

Vulnerable Workers in Times of Social Transformations

Discrimination and Participation of Young and Older Workers,
and Social Dialogue Stances

edited by Olga Jubany, Fabio Perocco

The Effects of New Forms of Employment on Different Generations of Workers

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Abstract This chapter aims at enlacing the correlation between new forms of employment and new vulnerabilities in the six countries analysed. In particular, the analysis done has pointed out the effects of new forms of employment on different generations of workers, through analyzing issues such as: the new forms of employment and the policies implemented in order to reduce the risk of labour market exclusion and increasing vulnerability.

Summary 1. Introduction. – 2. The Analysis of the National Frameworks in a Long-Term View: the Labour Market Composition. – 3. National Paths and Main Issues Concerning the Effects of New Forms of Employment. – 4. A Synthesis of the Results of the New Forms of Employment on Younger and Older Workers. – 5. Concluding Remarks on the Impact of New Forms of Employment on Younger and Older Workers.

1 Introduction

The LinkAge investigation has highlighted a correlation between new forms of employment and new vulnerabilities in the six countries analyzed. In this regard the analysis aimed at exploring the effects of new forms of employment on different generations of workers on young and older workers, through analysing issues such as: which are the main new forms of employment and division of labour emerging in the last decade? Which have been the effects of these new forms of employment on young and older workers? Also with regard to policies, what impact have the new forms of employment had, and how have specific policies been implemented in this regard.

In all six national contexts analyzed there are, even if in different terms, common problems in relation to the effects of new forms of employment on young and older workers. These problems are the following: de-industrialisation processes that mostly affect manufacturing industries; the introduction of new technologies and the effects on the labour processes; the de-regulation of labour law and the introduction of new labour contracts marked by a high instability and an increasing precariousness. In addi-

tion, those processes have combined with other dynamics such as: ageing of population; the increase of the educational level among the younger generation; reductions in welfare provisions, especially for labour policies; and social shock absorbers.

The LinkAge investigation has also allowed the collection of actions and measures addressing the needs and demands of young and older workers in relation to new scenarios shaped by new forms of employment. These actions and measures are focused on the active inclusion in the labour market of different generations of workers dealing with the risk of exclusion from the labour market and increasing vulnerability.

2 The Analysis of the National Frameworks in a Long-Term View: the Labour Market Composition

In order to deepen the effects of new forms of employment on younger and older workers it comes relevant to analyse the general transformations of the economy and labour market policies in the six countries in a long-term view. In the last decades all the six countries analyzed have experienced some transformations in the labour market composition and more generally in the economic structure. These transformations occurred have been involving the workforce as a whole but their impact has been more relevant on younger and older workers even if with many differences between the six countries. The analysis of the labour market re-composition shows that the changes of the national economies have substantially reduced the employment in the manufacturing sector and enlarged that one in the tertiary sector. This dynamic has implied the growth of the female participation to the labour market but also the increasing causalization of the employment relationship. As a consequence the deregulation of the labour market has produced, as already mentioned, a relevant shift from stable employment positions to unstable ones. Nevertheless, the regulatory framework evidences many divergences between the six countries.

So, considering the results of the LinkAge research, the main new forms of employment emerging during the last decade are the result of basically two main dynamics:

- 1) Restructuring processes: the relocation and delocalisation of a part or the full manufacturing process in order to reduce labour costs; firms closures that produced a huge amount of dismissals; the technological change due to the scientific innovation of products and labour process as well; the intensification of work paces caused by the high variation of markets and just in time work organisation patterns;
- 2) The deregulation of the employment relationship and specifically: the growth of fixed-term contracts due the increase of both standard

fixed-term contracts and so called 'atypical' contracts more and more typical in the labour market; the increase of work discontinuity due to the increasing alternating periods of intense work with periods of unemployment; the spread of underpaid and unpaid jobs (mini-jobs, zero hour contracts, stage); further reductions in protection against dismissal claimed by employers and promoted by some governments.

Along these lines, considering the restructuring processes of enterprises it should be highlighted that the reorganization of production is also due to more articulated dynamics involving the international division of labour which produces delocalization, closures and mergers. Moreover, the six cases analysed evidence how the restructuring of enterprises has caused consequences on work organisation in productive contexts, such as: learning how to use new technological tools and numeric control machines (by means of specific training which should be guaranteed by enterprises, although it is not always so); the intensification of the work pace and the demand for workers to pay more attention towards qualitative standards; increasing difficulties in being able to find a life/work balance due to the gap between working hours/work pace and the timetable of public services and activities destined to consumption. In the countries analysed, the restructuring of enterprises has originated dissimilar outcomes on the labour force, depending on the domestic dynamics of the labour market and on the specific national regulations of industrial relationships and labour policies.

