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Social models, flexicurity policies and social vulnerability in Italy and Spain: a critical assessment in the light of the capabilities approach

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Abstract

This doctoral dissertation aims to assess Spanish and Italian employment policies in the light of the capabilities approach. The approach provides the conceptual and normative framework for the policy evaluation. The thesis combines a psychosocial view, a comparative perspective and a qualitative method in order to comprehend how ‘conversion factors’ have worked in Italy and Spain over the period 1995-2008. The basic idea is that conversion factors do not only include institutional settings and political structures, but also socio-cognitive systems, which play a key role in producing and reinforcing social vulnerability. The main research question is whether national flexicurity policies are capability-oriented and intended to expand individuals’ capabilities and choices, promote equal distribution of opportunities and empower vulnerable groups, like the young. On the one hand, the focus is on the processes that social models promote through institutions and public policies for protecting vulnerable individuals and for giving them the possibility of achieving what they value; on the other hand, a strong attention is paid to meanings and representations used by key actors that are involved in the design and implementation of policies in the two countries under analysis.

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Summary

Title: Social models, flexicurity policies and social vulnerability in Italy and Spain. A critical assessment in the light of the capabilities approach

During the past two decades, European labour markets and welfare states have undergone many transformations that have questioned the traditional paradigm based on permanent contractual arrangements, overall stability and encompassing social protection guarantees. Within the broad overview of these transformations, the European institutions have played a key role in disseminating over Europe new cognitive and normative frameworks, modes of governance and policy methods (Serrano and Jepsen, 2006; Serrano, 2009). National social models have been made to converge towards a new unified “European social model” (ESM). Still, despite the converging trends that have characterized European members, the modality to cope with the new challenges widely varies in accordance with the institutional-political-historical configuration, the socio-labour-economic situation and the dominant interpretative framework of each country.

The concept of “flexicurity” has become predominant in the European debate on the challenges of labour markets (Jørgensen & Madsen 2007). It can be considered the European answer to social vulnerability and aims to face its outbreak, while boosting labour market flexibility and pursuing economic competitiveness. The concept of social vulnerability can be enriched if treated in the light of the capabilities approach (Sen, 1985, 1992, 1999), according to which it also means the impossibility for people to exercise their freedom of choice and pursue what they value in their life. The approach has been used for the policy assessment and applied to the field of employment, following the assumption that social protection systems, institutions and labour legislation may be capability- or vulnerability-enabler.

This dissertation has assessed flexicurity policies and the mechanisms of fight against social vulnerability associated to a situation of precariousness or unemployment in the light of a capabilities approach in Spain and Italy. This research work studies trends and transformations of employment legislation, social protection systems and labour markets over the period between 1997 and 2008 in order to define national vulnerability profiles. The core of the thesis is the analysis in the light of the capabilities approach of the cognitive and normative framework of key actors involved in the design and implementation of policies, who contribute to the construction of the

meanings that inform these. Furthermore, the representations of flexicurity policies of the actors – as key informants in the field of employment – are examined.

The contribution of this thesis consists in the effort of combining 1. the capabilities approach, which provides the cognitive and normative framework for carrying out the policy assessment; 2. the psychosocial, which focuses on the relations between the macro level and the individual; 3. the comparative perspective, which emphasizes the differences and similarities among institutional and political arrangements of each social model; and 4. the qualitative method, which is useful for investigating ideologies and values that permeate policies. Indeed, this dissertation aims to use the capabilities approach for assessing cognitively and normatively the institutions, meanings and discourses embedded in the Spanish and Italian social models in relation to social vulnerability.

For the assessment of employment policies, a diversified methodology has been adopted. Statistical secondary data, official documents and legislative texts according to an historical and comparative perspective have been used for the contextualization of the study at the national-level in order to identify country-specific characteristics, the institutional configuration of the social models and the profiles of social vulnerability of Italy and Spain. Moreover, in-depth interviews have been carried out to Spanish and Italian representatives of trade unions, NGOs, organizations of temporary employment agencies, civil servants at the national and regional level as well as experts on social protection and employment policies. The indicators and micro-indicators used for the qualitative analysis have been drawn partly from the literature on capabilities in the field of employment policies (Bonvin, 2006) and partly from the interviews.

When tracing national social vulnerability profiles, in Spain the picture of a “dynamic” social vulnerability emerges. It derives from a precarious situation with high temporary work and unemployment rates, but long-term unemployment rates are low during the period under analysis, probably due to the widespread presence within the labour market of short-term jobs that allow some people to keep working, although in an unstable position. Italy reveals different traits, since it shows the configuration of a “static” social vulnerability. In fact, long-term unemployment rates are extremely high as well as the percentages of discouraged people that have renounced looking for employment and inactivity rates.

In both the Spanish and the Italian case, the legal framework fosters flexibilization of the labour market, but is not oriented to favour job security, lifelong learning and income maintenance, which

have a key role in the creation of valuable opportunities for individuals and in the application of a flexicurity strategy. Moreover, Spain and Italy seem to be characterised by low-cost social model, since scant expenditures are employed in passive and active policies. Despite the extremely vulnerable situation of individuals in the two countries, employment and welfare systems as well as the cognitive framework and conceptual references seem to be inadequate for allowing the enhancement of capabilities and a fair and impartial distribution of opportunities for everyone.

As for the Italian case, a poorly defined and confused situation made of delays, resistances and failed attempts in the implementation of active policies, lack of substance in social dialogue, clientelism and a general disconnection from people's actual needs emerge. Moreover, the Italian cognitive framework seems to be mainly cultural-individual oriented, whereas the Spanish one seems more political-social oriented. Furthermore, Spanish actors seem to be more oriented to question and problematize specific issues than the Italian colleagues, and trade union representatives more than the other actors. Spanish and Italian representatives belonging to public bodies show a major acceptance of the activation framework in terms of individual responsibility for the integration in the labour market.

The cognitive framework and the conceptual basis emerging from both Spanish and Italian interviews do not result to be oriented towards the capabilities approach for many aspects, even if some hints can be traced in matters of long-term policy perspective, availability of job opportunities, tailor-made actions and importance of social dialogue. In general terms, when describing employment policies the actors interpret opportunities in a mode that is not close to the idea of job as utility, which is instead proposed by the capabilities approach. Furthermore, according to their representations, policies fail to facilitate individuals to pursue what they value for their life.

Our conclusion cannot be different than stating that institutional resources and socio-cognitive frameworks under which the Italian and Spanish social models have evolved do not allow individuals to pursue and achieve what they value have nor to exert freedom of choice, especially for young people.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ESM	European Social Model
EU-15	European Union – 15
EU-27	European Union – 27
US	United States
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EES	European Employment Strategy
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
ALMP	Active labour market policy
LLL	Lifelong learning
ESF	European Social Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
EPL	Employment protection legislation
EB	Eurobarometer
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
CGIL	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro
CISL	Confederazione Italiana Sindacato Lavoratori
UIL	Unione Italiana del Lavoro
UPI	Unione delle Province d'Italia
CCOO	Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores
CCAA	Comunidades Autónomas
PES	Public Employment Service
ETTs	Empresas de Trabajo Temporal
INEM	Instituto Nacional de Empleo
SEPE	Servicio Publico de Empleo Español

Preface¹

The relationship between society and the individual is deep and extensive, and the modes in which this relationship appears is complexly articulated. They cannot be viewed as separate entities and it is insufficient to state that the sum of individuals constitutes the society. Rather, they have to be thought of in terms of functions and relations. As a house, the structure of the relations among stones, more than the structure of the stones themselves, and the function of a stones in relation to the others form the structure of the whole building (Elias, 1990). The relationship between society and individuals is the object of analysis of the social psychology. Several definitions of social psychology can be reported, but the one proposed by Moscovici seems to be especially suitable to the aims of this thesis. The author defines social psychology as “the science of the conflict between the individual and society” (1984: 6). In our opinion, social psychology adequately observes the interconnections between the micro and macro dimension as well as between people and the social context where they reside. In this dissertation, we attempt to assume the psychosocial approach for the assessment of employment and social protection policies, as we claim that this view can open new glimmers and shed light on how social vulnerability develops within the interrelational sphere between individuals and society.

The study of policies in the psychosocial approach should not be taken for granted, since the ‘social’ and the ‘psychological’ sides have often been treated separately, rather than as two intertwined and indivisible aspects of the same issue. Consequently, the analysis of the interconnections between these aspects has often been lost, insofar as one of the two has prevailed on the other. In their elaboration of a psychosocial approach to the welfare state, Stenner and Taylor (2008) claim that social and psychological sciences “came into being as a result of this relation between ‘society’ and ‘subject’, but in functionally specializing each on just one side of this relation, they served to obscure the very relation that called them into being” (418). Moreover, the use of only one discipline at a time have frequently contributed to neglecting relevant factors, namely the social justice and equality in the case of psychology and the individual choice in the case of sociology (Stenner and Taylor, 2008). Instead, all these factors turn into a unique picture in the psychosocial approach (and in the capabilities approach, as we will see in this dissertation). In this regard, the authors state that it is the “freedom from disciplinarity that makes psychosocial

¹ Part of this preface was included in the paper “The psychosocial well-being: how to feel well in society?” that I presented at the OECD-Universities Joint Conference “*Economics for a Better World*”, Paris, July 3-5, 2013.

studies potentially interesting and productive (...) [as] it requires considerable rigour and creativity to move in the interstitial spaces between disciplines and to invent new points of access to important issues” (2008: 427). Hence, social psychology acts as a natural bridge between the fields of sociology and psychology, within which the elements of the two approaches co-exist and relate each other².

A social psychological approach will be the overall framework of this doctoral dissertation. The approach will be applied here in order to investigate the effects of societal forces and macro-social structures on people’s conditions as well as to comprehend the specific meanings, norms and values that actors and institutions diffuse within their communities. In this regard, Dijk argues that “social psychology is (or should be) the discipline that acts as an interface between the study of cognition and that of society” (2011: 45), and also that “social psychology accounts for (or should account for) the social-cognitive aspects of interactions, namely social beliefs and shared knowledge and ideologies as well as the mode by which these aspects are represented, employed and reproduced by social actors as group members. Thus [...] social psychology contributes to enhance our knowledge of the micro-macro relations in society”(2011: 58)³. In our opinion, this approach will be especially useful for disentangling the intricate and interesting dynamics that develop between individual and society and that contribute to reinforcing social vulnerability. This approach is consistent with Sen’s capabilities approach (1999), which will be used in the dissertation for evaluating flexicurity policies. Although the capabilities approach is embodied in the economic disciplines, its special attention to the role of social institutions in determining individuals’ opportunities and well-being makes it suitable to a psychosocial review. Indeed, according to the approach, institutions and public policies play a central role in creating the conditions that allow individuals to pursue what they have reason to value. They may remove obstacles that hinder the expansion of people’s capabilities or, rather, favor the development of human potential, which refers to the Aristotelian eudaimonic notion of well-being (Nussbaum, 1988). This means that an empowering-oriented relationship between institutions and the individual is required. The psychosocial view gathers the normative framework offered by the capabilities approach for the assessment of this relationship. More specifically, the capabilities approach raises the need to accomplish a psychosocial vision of social protection and employment policies, which will be our attempt in this thesis. The social psychology is also salient because of the introduction of the new activation paradigm in the European member states. Indeed, the activation paradigm – as we will see in the first part of the

² The interdisciplinarity of the approach that I have used for this thesis mirrors the interfaculty character of the doctoral program (Program in Social Psychology) I carried out within the Faculty of Psychology and the Faculty of Sociology and Political Science in the Complutense University of Madrid.

³ My translation.

thesis – marks more than in the past the role of the individual in constructing his/her own project of life and promotes a strong individualized vision of work and welfare. Therefore, as Stenner and Taylor declare “The more the ‘weight’ of welfare provision becomes a matter of individual responsibility, choice and desire, the more prominent and unavoidable the psychological dimension becomes” (2008: 421). Finally, Moscovici’s definition of social psychology as the science of ideological phenomena (cognitions and social representations) and of the phenomenon of communication (1984: 7) is fully reflected in the methodology used in this thesis. Indeed, the qualitative approach (content and discourse analyses) has been considered the privileged way of carrying out the assessment of employment policies in terms of cognitive and normative frameworks as well as social representations in the light of the capabilities approach.

Introduction

Recently, extensive economical, social and ideological changes have taken place at a global level. The consolidate situation that has characterized European societies in the last decades has disappeared and deep transformations have occurred. The deregulation and liberalization of the labour markets as well as the transitory character of human relations and individual precariousness have produced the image of a “liquid modernity” (Bauman, 2002). Risk, unpredictability and indeterminacy are at the very basis of current societies and a new culture of uncertainty has emerged (Beck, 1992), investing productive, labour, relational and existential dimensions. During the past two decades, European labour markets and welfare states have undergone many transformations, driven by a widespread search for flexibility, with a subsequent modification of concepts, objectives, and functions related to employment and social protection policies. This has produced the shift from the industrial society, characterized mainly by permanent contractual arrangements, overall stability and encompassing welfare guarantees, to the knowledge-based post-industrial society, where these conditions are no longer available. This change has brought with it a rise of social vulnerability (Ranci, 2010). Within the broad overview of these transformations and challenges in the European Union, the promotion by the European institutions of cognitive and normative frameworks, discourses, modes of governance, policy methods, and principles constituting a new paradigm can be highlighted as a relevant force for the change. The new paradigm concerns mainly a strong emphasis on activation policies, which pursue the quickest transition of the unemployed into the labour market. Activation policies are based on a few principles: 1. Individualization, according to which the public action has to perform on individual behaviours and attitudes by means of tailored interventions; 2. Economic integration through employment, which devalues a wider meaning of integration that embeds also the political and social spheres; and 3. Contractualisation, which stresses the moral dimension of the unemployment and binds the access to rights to individuals’ behaviours that have to “deserve” it, with a consequent redefinition of the concept of “citizenship” (Serrano, 2007b). Moreover, it is evident the attempt of disqualifying unemployment benefits that come to be defined as “passive policies”. This relies on the assumption that the individual is responsible of his/her own situation as an unemployed and that has the duty to re-train and adapt himself/herself on the basis of the labour market requests. Innovative concepts, like “flexicurity”, “activation” and “employability” have been introduced at

the European level by the European institutions and countries have assumed them in order to reduce the disadvantages of the old paradigm. Thus social models in Europe have been made to converge towards a new unified “European social model” (ESM). Yet, the meaning of ESM remains unclear, since it is “the result of multi-level tensions [...] between different institutional, economic and social actors” – as stated by Serrano and Jepsen (2006: 3) referring to Goetschy’s contribution in the same book. Therefore, the polysemous character of this concept that is used in academic and political debates serves to legitimate the European identity (Serrano, 2009; Serrano and Magnusson, 2007a; Jepsen and Serrano, 2005, 2006). The European Social Model has prompted Member States to adapt their national models and internal policies according to the European Employment Strategy (EES) and the Employment Guidelines. This process, called Open Method of Coordination (OMC), represents a “soft instrument” vis-à-vis other supranational regulatory methods – for instance EU directives. Still, despite the converging trends that have characterized European members, the modality to cope with the new challenges widely varies in accordance with the institutional-political-historical configuration, the socio-labour-economic situation and the dominant interpretative framework of each country. The OMC has played a central role in orienting the Member States towards ‘flexicurity’, which was presented as a means to promote both economic growth and social cohesion.

The concept of “flexicurity” has become predominant in the European debate on the challenges of labour markets. Introduced by the European Commission in its “Employment in Europe 2006” report (COM, 2006a) and fostered in the “Lisbon Agenda”, the concept of flexicurity is difficult to define exhaustively and concisely because of its ambiguous nature (Serrano, 2009; Jørgensen and Madsen, 2007). It aims essentially to provide flexibility for employers and security for workers and shares the view of eliminating the distinction between internal and external markets with the theory of “transitional labour market” (Schmid, 1995, 1998; Schmid and Auer, 1997). Flexicurity is supported by three pillars, known as the “Danish golden triangle”: 1. flexible contractual arrangements; 2. active labour market policies (ALMP) joint to responsive lifelong learning (LLL), and 3. high social protection, especially during transitional phases, through modern social security systems. However, different configurations of flexicurity can be highlighted, since it varies according to national social models. When analysing flexicurity policies at the country-level, it is relevant to take into account the influence of the European discourse on the one hand; the semantic aspects that mirror the dominant view around unemployment and other key concepts of national social actors who actively participate in its construction on the other hand. In this sense, public policies have to be considered expressions of the representations that societies use to tackle and communicate social issues as they are conceived and perceived (Muller, 1990). Indeed, according to

a psychosocial view, public policies embody cognitive and normative frameworks, values, principles, forms of action, practices, instruments and social beliefs about what is fair in a specific social context. These elements serve the construction of social themes – like social vulnerability – as problems to be inscribed within the political agenda. Policies can be viewed thus as a mode of organizing collective responses to crucial social questions within a contingent frame of reference.

Flexicurity is, in a certain sense, the European answer to social vulnerability and was proposed for facing and preventing its outbreak, while boosting labour market flexibility and pursuing economic competitiveness. Social vulnerability concerns the exposure of individuals to instability and weak integration in society. It is “characterized by an uncertain access to fundamental material resources (wages and/or welfare benefits) and/or by the fragility of the family and community social networks” (Ranci, 2010: 18). According to the author, it does not only concern a resource deficit, but also involves a social dimension, in that relationships in society no longer provide certainties. The concept of social vulnerability includes several intertwined spheres of life, but this dissertation will deepen only those that are related to unemployment, job transitions and integration into the labour market, paying attention to the case of young people. This recent phenomenon varies depending on specific contexts, generating thus different profiles of vulnerability. The definition of social vulnerability can be enriched if treated in the light of the capabilities approach, according to which it mainly means impossibility for people to exercise their freedom of choice and pursue what they value in their life.

