service</p> <p>6. Self-entrepreneurship</p> <p>7. Professional mobility</p>	EU-ITA-LOCAL program

Table 12 (<https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/italy/3-employment-entrepreneurship>)

We see that, through legislative means, young people can benefit from preferential measures such as training opportunities and apprenticeship contracts.

With the help of the cross-border program, the youths could also initiate their career in the European continent.

Currently, Italy's youth employment policy is centered around the Youth Guarantee Project, although the first round of policy (2014-2020) has already concluded, the measures of Youth Guarantee will continue thanks to the financing of the “Pn Youth, Women, and Employment” (2021-2027). For the foreseeable future, the Youth Guarantee Project will still be the Blackstone.

5.2 Employment Policy and Graduates' Fate

We have gained an understanding of how current youth employment policies are being implemented and have also learned about the various policies that are in effect. Finally, we would like to see as a neo-graduate, in the circumstances of different countries, what she/he could do under this policy structure and policies items, what opportunities and chances will be taken advantage of.

This part will change the study perspective from the macro/historical level into a personal living, therefore, using it as the final part of the research will be very interesting. The reason why I chose these 2 universities is for convenience request, as my bachelor's and master's universities, would reject some mistakes caused by unfamiliarity.

5.2.1 A graduate fate in China

Here we will use the example of China Agriculture University

As a student about to graduate, I am nervous, I know that in China the

employment situation is getting harder, but I still need to start. Fortunately, in China, especially at my university, I had the chance to participate in several competition

The examination for selecting outstanding university graduates to work at the grassroots level. (October)

(https://rsj.beijing.gov.cn/ywsite/bjpta/xwzx/zytz/202309/t20230915_3260037.html)

Examination for the recruitment of civil servants in central government agencies and institutions for Fresh graduates (October)

: (<http://bm.scs.gov.cn/pp/gkweb/core/web/ui/business/home/gkhome.html>)

Beijing Municipal Civil Servant Examination for Fresh Graduates* (December)

: (<https://rsj.beijing.gov.cn/bm/ztzl/gwy/>)

In addition to the large-scale exams mentioned above, as a fresh graduate of the current year, I can also participate in recruitment exams set up by various units. These exams will specify "targeted at fresh graduates."

“Announcement for the recruitment of fresh graduates by the Central Gifts and Cultural Relics Management Center in 2024.”

: (<https://www.shiyebian.net/xinxi/462443.html>)

These kinds of exams set up by various units were published based on their employee’s requirements, as far as I am still a fresh graduate, I could benefit from this policy. (if I graduate in 2024 July, I can keep the identity as a “fresh graduate” from the end of 2023 till the end of 2024)

But who knows what opportunities the future holds? So why not seize the

opportunity at this moment? A work right now can give me a feeling of security. I turned to the university website, student employment service network (<https://scc.cau.edu.cn/frontpage/cau/html/index.html>), the employment support enhancements are as follows:

- Training activities
- Individual consultations
- Career seminars
- Vocational assessments

Sadly I didn't find any support on recruitment skill enhancement, "training activities" is empty (<https://scc.cau.edu.cn/frontpage/cau/html/trainActivities.html>), inside the pages "Career seminars, vocational assessments" the latest info was surprisingly published 3 years ago, and the total number of information does not exceed ten. The "individual consultations" is an online platform strictly reserved for students, who need student numbers and codes. (<https://scc.cau.edu.cn/a/login>)

Although the skill enhancement pages are limited, I still find other important information, it publishes info about "the examination for selecting outstanding university graduates to work at the grassroots level" I can register for every other province, and after I am selected, I will be able to become government employee and live in another province.

In addition, this website provides important information—campus recruitment. Many companies will directly come to the campus. Unlike regular recruitment, campus recruitment reserves specific quotas for fresh graduates. Campus recruitment

includes the following forms:

- Company recruitment sessions. (one company in presence)
[\(https://scc.cau.edu.cn/frontpage/cau/html/recruitmentFairForm.html?id=f8284cd515f447a188fc51d66dc57382&\)](https://scc.cau.edu.cn/frontpage/cau/html/recruitmentFairForm.html?id=f8284cd515f447a188fc51d66dc57382&)
- Job fairs. (Fresh graduates and companies choose each other)
[\(https://scc.cau.edu.cn/frontpage/cau/html/bilateralchosefairForm.html?id=36c8ef26c9494bd195aad84f1b5a413d&\)](https://scc.cau.edu.cn/frontpage/cau/html/bilateralchosefairForm.html?id=36c8ef26c9494bd195aad84f1b5a413d&)
- Spring/fall campus recruitment events. (hundred companies in presence)

Importantly, in campus recruitment, many large state-owned enterprises, and even government agencies, participate. These positions are only open to university fresh graduates, and other individuals may not even be eligible to submit resumes. Therefore, the competition is greatly reduced, making it an extremely rare opportunity for everyone.