Considering the deregulation of the labour market it should be remarked that during the past decade, by following a global trend, all the national contexts analysed have been affected by the growth of precarious work relationships. However, the outcomes for the labour force have been different in each single nation, depending on the roles played by institutions and social parties in managing the economic crisis. Italy, Spain and Poland have faced the highest levels of job insecurity: especially from the year 2000, these countries' governments have been promoting temporary contracts without however incentivizing labour policies. In particular, in the name of modernisation, the governments of said countries have been acting as follows.

In Austria the most common form of 'atypical employment' is part-time work whilst temporary employment contracts are less common as other employment contracts, such as labour leasing and self-employment. The changes occurred in the economic structure have led to an enlargement of the employment in the service sector that currently employs 70% of the active population, by contrast only 25% of workers are employed in the manufacturing sector. Despite the economic recessions and its results in the economy and labour market Austria has the lowest unemployment rate

of the EU 28 (people aged 15-64). At the end of 2013 it was 5.0% compared to an EU 28 average of 11.0%;

In Belgium part-time work occupies a growing place, especially for women in order to care for children or other dependents. The most relevant changes of the labour market are related to the increase in the employment rate of women (aged 15-64) from 38.1 % in 1986 to 57.2 % in 2013. The employment rate has increased especially among older workers as the rate of youth employment has declined over the past 20 years for both men and women. In same period also the differences between regions have increased. The economic recession has translated with both a slowdown of productivity and a reduction in hours worked by their employees and restructuring processes and job losses;

In Italy the deregulation of the labour market started in the 1990s, then, the emergence of new sources of workforce at lower costs and without protections accorded to workers employed has accelerated the ongoing restructuring, especially as regards the manufacturing industries with low-technological investment and labour intensive activities. In the first 2000s the government strengthened the role of private employment agencies and extended the temporary work, by introducing new types of employment contracts marked by the high discontinuity of job performance (intermittent work, job sharing) and modifying some existing employment contract (apprenticeships, part-time work and collaborations). From year 2000, job insecurity has undergone acceleration due to the issuing of specific measures which have increased the amount of discontinuous contracts with the aim to make work relationships flexible;

In Poland the economy has experienced relevant transformations as a consequence of the political changes of 1989. Following the reforms carried out in 1989 with the Balcerowicz Plan, many public enterprises have undergone privatization, hence causing employment discontinuity and unemployment (see Kowalik 1991). The liquidation of numerous unprofitable state-owned companies, the steady modernization of businesses, and the privatization process strongly contributed to the precarization of workers. Despite the creation of new jobs in the private sector the condition of workers in terms of working and income stability is still problematic. Poland has currently the hugest number in Europe of temporary employees as percentage of the total number of employees, as shown by Table 7.

In Spain, as of the 1980's, the government has strongly encouraged temporary work contracts, thus contributing in dualizing the labour market with particular disadvantage for the younger generations. Then, since the late 1990's to 2008 Spain experienced one of the most intense economic and employment expansion of the Euro area (with an increase of the total active population of 6 million people in this period). Then, the analysis of the recent evolution of employment trends by age groups shows that major differences emerge between young and older workers. Young workers have

been the age group most affected by increasing unemployment in the current recession: young male workers employed in the construction sector and manufacturing sectors have been the more affected by the economic recession. Labour market reforms implemented since the mid 1990s have been addressed to reduce the labour market duality through the reduction of differences of non-wage costs between open-ended and temporary contracts. The labour market reforms launched in the last two years (2010 and 2012) have been specifically focused on the lowering of labour market duality mainly through the reduction of dismissal costs of permanent contracts.

In UK the economy during the last twenty years has been marked by an ongoing moving in and out of recession. In a long frame view Britain's relatively deregulated labour markets had contributed to a strong economic growth, new employment opportunities and, by attracting immigrant workers, differentiate the labour market. Nevertheless, especially since the neoliberal turn started in the 1980s with Margaret Thatcher in the UK there have been relevant changes in the nature of industrial relations. Since then the rising unemployment and income insecurity have become structural features of the labour market: again, the restructuring processes involving the manufacturing sector and the enlargement of the tertiary sector have produced the destruction of stable job positions and the creation of new jobs marked by a high instability and low wages. In economic phases marked by a limited labour demand the UK policies have focused on encouraging mainly older people to search employment. On the opposite, in phases marked by high unemployment, governments' attention has been focused on younger workers.

In order to deepen the effects of the above mentioned dynamics on new forms of employment one needs to consider different variables: the effects of new forms of employment and the combining effects of the economic crisis; the effects produced by the technological change on workers and firms; different impact on the six countries analyzed; different impact on younger and older workers.