The Capabilities approach

Transformations in social protection and employment policies according to the flexicurity concept as well as the cognitive and normative framework of key actors and experts involved in the design and implementation of such policies will be evaluated in this dissertation through the capabilities approach in order to better understand their orientation towards social vulnerability. The approach, whose influence on social sciences is currently increasing (Salais & Villeneuve, 2004), draws from Sen’s conceptualization (1985; 1992; 1999). It proposes a new economic theory based on human rights and the pivotal role of institutions, which entails an alternative way to evaluate well-being by focusing on individual conditions (Munck and Zimmermann, 2008). Indeed, Sen argues that the “economic development can be seen as a process of expanding real freedoms that people enjoy” (1999: 3). This diverges with other views that identify ‘development’ with the growth of GDP or of individual income, which, in the author’s view, can be considered a means for achieving freedom, but is not an end in itself (Sen, 1999). The capabilities approach relies on five

different aspects: a) starting resources; b) conversion factors, which refers to external factors allowing or impeding the conversion from resources to capabilities; c) the capability set, such as the extent to which people are really free to lead the life they have reason to value; d) choice, which refers to the possibility to choose among different options available determining individual agency; and e) people's functioning, such as the life they actually lead. In terms of employment, these aspects are defined as *capability for work* (Bonvin, 2006), which constitutes the yardstick against which flexicurity policies will be assessed in this study. In fact, the capabilities approach serves as a normative basis centred on social justice for evaluating public policies (Salais and Villeneuve, 2004), although it has been applied in a broad variety of fields and disciplines (Bussi and Dahmen, 2012). Moreover, the approach emphasizes the concept of *agency*, insofar it allows individuals to achieve their own well-being. Unemployed people do not have this agency, so that they cannot enjoy positive freedom to act as they value - "freedom to", in opposition to negative freedom as "freedom from" (Salais, 2003). The key point is that employment policies are able to create possibilities for agency. Therefore, the capabilities approach appears especially adequate for assessing flexicurity policies and considering whether they are informed by a capabilities view or are oriented towards social vulnerability. Indeed, as defined by Ranci, social vulnerability "takes the form of a life situation in which autonomy and the capacity of individuals and families for self-determination are threatened by the introduction of uncertainty into the main systems of social integration. The instability of the social position does in fact translate into a reduction of opportunities in life and of possibilities of choice. It is characterized no so much by the scarcity of resources *tout court*, as by the instability of the mechanisms used to obtain them" (2010: 18). Starting from the assumption that social protection systems, institutional arrangements and labour legislation on the one hand and cognitive and normative frameworks on the other hand may tend to be capability- or vulnerability-enabling, this doctoral dissertation will explore Spanish and Italian social models and flexicurity policies.

Aims and questions

This PhD thesis aims to assess flexicurity policies from a capabilities approach in two countries sharing the Southern European social model (Karamessini, 2007), namely Spain and Italy, in the period between 1997 and 2008. This research work examines, through a comparative perspective and over a ten-year period, trends and transformations of employment legislation, social protection systems and labour markets, which work as mechanisms for fighting social vulnerability associated to a situation of precariousness or unemployment. Special attention is given to young people, since

the youth can be identified as one of the vulnerable groups that most is affected by unemployment in the Spanish and Italian case. The core of the thesis is the analysis of the cognitive and normative framework of key actors involved in the design and implementation of policies, who contribute to the construction of the meanings that inform these. Semantic and discursive elements are carefully observed in the attempt to detect the influence of the European rhetoric and the paradigm of activation as well as the constituents of the interpretative framework of the different national and regional actors. Furthermore, the representations of flexicurity policies of the actors – as key informants in the field of employment – are examined. The capability approach serves as theoretical reference to evaluate whether a logic of opportunities for unemployed people, job-seekers and workers is appreciable. More specifically, in Sen's view, "What counts is access to a real freedom of choice at every stage of life and the possibility for people to live the life they value. It is about guaranteeing the security of personal development" (Salais & Villeneuve, 2004: 7). The study tries thus to assess Spanish and Italian social models and flexicurity policies in relation to their disposition to pose the bases for individual agency and the enhancement of capabilities instead to reinforce social vulnerability. The comparative perspective is particularly interesting when using the capabilities approach, insofar as Sen's approach leads us to emphasize the role of institutional and political arrangements – and not only individual factors – in coping with the phenomenon of social vulnerability. The psychosocial view brings us to pay special attention to ideological assumptions that are crucial in determining the distribution and the use of common resources. Moreover, when studying the phenomenon of social vulnerability, it is important to consider the productive structure, the labour market and the employment available as well as the power relations of a specific context. In this regard, it is valuable to mention Prieto's (2014) concept of 'social employment regimes', which includes "a set of formal and informal principles, regulations, procedures and political, social, and economic practices that establish guidelines in reference to the asymmetry of wage relationships that regulate the working, employment, and living conditions of workers and the job turnover and socio-demographic distribution of the population in a given society" (2014: 73). Following the capabilities approach, five groups of research questions can be distinguished:

- Starting from the assumption that different social models, together with other labour market and economic factors, contribute to the creation of different levels and configurations of social vulnerability in different geographical areas, which vulnerability profiles do Spain and Italy present? Which similarities and differences in terms of social vulnerability can be highlighted in these two European countries sharing the same social model? What are Spanish and Italian institutional, labour and socio-economic

specificities in which flexicurity policies are embedded? Which are the main transformations in social and employment policies that emerge by legislation in the last twenty years in Spain and Italy? Do these institutions and reforms favour the development of individual capabilities?

- Which is the situation of young people within the labour market in the two countries? In which sense can they be considered a vulnerable group calling for public concern? Why the capabilities approach is especially relevant to study the youth's conditions? Which youth programs have been developed and according to which conceptualizations of "the young"?
- Following the change of paradigm, which is the influence of the European rhetoric on the discourses of the national and regional actors interviewed for this thesis? Which meanings contribute to creating the interpretative framework of flexicurity and the specific way to articulate social questions? Which distribution of responsibilities, according to the actors' view, underlie flexicurity policies? What are the differences of position amidst the various groups of actors?
- Which are the assumptions at the basis of the normative and cognitive framework of Spanish and Italian actors involved in the development of policies? Is the framework capability-oriented? Are the actors' conceptualizations and ideas, which inform flexicurity policies, capability- or vulnerability-enabler? To what extent is the logic behind national actors' discourse oriented to promote valuable job opportunities for individuals and guarantee conditions for real freedom of action?
- Considering the interviewees as key informants in matters of unemployment, which are the actors' representations of employment and social protection policies in their countries? The way they describe policy design, implementation and evaluation is in line with the capabilities approach? In their view, do policies increase opportunities for people, and especially for the youth, to reach what they value and protect them from social vulnerability?

The dissertation aims to be an original contribution to the literature on public policy assessment. In fact, the integration of the comparative perspective, the capabilities approach and the social psychological view that is carried out in this research work favours a pluridimensional evaluation of policies. The original assumption is that not only institutional and political arrangements, but also cognitive resources, provide specific opportunity sets to individuals and possibilities to cope with social vulnerability in each country. Therefore, the capabilities approach can be used as the

cognitive and normative framework for evaluating policies and comparing social models also in terms of ideologies, values and representations, whereas the literature shows a marked tendency to measures capabilities in terms of facilities. The use of the approach seems particularly fruitful for the comprehension of flexicurity, since it serves as a conceptual reference to study the process of individual empowerment – or rather, vulnerabilization. Indeed, flexicurity policies propose an individualizing and empowering view of the integration into the labour market of employees and unemployed. However, such view results to be controversial, insofar as it does not seem to suit with vulnerable groups (young people, women, immigrants...), in that the focus on the idea of work-first that is at the basis of the activation paradigm seems to neglect needs and difficulties of such groups. Moreover, this thesis aims to contribute to the debate on flexicurity among the European countries through three almost innovative aspects. Firstly, the comparative analysis is carried out between Spain and Italy, which both belong to the Southern European Social Model. Despite the undeniable relevance of using systems of categorization when dealing with employment and welfare regimes in Europe (as it is the case for Esping-Andersen's classification, 1990), the ascription to the same category – like in the Spanish and Italian case – is an obstacle to highlighting the diversity within the same model, since a major attention to homogeneity prevails (Barbier and Knuth, 2010). Therefore, adopting a comparative perspective between countries sharing the same social model allows underlining differences and similarities in the understanding of flexicurity, which stems from relations among forces within a specific social, economic and political context. Secondly, the focus of the assessment relies on discourses and representations of key actors that are involved in the design and implementation of the employment policies, while until recently the main tendency in the literature was to measures capabilities in quantitative terms. In this regard, it is important to remind that the capabilities approach is mainly a way of thinking that can be properly utilized for assessing the actors' cognitive and normative framework, which contributes to shaping the meanings and logics that conform policies. At this scope, some indicators for the qualitative analysis have been proposed, partly gathered from the studies in this field and partly resulting from the interviews. Finally, great attention is paid to the youth, whose integration into the labour market has presented in the past several difficulties and that nowadays has become even more hard due to the financial crisis. The situation of the young is especially critical in Spain and Italy, where unemployment rate for 15-24-year-olds is even higher than other vulnerable social groups (i.e. women). This leads to increase the social vulnerability of young people, stressed by the need for entering the labour market and the will to uncover valuable job opportunities.

The methodology

The study focuses on two countries, Spain and Italy, which belong to the same social model – the Southern European Social Model (Karamessini, 2007) – and geographic area. The concept of “social model” is used in this thesis for indicating the characteristics that define a specific socio-labour context. Indeed, according to Karamessini, a social model includes employment and welfare regimes. Nonetheless, we have broadened the meaning of the concept, encompassing the psychosocial dimension. Thus, the focus is on ideologies, cognitions and representations that constitute public policies and that determine the outline of social problems, the discourses about them and the proposals for solving them. The time-span under analysis starts in 1997, when at the European level the European Employment Strategy (EES) was launched and at the national level relevant reforms in matters of flexibility and security policies took place in Spain and Italy. Even if the notion of ‘flexicurity’ is quite recent, several elements related to it were already in existence in the past (Keune and Jepsen, 2007). The period under consideration ends in 2008, before the outbreak of the financial crisis. The choice not to consider the later period is due to the aim of this research work of analysing the system of meanings, values and discourses that have been consolidating and spreading in the long run, leaving aside the urgent measures implemented for tackling the disruptive effects of the crisis. In fact, the recent crisis has drastically unsettled the previous market and labour situation in Europe and around the world, leading to the adoption of emergency measures in the attempt of restoring a sort of equilibrium. In this thesis, the focus is on the situation until 2008, but we consider that the comprehension of the historical antecedents can contribute to a better understanding of the present times.

First, the main concepts, approaches and theoretical frameworks used in this PhD thesis will be presented in Part I. At this scope, a study of the literature on the topic underlying the thesis has been accomplished. Secondly, the empirical study of flexicurity policies through a comparative perspective and in the light of the capability approach is described in Part II and III. The development of these policies, concerning transformations in labour market, social institutions and employment regulations as well as changes in cognitive and normative frameworks and practices, is particularly difficult to outline. For this reason, it may be significantly useful for our purposes to adopt a diversified methodology. In this sense, secondary sources have been employed in order to contextualize policies, whereas a qualitative method has been used to assess frameworks and discourses. The contextualisation has been effectuated in order to adopt a more comprehensive view of social models and flexicurity and assess if employment and social protection policies act as useful and effective conversion factors. More specifically, the following combination of research

methods has been utilized for this dissertation:

- Statistical secondary data, official documents and legislative texts according to an historical and comparative perspective for the contextualization of the study at the national-level in order to identify country-specific characteristics and profiles of social vulnerability in Italy and Spain.
- In-depth interviews across a wide spectrum of Spanish and Italian representatives of trade unions, NGO associations, organizations of temporary employment agencies, civil servants at the national and regional level as well as experts on social protection and employment policies.

The analysis of the interviews has led to the elaboration of capabilities indicators and micro-indicators, which also refer to Bonvin's proposal (2006). The indicators are formulated in terms of opposition between poles in an effort of simplification. Although, the analysis has considered all the alternatives and shades among the two poles as well as the options out of them. We report here the categories and indicators used for the assessment of the representatives' discourses in matters of flexicurity:

- *Market versus social orientation*: This indicator tries to observe the general orientation of policies, which may be addressed towards different directions. We will take into account some dichotomies, which only serve as referential points, without assuming that no other direction would be possible: work-first/capabilities approach, passive/active orientation and supply-side/demand-side policies. In a capabilities approach, both passive and active orientations are necessary for the development of individual capabilities. The prevalence of active policies (and especially some measures; i.e. employment incentives) would foster mainly a work-first approach, while the prevalence of passive policies would be insufficient. The focus on supply-side/demand-side employment policies mentioned by Bonvin (2006) endorses the question of whether people have to adapt to the market (supply-side programmes) or the reverse. The point is if social protection and employment policies are oriented to improve individual marketability and ability to compete with the aim of a quick integration into the labour market or if they foster real freedoms to choose one's way of life and work. In fact, the logic of capabilities promotes the work as utility and as a means to realise oneself. In the former case, according to the

rhetoric of the economic mainstream, the focus in on the market, opportunities are assimilated into employability and the development of human capital is directed to workers as human resources, rather than as individuals. In the latter case, the capability approach focuses on both firms and individuals according to the assumption that a positive relationship between economic and social issues is achievable.

- *Restrictive view of opportunity as productive work versus valuable job*: The definition of “valuability” can be partly linked to the concept of “job quality” and partly has to remain open to individuals’ interpretations and demands. As far as the concept of job quality is concerned, at the European level two conceptualizations have been formulated by the EC and the ILO (“decent work”). Such definitions, which belong to diverse cognitive matrix and semantic domains, follow different logics and political goals (Prieto et al., 2009), exerting their influence on the national level. The conceptualization of “job quality” is variable depending on the social groups, society, actors, as we will see better in Part III when the meanings of “valuable opportunities” will be analysed. For the purposes of this research work, it is more appropriate to extend the attribution of “valuability” to the whole process of integration of people in the employment, since a valuable job is possible not only if jobs, and above all valuable jobs, exist, but also if the access to them is fostered. The access to valuable job is feasible if a logic of opportunities for individuals behind policies and public employment services is appreciable. Consequently, we will focus on the orientation of actors in considering policies favourable for a) the entry into the labour market through a valuable job; b) providing quality employment services, where quality means that they are able to help people to achieve what they value; c) promoting active programs and actions in the direction of the wishes and needs of job-seekers; and d) coordinating active programs with an adequate social protection to the unemployed throughout the transitional phases from a valuable job to another. The issue of “valuability” is intrinsic into the capability approach and can be defined not only according to external criteria – which can be drawn from the literature and from the European indicators – but, most importantly, to individual life-course trajectories. Employment is an essential functioning for individuals and in many respects (including lifelong learning and professional re-qualification, job security, income support, labour market integration), a valuable transition contributes to the reduction of vulnerability. This is especially true if the “valuability” is defined by the range of real opportunities offered to people. This view diverges from a focus on quick labour market integration on

the explicit ground that having a bad job is better than having no job at all. The postulate of the “superiority of low-quality jobs vis-à-vis all forms of non-work” (Bonvin, 2006: 220) contrasts the capability approach, according to which promoting and distributing valuable opportunities to everybody is a key political challenge.

- *Technocratic and centralized modes of governance versus situated and reflexive public action (decentralization)*: The tendency to introduce performance targets in order to guide and control the action of public services and employment policies acts as a powerful obstacle impeding, to a great extent, the development of a capability approach. Indeed, if the definition of the targets at the European level is carried out by groups of experts (“expertocracy”), it implies that the national margin for manoeuvre and the capability discourse is significantly reduced by the requirements of technical compliance with predefined objectives. This contributes to the loosening of the broad qualitative perspective of employment issues and situated public action. A “situated” public action foresees a decentralized governance envisaging the involvement of regional and local actors in order to make policies closer to individuals. Tailor-made programs and the evaluation of the outcomes of policies play a pivotal role in this sense.
- *Technocratic and centralized modes of governance versus situated and reflexive public action (Social dialogue and involvement of civil society organizations)*: The capability framework also implies the commitment of different social partners, which allows to locate public action within established negotiation and decision-making at national and regional level. Indeed, social actors have an important role in ensuring the positive correlation between the design and implementation of policies and the needs of the recipients, which allows to optimise the quality and efficiency of the outcomes. The effective and substantial participation of social partners in the various decision-making and implementation processes is crucial for an adequate presence of social dialogue.

More in detail, the first empirical part (Part II) shows the appraisal of social vulnerability and the articulation of vulnerability profiles within the social-economic conditions of Spain and Italy. Special attention is given to young people, who constitute one of the most relevant vulnerable group in the Spanish and Italian context. In the second empirical part (Part III) the analysis of the cognitive and normative framework and of the Spanish and Italian actors is presented. The analysis has been effectuated both at national and regional level, taking four ‘macro-regions’ as case studies.

Two case studies have been carried out in the Community of Valencia and Andalucía (Spain) and the other ones in the Region of Tuscany and Sicily (Italy). The identification of these regions has been linked to inter-national comparability reasons and intra-national variety of labour markets and employment situations as well as policy management and political orientation. Semi-structured interviews to representatives and experts in employment and social protection policies have been conducted, so to understand and compare more clearly the meanings and discourses surrounding the flexicurity policies in Spain and Italy, as well as their implementations. More in detail, 45 interviews (22 Spanish and 23 Italian interviews) have been examined through a qualitative discourse analysis. In synthesis, this part develops a qualitative in-depth study of the cognitive and normative frameworks, nature and scope in matters of employment and social protection policies, so as to evaluate the Spanish and Italian flexicurity policies from a capability approach. This study focuses in particular on the presence/absence among actors of a logic of opportunities for people and valuable options available to them to achieve the life they value.

Outline of this dissertation

The thesis is made up of three parts. The first part (Part I) provides the conceptual and theoretical tools that will be used to develop the dissertation. It introduces the topics of the European and national social models, flexicurity policies and social vulnerability as well as the capabilities approach that will constitute the specific analytical framework of the study. The second part (Part II) tries to describe different aspects of flexicurity policies and trace the Spanish and Italian profiles of vulnerability. This part aims to contextualise the study, considering the institutional and legislative transformations of Spanish and Italian employment policies and labour market over the last twenty years. Economic and socio-political vulnerability, with special attention to young people, will be highlighted through the examination of the conversion factors. The third part (Part III) is intended to analyse the cognitive and normative framework of Spanish and Italian flexicurity policies by means of interviews with key actors involved in their design and implementation. These policies will be assessed in the light of the capabilities approach. Different indicators, stemmed from Sen and other authors that have worked with the approach as well as from the analysis of interviews, will be employed to evaluate whether the cognitive and normative elements that are embedded in flexicurity policies hint at an orientation towards individual opportunities or, rather, social vulnerability. Meanings and discourses used by the actors will be carefully observed in order to better understand how they construct policies, the idea of “recipient” and other social issues.

Chapter I starts with an analysis of the transformations occurred in the last twenty years in the European Social Model (ESM). After considering the different ways by which the model is defined, we observe how the change of paradigm in which the social model is embodied links with the rise of a new social question: social vulnerability. The relevance of the new paradigm of activation in changing the meaning of “social protection” is shown and attention is paid to how protection is interpreted within the European Social Model, considering its conceptualizations, the typology of risks it covers and the means to tackle them. Then we focus on the EU role and the new policy tools (European Employment Strategy, EES; Open Method of Coordination, OMC) as well as on their influence on the member states, exploring thus the connections between the supranational and the national level. Finally, the examination of different social models within the framework of the ESM is carried out according to distinctive welfare and employment regimes categorizations in addition to the traditional Esping-Andersen’s classification (1990). Particular attention is given to the Southern European Social Model, which includes the countries analysed in this dissertation, Italy and Spain. The relation between different social models in Europe and social vulnerability is carefully described.