Usually, the better the university, the more companies and positions will participate. Conversely, opportunities will be more limited in lesser-known universities. However, in practice, many companies participating in online campus recruitment only have restrictions on the status of fresh graduates, rather than specifically requiring the reputation of the university.

But, for a lot of people, maybe including me, I need to prepare for it, using all the platforms to send my CV, to apply for the open job in the labor markets.

5.2.2 A Graduate Fate in Italy

In this case, we will use the University of Padua as an example.

As a student about to graduate, I am nervous, I know that in Italy the job supply is not optimistic, but I still need to start. First, I came to the University Career Site to look for an internship (work), as I know these internships are offered to both students with/without credits requestion. (<https://careers.unipd.it/it/#/portale/stage-italia>), but the intern offers usually have discipline restrictions, so it is not adaptable for everyone.

Afterward, I began to check other opportunities, some of them I found in the Newsletter sent by the career office every month, where I can get more information about the -working environment, -seminars, -sending candidature cv...unfortunately there are not enough jobs present in the monthly newsletter, considering that it is just a newsletter, I can understand.

At the same time, these newsletters also introduced the seminars for skill enhancement that I can sign up for (<https://www.unipd.it/laboratori-sviluppo-competenze-trasversali>), but the places are so limited, only for 30 students.

Subsequently, I also learned about a series of workshops, courses, and tools provided by the career services (<https://www.unipd.it/orientamento-lavoro-professioni>). They include:

- Individual consultations
- Seminars and workshops
- Transversal skills labs - in person
- Transversal skills labs - online

- Mentor&Me Project
- Career development information modules - ICARD
- Self-assessment tests for transversal skills
- Virtual company visits
- Information on the job market and professions
- Job search tools - Video Top Tips
- Active job search path

These activities do not primarily focus on professional skills but rather provide a wealth of job-seeking skills and more information about the workplace. At the same time, I realized the importance of using different platforms for my career, especially the necessity to run my profile on websites such as LinkedIn and Indeed, etc. I will send my CV as much as possible to as many companies as possible.

During one-on-one communication with the employment office, the counselor also mentioned the EURES platform (<https://www.cliclavoroveneto.it/eures1>), which allows you to try internships and work in other countries.

Right, there is also the career fair held at the university every May (<https://www.universitaperta-unipd.it>), where you can communicate with various companies and organizations, and submit resumes, which is also an opportunity not to be missed.

Finally, after I graduate, if I am not able to find work, I will register for the Youth Guarantee Project, which supports us in identifying professional opportunities.

Furthermore, companies that hire graduates enrolled in the Youth Guarantee

program can benefit from an economic incentive. (<https://www.unipd.it/garanzia-giovani>)

In simple terms, from the perspective of a university graduate, there exist stark differences in the employment prospects of university students between China and Italy. These significant differences reaffirm our previous discussions regarding the 2 nations' historical development and policies.

6. Conclusions and Prospects

6.1 Can Government Help on Employability?

Finally, let's back to our research questions:

1. What are the Governmental policies for employability like in these 2 countries?

2. How do the youth graduates benefit in 2 countries?

3. How do they come into practice in 2 countries?

In our study, we addressed three research questions in Chapter Four (Comparative Analysis of Employment Policy History and Youth Employment Policy) and Chapter Five (Implementation of Current Policies).

We must acknowledge that this paper did not employ research methods such as questionnaires or interviews but literature surveys and historical data collection methods, which might make it feel lengthy and require reading a lot of text, terms, documents, etc. However, we distinctively conducted comparative research to address all three research questions, and as a result, we obtained many interesting findings.

1. The development of employment policies in the two countries exhibits clear differences. In China, policy implementation often relies on "notices" and "decisions" issued from higher authorities, while Italy's employment policies require systematic documentation, often presented in the form of laws and regulations. However, both countries share similarities in the direction and content of their policy development.

2. In the early years, youth employment in China primarily relied on state allocation arrangements, while in recent years, it has benefited more from

continuously improving market economy rules and entrepreneurship/employment policies.

In Italy, young people have greatly benefited from long-term policies such as the apprenticeship system. During economic downturns, the role of state planning and projects becomes more prominent, with policies actively leaning toward the youth population.

3. In the implementation of policies, Italy employs a system where the European Union, national government, and local governments act as executors to support youth employment. Universities, on the other hand, play a relatively independent role, mainly focusing on education and skill development tasks. The individual graduate could get less direct but more indirect support from the university side.