That is to say that there are national features such as the economic structure, welfare provisions (especially concerned with labour policies) the legislative framework and also intergenerational issues to consider for each country analysed. All these different variables make the difference. In any case, by looking at the variations in the number of employees it is clear a strong reduction in the employment rates for all age groups especially in manufacturing sectors. This is very clear for Spain, Italy and Poland as shown by Eurostat data in Table 1.

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Table 1. Employment in manufacturing sectors (thousands)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
EU 28	37,861.6	35,001.6	33,854.5	34,056.0	33,623.8	33,114.8
EU 15	27,974.7	25,905.1	25,231.7	25,306.4	24,861.3	24,361.3
Belgium	707.3	653.4	650.4	638.3	592.0	586.6
Spain	2,971.5	2,536.4	2,396.3	2,340.0	2,213.4	2,108.2
Italy	4,611.0	4,400.5	4,221.1	4,264.6	4,158.8	4,074.9
Austria	638.8	605.3	619.5	648.4	656.1	646.5
Poland	3,217.4	3,046.5	2,860.3	2,904.8	2,886.5	2,948.0
United Kingdom	3,271.3	2,731.2	2,780.2	2,775.9	2,810.9	2,839.2

Source: Eurostat, LFS

Considering the employment rates Eurostat data shows a general decline of them among young people aged 15-24. This decline is mainly due to the increasing access to the tertiary education in all countries and the consequent unavailability of youth generations to cover permanent or fixed-terms positions in the labour market. Nevertheless it is also true that the unemployment has involved mainly young people as shown in Table 4.

Table 2. Employment rates by age group (%)

	2000	2005	2010	2013
	15-24	55-64	15-24	55-64
EU 28	:	:	35.9	42.2
EU 15	39.9	37.5	39.9	44.2
Belgium	30.3	25.0	27.5	31.8
Spain	32.2	36.8	38.5	43.1
Italy	26.1	27.3	25.7	31.4
Austria	52.5	29.2	53.1	31.8
Poland	24.1	29.0	22.5	27.2
United Kingdom	55.8	50.4	54.4	56.8

Source: Eurostat, LFS

Assuming the dynamics connected with the international division of labour involve all the six countries analyzes data shows that the effects of these dynamics on the labour market composition have been different. Divergent economic structures only partially explain the existing heterogeneity. The different trends can be explained considering the combination of different variables: economic structures, labour protections, main features of the labour supply and demand, technological investments, work organization, industrial and economic policies and welfare provisions.

Eurostat data shows relevant differences between the six contexts analyzed about the employment rates of young people aged 15-24 on the basis of the level of education attained, as shown in Table 3. Italy is the country with the lowest employment rate of youth people with tertiary education, followed by Spain; by contrast, Austria and United Kingdom are significantly above the European average (EU 28 and EU 15). Comparing data in a diachronic view it is observable a general reduction in all the six countries analyzed, with the exception of Austria. The existing differences are mainly due to the rising mismatch between labour demand and supply and specifically to an imbalance between the demand and supply of educated labour that shows cross-country differences in the incidence of overeducation. Assuming that overschooling does not necessarily imply overskilling it is noticeable that the entry in the labour market for more educated young people is still problematic. Along these lines, the economic recession seems to have increased existing difficulties of young people: as highlighted by Eurofound (2014b) the labour market for young people is still very poor. As a consequence of the economic crisis, young people who have concluded full-time education are less likely to move directly into full-time permanent employment. Along these lines, extended school-to-work transitions are compromising lifetime earnings, future employability and, in more general terms, the transition of young people into adulthood.

Table 3. Employment rates of people aged 15-24 with tertiary educational level¹ (%)

	2000	2005	2010	2013
EU 28	59.7	60.2	56.8	54.7
EU 15	59.7	60.0	58.1	56.9
Belgium	80.8	63.7	53.8	44.2
Spain	45.5	56.4	45.8	35.8
Italy	49.3	27.3	25.3	23.1
Austria	64.8	73.3	63.3	67.4
Poland	53.9	56.3	52.5	43.3
United Kingdom	82.6	79.1	72.6	71.6

Source: Eurostat, LFS

¹ Tertiary level relates to short-cycle tertiary, bachelor or equivalent, master or equivalent and doctoral or equivalent (levels 5-8). See also metadata Eurostat, available at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/lfsa_esms.htm (2014-07-20).

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Considering Eurostat data on unemployment rates (Table 4) from 2000 to 2013 it is clear the existing divergence between the six countries analyzed. During this period the unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 has been increasing almost in all countries (except in Poland) but with relevant differences. The unemployment rate among this age group has grown by 8.5% in Belgium, Italy and United Kingdom, by 30.2% in Spain.

The analysis of the unemployment rate among older workers shows also different trends: from 2000 to 2013 it has increased in all countries (except in Austria and Poland) but with relevant dissimilarities. Among the workers aged 55-64 the unemployment rate has increased in Belgium by 2.2%, in Spain by 10.2%, in Italy by 1% and in United Kingdom by 0.3%.