Chapter II introduces the concept of flexicurity, whose influence has grown consistently in the political and academic debate on labour regulation as well as on employment and social protection policies within Europe. It contributes to the change of paradigm – that has been illustrated in the former chapter – leading to new interpretations of problems, new solutions and a new idea about how policies have to deal with these problems. We clarify the origins of the concept and the process of its dissemination in the European Union. The chapter moves on towards the analysis of the four pillars that form the idea of flexicurity, highlighting imbalances and controversial aspects. Furthermore, we observe the new configuration of relations among the State, employers and employees that flexicurity policies produce. Finally, different combinations of flexibility and security giving rise to multiples typologies of national models within the EU are studied.

Chapter III presents the capability approach according to its author Amartya Sen and later contributions, as well as its transposition into the European framework. Each conceptual component embedded in the approach is described and the interconnections among them are taken into account. Moreover, the approach is considered in relation to other key concepts, like social rights, solidarity, and social justice, which frequently appear in the literature on capabilities. Finally, and most importantly, we observe how the approach has been increasingly implemented in the field of the evaluation of public policies and how it seems to be especially useful and fruitful to understand the

question of social vulnerability.

Chapter IV illustrates the methodology used in this research work. Throughout the thesis, a comparative perspective will be adopted with the aim of evaluating differences and similarities between two countries – Spain and Italy – belonging to the Southern European Social Model. In the first empirical part (Part II), secondary sources and statistical data are used for the analysis of Spanish and Italian socio-economic structures, labour markets and legislative frameworks. In the second empirical part (Part III), a qualitative method is employed for the analysis of the discourses of key actors, including specific case studies. Capability indicators are listed in great categories, each of which is articulated in sub-indicators. Finally, implications and limitations concerning the methodological aspects of the capabilities approach will be shown in order to depict a broader overview of the complexity of this analysis.

Chapter V, VI, VII and VIII aim to study through an historical perspective the socio-economic context in which flexicurity policies developed as well as the transformations occurred in the last two decades. The purpose is to provide a general view of the main features of the labour market and social protection in Spain and Italy in order to define the profile of social vulnerability for each country. In particular, Chapter five shows the economic aspects of social vulnerability, which refers to income and employment insecurity, looking at the labour market (i.e. employment, unemployment, discouraged people rates), the type of contracts (i.e. temporary and part-time contracts) and labour force's skills in comparison to EU average. Gender gap is also considered. Chapter six focuses on the socio-political aspects of social vulnerability, which is connected to the social support provided by society through labour market policies and employment protection. Social expenditures and participants to the labour market programs are carefully observed. Chapter seven is an analysis of the reforms as regards as the four pillars of flexicurity in both countries over the last twenty years, with a special attention on the most recent legislation. This serves to comprehend the evolution of policies and the goals they have been pursuing over time. Chapter eight tries to describe the youth situation in Spain and Italy, paying strong attention to the issue of social vulnerability among young people.

Chapter IX, X, XI and XII develop the main empirical part of this doctoral dissertation. They focus on the cognitive and normative framework of employment and social protection policies in Italy and Spain. Key players and experts involved in their design and implementation have been interviewed with the objective of assessing Spanish and Italian flexicurity policies in the light of the

capabilities approach and investigate the construction of flexicurity in the political discourses. The aim is answering the following questions: “To what extent does the European Union influence the introduction of the discourse of flexicurity at the national level?”; “Which is the picture depicted by the interviewees regarding the orientation of policies in their countries?”; “How does this pictures vary according to the social group to which the interviewees belong?” “Where is their cognitive and normative framework oriented towards?”, “Is it a capability or vulnerability enabler?”, “Does it contribute to the strengthening of social vulnerability among young people?”, “Which discourses are developed about the central concepts of ‘unemployment’, ‘social protection’, ‘work’, ‘worker’ and the role of the State?”, “What are the meanings and ideas beyond the linguistic production?”, “Does the rhetoric on flexicurity and the capabilities principles converge?” The comparison between the Spanish and Italian case is carried out by focusing on the cognitive elements of the interviewees as well as on their descriptions and representations of national employment policies in terms of valuable opportunities, access to them, tailored public action and social dialogue.

Finally, we summarise the findings of this research work and define the policy implications of the diffusion of the paradigm of flexicurity analysed from a capabilities approach. This study tries to provide a theoretical and empirical contribution to the understanding of past and on-going processes of transformation of the welfare state and employment policies in Spain and Italy. The dissertation ends by proposing some key questions that can foster possible future developments of this research work.

PART I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Before starting, a brief presentation of part I will be now traced. In response to internal interests and external pressures, several transformations have occurred in the last decades in Europe leading to the introduction of the so-called paradigm of activation and to the re-definition of the European Social Model (ESM). Connected to these changes, new social constructions have fostered the diffusion of alternative cognitive and normative frameworks contributing to the shift of paradigm. In this sense, new conceptualizations, ideas and principles have been disseminated among the member states and have replaced the old meanings about how public policies relate with individuals. This also involves the discursive dimension of policies, which is relevant at the time of naming social issues and attributing responsibilities to solve them. It is important to bear in mind that cognitive and normative frameworks constitute the foundation of public policies, codifying and expressing values and norms that are shared by a community. Policies act as structures of meanings and construct frameworks for the interpretation of the world by determining social beliefs on social relations and assumptions about what can be considered fair and legitimate in a given society and what cannot (Muller, 2000). In addition, policies include the modalities of organizing collective answers to social problems within a specific contingent framework, by means of which social realities are interpreted. According to these shared frameworks, individuals perceive reality and interact among them (Muller, 1990). These frameworks are constitutive of institutions that design policies, delineate strategic goals and measures, and establish public spending and benchmarks. Furthermore, they determine social protection, employment regimes and labour market regulation within the national system of production. The interaction between these elements gives rise to the variants of social models in Europe.

These transformations in the paradigm and in the ESM have widely influenced employment and social protection policies embedded in the social models of the member states, insofar as the European Employment Strategy and the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) attempted to make them convergent to each other. Nevertheless, each social model has reacted differently to these changes according to their peculiar features. The transformations of the paradigm at the European level and the changes in the European Social Model are represented mainly by the shift from an industrial society based on permanent employment and welfare guarantees to a post-industrial one that rests in job and income insecurity and a weak social protection, producing as an effect the spread of social vulnerability. Social vulnerability emerges in the interconnection between different spheres of life (i.e. labour instability, care needs, housing problems) and not only from traditional risks (i.e. unemployment, poverty, social exclusion). In the new paradigm, the responsibility of

managing vulnerability is entrusted to individuals that are called to participate actively in the process of their integration into the labour market (Ranci, 2010).

The solution proposed by the European institutions in order to tackle unemployment, instability and social vulnerability is represented by the notion of flexicurity, which is an attempt of combining two dimensions that have been so far considered in oppositions, namely flexibility for firms and security for workers. However, its efficacy and intentions have strongly been criticized because of its orientation to favor firms more than workers and its trend to neglect the wishes and needs of individuals. Hence, the conceptualization of flexicurity, as proposed by the European institutions, seems to disregard the key element of freedom of choices by individuals. The thesis attempts to reintroduce this element through the capabilities approach. The approach, which was proposed by the Nobel Prize Amartya Sen, acts as a cognitive and normative framework for evaluating employment and social protection policies on the basis of their capacities to make people able to construct the life-path they value instead of augmenting their vulnerability in society.

Chapter I.

Setting the scene and the concepts in the change of paradigm: European and national social models and social vulnerability

1.1 Introduction

In the last decades within the European Union, several challenges for the European and national social models have stemmed from different factors: globalisation and deregulation; demographic and societal variations, including the increasing participation of women in the labour market and the ageing of the population; continued education; transformations in family relations; open access to the new technologies (ICT) and their wide diffusion in the society (EC, 2007, 2004a,b); emergence of new ideas about welfare (and welfare dependence) and normative views as regards the relationship between State and market (Gilbert, 2002). In the face of these technological, economic and social changes, which have led to the shift from the fordism to the post-fordism (Aglietta, 1987; Boyer and Saillard, 1995; Alonso and Martínez Lucio, 2006) and to the establishment of the paradigm of activation, the modernization of social models took place, fostering the European Union and the European Member States towards deep transformations. These transformations have been extensive in nature, concerning a redefinition of the conceptualisations at the basis of social models themselves.

Before starting, it is relevant to define what a social model is and which components contribute to its constitution. According to Karamessini (2007), social models indicate the characteristics that define a specific socio-labour context and involve employment and welfare regimes. The former regime refers to how employment is regulated, as well as to how labour market policies and skills development are structured. The latter regime includes the organization of social protection as well as the provision of benefits and social services. It also refers to the different roles played by the State, the market and the family in the production and distribution of welfare (Karamessini, 2007; Esping-Andersen, 1999). In the view of the author, the regimes are linked to each other, which, nevertheless, do not necessarily entails a consistence between the two. The interaction between employment relationships and societal arrangements gives rise to the variants of social models in Europe. Employment regimes and welfare states are elements of social models, but they also complement national production systems. Indeed, as Karamessini states, “changes in the production

regime call for accommodative changes in both the employment regime and the social protection system, and the relationship between production regimes and social models is a two-way one” (2007: 2). However, in this thesis the concept of social model encompasses also the ideological dimension. In fact, the attempt is to emphasize the role of values, cognitions and representations in a social psychological view, following the assumption that social problems does not stem only from institutions, but also from how they are conceived and debated (Prieto, 2014).

Social models offer approaches for dealing with issues of special social relevance (i.e. job security, welfare state, quality of work and social equality), since they embody a set of shared values and beliefs that are determinant in defining and legitimizing institutions and policies. These are a manifestation of how social questions, which are acknowledged collectively as public problems, are conceived and interpreted. Political problems are therefore social constructions, strictly connected to a particular socio-political context and produced by the interaction between several situational factors (i.e. historical background, labour market) and social actors (i.e. trade union, social movements). Consequently, policies express the interventions that society intends to furnish in relation to specific social issues (Muller, 1990; 2000). This may be crucial with respect to the orientation of national models to generate job opportunities and provide protection against social vulnerability for individuals through employment and social policies.

Recently, linked to fundamental transformations of social models, new social constructions have fostered the diffusion of alternative interpretative frameworks, where concepts have acquired different meanings and other ones have been added. In this sense, a new epistemic paradigm – the paradigm of activation – has replaced the old one, providing new beliefs and general assumptions on social issues according to which policies try to face social problems, as we will see later on in this chapter. As described by Kuhn (2005), the change of epistemological paradigms leads to deep variations in the notions that underpin the world-view beyond social questions. This also involves the discursive dimension of policies, which is relevant at the time of naming problems and attributing responsibilities to solve them (Fernández and Serrano, 2014). Indeed, the introduction of new semantic expressions (i.e. employability and activation policies) is useful to manage these variations. Semantic changes make evident alternative definitions of problems, and, consequently, suggest different types of interventions to carry out through public policies. In particular, the notions used to name social problems specify the political framework from which the approaches and the manners to fight them derive.

In addition to traditional and historical social problems, a new concept has started to spread out, namely that of ‘social vulnerability’. This concept seems suitable to capture more properly of other notions the consequences and shortcomings produced by the new socio-economic configuration.

Still, due to the blurred and temporary nature of the factors that constitute it, vulnerability is difficult to delineate. Ranci and Migliavacca define it as “a life-situation characterized by a multi-dimensional combination of factors of disadvantage and advantage, of inclusion and exclusion. Its distinctive feature is that weak and unstable integration in the main mechanisms of resource distribution in contemporary society places people in a situation of uncertainty and high exposure to the risk of poverty and, eventually, of social exclusion” (2010: 219). Castel (1995, 2003) describes social vulnerability as marked by transitional phases and depicts it as “an intermediate unstable area that combines the precariousness of work and the fragility of proximity means” (1997: 13). A different definition is proposed by Vatsa (2004), who states that vulnerability is “the inability to cope with risks, shocks and stress” (2004: 11). According to this author, vulnerability refers to outcomes in relation to the exposure of individuals to the risk of suffering a negative event. While in the past, risks of damaging factors were easily detectable (sickness, unemployment, accident, old age), the current paradigm makes risks unpredictable and the social position of individuals unstable, since their exposure highly depends on the broad set of conditions in which they live. Quoting Alwang, Siegel and Jørgesen (2001) and Glewwe and Hall (1998), Vatsa articulates the concept of vulnerability in terms of welfare loss, instead of poverty. The author (2004) traces the difference between poverty and vulnerability and makes clear that whereas the notion of ‘poverty’ refers mainly to static and persistent circumstances, social vulnerability concerns a dynamic condition and embraces the uncertainty people face into their life-course and reflects the indefiniteness of the existence. In our opinion, a crucial feature that defines ‘social vulnerability’ – but that involves also ‘poverty’ and other related concepts – is the unwillingness of individuals for living or staying in a certain situation that they undergo, insofar as the social context does not allow making different choices and enjoying better opportunities. Indeed, as Ranci highlights, social vulnerability is characterized not only by the “uncertain access to fundamental material resources (wage or welfare benefits) [...], but also by the instability of the mechanisms to obtain them” (2010: 18), which led to a reduction of possibilities for choice and opportunities in life. The author points out that social vulnerability is tied to the overlapping and entanglement of difficulties in different crucial areas, such as income level, housing conditions, employment, child and elderly care, educational paths and so on. In this regard, we can say that social vulnerability rises in the intersection among these areas. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this dissertation, we will deal with the specific areas related to social integration, which covers unemployment, employability, difficulties for entering the labour market for the first time – as the case of young people – or during the transition from one job to another.

As we will see in this chapter, the shift towards the paradigm of activation suggests not only a

certain conception of social vulnerability, but also a way of dealing with that, since the different definitions of the problem are strictly connected to the modalities of intervention of the State and the definition of the role of public institutions in tackling it. This has resulted in the transformations of the European Social Model and national social models in Europe. The chapter analyses these transformations, trying to answer to three groups of questions: 1. Starting from the ESM's definition, how has its conceptual normative framework changed following the shift of paradigm? In which direction are social protection and employment regulation in Europe currently oriented? Which effects does the transformation of the ESM produce on social vulnerability? 2. Which is the EU role in these changes? How does the European level exert its influence on Member States? Which tools does the European Union use in order to achieve its purposes? 3. On the basis of the assumption that more than a social model can be detected in Europe, which are the typologies of social models in Europe in relation to social vulnerability? Have these typologies changed over time? Are the "old" typologies still valid? And are some social models more prepared than other in facing social vulnerability? In the successive paragraphs, we will attempt to answer to these questions, observing the pervasive influence of the paradigm of activation on the conceptualisations at the basis of European and national social models. We will also deepen the function of social protection and employment regulation in the prevention against social vulnerability and in the development of opportunities for individuals.

1.2 The European Social Model over time

In order to better understand the change of paradigm, the transformations occurred in the recent decades on social models and the impact they have had on the rising of social vulnerability in Europe, it can be useful to begin by looking at the definition of the European Social Model (ESM), which is first of all a social and political construct.

1.2.1 Looking for a definition of European Social Model

The European Social Model (ESM) represents the framework of principles, values and behaviours shared by the EU members, which have as aim the ambitious project to reform their welfare and employment regimes in order to bring them in line with each other and to create a European social identity. The European Social Model embodies the European specific manner of dealing with social issues, in contrast with other models, like the Asian and the American one (Bonvin, 2006). It covers several areas, like education and training, full employment, welfare and

social protection, the fight against youth unemployment and that of other ‘weak’ groups, and guarantees for fundamental social rights, including freedom of association, right to strike, protection against unfair dismissal, equality and non-discrimination. At a practical level, the ESM appoints for social dialogue between trade unions and employers and the involvement of civil society organizations and “supports a harmonious combination of economic and social objectives” (Bonvin, 2006: 230). The model pursues thus sustainable economic growth as well as social cohesion, according to the idea that these goals should go hand in hand. The expression ‘European Social Model’ was first used by Jacques Delors, probably during a period when competition with the US was the centre of attention in European politics. Jacques Delors was one of the first people to disseminate the term in the mid-1980s by designating it as an alternative to the American way of life. It was also the first attempt to pay attention to the social dimension of the European Union (Jorgensen and Madsen, 2007). The expression appeared in 1994 in the White Paper on social policy (European Commission, 1994), where it was defined as a set of shared values, that include “democracy and individual rights, free collective bargaining, the market economy, equality of opportunity for all and social welfare and solidarity” (1994: 2).

In the literature, the expression of European Social Model has been used with different and often divergent meanings. Serrano and Jepsen (2006) have grouped the meanings into three categories, based on the contribution of Hay et al. (1999). Some of these meanings are especially linked to the new goals proposed at the European level in the last decades. The first group refers to the common features in terms of institutions and values of the EU member states, which serve to designate them as characterised by a specific modality of regulation. Such values are gathered in the Charter of Fundamental Social Rights. Several authors have tried to list these common characteristics and principles that are encompassed in the ESM. Guarantees of workers’ rights and equal opportunities (Vaughan-Whitehead, 2003), provision of generous benefits and public services (Scharpf, 2002) and promotion of social dialogue and democratic system (Hay et al., 1999) are some of the features that are shared by the Member States. The second group represents the ESM as an ideal model and a good example to follow by European members. In the third group, the ESM is shown as a European project for the enhancement of economic conditions as well as the cohesiveness, especially looking at the enlargement towards the Eastern countries. It identifies the ESM as an ongoing political project, proposed by the academic and political spheres for dealing with the current socio-economic challenges. Such categories, according to the authors, do not exclude each other. The co-existence of these dissimilar meanings is partly tied to the undetermined essence of the concept, which is characterised by a high degree of ambiguity and polysemy. As argued by Goetschy (2006), such polisemy is linked to the way the content of the ESM is generated. In fact,

she claims that the model is the outcome of multi-level tensions amidst various economic and social actors. In this regard, Guillén and Palier (2004) have stressed the existence of two conflicting EMSs, one promoted by “economically oriented actors” and the other one promoted by “socially oriented actors”, more than a clear European Social Model. In the field of employment policy, dynamics can be seen as a fight between two groups of actors. The “socially-oriented actors” (i.e. Ministers of Labour, trade unions, left wing governments and members of the European Parliament) try to find solutions that combine productive and social purpose, whereas “economically-oriented actors” (i.e. Ecofin Council, Economic Policy Committee and right wing governments) push for market-oriented actions. The two groups of actors fight to make their policy orientation and their proposals prevail in the European arena (Pochet, 2005). Left wing actors attempt to foster a ‘social dimension’, due to the excessive dominance of economic interest within the European Union; nevertheless, the ideas concerning the meaning of a ‘Social Europe’ and the means to construct it are countless (Trubek and Trubek, 2005).

As shown, a clear definition of the concept of ‘European social model’ still seems to be missing. However, some common assumptions shared by different definitions can be noticed. One of these relates to the divergence between the US and the European models. Indeed, while the former is characterised by the absence of regulatory tools, the latter is provided with employment protection and wage regulation. Such tools are often believed to hamper the productivity of the EU markets in comparison with the US economy. Nevertheless, the US model is usually considered to produce negative social consequences. However, the fact that the European regulatory tools hinder the productivity of the market is strongly questioned (Salverda, 2006). Another common assumption in relation to the ESM is the idea that economic and social dimensions are intertwined. The current European debate is focused on individuating the proper conditions to achieve both the development of economy and the enhancement of living conditions. At this scope, new concepts (i.e. flexicurity, activation and employability) have been proposed, replacing or rethinking the old ones, like those of ‘extensive social protection’ and ‘job security’.