Can governmental policies help with the fate of youth graduates' employability? After these 80 pages, we have the answer but also more thoughts, we discussed that employability is contributed by person, organizational strategies, and governmental/educational policies. In our historical comparison, Italy continuously improves its apprenticeship policies, while China provides employment policies specifically for university graduates. Both countries have also implemented early retirement policies, which effectively address the employment issues faced by young graduates and can be said to enhance their employability. However, it is worth noting that the discussion on "government policies" itself increasingly emphasizes not only administrative measures and economic actions but also the cultivation of individual capabilities and even the construction of the overall social employment atmosphere. This phenomenon

is observed both in China and Italy regarding "youth employment policies".

This means that the formulation of employment policies involves not only **considering employability from the perspective of government policies**, but also integrating the perspectives of individuals, organizational strategies, and governmental/educational policies. In other words, considering government policies from the whole concept of employability.

Last but not least, in China, universities serve as the implementation targets and executing agencies of government youth employment policies, tasked with increasing employment rates and addressing the issues of recent graduates. Under the university system, having the identity of a "fresh graduate" can enjoy huge advantages of job opportunities.

6.2 Rethink the "Policy" Concept

Despite different social systems and levels of economic development, China and Italy follow similar timelines in formulating employment policies. This is particularly evident in the prosperity of employment during the 1960s and the employment reform adjustments starting in the 1990s. Similar measures such as entrepreneurship encouragement and rural revitalization have also been adopted.

It is worth discussing that this poses requirements for how we view China. For a country with a political and economic situation vastly different from Western nations, many mainstream voices, whether academic or media, tend to emphasize differences, leading to a natural binary opposition. In this study, for instance, terms like "Chinese

employment policy" and "Italian employment policy" may lead readers to believe that the two types are completely different.

Our comparative study, which reveals so many similarities, emphasizes an inclusive, monistic dialectical perspective, taking employment policy as a unified concept, starting from the same point and extending to different paths, for example: employment policies (Chinese model, Italian model).

Similarly, in youth employment policy, through comparative analysis, we have indeed seen both Italy and China continually expanding policy measures. As a capitalist country, Italy has recently begun implementing the *comprehensive youth employment policy package* and the *youth guarantee program*. Meanwhile, as a socialist country, China is attempting to broaden youth entrepreneurship, support small and medium-sized enterprises, and strengthen the market. In some words, we can explain it as policies convergence phenomenon, or as the result of policymakers learn each other. However, if we can shift our perspective and incorporate the concept of policy into a unified framework, then the development of youth employment policies in Italy and China, as discussed in this paper, is not merely an outward expansion of their policies, but rather an internalization and absorption of policies themselves.

Seeking common ground while acknowledging differences and reaching consensus is also a fundamental requirement of globalization. In today's increasingly turbulent and risky world, facing the resurgence of conflicts, adopting such thinking may offer effective measures for response.

Certainly, significant and even surprising differences exist between the two countries. While few may recognize the vast disparities in the character of universities between them, both nations share a consensus regarding universities as the final step before employment. Building upon this common ground, understanding and acknowledging these differences is essential not just for Italy but also equally necessary for China.

6.3 Limit and Potential Study Direction

Our research focused on the historical comparison between China and Italy, unfortunately, we only conducted the quality part, and we have to admit that even though most databases are free to access, professional statistical software is required for analysis. Through these data analyses, we can obtain more detailed and visually intuitive results that better reflect the development status of both countries. Therefore, in our study, we consult mainly on the statistical report but not the original data.

Second, to summarize and compare historical development, 50 pages are far away not enough, it requires much more effort and patience to concentrate on the history-changing trends and important events in detail, for a better combination of “history” and “policy”.

Finally, our new outlook on "policy" involves the theoretical integration of the "Italian model" and the "Chinese model", as well as the necessity to extend related knowledge. Unfortunately, I don't have time to further elaborate on this speculative level, but it is certainly valuable.

Another interesting aspect is that, since this study is conducted through a longitudinal historical dimension, I believe that exploring how to use different perspectives to measure the societal development of Italy and China will always be a fascinating direction. This may involve policies, and economics, but also gender awareness, concepts of rights, educational methods, humanities, and various other aspects.

Finally, we have reached the end of our journey. The idea for my thesis was inspired by my personal experiences, which are unfolding both in China and Italy. I am grateful to Professor Padovani for his invaluable guidance, which enabled me to chart a clear research path and turn my idea into reality. Every comment and exchange we shared will serve as a crucial lesson in my lifelong learning journey.

I also want to thank myself for having the courage, curiosity, and determination to pursue studies in Italy and explore the world. The knowledge, both tangible and intangible, gained during this journey will always remain in my heart, motivating me to overcome future obstacles.

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