Table 4. Unemployment rates by age group (%)

	2000	2005	2010	2013
	15-24	55-64	15-24	55-64
EU 28	:	:	18.7	6.4
EU 15	16.1	7.6	16.6	6.4
Belgium	15.2	3.2	21.5	4.4
Spain	25.3	9.8	19.6	6.3
Italy	31.5	4.7	24.0	3.5
Austria	6.3	6.7	10.3	3.6
Poland	35.7	9.7	36.9	10.8
United Kingdom	12.0	4.5	12.8	2.7

Source: Eurostat, LFS

In this direction the analysis of the labour market composition reveals, as definitely shown by data, not an inverse correlation between employment and unemployment rates rather than divergent paths. This dynamic is mainly due to the recent transformations occurred that have produced both the reduction of the inactivity rate among the population over 55 and the increase of the temporary employment, especially among the youth population as shown by Tables 5 and 7. Data shows a strong reduction of the inactive population among people aged over 55 as consequence of the impoverishment of the household budget, due to the growing casualization of the workforce, and also of pension reforms that postpone the retirement age and forced many people to increase the seniority in the job. Data shows that in all six countries analyzed during the last fourteen years the inactivity rate has decreased hugely: by 18.2 percentage points in Belgium, by 13.3 in Spain, by 16.7 in Italy, by 15.1 in Austria, by 11.9 in Poland and of 10 percentage points in United Kingdom. This dynamic has been mainly involving women, as shown in Table 6, also as result of the declining of the male breadwinner model and the spread of dual-earner families. In

this direction since 2000 older women have been experiencing also the effects of both the reduction of welfare provisions and the precarization of the labour contracts: on one hand the cut on welfare state services and transfers has increased the care burden for women as unpaid work for dependent people in the household or in the enlarged family network; on the other hand the increasing precarization of the labour contracts has implied a growing instability of the employment position of other member of the family both in terms of a reduced income and also a reshape of the working times. In these terms, even if the family size has been progressively reduced in the last decades, the cut of welfare provisions justified by austerity measures launched for the need of fighting economic inefficiencies and providing fiscal consolidation are contributing to dismantling the social welfare although not all countries are affected in the same way. Particular intensive effects have been experienced in Mediterranean countries, such as Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain where the restructuring processes have combined with the lack of new job opportunities and the reduction of welfare provisions (traditionally very limited in these countries in comparison to other countries of EU 15).

Table 5. Inactive population as a percentage of the total population, by age group (%)

	2000	2005	2010	2013
	15-24	55-64	15-24	55-64
EU 28	:	:	55.8	54.9
EU 15	52.5	59.4	52.1	52.8
Belgium	64.3	74.1	65.0	66.7
Spain	56.9	59.2	52.1	54.0
Italy	61.9	71.4	66.2	67.4
Austria	43.9	68.6	40.8	67.0
Poland	62.5	67.9	64.3	69.5
United Kingdom	36.6	47.2	37.7	41.6

Source: Eurostat, LFS

However, gradually, both in relation to social changes occurred and pension policies enacted, a growing number of women with more than 55 years is now active in the labour market. In particular, the increasing destandardization of labour contracts has made discontinuous and also precarious the working conditions of many female workers close to retirement. Old female workers, especially those ones with low skills, are now caught between the dependence on the care of others and the work instability.

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Table 6. Inactive population as a percentage of the total population, by sex (%)

	2000	2005	2010	2013
	M	F	M	F
EU 28	:	:	44.9	64.3
EU 15	48.6	69.8	43.1	62.1
Belgium	63.7	84.2	56.6	76.6
Spain	39.7	77.5	37.1	70.1
Italy	57.8	84.1	55.7	78.5
Austria	55.5	81.1	57.0	76.5
Poland	58.9	75.6	59.1	78.5
United Kingdom	36.7	57.4	31.7	51.1

Source: Eurostat, LFS

Considering the transformations occurred at socio-economic level during last decade and data about the temporary employment is noticeable that the working (and living) condition of young people under 25 is most exposed to precariousness. Among young workers aged 15-24 the percentage of temporary employees on the total number of employees is relevant, with many differences between the six countries analyzed. The most paradigmatic cases are those one of Italy, Poland and Spain: in those countries young workers under 25 years old are mainly working with temporary contracts, as shown by data in Table 7.