1.2.2 The change of paradigm in the recent decades and its effects on social vulnerability

Competitive forces have led to the review of crucial European concepts in the last decades (i.e. social solidarity and social justice) in the effort to make nations adapt to the new economic circumstances (Streek, 1999). Thus, the European Social Model has changed profoundly, leading to the shift from industrial to post-industrial society and towards the paradigm of activation. Since the post-war period, three pillars have been at the basis of the social model of industrial societies, such

as high employment stability, strong family ties rested on a gender division of roles and generous welfare programs. These pillars have respectively undergone different forms of erosion (Ranci, 2010). The first regards the “weakening of the labour market’s function as the main mechanism of social integration” (*Ibid.*, 4), which leads to an increase of job insecurity. By making reference to Castel (1995), Ranci specifies that this increasing instability is due to a greater precariousness of workers, which brings negative consequences on the living standards, a growth of long-term unemployment and a rise of the number of people excluded from the labour market. The second form of erosion concerns the weakening of family relationships, which is connected to changes in demographic terms and in the organisation of the household. The third form of erosion affects the rigidity of welfare systems. Even if their function has recently been questioned, still welfare states are not prepared for facing social vulnerability. Indeed, in the past, social protection has been devoted to a small group of workers who were fully integrated in the labour market, which contrasts with the current situation of European societies (Taylor-Gooby, 2004).

In the past industrial societies were characterised by strict labour regulation and a rigid division of labour, being structured in centralized and hierarchical organisations. Economic stability and social security were the foundation of this model of production. The assumption that the market did not guarantee such stability fostered a Keynesian view of the State, whose intervention was considered fundamental in order to ensure proper living standards to people out of the profit logic of the market. In this sense, the welfare state had the crucial role of preserving security and preventing individuals by the risks they can face during their life (Crespo and Serrano, 2004). This embodied the very core of the meaning embraced by social protection, such as the idea that labour market was unequal in an intrinsic way and that society had to take charge of the most relevant risks (i.e. unemployment and poverty). The meaning of social protection in industrial society refers to the provision of autonomy offered by the State in order to make individuals able to survive beyond the fluctuations of the market, reducing individuals’ reliance on it (Esping-Andersen, 1999). This meaning is interconnected to the concept of risk, assuming that each person is submitted to the possibility of facing damaging situations (unemployment, illness, disability) during his/her life. These situations were considered objective risks that were independent from individual lack, behaviours or attitudes. An external attribution was prevalent in this case, clearing the issue from social judgments. Since risks were thought of as common to all individuals who are affected, though in different measures, by them, the commitment of the State was providing guaranties of social security to reduce the effects of these situations. This view favoured the will by society to take the responsibility for dealing with these risks. Collective solidarity towards people in debilitating conditions was viewed as a duty and a question of justice. Receiving social benefits

when facing situations of difficulty was thus considered a “right” and the State was supposed to provide livelihoods and minimum guarantees. This made possible the centralization and regulation by the State of uncertainty. The role of the State was crucial also in protecting workers through the mediation among different social actors in phase of negotiation. This was carried out by means of a juridical regulation of the conflicts between the groups of employed and employers in the attempt of re-establishing a form of equilibrium between the two social groups. Finally, social protection refers to the State’s intervention in the functioning of the labour market, actuating in the regulation of supply and demand. The efforts were oriented to facilitate the match between job seekers and job offers in order to place people in the productive system with the aim of establishing an order in the labour market (Fernández and Serrano, 2014).

The old paradigm and industrial societies have recently undergone a deep transformation: instability has become the cornerstone of the post-industrial societies and of the current paradigm of activation. This paradigm differs from the previous one in three aspects. The first aspect concerns the new individualized view of the problem of social vulnerability, which is focused on psychological factors, including behaviours, attitudes and motivation of unemployed people. The second aspect refers to an increasing importance given to merits in contractual relations, on the basis of which workers have to deserve and gain positions in the labour market. The last aspect is related to a greater emphasis on the employment and the economic side of citizenship, instead of the social and political ones (Serrano, 2007b). Moreover, following a neoliberal trend, supply-side economy started to replace demand-side economy, with a consequent rise of deregulation and flexibility. Also social protection and labour participation came to be conceptualised according to requests of the market and in an effort to reduce dependency from the State (Burroni and Keune, 2011). Risk is now assumed to be unavoidable and impossible to foresee for individuals, who have to prepare themselves to tackle it at one point in their life-course (Beck, 1992). People are requested to cope with market fluctuations and to adapt to labour demands. Therefore, the new socio-economic order, which is characterized by high instability and continuous transitions, generates the picture of a liquid society (Bauman, 2002). In this context, the concept of social vulnerability appears. It covers different aspects of the individual’s existence (personal income, job security, investments in training and careers, housing conditions, care-giving activities, social integration), concerning “areas of social life that have long been considered a private sphere” (Ranci, 2010: 15).

In post-industrial society, unemployment is converted into a lack of *employability*. As this ability is considered determinant for individual and economic success, lifelong learning and multi-skills of labour force are promoted. In these circumstances, activations policies start to prevail. They are oriented to activate inactive people through an individualised intervention carried out by

employment services, which have the duty of fostering motivation and developing psychosocial competences. The enhancement of personological, moral and personal characteristics is thus encouraged in order to facilitate the entrance of unemployed into the labour market. The basic assumption is that individuals have to take charge of their own life projects; consequently, the complete responsibility of their success or failure in finding a job and livelihood is attributed to them, which lead to a depoliticization of employment and vulnerability and a politicization of individuals (Serrano, 2009b; Fernández and Serrano, 2014). Individuals are called on to be responsible and adapt to the contradictory demands of the market. They are also required to keep a coherent and stable identity while living in a productive model based on transitions and fragmentation as well as to develop their ability for planning and time management when a generalised uncertainty forces to adopt a presentist view and hampers the possibility of designing future projects. Following the transformations of the systems of production, which have contributed to the shift from the industrial to the post-industrial society, also the notion of ‘social protection’ has changed. In fact, the meaning of social protection has exhibited a gradual shift of the objectives of the public intervention that is no longer – or not only – oriented to protect individuals against damaging situations, but to promote the activation of jobless people. Full work integration and full participation in the labour market is the ultimate goal. Social protection policies, which are now appointed – or disqualified – as passive policies, are no longer oriented to act in favour of the individual, but rather on the individual who is considered the cause and the solution of her/his own situation. Indeed, the social welfare is not longer considered protecting against risks, rather than providing useful tools that allow people to manage risks (workfare). In fact, as Keune and Burrioni highlight, “welfare state reform focused on its productive, rather on its preventive function” (2011: 76-77). Thus, the meaning of security no longer coincides with the certainty of the worker to keep an open-ended job (job security) or to be provided with the necessary livelihood, but to carry out labour transitions from one job to another (employment security) in a satisfactory way (Wilthagen and Tros, 2004). It turns into an active security, which can be understood as a self-insurance against risks. This shift represents the effort to fight dependence on the welfare state and to promote individual autonomy and responsibility, according to the conception that the lack of agency – or passivity – is due to a disease of the will and a moral pathology. The State thus does not guarantee protection any more and risks become a private affair. What is omitted from this individualistic framework is the importance of interdependency, as a prerequisite for personal autonomy. As the concept of autonomy belonging to post-industrial society moves far from the idea of interdependence, what is supposed strengthen the individual agency may produce an increase of vulnerability. According to the new paradigm,

individuals are considered as independent and competitive, ignoring their social interdependence (Dean, 2003).

This structural change of paradigm and of the social and productive model has led to an expansion of social vulnerability, associated to the dizzying growth of flexible and precarious work. Uncertainty has been introduced in the system of social integration and, in addition, a strong individualisation of social relations has contributed to the fragmentation of society (Crouch, 1999). The new socio-economic configuration has started to produce feelings of insecurity and perceptions of frailty, due to the end of a stable and secure living style (Bauman, 2002). In particular, instability has begun to be viewed by some authors as intrinsic to this period of transformations that is characterised by the conflict and the co-existence of elements belonging to the previous and the current model: “uncertainty [is considered] as the inevitable effect of a transitional phase in which industrial society is de-structuring with the passage towards a new form of social organisation. The simultaneous presence of maximum security and great insecurity would reflect the ambivalences and contradictions that are typical of transition phases, when elements of disorganisation are prevalent in comparison to elements of organisation” (Ranci, 2010: 3). By contrast, according to other authors, uncertainty is not linked to a transitory phase, but represents a new trait of the post-industrial society in which risk is not predictable and the ideal of security is demanded more and more (Beck, 1992). All the aspects presented so far constitute the new European Social Model.

In conclusion, the European Social Model is a notion that constitutes a valuable analytical tool for understanding what is happening in Europe. It is also useful for political decision makers, especially at the time of designing, planning and implementing a common social and employment policy agenda at the European level. The following section will focus more on the top-down process of influence of the European Union on national social models, taking into account the tools the European institutions use for pursuing the convergence of employment and social protection policies of member states.

1.3. The EU role in the change of paradigm: the European Employment Strategy (EES) and the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) as new European tools

Whereas in the very beginning, the European Union used to deal only with few topics, progressively the areas of regulation were extended and the number of social questions tackled at the European level arose. Consequently, throughout the last decade the European institutions have acquired a referential position in matters of labour and social policies. Also the modes of regulation

underwent an important change, since the traditional binding instruments (i.e. European directives) started to be flanked by diverse soft methods of regulation.

As regards to employment policies, the Lisbon strategy promoted a new form of implicit regulation at the EU level based on the exchange of practices, sharing of information and coordination amidst member states. These instruments were introduced by the European institutions with the aim of pushing countries towards the same direction, namely the enhancement of the performance of policies in the field of labour and social protection. The innovative charge of these instruments relied on their persuasive nature, their capacity to make resources and methodological tools accessible as well as on their influence in social and cognitive terms. In particular, this soft regulation was not tied to constraints imposed from the outside, as it is the case of legislation or sanctions in the economic sphere; rather, its strength was linked to generate forces from inside that contributed to modelling social questions according to the new conceptions connected to the paradigm of activation (Serrano, 2009a). This mode of regulation is strongly connected to the EU institutions' ability of spreading new ways of thinking about social and labour issues. Indeed, the institutions have been playing "an active role in the symbolic production of a political order" (*Ibid.*, 2009a: 2), by providing new cognitive and normative frameworks. These alternative interpretative frameworks suggest a reformulation of the most pressing social problems and the measures for solving them.

The European institutions play a central role in the circulation of discursive expressions and strategic keywords as well as in the dissemination of procedures and epistemic representations that are grounded on a set of key concepts. These concepts are ambiguous and subject to constant transformations, depending on the institutions' interests and intentions of adjusting their plans. Such interests account a broad variety of purposes, such as strengthening policy proposals, building a shared identity and a sense of belonging among the member states, and gaining political legitimacy. Indeed, the institutions seek to negotiate and conquer their legitimacy within the European arena, which is constituted by different social and political realities (Barbier, 2001; Jacobsson, 2004). Due to the wide diversity that characterises the European Union, the institutions are called to a challenging task. In fact, they are supposed to regulate the conflicts of groups of political actors and the contrasts between antagonistic views, while at the same time keeping a neutral position. This neutrality guarantees the institutions a degree of legitimacy within the European arena, which comes to be the space where 'battles of ideas', discussions and bargaining take place (Serrano, 2009a). It is important to bear in mind that the main aim of the European institutions is to channel national realities into a common direction through common guidelines according to the specific vision of the European Social Model. Hence, the institutions use concepts and expressions to create

the possibility of carrying out agreements and compromises between different groups and actors. This leads to generate mixed words that are open to multiple interpretations, such as ‘flexi-curity’ or ‘employ-ability’. Moreover, a specific vocabulary that marks the new paradigm and strategy, such as “partnership”, “activation”, has been produced. These notions, whose elaboration has been carefully thought, have become dominant in both the political and the academic discourses. In particular, the use of technocratic devices and the support of research as expedients for turning supranational political discourses into scientific results is also oriented in this direction. The effort of building up communities of experts, professionals and researchers contribute to the policy coordination within Europe (Jepsen and Serrano, 2006; 2005; Pochet and Natali, 2005). Some of the concepts have been borrowed from the economic domain (i.e., benchmarking, flexibility and contractualisation). Indeed, these concepts develop within a context where the economic sphere and the role played by the EMU deeply influence the definition of problems and the proposal of solutions.

The diffusion of the concepts, words and ideas proposed by the EU institutions has had a great impact on the construction of social questions at the European and national level. The elaboration of a peculiar manufactured language and the diffusion of a new cognitive and normative framework serve the European political project of providing shared answers and instruments to face the challenges of employment (Serrano and Jepsen, 2006). In order to achieve this purpose, the institutions use specific policy tools, namely the EES (European Employment Strategy) and the Open method of coordination (OMC).

1.3.1. EES, as the operative and ideological harbinger

The European Employment Strategy born with the scope of counterpoising the Economic and Monetary Union. Indeed, a relevant imbalance between market efficiency and social protection took place after the establishment of the EMU, insofar as economic policies came to be designed at European level following a common direction for all member states, whereas social security policies kept being elaborated at the national level. The key role of the Strategy has led to the production of a broad literature on this topic (Zeitlin et al., 2005; Salais, Raveaud and Mathieu, 2002; Goetschy, 2003; Trubek and Mosher, 2003; de la Porte and Pochet, 2004).

The European Employment Strategy (EES) was launched in 1997 by the Treaty of Amsterdam. The Treaty defined the steps to carry out this accomplishment in the Employment Chapter. Four policy “pillars” were at the basis of the strategy for the period from 1997 to 2002: employability, adaptability, entrepreneurship and equal opportunities. After the five-year evaluation of the strategy

that was made in 2003, significant changes were introduced. Some changes were proposed by the Wim Kok Group, which aimed to increase the political relevance of the EES within the member states and to reinforce its connection with the goal of competitiveness. Kok's report, titled "Jobs, Jobs, Jobs: Creating More Employment in Europe" (Kok et al., 2003), focused essentially on the quantitative side of employment policy. In fact, the report presented as main policy objectives to increase the adaptability of workers and enterprises, the inclusion of people into the labour market and the investment in human capital. Hence, after its introduction in 1997, the EES was significantly reformed in 2003. Three encompassing objectives replaced the four "pillars", namely 1. to achieve full employment, 2. to raise job quality and productivity and 3. to promote cohesion and inclusive labour markets (CEC, 2003). These objectives were closely linked – or rather, subordinated – to the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines (BEPG) that set out the economic policy of the Union (de la Porte and Pochet, 2005). Such relation also appears in the European Integrated Guidelines (2007b), as it is evident in the following propositions: "Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation"; "Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements through better identification of occupational needs and key competences, and anticipation of future skill requirements; [...] ensuring the attractiveness, openness and high quality standards of education and training systems". In spite of the fact that the EES was supposed to raise the attention on social goals, economic aims continued to have a strong impact on it.

The substantial novelty of the EES is represented by the fact that it provides a 'cognitive framework', which is highly determined by the EU political priorities. Indeed, as seen earlier in this chapter, European institutions exert an important socio-cognitive influence on member states that adapt their national policies to the concepts and the language proposed by these. Therefore, a knowledge of the European interpretative framework is required in order to better understand national employment and social protection policies (Barbier, 2004; Jacobsson, 2004), which – according to a ESM perspective – are connected one another. The EES results into being a political discourse concerning the objectives to reach in the field of employment as well as the ways and means to make labour markets develop. It encourages European countries to apply national reforms in the field of employment policy, which are oriented to reach the following objectives:

- a) a skilled and adaptable labour force with access to lifelong learning;
- b) higher rates of employment (especially among women and the elderly);
- c) active employment and social policies;
- d) supply-side measures for job creation (Trubek and Trubek, 2005).

The EES defines policy goals in terms of performance indicators (i.e. employment rates), establishing specific benchmarks. Therefore, the EES can be considered as “a politics of indicators” that determines the type of political action and evaluation processes. Following this model, the Open Method of Coordination was later introduced. Several OMCs related to different topics, such as pensions and inclusion, emerged. Still, the EES constitutes the most elaborate form of OMC (Barbier, 2004).

1.3.2. The OMC: the EU flagship

The Open Method of Coordination (OMC), which is the main instrument proposed by the Lisbon strategy in 2000, represents a new mode for governing European member states. In Zeitlin's words, “No development in European integration has aroused greater interest and controversy in recent years than the Open Method of Co-ordination” (2005: 19). The peculiarity of this method has attracted many scholars and led them to deepen the topic (Zeitlin et al., 2005; de la Porte and Pochet, 2003; Jobelius, 2003; Barbier, 2004; Hodson and Meher, 2001; Jacobsson, 2002). The OMC embodies several elements, namely the definition at the European level of specific goals, the implementation of policies oriented at the achievement of the goals at a national level, the evaluation of results thanks to quantifiable and measurable data. These elements are described in more details in the Presidency Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council:

- “Fixing guidelines for the Union combined with specific timetables for achieving the goals which they set in the short, medium and long term;
- establishing, where appropriate, quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks against the best in the world and tailored to the needs of different Member States and sectors as a means of comparing best practices;
- translating these European guidelines into national and regional policies by setting specific targets and adopting measures, taking into account national and regional differences;
- periodic monitoring, evaluation and peer review organized as mutual learning processes” (point 37 of the Lisbon summit conclusions).

The efficacy of the method relies on the endorsement by European countries of the procedures and mechanisms it encompasses for negotiating contents, ideas and norms as well as the modalities to pursue these. In fact, it contributes to the creation of epistemic communities (Zeitlin and Trubek, 2003). The OMC substitutes a centralized approach that is founded on a formal model of

subordination with a type of regulation that aims to involve different actors in the decision-making process, in the attempt to harmonize a wide variety of political interests, social positions and world-views. This decentralisation of the processes of government (multilevel governance) is at the basis of the effort of the European institutions to gain legitimacy among member states (Serrano, 2009a). Hence, the substantial participation of diverse actors at different levels is a key element of the OMC as a governance tool.

After the European Council introduced it for the first time, the OMC has become an overspread instrument of EU governance in different fields (research, education and migration). Still, its application to social policies (employment, pension, exclusion and health care) is the most relevant. The OMC in matters of employment and social policies is used for constituting a Social Europe and making member states converge toward a common political project. For this purpose, it tries to reconcile different ideas and visions by defining goals and actions, rather than operating at the institutional and legislative level. The OMC, which allows a supranational governance in matters of employment, training and social protection, is one of the most peculiar forms of social regulation that has become representative of the new paradigm (Serrano, 2009a).