Table 7. Temporary employees as percentage of the total number of employees, by age group (%)

	2000	2005	2010	2013
	15-24	55-64	15-24	55-64
EU 28	:	:	40.0	6.6
EU 15	39.4	6.2	41.2	6.2
Belgium	30.9	4.6	32.1	4.4
Spain	68.9	13.0	66.3	14.1
Italy	26.2	6.0	37.0	6.5
Austria	33.0	2.3	34.6	3.3
Poland	14.2	8.5	65.1	16.0
United Kingdom	13.2	6.2	12.3	5.4

Source: Eurostat, LFS

Nevertheless, as in Spain the temporary employment was spread since the 1990s, in Italy and in Poland it is a recent trend, mainly due to the labour market reforms. Along these lines, during last decade Italy and Poland have been experiencing a common path.

Since the 2000s in Italy the structure of Italian labour law has been gradually undermined: the Legislative Decree 276/2003 has strengthened the role of private employment agencies and extended the temporary work, by introducing new types of employment contracts marked by the high discontinuity of job performance (intermittent work, job sharing) and modifying some existing employment contract (apprenticeships, part-time work and collaborations).

In Poland young people under 25 usually have fixed-term contracts with low salaries, totally lacking any social protection, the so called 'junk contracts'. These contracts fail to ensure job security and in many cases they have also clauses allowing the employer to give only two weeks' notice for dismissal, and without obligation to give a reason. People employed with these contracts are not covered by the Poland Labour Code and do not have the right to paid leave or the minimum wage (see the analysis on junk job contracts made by Pańków 2012).

In these terms also a position in the labour market does not guarantee an adequate living standard and in many cases, on the basis of the kind of labour contracts, it may contribute to enlarge the risk of in-work poverty, as shown by Table 8. Additionally for the most vulnerable groups, a full-time job does not provide a solid pathway out of poverty: the workers included in these groups could experience critical economic privation during the current economic downturn, especially if their working hours are reduced because the worsening of the economic conditions. Recent measures addressed to make the labour market more flexible have translated into the precarization of the working conditions of many workers: data shows that the spread of low-paid employment even it has increased the number of people employed it has also amplified in-work poverty. Some people are more or less likely to be among the working poor: specific characteristics such as gender, age, education, household composition (single person, households with dependent children or without) and working conditions (average of yearly worked days, wage level, professional status, full-time or part-time work, type of employment contract) (see Eurofound 2010). It has been proved that women are more likely than men to be employed in low-paid jobs, working part time or in temporary employment. Single mothers and women working as employee or as self-employed with low incomes are also more likely than men to be at particular risk of poverty. Then also other variables such as education and age matter: considering the two age groups analyzed it should be considered that for both younger and older workers the risk of poverty is high: the first ones cope with the lack of working experience even if they may have high educational levels

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whilst the second ones face with low-skills and difficulties to access to IT knowledge. Nevertheless, data shows that in-work poverty risk is higher for young people because they are often forced to start their careers with low-paid jobs. Younger workers under 24 years old are experiencing increasing obstacles in accessing to a condition of economic empowerment: the access to formal labour market in a permanent position is getting more and more difficult and it is easier for them to get caught in the trap of precarity and as a consequence they may stay in this condition for many years.

Table 8. In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by age group

	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013
	18-24	55-64	18-24	55-64	18-24
EU 28	:	:	10.9	7.3	11.2
EU 15	8.7	7.4	10.5	6.9	10.5
Belgium	4.9	3.1	4.5	4.2	6.6
Spain	8.1	11.3	15.9	12.7	10.8
Italy	9.8	6.8	13.2	6.2	14.7
Austria	6.0	5.8	5.4	4.0	5.1
Poland	15.0	11.9	12.2	10.4	11.0
United Kingdom	11.1	8.4	5.6	6.2	9.2

Source: Eurostat, SILC

Trends in temporary employment are very similar to those ones of unemployment. Data shows that in Italy, Spain and Poland the work discontinuity often translates in unemployment, especially for young people. With direct effects in the growth of NEETs, young people not in employment and not in any education and training. Again NEETs decrease in some countries such as Belgium, Austria and Poland and increase in Italy, Spain and United Kingdom.

Table 9. Young people neither in employment nor in education and training aged 15-24 (NEET rates)

	2000	2005	2010	2013
EU 28	:	12.7	12.7	13.0
EU 15	11.3	11.9	12.6	12.7
Belgium	17.7	13.0	10.9	12.7
Spain	12.1	13.0	17.8	18.6
Italy	19.1	17.0	19.1	22.2
Austria	7.9	8.3	7.1	7.1
Poland	:	13.9	10.8	12.2
United Kingdom	10.9	8.4	13.7	13.3

Source: Eurostat, LFS

3 National Paths and Main Issues Concerning the Effects of New Forms of Employment

As highlighted by Supiot (1999) the analysis of changes occurred in employment relationships in Europe requires a multidisciplinary and comparative view in order to consider the evolution of the labour law in a diachronic approach. Nevertheless inter-country comparisons are difficult to manage because the variety of national experiences. Supiot underlined that a relevant proof of this difficulty is the fact that since its building, in the second postwar period, the European Community has not still found a common definition of the concept of ‘wage employment’.

In contrast with many theories, belonging to the neoliberal tradition, the overcoming of the Fordist age has not implied the abandonment of the Tayloristic organization of work or the rigid hierarchical subordination of employees in the employment relationship. Along these lines the LinkAge investigation has mapped different trends in the labour regulations among the six European countries analyzed which are the results of the above mentioned variables and their combination in a long frame view.

Considering the mapping of the six countries, by analyzing employers’ and unions’ attitudes it was clear that in some cases, the notion of ‘new forms of employment’ resulted to be very broad and generic. Employers’ representatives and unionists interviewed gave diverging interpretations in this regard. Then, there is often wide divergence between the opinions of the entrepreneurial organizations’ representatives and those of the workers’ representatives about the restructuring processes and the effects produced on working conditions. The former state that, due to the economic crisis and the increasing difficulty in foretelling the market’s demand,

enterprises need to use discontinuous employment contracts, otherwise businesses would collapse. Instead, the latter state that the increase in job insecurity is one of the main causes for the enterprises' loss in productivity since the labour force employed with discontinuous contracts has no interest in investing in the work activity. Trade unions have expressed their widespread concern as regards youth unemployment; whereas, less attention has been given to the future employment workers aged more than 55, obliged to remain longer in activity due to the rising retirement age. At the same time, though, said age bracket is particularly exposed to the risk of social exclusion due to the enterprises' processes of reorganization.

More specifically, as regards the consequences of the restructuring of enterprises, trade unionists interviewed have identified the following aspects as problematic:

- 1) De-professionalization and wage differences among workers: Both aspects are spread in the enterprises originated by processes of outsourcing that, in actual fact, affect the labour force employed in enterprises that work in a mono-commission regime and often do not have their own market. In addition to these elements, it is also necessary to take into consideration low wages as well as reduced perspectives both of career and training for those workers employed in outsourced enterprises;²
- 2) The increasing detachment between the enterprises' property and the territory where the labour force is employed: The new international division of work, which took place in the 2000's, entailed the dislocation of the entire productive process, or of some phases of the same, especially in the manufacturing sector, in extra-European countries at a lower labour cost. This process had direct consequences on negotiations and social dialogue because it eases the confrontation between those who organize the enterprise with its related work, and those who represent the workers' interests. The restructuring of enterprises are closely connected to the de-regulation of the labour market, and specifically to the introduction or extension of contractual typologies characterized by employment and wage discontinuity. As regards this specific field, the interviews carried out with trade unionists highlighted the two following aspects. On one hand the effects of the current changes on the labour market: all of the contexts analyzed, although at different levels, are characterized by a segmentation of the labour market which, at first sight, seems opposing younger and older workers. In fact, unpaid internships and temporary contracts are more widespread among the youth (regardless of their educational level),

² These issues have emerged from the interview carried out by ZSI (Austria) to the trade unionists.

whereas workers aged over 55 suffer from increasing precarious life and work conditions due to the many processes carried out for the restructuring of enterprises. The social risk for unemployed people aged over 55 is high but the perception of this problem is not present among workers' and entrepreneurs' representatives.³ According to those interviewed, even the issue of youth unemployment has been underestimated by the social partners, with the effect of reducing the pressure for the implementation of adequate governmental policies. On the other hand the effects on the welfare system: employment (and income) discontinuity in the contexts analyzed produces the risk of social exclusion and poverty among the active population. However, such effects weigh upon the future generations because employment discontinuity reduces the national insurance contribution, and at the same time prejudices retirement revenues for the generations that will be retiring in the next decades. Along these lines the increase in the retirement age affects the employment stabilization of young generations hence, causing social hardships to become widespread.

4 The Impact of New Forms of Employment on Younger and Older Workers

The main issues observed in the six countries relate to the results of the different combination of socio-economic issues on the labour market and specifically on younger and older workers.

Considering the analysis of the condition of workers aged 15-24 the following issues have emerged.

There is a positive correlation between the over-education and the increasing mismatch between labour supply and demand. This is particularly due to the fact that in some countries (Spain, Italy and Poland) the labour demand is very poor while young people are more and more educated. As a general trend in the six context analyzed the correlation above mentioned is also the result of a long-established gap between education, training and working activity paths.

Facing job losses there have been great difficulties in the job creation: many findings testify that the creation of job needs a combined mix of ideas, funds and policies. During the recession the creation of new jobs is very difficult, especially in countries, such as Spain, Italy and Poland where industrial policies have lacked and the technological investment in enterprises is still low.

³ Eurostat data highlights that women and immigrants over 55 are the ones more exposed to such risk.