1.3.3. Soft law versus hard law

The OMC represents a method of soft regulation, since it emphasizes the “non-mandatory nature of rules, their flexibility and openness to a variety of players and a growing diversity of social systems within the EU” (Goetschy, 2006: 57). The OMC differs from the traditional method used by the European institutions, in that the latter creates uniformed rules that Member States have to adopt and provides sanctions whenever the rules are not respected through the support of the European Court of Justice. In this sense, the traditional method is defined as “hard law”. By contrast, the OMC provides general and open-ended guidelines rather than rules. Moreover, it does not foreseen sanctions for those Member States that do not follow the guidelines. Thus, it is defined as “soft law”.

Much of the controversy surrounding the OMC concerns the merits and the drawbacks of “hard” and “soft” law for the construction of a Social Europe. Many authors have debated on the differences between binding law (directives or collective agreements) and non-binding ones such as the OMC as well as on the effects they have on the achievement of certain goals. In fact, the question of whether soft law creates a greater risk of inefficiency than hard law or, by contrary, whether it favours the implementation of guidelines is overspread; however, a final answer has not yet been provided. In fact, the actual effectiveness of directives can vary even though they

constitute hard law, whereas a careful monitoring of OMC guidelines can result in successful implementation even though they represent soft law. Nonetheless, we have to bear in mind that the two forms of law may co-exist (Goetschy, 2006). Indeed, the Open Method of Coordination can be combined with other instruments of action, including traditional legislation, despite the fact that hard law is generally applied to specific fields related to the monetary union of the member states. Other issues are generally left to a soft legislation and to intergovernmental decisions. This is the case of the welfare state. Thus, the OMC makes national employment policy and social models of different countries facing common challenges converge each other.

In conclusion, with regard to the role of the European institutions, the OMC and the EES are fundamental instruments that favour the influence of the ESM on national models and address the fight against social vulnerability by taking into account the severe disparities within Europe.

1.4. National social models in Europe preventing social vulnerability

As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, social models include values and principles, as well as an array of institutions, interactions and relations that expresses the specific features of each country. The definition itself of the ‘social model’ suggests that more than one model is embedded into the supranational social model – the European Social Model. For this reason, in the effort to construct the political project of the ESM, European institutions force member states towards a convergence in the social sphere. Nevertheless, the effects of their attempt are deeply influenced by national situations and actors operating within the country, which leads the EU to have a restricted impact on this sphere at the member state level (Mósesdóttir, 2006). Hence, in spite of the fact that the influence of the ESM cannot be underestimated, national models maintain a substantial degree of freedom to implement employment regulation and social protection, which are still essentially a national matter. In order to better comprehend the relation between national social model and the issue of social vulnerability, it is therefore necessary to take into account the variations of countries, which on the basis of their features have been distinguished by authors working in comparative analysis in different typologies.

1.4.1 Typologies of national social models

The distinction of European countries into a few categories, traced on the basis of similarities and divergences, allows the identification of different types of social models. Different typologies⁴ have been defined according to different criteria (welfare state, employment regime, social protection). However, the categorizations carried out so far have been depicted on the framework of industrial societies, focusing on historical social issues such as unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, and so on. The transition from the industrial to the post-industrial society, promoted by the European institutions, affected national social models, even if in different degrees and modalities. Consequently, new typologies have been proposed with the scope of better describing the current situation, focusing for instance on the balance between flexibility and security as well as on social vulnerability. In fact, since models are subjects to transformations, typologies are revisited over the time. The following section will observe the changes in classifications, starting from the traditional literature on the topic until the most recent studies of authors that have contributed to the elaboration of categorizations of national social models. Still, this does not pretend to be an exhaustive review.

At the very beginning, the introduction of a typology of social models was an important innovative element for comparative investigations. Esping-Andersen's ideal types have become a key reference, since the publication of the 'Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism' in 1990. Using Richard Titmuss's typology as a starting point (1958), and centring his analysis on the concept of decommodification⁵, Esping-Andersen used the concept of the 'welfare state'⁶ to describe the complex relationships between State, labour market and family, identifying three main models: universalistic, continental corporatist and liberal (Fig.1).

⁴ Typologies can be used for different purposes and can focus on variables related to causes, institutions and/or outcomes. Although critics have questioned its theoretical and empirical value, Arts and Gelissen (2001, 2002) have pointed out that ideal-types are not goals in themselves. Countries may possess characteristics which make them close to a model more than the other ones, without being fully identifiable with the model itself. Typologies are analytical tools and have to be adapted to the continuing changes of different variables in each country.

⁵ Decommodification refers to the degree to which welfare states weaken the individuals' dependency from the market participation by granting entitlements and income transfers. It designates the process of liberation or independence of labor forces. Decommodification is a function shared by all social protection systems; still it varies according to the kind of regimes.

⁶ Welfare systems are characterized by the type of risks they cover and the extent to which they cover them. The frontier between the risks that can be taken care of on a private basis and those which require public intervention is bound to change with the development of markets, demography, technologies and the prevailing visions of society and solidarity. Their features are the results of long-term conflicts and debates and are therefore strongly country-specific.

Figure 1. Esping-Andersen's classification of three social protection systems

Social protection system	Liberal	Social Democrat	Conservative corporatist
Geographic location	Great Britain	Scandinavia	Continental Europe
Historical reference	Beveridge	Beveridge	Bismarck
Objectives	The fight against poverty	Guarantee an equal income for all, equal redistribution	Maintain worker revenue levels
Functioning principle	Selectivity	Universality	Contributivity
Technique	Targeting	Redistribution	Social insurance

Source: Palier, 2001: 35.

The 'liberal' model is characterized by a low level of decommodification and a high level of dependence of individuals to the market, which allows them "to ensure their primary incomes and social protection" (Palier, 2001: 36). In this model, social protection is essentially residual, replacement incomes are relatively low and services are mainly directed towards target groups. It is especially represented by the United Kingdom. By contrast, the 'universalistic' model is characterized by a high level of decommodification. This model, which is associated with Scandinavian countries, offers high quality universal social protection services and aims at ensuring equality for individuals (Palier, 2001). The 'conservative-corporatist' model, associated with continental countries, aims not so much to reduce inequalities as to guarantee income maintenance to workers in the case of damaging experiences. Benefits are relatively generous and provide certain independence from the market, even if the access to social protection is related to employment. In Esping-Andersen's typology, Italy is included in the *conservative regime*, characterised by corporatist status divisions, residual social assistance schemes, minimal redistributive impact, and familiarism. Spain, Portugal and Greece do not appear in this categorization, but in those cases in which they are taken into account, they have been treated as late-comers (Ferrera, 1996). A Mediterranean model was added later by Leibfried (1991), Ebbinghaus (1998), Ferrera (1996) and Karamessini (2007) in order to compensate for this lack.

Maurizio Ferrera (1993) presents a classification of advanced welfare states according to their 'coverage format', that is, the degree of inclusiveness of social insurance schemes, focusing on the recipients of social protection. This classification distinguishes between pure occupational (work-related), mixed occupational, pure universalistic (based on citizenship) and mixed universalistic welfare states. These four distinct types take into account socio-economic, cultural-institutional and

party-political factors, which are determinant in shaping welfare states. The pure occupational model includes France, Belgium, Germany and Austria; the pure universalistic model includes Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden; the mixed occupational model includes Switzerland, Italy, Netherlands and Ireland, whereas the mixed universalistic one includes Great Britain.

Other classifications have been recently proposed, like the four ‘institutional social protection families’ (Palier, 2001). The first family is represented by Anglo-Saxon countries (Great Britain, Ireland), where social protection is based on need, defined as ‘the minimum to satisfy’ (Merrien, 1997: 101). Social protection, which is primarily financed by taxes, provides numerous benefits that are strictly controlled by a strongly centralized system. Only health care is universally delivered by the National Health Service (NHS). By contrast, the social protection system in Scandinavian countries, which is the second family, represents a “dominant universalist system” (Palier, 2001). Access to social protection is considered a right for all the citizens. The welfare state provides many free social services and benefits are automatically attributed in case of need. The system is primarily financed by taxes but is managed in a decentralized manner. The third family is constituted by the continental countries (France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Austria). Here, benefits are contributive and proportional to the level of the unemployed person’s former wages. Nevertheless, a safety net exists for people who are not covered by social security. In opposition to the Scandinavian or Anglo-Saxon countries, the management of the system is not directly handled by the State but by social partners (representatives of employers and employee). The last family is represented by Southern European countries (Spain, Italy, Greece, and Portugal). These countries offer a mixed system of social protection, combining contributive benefits that are proportional to income (social insurance), which are typical of the Bismarckian social protection, with universal services (national health care services). Other features are specific of these countries: fragmentation of welfare, uneven distribution of benefits between professional groups, strong territorial disparities, weak state involvement and low effectiveness of social protection services.

In their analysis, Gallie and Paugam (2000) highlight four ‘unemployment welfare regimes’: the *universalistic regime* with comprehensive coverage and a high level of replacement benefits, which includes Denmark and Sweden, the *liberal/minimal regime* with uncomprehensive coverage and level of cover, the *employment-centred regime* with uneven distributed coverage, as well as level and duration of benefits (Germany, the Netherlands, and France) and the *sub-protective regime* with uncomprehensive coverage and level of coverage, despite with an ideology that diverges from the minimal regime (Italy). Another significant contribution to the debate is provided by Amable (2003), who focuses his analysis on ‘models of capitalism’. He defines a model as a specific form and pattern of interaction between different institutional areas, namely the product market, the

labour market (including employment policies and industrial relations), the financial sector, the social protection and the educational system. The way these areas are intertwined determines the features of each type of capitalism. Amable uses the concept of ‘complementarity’ to highlight the connection among different dimensions that determine each model. According to his analysis, it can be distinguished the market-based capitalism model (United Kingdom), the continental European capitalism model (Switzerland, Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium, Norway, Germany, France and Austria), the social-democratic capitalism model (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) and the Mediterranean capitalism model (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain).

Now we will see a different classification of social protection systems, which arises when introducing the factor of the social vulnerability. Ranci’s analysis (2010) shows that six policy areas can be identified. In the social-democratic Scandinavian welfare regimes, the existence of a broad welfare system and strong active employment policies reduce exposure to social vulnerability by providing support for work/care conciliation and labour-market entry. In the Anglo-Saxon liberal welfare regimes, the market supply predominates, while active employment policies privilege an approach based on incentives that exclude the most vulnerable groups. By contrast, the continental and Southern European countries tend to differentiate from their traditional regimes. According to Ranci (2010), the continental regime can be divided into two areas: a French area, which include France and the French speaking zone of Belgium, and a German area. The German area has more difficulties in developing programmes to protect people against social vulnerability because it still relies on its strong traditional corporatist welfare system, whereas the French area occupies an intermediate position. Also Southern Europe can be divided into two areas: a Western area, which includes Spain and Portugal, and an Eastern area, which includes Italy and Greece. The Eastern area finds it difficult to develop strategies to tackle social vulnerability, because of the characteristics of their old social protection models which lack broad systems of coverage for damaging situations (unemployment, poverty, social exclusion). In conclusion, introducing social vulnerability into the analysis changes the way in which welfare states can be classified and “makes it difficult to frame differences among European welfare states by adopting the traditional regime concepts” (Ranci, 2010: 277). We will deepen the aspect of the relation between national models and social vulnerability in the following paragraph.

1.4.2 National social models and social vulnerability

In face of the current socio-economic transformations, traditional social models have started to redefine their welfare and employment regulation systems, which are crucial in protecting individuals against social risks (Esping-Andersen and Regini, 2000). In this re-definition of social models according to the new post-industrial paradigm and the new conceptualisations, some countries have been able to give responses more easily.

In the past, the uneven exposure of the individuals to damaging situations typical of industrial society (loss of work, invalidity, sickness or old age) was more or less adequately accounted for by the existence of different welfare systems which constituted specific institutional systems of state-market regulation (Esping-Andersen, 1990). They contributed to maintain material living standards of individuals, providing variable amounts and kinds of public benefits. The variability of welfare systems in Europe was also connected to the selectivity in the access to benefits and the generosity of the benefits themselves. Protection against social risks as well as social opportunities were thus distributed through the intervention of welfare states. Even if performing differently, nowadays these systems are still fundamental in tackling the new social risks, especially social vulnerability, so that its diffusion and characteristics varies in function of their development in the national contexts. Indeed, they contribute to the definition and extension of the phenomenon through their modality of approaching and defining the problem within the labour market. In particular, social and employment policies constitute one of the main elements in the protection of individuals together with other social economic factors (such as family and class structures). In particular, national social models and welfare systems, determine thus different profiles of social vulnerability within Europe (Ranci, 2010). In part II of this thesis, we will explore the Spanish and Italian profiles in more details.

The transformation of welfare states is strictly connected to the change of typologies of risk. In fact, the old social risks did not affect individuals in the same ways as social vulnerability does. While the former were strongly related to the employment position, the latter, as we have seen in the previous sections, is connected with the critical transition to a post-industrial society. Social vulnerability springs in the interplay between work and other spheres of everyday life and makes evident the problems of the connection of the labour market with household organisation, life transitions, care need and the spread of social instability (Ranci, 2010). These fields were historically covered by residual programmes of welfare systems, delegating the solution of many problems to the market or the family. Nevertheless, it is in the interstitial space among these fields that social vulnerability arises. In addition, social vulnerability is related to the life chances. Social

vulnerability is more intense in the early stages of the work careers – as a result of the long transition to a stable employment – and it largely affects young people. Although risks have changed profoundly in the last decades, the structure of welfare provision has remained substantially unchanged.

Traditional welfare states are only partially able to deal with the problems arising in the transition from industrial to post-industrial societies (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Taylor-Gooby, 2004), even though some welfare regimes have performed better than others. Traditional welfare systems are not equipped to provide protection against social vulnerability, which highlights the importance of innovation (Taylor-Gooby, 2004). According to Ranci (2010), the rise of new social problems requires not only the reorganisation of the existing social protection schemes, but also the recalibration of the entire welfare system (Ferrera and Rodhes, 2000; Ferrera and Hemerijck, 2003). The attempt is to meet needs and demands for social protection that were previously almost non-existent or marginal, or at least not fully recognised in the public agenda. Overall, countries can be assessed on the basis of the capacity of innovate their welfare systems, which determines a different development of social vulnerability profiles.

Scandinavian welfare systems are the better equipped in responding to social vulnerability. They innovate and adapt to social and economic changes, thanks to their universalistic principles (Esping-Andersen et al., 2002). By contrast, Continental (Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland and Germany) and, above all, Southern European welfare systems seem to be the most challenged by social vulnerability (Borghi and Van Berkel, 2007; Ferrera, 1996; Trifiletti, 1999; Naldini, 2002; Kazepov and Sabbatinelli, 2002). Observing Southern countries, it is important to take into account the transition from the classical male breadwinner family model to the new dual-income based family model, which has significantly increased the protection of individuals against social vulnerability. Nevertheless, where the transition has not occurred, the persistence of the traditional male breadwinner model generates greater exposure to social vulnerability (Ranci, 2010). Indeed, the male breadwinner model is still diffused in some parts of the Southern Mediterranean countries, although it tends to convert into new forms of household organization. The family is a strong factor of protection against social vulnerability, especially for people with no incomes or no access to benefits. According to Ranci (2010), a growing proportion of young people in the Mediterranean countries chooses to remain longer in the parental home, taking advantage of the income redistribution functions performed by the family. This allows young people in transition to adulthood to cope with social vulnerability, likely to occur in the early phase of their autonomy, especially due to the spread of temporary jobs. The family is therefore to be regarded as a crucial factor in the safeguard against social vulnerability.

In conclusion, differences of social models in Europe seem to be of great importance for defining life-chances of individuals or rather social vulnerability. Some social models, like the Scandinavian one, are better prepared to respond to the new problems of social vulnerability, thanks to their universalist principles. By contrast, corporatist and familistic systems are in the most difficult positions. Specifically, social vulnerability is concentrated in the Southern European area, whereas it results to have a lower weight in the central area comprising continental countries.

1.5 Concluding remarks

In this chapter we have tried to delineate the nature of the transformation of the European social model. In the past, the model was oriented to prevent poverty and social exclusion, concentrating its efforts on welfare programmes and targeting the social groups – long-term unemployed, youth unemployed, single parents, immigrants, and some other groups – towards whom the action was directed. This model has strongly influenced member states until the '90s and carried on even later. Afterwards, the model was mainly characterised by activation, employability and flexicurity as well as by the broad spread of social vulnerability. Labour market and welfare systems in Europe, which were more or less prepared to face the phenomenon of social vulnerability, underwent important changes.

These changes have introduced new meanings and discursive elements in the relationships settled so far in the field of social and employment policies, which through social protection and regulation of labour markets define social models. The dissemination of interpretative frameworks and the spread of concepts that are presented as empowering individuals foster the fight against dependency and encourage the rethinking of the social protection in terms of morality and individual responsibility. According to the new paradigm, dependency on the State is morally condemned while entrepreneurial and active attitudes are strongly promoted. The attitude of recipients gradually becomes a matter of policy concern and the individual, more than the labour market, turns thus into the focus of the government's intervention. This politicization of the individual's behaviours and beliefs is accompanied by a depoliticization of the issue of unemployment, which contributes to the rise of social vulnerability.

The phenomenon of social vulnerability has largely extended from poverty and social exclusion. It concerns social areas traditionally considered to be protected, such as income insecurity, work uncertainty, transition into adulthood. It refers not only the level of social integration that the general development of a nation is expected to influence, but also life chances. Considering social vulnerability as a new criterion for classifying social models, welfare states and employment

regimes, some categories hold relatively unchanged in comparison to the traditional classifications: Scandinavian countries, which have been more successful in achieving high growth and low unemployment, seem to be able to combine strategies to protect against the traditional damaging situations as well as social vulnerability. Also the UK and Ireland look able to direct their policies to fight against social vulnerability, because of their more “liberal” approach. By contrast, other traditional regimes can be split into two sub-groups. Within the continental corporatist welfare regimes, the French area has adopted an approach more concerned with work/care conciliation services, whereas the German area has lagged behind. Also within the Mediterranean regime it is possible to distinguish two clusters, a Western area (Spain and Portugal) and an Eastern area (Italy and Greece), whose labour policies seem to follow different paths. In particular, the Eastern area has fallen behind. It seems difficult to frame the European social protection models in terms of conventional regime typologies when considering social vulnerability, as new national profiles can be depict.

In conclusion, the transformation of the European Social Model is currently regarded as a solution to react to the new economic and social challenges by the European institutions, which play a central role in the diffusion of innovative conceptualizations and practices. One of these new conceptualisations is represented by the notion of ‘flexicurity’, which is depicted to be the new European proposal for the fight against social vulnerability within the national social models in Europe, as will be exposed in the following chapter.

Chapter II.

Flexicurity policies: the European answer to the new challenges of employment

2.1 Introduction

Following the change of paradigm and the new conceptualizations at the basis of the ESM, the concept of flexicurity has been proposed by the European institutions in the 2000s as the ideal solution for facing the challenges of the new century. The concept of flexicurity is used to designate an original political strategy for the management of employment and social protection policies, which intends to provide flexibility for employers and security for workers. It aims to promote social cohesion, high levels of competitiveness and economic growth simultaneously.