The widespread (ab) use of contractual typologies such as internships, apprenticeships: it has been proved that unpaid and underpaid jobs are expanding precarity. Among this kind of jobs there are internships: they are often unpaid, on the basis of the assumed low productivity of young people involved but it is arguable that internships really contribute to gain working or professional experience. In most cases young people accept these jobs instead of being unemployed but then they risk to be entrapped in the precarity. Formally, these contracts provide for young people a job and some training. Actually, though, many enterprises use this kind of contract to save on labour costs and to substitute seniority workers. This contractual abuse creates a disadvantage for workers because it lengthens their permanence in the trap of job insecurity without the possibility to acquire particular benefits in terms of specialization (see also Perlin 2011). The increase in the use of new discontinuous contractual forms, such as: the zero hour contracts in the United Kingdom, the so-called 'junk contracts' in Poland, the different typologies of temporary contracts in Belgium, and even more so in Spain and Italy. In Austria there has been an increase in the amount of self-employment contracts. In all of the contexts examined, although with different levels of diffusion and temporariness, the increase in the use of these contractual forms has produced a general slackening of life projects of people aged under 25 and a decrease in the contributive revenues for the payment of retirements.

The absence of employment perspectives in addition to the hardships that the economic crisis is worsening in the various national contexts: There has been an increase in the amount of NEETs, particularly in Italy, Spain and in the United Kingdom, as shown by the data in Table 9. The increase in NEETs, especially when observing the trend with reference to the beginning of the economic crisis, indicates that in some of the contexts examined, for a series of variables, the population aged under 25 is particularly at risk of social exclusion.

Considering the analysis of the condition of workers aged over 55 the following issues have emerged.

Technological change and educational gap: this is due to both the lack of training activities in the workplaces and the low educational level of older workers. In the six contexts analysed, the technological change has occurred with different modalities, essentially due to the workers' level of education and to the enterprises' financial investments (both in technology and training). In quantitative terms, it is difficult to estimate the entity of the job loss caused by the technological changes; it is also difficult to estimate the career and pay advancements connected to a higher technological investment. However, it is possible to identify the greater difficulties that workers aged over 55 have to face, also on the basis of the interviews carried out. The introduction of new technological devices

has caused the intensification of the work pace and greater employers' pressure as regards qualitative control, with consequent difficulties for those workers who are not skilled and highly educated. Moreover, the difficulties met by workers aged over 55 in adapting to a new language and technology are exposing those workers to new forms of discrimination and the risk of being fired.

Job losses and increase in the retirement age: almost in all countries analyzed the retirement age delay has been achieved but in some countries this has been associated with massive dismissals that make more difficult for over 55 to join the pension. The interruption in advance of the work career and the difficult re-collocation increase the diseases of workers belonging to this age group. For the workers aged over 55, the termination of the employment determines, especially for unskilled workers, a difficult management of the transition from a stable employment to the research of a new job. The above mentioned difficulty is particularly evident in Spain where, at the end of 2013, the rate of the unemployed aged between 55-64 reached almost 20%, unlike the other contexts analysed. The Italian situation is more articulated: in fact, it is possible to assume that the social security system has prolonged the existence of many employment relationships mainly without any form of indemnity so to anticipate the dismissal.

Outplacement initiatives cope with long careers in many sectors involved in relocations. In most of the six analyzed countries there is not a deep-rooted tradition in outplacement actions. So the job search contrasts with long careers of older workers mainly developed in one firm or in one sector and it is mainly based on the individual effort of the worker affected by a dismissal procedure.

The restrictions and costs-opportunities connected to the workers aged over 55: Workers over 55 have a high seniority and a consolidated experience in a typical work relationship that on the one hand support a productivity increase but on the other hand oblige employers to apply contractual regimes adequate to the experience matured and skills acquired. Moreover, workers over 55 are often members of trade unions, and thus with a high average knowledge of their rights. These elements, as highlighted in the interviews carried out with the trade unionists, often influence employers in the way they manage their enterprises, especially during this economic phase, giving more attention to the saving of labour costs to the detriment of workers with higher seniority.

5 Conclusion

Young people in the six national contexts analysed are experiencing an increasing precariousness. Accessing to a stable employment position is becoming more difficult for many young people, especially for those who

live in countries affected by a structural economic crisis such as Italy and Spain where youth unemployment has reached the top in the European Union (28 members). Since the 2000s in the six national contexts analyzed, permanent positions in the labour market have reduced while fixed-term contracts have hugely increased. As a matter of fact, the request for flexibility, in order to reduce labour costs and increase firms' competitiveness, has produced growing difficulties in accessing to a regular employment position among young people. In addition, their staying in the precariousness trap is preventing their emancipation from the family of origin, with many consequences also for the postponement of their adulthood. Young people interviewed have also pointed out the difficulties in accessing to the labour market with fixed-term contracts, and moreover their lack of confidence in their future, especially in Italy and Spain.