The introduction of the concept of flexicurity within the political and scientific field has contributed to the production of new interpretative frameworks through which dealing with current social issues, like social vulnerability. In this sense, flexicurity contributes to raise alternative meanings to economic and social problems. Indeed, it tries to reconcile what has been considered so far irreconcilable by creating “win-win” relations between former adversaries, namely employees and employers. This is due to the fact that its definition is open to several interpretations, so that many different interests and considerations may co-exist in the same concept (Barbier, 2007). This makes it gains support of diverse social actors without the risk of arousing conflicts. On the one hand, even if with some skepticism, the European trade union and the political left perceived ‘flexicurity’ as a chance to revitalise the Lisbon Strategy and give social security, lifelong learning and active labour market policies more attention within the European agenda; on the other hand, the political right and European employers’ organisations perceived ‘flexicurity’ as an opportunity to introduce less stringent hiring and firing rules, thanks to various forms of employment security. Flexicurity, which is currently occupying a central place in the European and national debates, has become thus a “political celebrity” (Jørgensen & Madsen 2007) and “one of the most fashionable elements of the European political discourse” (Keune and Jepsen, 2007: 5). The notion of flexicurity do not provide a specific model of intervention in the labour market, rather it is an analytical and conceptual framework with which to discuss economic and social problems. This analytical framework, which is characterised by deep paradoxes (Crespo and Serrano, 2007), is

highly influenced by the variety of actors participating in the debate promoted by European institutions. This leads to a situation in which the flexicurity concept has been widely accepted, while a struggle takes place among actors trying to impose their favourite interpretation. The need to balance different powers and points of view at European and national level can partly explain the ambiguous nature of flexicurity (Serrano, 2009a). It is this peculiar nature of the flexicurity concept that makes it possible for actors with widely different positions on employment and social policies (Commission, Council, Parliament, European Trade Union Confederation, BusinessEurope) to acknowledge its importance in coping labour market problems in Europe (Serrano and Keune, 2014).

In order to face labour market problems, other proposals flanked that of flexicurity. One of these was the theory of transitional labour markets (TLM) (Schmid 1995), which conceptualized a systematic management of social risks and transitions – defined as sequences in a personal and professional career (Schmid and Gazier, 2002) – in and out of the labour market. Transitional labour markets can be described as “legitimate and negotiated sets of mobility options supported by institutionalised ‘social bridges’ between various statuses of employment or between employment (market work) and unpaid work over the life course” (Schmid, 2008: vii). Each transition in a person’s life course (i.e. from school to work, from part-time to full-time work, from dependent employment to self-employment) may bring opportunities and adverse consequences, which makes it risky. Thus, the theory suggests an institutionalization of transitions and risks through generous benefits during the transitional phases, aiming at social integration and full employment. Both the TLM and the flexicurity proposals acted in opposition to a neo-liberal perspective that fostered flexibility as a solution to market problems (Auer and Gazier, 2008) and, partly, in convergence with the capabilities approach (Gazier and Gautie, 2011). However, the concept of flexicurity resulted more attractive to policy-makers than other proposals (Wilthagen, 1998) and was later included in the European agenda⁷.

The Commission’s *Employment in Europe* 2006 Report analyses carefully the problems related to employment and security and outlines a vision of flexicurity based on five elements (European Commission, 2006b): 1. the availability of contractual arrangements, providing adequate flexibility for both workers and employers to shape their relationship according to their needs; 2. active labour market policies, which should effectively support transitions between jobs, as well as from unemployment and inactivity to jobs (activation); 3. lifelong learning systems to enable workers to remain employable throughout their careers; 4. modern social security systems that ensure that all workers are adequately supported during the periods outside the labour market, facilitating labour

⁷ For a detailed description of the concept of flexicurity within the European institutions, see Herráiz Martín, 2007.

market mobility and transition; 5. substantial involvement of social partners for achieving a greater consensus on policies. These five elements serve to establish the vision of a labour market in which flexibility for employers is provided by frequent transitions of workers between jobs and where security for workers stems from employability and social protection support in periods out of work. Moreover, dismissal protection is increasingly considered as hindering flexibility. The Commission places the emphasis on adaptability and mobility through the use of non-standard types of employments, devaluing at the same time the importance of employment protection. Indeed, according to the Employment Commissioner Špidla, policies have to be geared more to the protection of people than to the protection of jobs. Social actors, namely public authorities and social partners, have a crucial role in assessing and implementing these policies.

An important turning point in the development of the concept occurred in November 2007, when the European Parliament approved a resolution entitled “Common Principles of Flexicurity” in response to the Commission Communication “Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity”, published in June 2007. Then, in December 2007, the Council adopted eight common principles of flexicurity, such as: 1. Flexicurity is designed to implement the main principles of the Lisbon Strategy. 2. Flexicurity, in addition to being committed to life-long learning, active labour market policies and a modern social welfare system, acknowledges the need for flexible contractual arrangements. 3. Flexicurity needs to adapt to the different circumstances in each Member State. 4. Flexicurity supports open and inclusive labour markets which help to reintroduce inactive employees back into employment. 5. Flexicurity concerns the smooth transition between jobs by constantly up-grading employees’ skills and providing the necessary social protection in transition periods. 6. Flexicurity should promote both gender equality and work–life balance. 7. Flexicurity needs the support of social partners. 8. Flexicurity needs to involve a cost-effective distribution of resources that public budgets can sustain.

Following the Council's request, in February 2008 the Commission underlined its commitment to flexicurity, by launching the “Mission for Flexicurity”. The Mission’s objective was to visit a few Member States and discuss in depth the development of the national pathways based on the Common Principles of Flexicurity. In December 2008, the Commission presented the Mission report, outlining ways in which the principles could be best implemented, considering the specific features of each Member State. The mission was headed by Vladimir Špidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunity. A progress report and a final Mission Report were presented in 2008. From the end of 2008 until 2010, member states reported on the implementation of their national pathways to flexicurity in the framework of the National Reform Programmes. In their report of the mission for flexicurity Vladimir Špidla and Gerard Larcher

stated that “Even though all labour markets in Europe are faced with the similar challenges, the implementation of flexicurity can only be specific, taking into account national and regional characteristics”, and added: “For this reason, the approach adopted does not consist of a single model but stresses the importance of a number of “Common principles of flexicurity”, relating in particular to the reduction of segmentation in the labour market, the need for a climate of trust with the social partners, and the search for the balance between the rights and responsibilities of employers, workers, job-seekers and the authorities” (2008: 3). The Commission fostered the concept of flexicurity as a solution to European economic and social problems. Therefore, it enforced the need for the member states to implement the flexicurity strategy. However, it can be noticed that while formally the Commission argued that each country should have implemented its own flexicurity policy, shaping it according to the national context, it strongly promoted the particular version of flexicurity that it proposed. As a consequence, the European employment policy run the risk of being uniformed to this version of flexicurity (Keune and Jepsen, 2007).

In this chapter we will discuss the rise of flexicurity in Europe, where a consensus has emerged concerning the importance of a new political strategy to solve labour market problems at the European and national level. In the first section, a brief account of the origins of the flexicurity concept will be provided. Some different definitions of the concept will be described through the observation of two European Commission’s documents (“Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and better jobs through flexibility and security” (COM, 2007c) and “Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs 2008-10” (COM (2007b) 803final)). Moreover, the apparent balance between the notions of flexibility and security that the concept of flexicurity embraces will be questioned. Then, the pivotal role of the concept in re-defining the relationships between employers and employees as well as between the individual and the State will be considered. Finally, the influence of the diversity of employment regimes on the features of the flexicurity model will be observed. The last section will offer some reflections concerning limits and potentiality of the flexicurity concept.

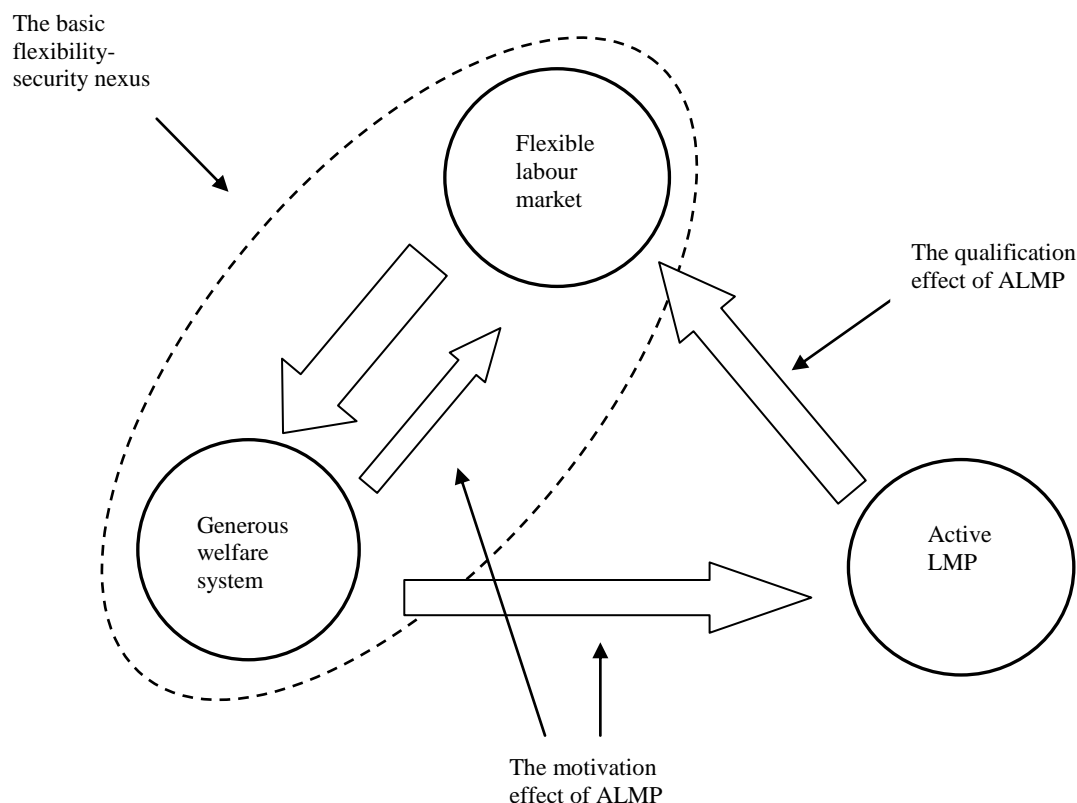
2.2 The origin of the concept

The concept of flexicurity was introduced in 1995 by the Dutch sociologist Hans Adriaansens, who defined it as a shift from job security (certainty of holding the same occupation with the same employer) towards employment security (certainty of remaining in work but not necessarily with the same employer). He suggested compensating for the decline in job security by improving employment opportunities and social security (Philips and Eamets, 2007). The concept originated in

the context of the preparation of the Dutch Flexibility and Security Act and the Act concerning the Allocation of Workers via Intermediaries (Wilthagen and Tros 2004; van Oorschot 2004). They aimed to reconcile the interests of employers and workers, strengthening both competitiveness and protection (Keune and Jepsen, 2007). The roots of flexicurity within the academic research can be traced to the mid- 1990s in the Netherlands. Ton Wilthagen and his colleagues investigated the Dutch policy in order to identify some general features of flexicurity strategies (e.g. Wilthagen 1998, 2002; Muffels et al. 2002). Besides, the notion of flexicurity was widely developed by some researchers in Denmark (Madsen 2002, 2003; Breedgart et al. 2005), since the specific characteristics of the Danish labour market resulted to be well represented in this concept (Breedgart, 2010; Bredgaard et al., 2008).

In Denmark the flexicurity concept really took off in the beginning of 2000s. The first explicit reference to a distinctive ‘Danish model’ characterised by a special balance between flexibility and security can be found in a publication of the Danish Ministry of Labour in 1999. But it is only since around 2004 that flexicurity becomes part of the political vocabulary. In particular, the Danish labour market model refers to a combination of “well-managed macroeconomic steering, labour market reforms, high flexibility, a well-educated workforce and well-functioning tripartite cooperation based on social and political consensus” (Bredgaard and Larsen, 2006: 9). It can be synthesised by 1. flexibility in the employment relationships and high level of mobility; 2. a generous unemployment benefit system and 3. a labour market policy of "activation" that is the result of a shift away from passive benefits towards active labour market programmes and implies a much more active role of the unemployed in seeking a job (Danish Ministry of Labour 1999). Altogether, these elements make up the three corners of the Danish ‘golden triangle’ (Fig. 2), the popular model often used to describe the success of the country in facing unemployment and income insecurity (Madsen, 2003; 2004; 2006).

Figure 2. The Danish 'golden triangle'



Source: Madsen, 2006

As shown by the figure, the model combines high mobility between jobs with a comprehensive social safety net for the unemployed and active labour market policies. The arrows between the angles of the triangle hint at flows of people. The social security system in the form of unemployment benefits and social assistance for the unemployed together with the highly flexible labour market form the main axis of the model, while the active labour market policy help individuals to find employment. The figure also illustrates two of the most important effects of the connection between the elements. On the one hand, as a result of the active labour market measures, the skills of job-seekers (e.g. training and education) are upgraded, which improves their chances of obtaining employment. On the other hand, the measures can have a motivational effect in that unemployed persons may intensify their job search, in the case that they attribute to activation a negative connotation. The image of the triangle represents the success of the Danish employment system, due to its unique combination that supports the ongoing transformations of labour markets (Madsen, 2003, 2004, 2006).

The 'golden triangle' depicts Denmark as a "hybrid" employment system, which embeds the flexibility of a liberal labour market as well as the social protection and active labour market policy

of Nordic countries (Madsen, 2003; Madsen, 2006; Bredgaard, Larsen and Madsen, 2005). Employers could hire and fire employees easily because of relatively low levels of employment protection regulation, but at the same time relatively high benefits were available for those who had lost their jobs, together with active labour market policy (especially retraining). This was supposed to allow structural adjustment while preventing unemployment rate to arise. In particular, the costs of protecting employees were covered to a large extent by the State through taxes paid by citizens and not by firms. However, since 1994, the individuals' right to benefits during the period of unemployment started becoming increasingly bonded to the participation in training programmes and other active labour market measures. Collective agreements played a key role in ensuring that the system worked, thanks to the fact that the labour unions were relatively strong and had high membership rates. They thus negotiated labour market policies with employers' organizations and both parties aimed to reach an agreement, while the State intervened in case a consensus was not possible. Thus, flexicurity foresaw the approval of the three parties: the State, the employers and the employees (Madsen, 2003).

The "golden triangle" has become an alternative to the Dutch flexicurity model. In more detail, the Danish flexicurity model, rather than being concerned with atypical types of employments, builds on 1) flexible standard employment, resulting from low employment protection; 2) extensive unemployment benefits providing income security to the unemployed; and 3) active labour market policies aimed at skill upgrading and activation of the unemployed. What the models share is the importance of social dialogue as a means to construct flexicurity policies (Keune and Jepsen, 2007). The two cases have aroused a general interest in flexicurity within the academic community as well as among policy-makers.—In particular, the Danish experience has been at the center of the political and scientific debates and Denmark has been proposed as a model to follow. This interest stems for a large measure from the fact that the country has managed to improve its labour market situation remarkably since the mid-1990s, reducing unemployment rates to the lowest and increasing employment rates to the highest levels in Europe. Therefore, the flexicurity model of Denmark has often been used also by the ILO and the OECD as an example of good practice for the successful labour market development (Bredgaard, 2010; Auer 2000; Auer & Cazes 2003; OECD 2004). Then 'flexicurity' has turned into a buzzword for the political circles in Europe and considered part of the agenda for the future (Jørgensen and Madsen, 2007). Nonetheless, the interest for the concept has weakened after the recent financial crisis (Bredgaard, 2010) and the question of its survival has become a matter of reflection (Jørgensen, 2010).

2.3 Flexicurity: a new word for new concepts and relations

2.3.1 The definition

The concept of flexicurity has been straightforward by the European institutions to enhance more flexibility in the labour markets and to provide security for the employees. The idea of flexicurity has roots in the past. As Keune (2008) underlines, a similar logic was already present in the work of Gosta Rehn (1988). The Rehn model argued that high flexibility and mobility of workers combined with full employment ensured flexibility to enterprises and high levels of security to workers. This model also stated that unemployed people should be provided with active and passive labour market policies to stabilize their income situation and enable them to find new jobs. Several definitions have been formulated, so that there is no universal agreement on the meaning of the concept. In particular, the notion of ‘flexicurity’ is presented by the European Commission as “a combination of flexibility and security in working arrangements” (2007c: 7). In fact, the Commission defines it as:

“an integrated strategy to enhance, at the same time, flexibility and security in the labour market” (European Commission, 2007c: 10).

and adds that:

“Flexicurity is about striking the right balance between flexible job arrangements and secure transitions between jobs so that more and better jobs can be created. The idea is that flexibility and security should not be seen as opposites but as complementary” (European Commission, 2007c:11).

One of the most widely used definitions comes from Wilthagen and Rogowski, who designate flexicurity as “a policy strategy that attempts, synchronically and in a coordinated way, to enhance the flexibility of labour markets, the work organization and labour relations on the one hand, and to enhance security – employment security and social security – notably for weaker groups in and outside the labour market on the other hand” (Wilthagen and Rogowski 2002: 250). Moreover, according to Eamets and Paas (2007), flexicurity is defined as an increasing labour market mobility – job flows, functional and occupational mobility, geographical mobility, and flexible working time arrangements – with opportunities to obtain a new job and not to suffer income lost. This means that

unemployed people should receive sufficient training and active labour market policy support in order to secure a new job quickly. Furthermore, unemployment benefits should be sufficient to cover major income losses when people are searching for new jobs. According to some authors and politicians, the duration of the payment of unemployment benefit should be relatively short, so that people will not lose motivation to seek new jobs. Flexicurity can be considered thus the current European answer to problems related to economic and social vulnerability in Europe, as we can read in the following text:

“Flexicurity [...] promotes a combination of flexible labour markets and adequate security. Flexicurity can also provide an answer to the EU's dilemma on how to maintain and improve competitiveness whilst reinforcing the European social model” (European Commission, 2007c: 7).

In this sense, it is important to bear in mind the scope of flexicurity, which came to be one of the several building blocks in the construction of a new European socio-economic configuration. Indeed, it serves to accomplish the long term goals proposed by the Lisbon strategy:

“The rationale for an integrated flexicurity approach is the need to achieve the objectives of the renewed Lisbon Strategy, in particular more and better jobs, and at the same time to modernise the European social models” (European Commission, 2007c: 10).

However, the kind of configuration the Lisbon strategy proposes results to be oriented towards an uneven equilibrium between the social and the economic dimensions. Such imbalance is not only detectable in the documents of the EC, but is also hidden in the linguistic constitution of the concept of flexicurity itself, as we are going to deepen in the successive paragraph.