In order to explain the impact of new forms of employment on younger workers one should consider also the increasing mismatch between labour supply and demand: younger people are better educated in comparison to past generations and in many cases they are overeducated in relation to their country's economic structure and firms' requirements. As a consequence, many young people interviewed are searching for any kind of job, notwithstanding the lack of career opportunities or the impossibility of gaining a stable position. This issue should activate governments in order to increase the skills required by firms: policy makers interviewed are aware of this issue but in times of crisis the state financing is converging on income support mechanisms rather than on industrial policies.

In the six national contexts analysed, the restructuring activities, mostly involving manufacturing industries, are damaging, even if in different terms, older workers, especially those with low skills. Among older workers the risk of vulnerability is increasing because of the dismissals that produce the loss of permanent positions and the scarcity of opportunities to re-enter in the labour market. For older workers interviewed - those who have lost their job as a consequence of the current economic crisis or the restructuring of companies due to business strategies mostly related to financial activities - the perception of their replaceability is discouraging the search for a new job. Furthermore, the introduction of new technologies, especially in the field of IT, has radically modified the work organization of some industries e.g. the graphics industry but also many sub-sectors of the metal industry where the loss of jobs is due to the elimination of human labour. Especially after the 2008 the economic recession has produced direct consequences in the construction industry and less innovative manufacturing sectors. In the sectors above mentioned job losses are mostly unavoidable while the creation of new jobs requires firms' investment and national policies as older workers need to be supported by special programmes of training activities, in order to acquire new skills addressed to re-enter in the labour market.

Among policy makers interviewed, the main issues to cope are connected to the difficulty in anticipating and managing current changes. Present difficulties are also related to the deep-rooted features of the national economic structure: in countries such as Italy, Spain and Poland, small sized and family-based enterprises have played a crucial role in the economic growth of the past decades that can no longer be played in the present situation. Among unionists interviewed, these countries are experiencing a structural loss of jobs which will be not regained when the recession will end. In these terms, this perspective has emerged also during the interviews with the policy makers who have highlighted the dilemma due to the reduction or lack of financing to create new jobs and the need to support older workers too young to retire but too old to be employed again. In more general terms it should be highlighted that social partners of the six national contexts analyzed are still more focused on the implementation of public policies rather than considering their effectiveness. Along these lines the economic recession and the austerity measures have exacerbated a contingent approach towards policies and measures to reduce the vulnerability among the two age groups considered in the analysis rather than promoted a long-lasting approach addressed to plan policies for next years.

Interviews with workers have pointed out different perceptions about the effects of the measure taken, on the basis of the existing perspectives in the national framework. Among all people interviewed has emerged the perception of a growing instability connected with the new forms of employment: this perception is particularly spread in Italy, Poland and Spain. In these countries also the evaluation of public policies is more critique due to the fact that, according to respondents, the governments are representing more the interests of firms rather than focusing on social inequalities. Among Belgian and Austrian workers the critiques have risen in relation to the specific conditions they are experiencing in the workplaces rather than to public policies implemented. Then, especially in Belgium young people are worrying about the increasing unemployment. The workers interviewed in United Kingdom have criticized zero hour contracts, even if with relevant differences in their opinions, regardless of their age.

The analysis of the effects of new forms of employment on young and older workers in the different contexts analyzed reveals that the national framework still matters. As a matter of fact despite the existing EU legislation the national labour law plays a key role in determining the regulation of working conditions and the implementation of public policies is still marked by traditional paths followed by the governments whilst the combining effects produced by the growing unemployment and the enduring restructuring activity of firms would require leader classes often lacking in national states. Then, it should also be highlighted that the socio-economic structure of the six contexts analyzed requires specific policies focused both on the reduction of inequalities and the enhancement of national strategic

economic sectors. In order to achieve these goals the contribution of social partners is necessary: during last decade the social dialogue to manage the transformations occurring in the economy and in workplaces has been experiencing a swinging trend. The lack of a stable debate about these issues has prevented the promotion of a permanent monitoring activity on the ongoing transformations and the implementation of effective policies to reduce the negative effects produced by the economic crises and by the transformation of work organization patterns as well.

In times of economic crises social partners demand different responses to governments: on the one hand, trade unions ask for investments in training and jobs instead of austerity policies and a balance between the flexibility claimed by the employers and the need of protection against social risks asked by workers; on the other hand, employers' representatives ask for the reduction of labour costs in order to keep the competitive levels of firms. The analysis made testifies that the effects of the new forms of employment - combined in some cases with the consequences of the economic crisis - have not caused the same outcomes in the six countries observed: one must take into account the different economic and social structure but also national governments' responsiveness and the attention paid by social partners to balance opposite interests.

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