2.3.2 Imbalances within the concept of flexicurity

The notions of flexibility and security have traditionally taken conflicting and competing semantic spaces, which have historically allowed articulating political antagonisms between employer's demands and employee's requests. In the case of the concept of flexicurity, this traditional opposition has been questioned, thanks to the use of a linguistic exercise. Indeed, observing the word flexicurity, we can notice that the 'root' or 'lexeme' is determined by the

notion of ‘flexibility’. It is important to bear in mind that the ‘lexeme’ is the unvaried part of a word, which conveys the essence of the concept. By contrast, the ‘morpheme’, such as the part of the word that gives a hint to the root, is constituted by the notion of ‘guridad’. In this sense, the notion of flexicurity naturalizes the need for flexible organizations, people and relationships, fostering the aspect of the flexibility over that of security (Fernández and Serrano, 2014).

The imbalance between the notions of flexibility and security within the concept of flexicurity appears again in the statements made by the European Commission, when describing the four policy components of flexicurity:

- *Flexible and reliable contractual arrangements*, which have to take into account both the perspective of the employer and the employee, as well as the view of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’. This has to be achieved through modern labour laws, collective agreements and work organisation.
- *Comprehensive lifelong learning (LLL) strategies* to ensure the ongoing employability and adaptability of workers, with special attention to the most vulnerable workers.
- *Effective active labour market policies (ALMP)* to help people to cope with rapid change, reducing the periods of unemployment and making transitions between jobs easier.
- *Modern social security systems* that provide adequate income support and facilitate mobility within the labour market. This includes broad coverage of social protection to assist people to combine work with personal life (European Commission, 2007c: 12).

By analysing these four basic points, which are presented as the overall expression of the flexicurity strategy, two kinds of comments can be made. The first concerns the fact that three out of four components of the flexicurity concept refers to the flexibility dimension, such as “flexible and reliable contractual arrangements”, “comprehensive lifelong learning strategies” and “effective active labour market policies”. By contrast, only one of the components can be included in the dimension of security, such as “modern social security systems”. Furthermore, we can observe that the content of the four components mainly serves the flexibility of labour markets through the adaptability of workers to external fluctuations and transformations. Again the dimension of flexibility prevails on that of security. We will now observe in more detail the four components, focusing on some extracts of the EC documents. In particular, regarding the first component, the European Commission refers to the agreements of both employers and employee’s interests on reliable and flexible arrangements. It seems therefore essential to ‘modernize’ laws to suit the changing context and the demands of the ‘market’. The second component is oriented to ensure the

adaptability and employability of the worker through the learning of new skills throughout life (Fernández and Serrano, 2014):

“Security [...] is more than just the security to maintain one's job: it is about equipping people with the skills that enable them to progress in their working lives, and helping them find new employment. It is also about adequate unemployment benefits to facilitate transitions. Finally, it encompasses training opportunities for all workers, especially the low skilled and older workers” (European Commission, 2007c: 10).

“Workers, if they are to remain and progress in work and be prepared for transition and changing labour markets, need to accumulate and renew skills regularly” (COM (2007b) 803 final: 31)

As we can read in the last text, the words “accumulate”, “renew” and “regularly” hint to an ongoing effort by the worker of constructing and gathering knowledge to adapt to the sudden changes of the labour market, which also makes competences useless in a short time. The third component, namely “effective active labour market policies”, is another clear point of reference to flexibility. In this case, these policies can be viewed as a kind of “re-socialization” of individuals in the new employment landscape, characterized by changes and transitions (Fernández and Serrano, 2014; Martín, 2013). The last component, the only one that seems to refer to the dimension of security, can be reconsidered now in the light of the previous components. Its objective is indeed that of facilitating labour market mobility, supporting the workforce during the passage from one job to another, when damaging circumstances and social vulnerability are more likely to take place. It is thus assumed that the worker will no longer have the same job for their entire life. Therefore, according to the new semantic connotation of ‘security’, stability will depend on his/her ability to move from one job to another. Reporting the similitude of Fernández Rodríguez et al., “‘security’ cannot be likened to a good anchor when there is a storm, but rather to a good oar” (2012: 155).

“Individuals increasingly need employment security rather than job security, as fewer have the same job for life” (European Commission, 2007c: 8).

In this sentence, the shift from job security to employment security is made explicit, so that the former notion soon becomes obsolete. Indeed, the traditional meaning of security in the world of work, represented by the maintenance of the same workplace (job security) is now replaced by a

confident insurance during the constant transitions from one job to another (employment security) (Wilthagen and Tros, 2004).

The result is the confusion of the notions of flexibility and security, whereas before they were substantially perceived as opposites (Hyman, 2005). The idea of a new notion of security, that will be complementary to that of flexibility, is spread out. In this sense, security is not longer contrary to flexibility, but the former is planned to be the basis for the latter. Security is indeed considered as a guarantee provided by the State in the periods of unemployment in the form of public benefits and trainings for the acquisition and upgrading of skills with the aim of facilitating life transitions (from school to work, from work to unemployment, from inactivity to work, from work to retirement) (European Commission, 2007c). ‘Flexibility’ becomes thus a more relevant element than ‘security’, which has been modified in order to be the ‘ideal partner’ of the former (Tovar Martínez and Revilla Castro, 2012: 253). The concept of ‘security’ is not longer strictly tied to the old notion of ‘social protection’ stemming from the negotiation among different stakeholder, rather it refers now to the improvement of individual employability that is supposed to make unemployed to increase job opportunities. This leads to think at an imbalanced relationship between the two notions that constitute the concept of ‘flexicurity’.

On the basis of the previous observations, we can underline that the concept of flexicurity tends to be market-oriented in the sense that it encourages flexibility in favour of labour market and employers at the expense of security for the general society, resulting detrimental to workers. Moreover, the European Commission seems committed to actively changing the meaning of ‘security’ into a notion that is suitable to ‘flexibility’, which instead results to be the unvaried and naturalized element of the ‘flexicurity’ proposal (Tovar Martínez and Revilla Castro, 2012). Therefore, it would be necessary to pay attention to the security dimension; otherwise flexicurity runs the risk of becoming a mere excuse to dismantle labour market protection.

2.3.3 The re-definition of employment relations

The introduction of the concept of flexicurity brings the re-definition of important relationships within the society, marking substantial differences in comparison to the past. This re-definition concerns especially the dialectical relationship between employers and employees as well as the relationship among individuals, the State and the market. The next section will approach the re-definition of relationships focusing on the texts in which the concept of flexicurity appears.

- e) The dialectical relationship between workers and employers.

With regard to the relationship between employees and employers, it is possible to notice a subversion of the traditional contrast between these actors. In fact, workers and employers are now treated as homogeneous groups (Keune and Burroni, 2011). In the past, they were assumed to be oriented towards different and conflicting interests, where the achievement of goals for one of them meant some kind of loss for the other. Moreover, the opposite positions of these actors were not considered on the same level. Indeed, the relationship between workers and employees was viewed uneven and imbalanced, where the former were forced to undergo the will and decisions of the latter. This antagonism was based on the asymmetry and inequality in the socio-economic status of workers and employers. Within the overall framework of transformations, the concept of flexicurity questions and re-defines the meaning of this antagonism, depicting the workers and employers in the same position and allowing the coexistence of different interests. Their interests appear thus no longer as mutually exclusive, but closely linked each other (Fernández and Serrano, 2014), as can be read in the following quotation:

“If Europe wants to strengthen its economy and create jobs, it has to be in the forefront of these developments [...]. This is a continuous process, affecting employers and workers alike” (European Commission, 2007c: 7).

“To enhance access to employment for men and women of all ages, raise productivity levels, innovation and quality at work, the EU needs higher and more effective investment in human capital and lifelong learning in line with the flexicurity concept for the benefit of individuals, enterprises, the economy and society”(COM (2007b) 803 final: 31).

The traditional view of the conflict between workers and employers, which is far from conciliating the two categories of actors, is highly criticized and forced to remain in the background:

“Too frequently, policies aim to increase either flexibility for enterprises or security for workers; as a result, they neutralise or contradict each other” (European Commission, 2007c: 10).

According to the new view proposed by the European institutions, employers and employees face problems, whose solution can be found only through the joint effort of both parts, as we can read in these extracts referred to flexicurity:

“It also aims at helping employees and employers alike to fully reap the opportunities presented by globalisation” (European Commission, 2007c: 10).

“Thus, enterprises and workers can both benefit from flexibility and from security, e.g. from better work organisation, from the upward mobility resulting from increased skills, from investment in training that pay off for enterprises while helping workers adapt to and accept change” (European Commission, 2007c: 10).

Moreover, we can highlight that the way to present the difficulties faced by both workers and employers as well as the strategies to solve them are all addressed towards a unique path, that of flexicurity. This means flexibility and adaptation of people on the basis of the market’s needs and security during the transitional phases:

“Adaptation requires a more flexible labour market combined with levels of security that address simultaneously the new needs of employers and employees” (European Commission, 2007c: 8).

“The European Council called on the Member States ‘to develop more systematically in the National Reform Programmes comprehensive policy strategies to improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises” (European Commission, 2007c: 8).

In these last two texts, the use of the adverbs ‘systematically’ and ‘simultaneously’ designating how the public action ideally addresses the ‘needs of employers and employees’ is strongly representative of the dissolution of the employer-employee opposition (Fernández and Serrano, 2014). In fact, as expressed in the extract, they clearly “share the same boat, and they are the object and subject of similar efforts” (Fernández Rodríguez et al., 2012: 155). Furthermore, the notions of ‘adaptability’ and ‘adaptation’ appear to claim the homogenization of the situation faced by both entrepreneurs and workers, ignoring the different positions and the power relations between them. This is also evident in the successive extracts, where activation policies are assumed to be effective wherever employment protection is weakened:

“EU Member States have recognised that they need to develop innovative policies to help people stay in employment whilst ensuring that companies remain competitive on the global stage” (European Commission, 2007c: 7).

“Spending on active labour market policies is associated with lower aggregate unemployment. The effectiveness of active labour market policies is positively related to less strict EPL” (European Commission, 2007c: 14).

In the end, although flexicurity tries to promote win-win situations where all the players have positive benefits (Wilthagen, 2007: 4), the negative perspective on employment – and more generally on protection and regulation – suggests that the new panorama would favour the needs of the market. By contrast, workers and job-seekers are supposed to adapt to the needs of the market and are now considered the only responsible of their situation, according to an individualizing view of the labour relationships (Tovar Martínez and Revilla Castro, 2012).

- f) The relationship between the individual and the state and its connection to the market.

The introduction of flexicurity, especially in matters of active labour market policies, fosters the representation of the citizen as someone who has to take care of him/herself, which produces the transformation of the relationship between the state and the individual. The concern for the dependency to state's benefits leads to a tightening of requirements for the access to public help. The relationship between the state and individuals become thus more connected to the personal commitment, which also requires an important action of control by the state. In particular, the strengthening of the monitoring of activities in the management and implementation of employment policies indicates the increasing centrality of the moral component in the new paradigm of activation, as well as the shift of responsibilities towards the individual. As the Guidelines 19 of the “Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs” (2008-2010) states:

“Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantage people, and the inactive through: [...] continual review of the incentives and disincentives resulting from the tax and benefit systems services, including the management and conditionality of benefits and a significant reduction of high marginal effective

tax rates, notably for those with low incomes, whilst ensuring adequate levels of social protection” (COM (2007b) 803 final: 29).

The meaning of citizenship is revised, insofar as it becomes something individuals have to gain with their attitudes and behaviours. This calls for a strong personal responsibility and internal attribution in comparison with the traditional assumptions at the basis of the welfare state and social security. In the old paradigm, social welfare was indeed considered a right of individuals by virtue of their citizenship. By contrast, in the new paradigm, the social construction of the citizen is changed. Citizenship, which previously allowed the benefit of labour laws that protected the worker from the market, has acquired an economic-connotation that bonds it to social integration (Saint Martin, 2001). Working becomes thus an unquestionable requirement for having access to citizenship. In this view, inactivity loses its legitimacy, while participation in the labour market turns a civil duty (Bonvin, 2004).

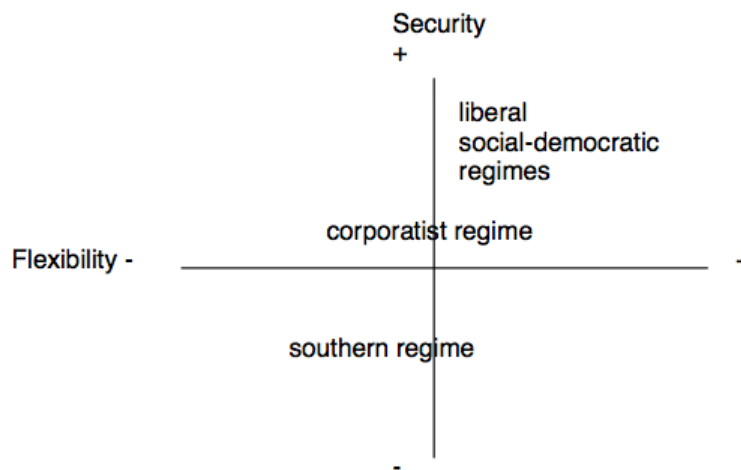
2.4 Flexi-curity and national models

The EC report “Employment in Europe 2006” clearly outlined that the Member States have to carry out an appropriate mix of policies which complements the flexibility and security of their labour markets. According to the “Common Principles of Flexicurity”, adopted by the Council of the European Union at the meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) held in Brussels on 5–6 December 2007, every Member State was allowed to carry out specific pathways to flexicurity. This permitted to take into account local characteristics and existing models of economic and social regimes. Indeed, numerous combinations of flexibility and security can be pursued because of the distinctive aspects of the European countries. No blueprint for flexicurity exists for all the Member States and reforms aimed at balancing flexibility and security need to be tailored to the national situation, which includes the political, economic, social and legal background as well as the prominence of collective bargaining that broadly depends of the country-specific historical framework. Also institutional complementarities influence the way nations apply the flexicurity agenda (Lehweß- Litzmann, R. 2014; Hall and Soskice, 2001). Consequently, different flexicurity models have emerged within the European Union.

The diverse national models and flexibility-security configurations have led to the attempt by several authors to identify typologies. In fact, the variety of social models, including welfare, employment or market regimes, is an important aspect for the exploration of the flexibility-security nexus. Muffels et al. (2002), for instance, have explored the relations between ‘employment

regimes' and performance indicators with respect to flexibility and security. They have distinguished different clusters of countries by using quantitative data in relation to the period 1994-1996 extracted by the European Community Household Panel (ECHP) as well as other indicators of flexibility and security. In the authors' view, the definition of 'flexibility' refers to the chance for transitions within the labour market amongst different employment statuses, whereas the notion of 'work security' concerns the chance of transitions from being out of work into part-time work and permanent work as well as the chance of transitions from being in employment into unemployment. This study highlights four clusters with different combinations of flexibility and security (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Employment regimes and the flexibility-security nexus



Source: Wilthagen, 2004, based on Muffels et al. 2002.

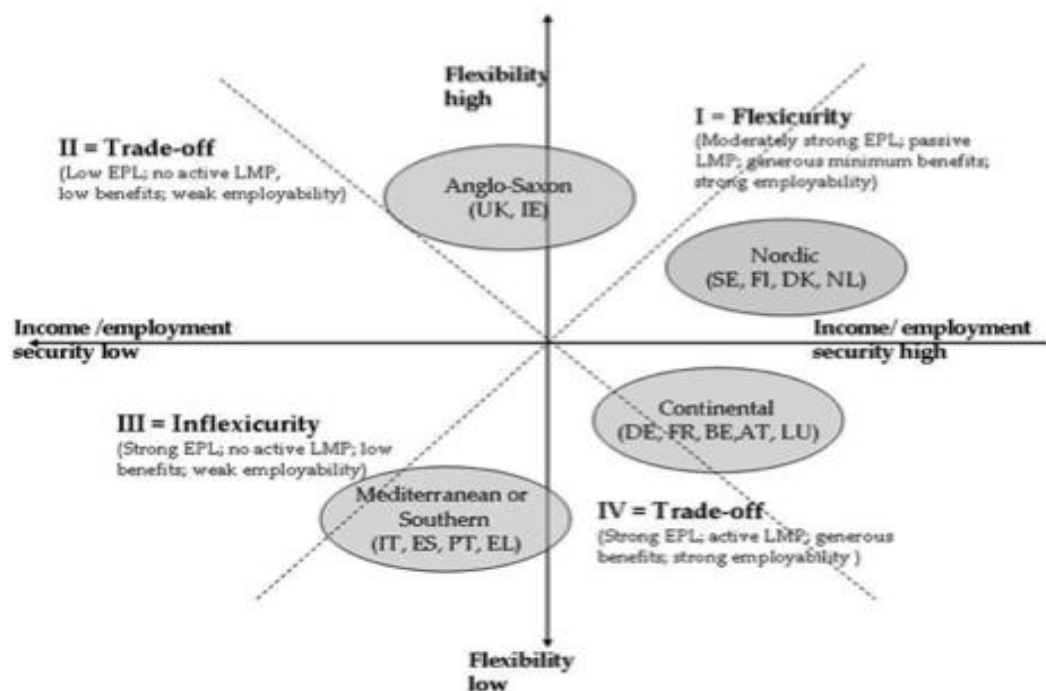
As shown in the picture, the liberal regime is prominent in mixing high levels of mobility of the workforce and flexibility with low levels of work security. The levels of flexibility are slightly higher in comparison to other regimes, like the corporatist or social-democratic regimes. In particular, the social-democratic system is characterised by an elevated level of work security but a lower level of labour market mobility in comparison to the liberal regime. According to Muffels et al. (2002), these regimes do not show a sharp distinction among each other, since the liberal regime demonstrates also some work security and social-democratic regime has some labour mobility and flexibility. In addition, the authors found that the Southern regime exhibits diverse features from the other regimes in relation to flexibility and work security. Indeed, the Southern regime performs badly in both dimensions. Even though the number of flexible jobs is conspicuous, the probability

of gaining a permanent work is low in the South, while the probability of a downward mobility into unemployment is higher. This study, which was presented by Wilthagen to a conference organized within the framework of the Dutch EU presidency (2004), suggests that different trade-offs exist within specific regimes, stemming from national institutions and policies.

Tangian (2005a,b) analyses the trade-off between flexibility and security, identifying four models: the *flexicure model*, where high flexibility and high security co-exist, which includes Denmark and Finland; the *inflexicure model*, with low flexibility and high security, which includes Sweden and the Netherlands; the *flex-insecure model*, with high flexibility and low security, which refers to the United Kingdom; and finally, the *inflex-insecure model*, where high levels of employment protection are accompanied by low levels of security. This last model embodies Spain, Portugal and Czech Republic (Tangian, 2009). The author highlights that Italy and Spain are currently oriented towards the *flexinsecurity model*, underlining the inability of both countries to link security to new forms of flexibility. According to Tangian's analysis (2004), Italy shows one of the highest levels of "norm-security" (indicating the security of permanent full-time workers), whereas in Spain the levels are much lower. Also, Spain displays higher levels of "flexicurity" than Italy (indicating security of fixed-term full time workers and permanent part-time workers) and one of the lowest levels of "all security" (indicating the security of all the groups mentioned so far).

Muffels and Luijkx (2008) have carried out another analysis of national models in relation to flexibility and security. According to their definitions in economic terms, flexicurity concerns the capacity of the labour market to provide opportunities for workers and entrepreneurs, whereas security refers to the possibility of remaining in employment, even if not necessarily in the same job. Starting from these definitions, the authors observe European countries on the basis of two indicators, namely the levels of mobility and employment security. In their study, they take into account welfare regimes, defining them as a "'regulatory mix' of institutions, laws and policies" (2008: 224) that varies among countries on the basis of their historical circumstances and socio-economic situation. Some of the most relevant factors that are embedded in the regimes are the generosity of the benefits, the EPL, industrial relations, legislation of salaries and ALMP. The results of their analysis is represented in the following picture (Fig. 4):

Figure 4. The location of welfare regimes in the theoretical relationship between flexibility and income/employment security⁸



Source: Muffels and Luijkx (2008)

In this classification the UK and Ireland have been put into the Anglo-Saxon cluster, despite the fact that the authors admit that Ireland does not fully fit into this regime. The Continental cluster contains countries such as Germany, France, Belgium, Austria and Luxembourg. The Netherlands, Denmark and Finland are included in the Nordic cluster. Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy belong to a distinct cluster. The Anglo-Saxon regime appears to be strong on the dimension of flexibility; it exhibits low employment protection legislation (EPL) levels and a strong orientation to 'employability'. However, the regime is weak in terms of employment security, with low benefits provided by the State and scarce ALM policies. The Continental regime performs more poorly in terms of labour market flexibility in comparison to the Anglo-Saxon countries, due to a strict EPL, but it is quite good in terms of income and employment security because of generous benefits, a strong 'employability' orientation and a wide presence of active labour market policies. The Nordic regime is likely to achieve moderate levels of flexibility or mobility, but shows a marked trend towards generous benefits, intermediate levels of employment protection and indulgence towards flexible contracts. Finally, the Southern regime seems to mix a low level of flexibility through strict

⁸ The lines through the origin indicates the European averages in terms of the attained levels of flexibility and security.

EPL and indulgence towards flexible contracts with low levels of income and employment security due to low benefits. Moreover, it reveals weak ‘employability’ efforts and scarce passive labour market policies. In spite of the fact that no country exhibits a perfect balance between flexibility and security (flexicurity), Nordic and Anglo-Saxon regimes are near to such balance, while Continental and Southern tends to show a negative relation between the two, which means that a growth of flexibility leads to a decrease of security and vice-versa.

Observing the contribution of the previous authors, we can comprehend that the attempt of implementing the European proposal of ‘flexicurity’ cannot produce the same results in each country. Therefore, the classifications of national models in relation to flexibility and security give us a better idea about the different situations the member states face and the diverse extension of social vulnerability that can arise all over Europe.

2.5 Concluding remarks

The scope of the flexicurity strategy is to combine employment and income security with flexibility in work arrangements, organisation and relations. This strategy aims to overcome the traditional trade-off between flexibility and security, where the former is seen to be related to employer’s interests and the latter to employee’s concerns. In a flexicurity strategy, flexibility and security must not be viewed as conflicting aspects, but as mutually supportive components of a well-functioning labour market. This is also expressed at a semantic level. In fact, the mix within the same concept of the notions of ‘flexibility’ and ‘security’ – that evoke two opposing labour regulation – makes the two antagonistic meanings co-exist, turning the conflict apparent. The new word “flexicurity” thus provides the possibility of thinking of the two notions as joined to each other and legitimates their integration into the same concept. Nevertheless, the notion of ‘flexibility’ still prevails, as shown in the lexeme (“flexi-”), while the morpheme ‘security’ confers only a different semantic orientation (“-curity”). The linguistic combination of opposite meanings can result in confusion and unclearness of opinions and interests. However, the ambiguity and vagueness of the concept also allows the variation of the meaning depending on the stakeholders that employ it. At the same time, this produces very different views on how to translate the abstract concept of flexicurity into policy, leading to a wide variety of implementations at the country level. In fact, the interpretations of the concept must be combined with the peculiar features of the national social models. In this regard, different typologies of social models have been detected looking at the flexibility-security configuration. Many of these identify Nordic countries as a good example of flexicurity and Southern countries as a poor example. The balance between flexibility

and security that stems from specific welfare and employment regimes in each country has important consequences in terms of social vulnerability. Nevertheless, the flexicurity strategy proposed by the European institutions seems ignore an important element, namely the possibility for individuals to choose between flexibility and security in the construction of their own life. The aspect of the freedom has to be re-introduced. This is the reason why the thesis will evaluate the orientation of policies to favouring the growth of opportunities for individuals according to what they value in the light of the capabilities approach. The approach will be presented in more detail throughout the next chapter.

Chapter III.

Fostering the Capabilities approach within employment and social policies

3.1 Introduction

The capabilities approach provides a new sight for the analysis and shaping of social and employment policies in Europe. It furnishes a reply to the neoliberal critiques to welfare state and labour legislation by combining economic and social goals. It was utilised in 1999 in the report on the transformations of work and labour law for the European Commission by Supiot, who proposed the concept of ‘capabilities’ as a solution to the opposition between ‘flexibility’ and ‘security’, insofar as social law would allow to manage individual instability and favour the integration of individuals into a flexible labour market (Deakin, 2005). The assumption that economic interests and social purposes can be conciliated brings the capabilities approach closer to the considerations of the flexicurity strategy. Nevertheless, a relevant difference between the two rests on the issue of freedom and on the role that possibility of choice plays in the definition of the flexibility and security trade-off (Zimmerman, 2014). In fact, the balance between flexibility and security cannot be established *a-priori*, as it was a universal formula, but has to stem from individual and social decisions. Freedom and possibility of choice are at the core of the capabilities approach and constitute its most original contribution. In fact, as Abbatecola et al. state, “Sen’s message is clear: the only ethically legitimate yardstick against which policies and collective action should be developed, implemented and evaluated, the only reference, is the extent of real freedoms” (2012: 4).

The Capabilities approach can be considered one of the most innovative theoretical proposals of the last decades. It was drawn by Amartya Sen (1985, 1992, 1999), who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1998. Subsequently other authors, like Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum & Glover 1995; Nussbaum & Sen 1993; Nussbaum 2003), contributed to developing this approach that emerges as a possible alternative to standard economic frameworks. Due to his disappointment to traditional theories of justice and measures of inequality and his agreement with Adam Smith’s (1976) analysis of “necessities” and living conditions, Karl Marx’s (1844) emphasis on freedom and emancipation (Clark, 2006) and Aristotle’s attention on *eudaimonia* and political distribution (Nussbaum, 1988; 1990), Sen proposes a new economic point of view based on human rights and the crucial role of institutions in fostering human development. Following the order of

relevance that Sen attributes to different aspects of his own thought, Ingrid Robeyns (2000) identifies the approach 1. as a “framework of thought” (2000: 3), which suggests a different way of thinking; 2. as a critique on other approaches to welfare application; and 3. as a useful formula for international comparisons of welfare systems. The approach leads to an important re-definition of several theoretical issues, such as liberty and freedom (Sen, 1983, 1992), living standards and development (Sen, 1983), justice and social ethics (Sen, 1982, 1985, 1990), gender divisions (Sen, 1985, 1990), and poverty (Sen, 1982, 1983, 1985). It also entails an alternative way to evaluate social well-being by focusing on personal situations (De Munck and Zimmermann, 2008).

The capabilities approach embraces the principle of a “life that is worthy of the dignity of the human being” (Nussbaum, 2000: 5) and, consequently, the assumption that individual’s well-being is not an instrumental device for achieving other goals (i.e. economic efficiency). In this sense, well-being can be analysed in relation to capabilities, defined by Sen as “a set of vectors of functionings, reflecting the person’s freedom to lead one type of a life or another” (Sen, 1992: 40). Thus, the individual’s capabilities set may constitute the relevant informational basis of the analysis on social vulnerability, which can be viewed as a “deprivation of capabilities”⁹. In fact, Sen’s approach can be used as an evaluative tool to assess individual’s substantive freedoms and the “person’s ability to do valuable acts and to reach valuable states of being” (1993: 30). In particular, the approach specifies an evaluative space within which comparisons of well-being can be fruitfully made. Nussbaum claims that “the capabilities in question should be pursued for each and every person, treating each as an end and none as a mere tool of the ends of others: thus [she] adopts a principle of each person’s capability, based on a principle of each person as an end” (2000: 5).

The Capability approach contributes to broadening the definition of economic development, which can be seen as a process of extending the real freedoms that people enjoy. Indeed, Sen’s proposal is that development should be evaluated in terms of “expansion of the ‘capabilities’ of people to lead the kind of lives they value – and have reason to value” (Sen, 1999: 18), which contrasts with other views that identify development with the growth of GDP or individual income. In Sen’s view, GDP and income are supposed to widen capabilities as means for increasing individuals’ well-being, but they cannot be considered as ultimate goals in themselves. Moreover, Sen questions the use of the GDP, considering it as an inadequate measure for comparing welfare states in different countries. Thus, he devises what could contribute instead to the creation of a new indicator to estimate national wealth based on the achievements in human development, the Human

⁹ The definition “deprivation of capabilities” was used first by Sen in order to conceptualize the notion of “social exclusion” (Sen, 2000). Later on, it served for operationalizing the concept of “poverty” in the attempt of monitoring human rights and equality (Burchardt and Vizard, 2011) as well as poverty and wealth (Arndt and Volkert, 2009) in developed countries.

Development Index (HDI). Sen's main difficulty is operationalizing capabilities in a single index, as the range of human capabilities can be extensive and their value varies among different individuals, social contexts and periods of time. However, the index, whose purpose was to focus the attention of policy-makers on human well-being as a measure of progress rather than on material outputs, had a great impact. Sen's approach served in the formulation of the human development paradigm and the elaboration of Human Development Reports by the United Nations Development Programme. The first Report – launched by Mahbub ul Haq in 1990 – aimed “to shift the focus of development economics from national income accounting to people centred policies” (Haq, 1995, quoted in Fukuda-Parr, 2003, p. 302).

The Capabilities approach was originally used to evaluate developing societies, but in recent years, it has been used for assessing economically advanced societies. In this regard, the approach has inspired the creation of CAPRIGHT¹⁰, a European research network dedicated to the analysis of social policies through the Capabilities approach, and the development of a research program aimed to investigate the potentiality of a “politics of capabilities” (Salais and Villeneuve, 2004). Nevertheless, the approach has entered not only the academic field, but also the political agenda at European and national level. In fact, the concept of capability has recently become relevant within the European Union in relation to the debate on European social and economic policies (Salais, 1999). The Supiot report “Transformation of Work and the Future of Labour Law” (2001) has widely favoured the spread of the concept.

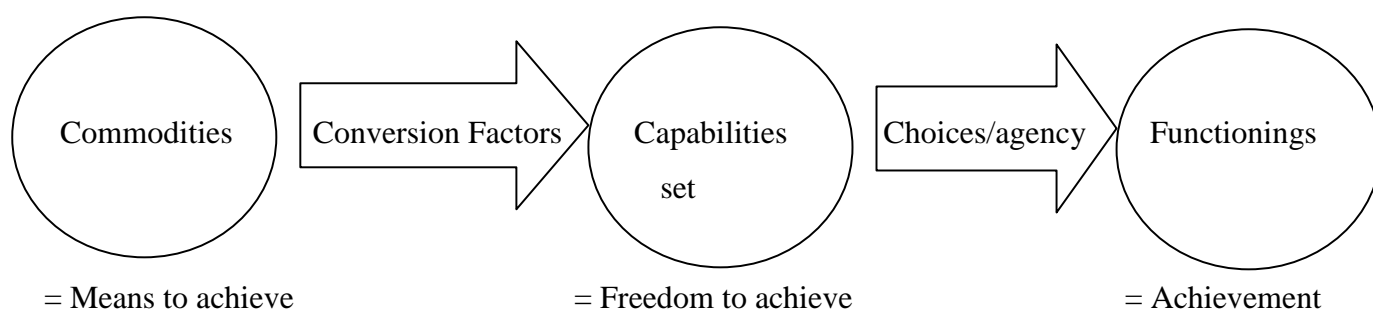
In this chapter, the conceptual cornerstones of the Capabilities approach will be drawn in detail, describing the significant contribution of the approach in comparison to others. A definition of social vulnerability in the light of the approach is also provided. We then move to delineate the relation with other key notions, which can easily be included in the discourse on capabilities, such as right, solidarity, or social justice. The borders of these concepts are often blurred, but it is important to bear in mind the connection between them. Later on, the spreading influence of the Capabilities approach within social sciences – and its use in the evaluation of social policies, in particular – will be considered, taking into account the normative framework to which it refers according to the specific context of analysis. Also, the application of Sen's approach to employment and welfare will be studied through a view of “work” as a valuable functioning and social protection as a mean to develop the life-project people value for themselves. Finally, some critiques carried out by different authors will be examined in order to investigate the limitations of the approach.

¹⁰ The title of the project is “Resources Rights and capabilities: In search of social foundations for Europe”. The project was funded by the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Community during the period 2007-2010.

3.2 The five conceptual stones of the capabilities and measurement questions

The Capabilities approach proposes five concepts on which its main assumptions are based: Commodities, Conversion Factors, Capabilities, Choices and Functionings. The potential transformation of commodities into functionings is a complex process (Figure 1), mediated by other variables that can be external (conversion factors) and internal (choices) to individuals. These variables contribute to individual diversity within society, which means that people possessing same commodities do not necessarily have same functionings.

Figure 5. The process from commodities to functionings



Source: The upper description of the figure is taken by Goerne's elaboration (2010); the lower description is taken by Robeyns's elaboration (2000).

As a starting point, commodities refer to the goods, services and resources to which people have access. They embody both material – money, properties, or, more extensively, any type of goods - and non-material aspects – skills and knowledge. However, commodities are mainly considered in terms of their characteristics that can be defined as their various desirable properties. As Sen states (1985) referring to Gorman (1956) and Lancaster (1966), these characteristics are fundamental in order to define their use and utility. An example often reported in the literature is that of food, which can be used to satisfy hunger, to have eating pleasure and to gladden social occasions.

The capability set concerns the world of possibilities and reflects the freedom to lead different types of life; in particular, they correspond to the potentialities people have and can develop. Nevertheless, only a few capabilities of the complete set will be realised, and only a minority of individuals will enjoy them (Sen, 1999). Individuals' capabilities are to some degree a consequence of their entitlements, that is, their possibility to possess, control and extract benefits from a particular commodity.

Functionings are achievements of persons, such as what they manage to do or to be (Sen, 1998); in particular, they represent the various things a person may value doing or being. Functionings can be elementary (i.e. being adequately nourished and in good health) or very complex (i.e. being socially integrated and achieving self-respect). According to Sen (1998), they differ from commodities, since the latter is used as a means to achieve the former; an example can be represented by possessing a bicycle (commodity) and bicycling (functioning). Also functionings can be distinguished from capabilities as they indicate what people “are and do”, while capabilities represent what people “can be and can do”. In fact, capabilities reflect the “combinations of functionings the person can achieve” (Sen, 1999: 75). Moreover, functionings are different from happiness, since they are posterior to having goods (commodities) and prior to having utility (the happiness resulting from the functioning).

Two variables have to be considered now in order to explain the variability of the process from commodities to functionings, namely conversion factors and choice. They are supposed to act respectively at an extrinsic and intrinsic level. Conversion factors are a crucial variable in Sen’s approach and are constituted by the environmental conditions, social structures and external constraints in which individuals live. They refer to environmental characteristics (physical context, infrastructure and public institutions), social characteristics (cultural norms, legal rules and public policies) and personal characteristics (gender, health, mental capacity), which together determine the capabilities to achieve functionings (Browne et al., 2004). Using again Sen’s example, the commodity can be represented by a bicycle and the conversion factors by a bike-way, as the first can be enjoyed only if accompanied by the respective infrastructure. Specific features of conversion factors influence both the modality of conversion and the typology of commodities involved in the process that lead towards functionings. Choice is the second variable. This refers to a personal aspect that determines the agency of individuals according to what they wish. Choices play a pivotal role in designating functionings among mutually exclusive options. They mirror interpersonal variations and are relevant insofar individuals adapt their preferences and expectations on the basis of the situation where they live.

The aforementioned elements are fundamental in making it possible to convert commodities into functionings. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that not all the commodities can be converted into functionings, which means that not all goods and resources result in actual ways of being and doing. Therefore, Sen accounts for inequality of capabilities even when people enjoy the same range of commodities. This is the reason for which commodities – that are generally considered the main indicator of individual monetary poverty and wealth – cannot be utilised as the only measure for evaluating individual well-being. Indeed, it would be inadequate to limit the

analysis to the goods possessed and to their characteristics. A shift of the focus towards “functionings” is thus required in order to assess what the persons actually do with the commodities and the characteristics to which they have access.

The Capabilities approach criticizes traditional welfare economics that describes well-being by paying attention to other concepts, such as absolute or relative opulence (i.e. real income), personal utility (pleasure, happiness) and negative freedoms (i.e. rules of non-interference, for example by the State) (Sen, 1993). In particular, the Capabilities approach can be distinguished from utility-based approaches for the fact of not stressing happiness only or desire fulfilment only, as it tries “to make room for a variety of human acts and states as important in themselves (not just because they may produce utility)” (Sen, 1993: 33). Moreover, it differs from non-utilitarian approaches since it does not attribute direct importance to the means of living or means of freedom (i.e. real income, wealth, opulence, or “primary goods” of the Rawlsian theory of justice). Indeed, even if these variables have an undoubted and determinant impact on the achievement of the objects people value, they cannot be considered objects themselves (Sen, 1993). A special attention has to be delivered to the comparison with the work of John Rawls (1971, 1988), according to which value-objects have to be placed among primary goods (Sen, 1993). A key question related to the distinction between the Primary goods approach and the Capabilities approach concerns if well-being should be assessed in terms of their individuals’ access to valuable resources or in terms of their access to valuable functionings. Reporting Cohen’s example (1993), the point is if we should look at food supply according to the Rawlsian sense, or the nutritional level according to Sen’s view (Pogge, 2010). The Capabilities approach contrasts with the Primary goods approach, as the latter considers to be relevant focusing on holding goods (means or resources), without looking at what individuals can do with them. Resources do not have an intrinsic value in Sen’s approach; their value derives from the opportunity they give to people instead (Anand et al., 2005). In this regard, Sen states that, in order to evaluate well-being, “people’s capabilities are more just and efficient criteria than endowments in primary goods” (Salais and Villeneuve, 2004: 7), as capabilities do not concern what persons have or are, rather what they can have or can be. As said, capabilities are options to achieve valuable functionings; therefore, “instead of looking at people’s holdings of, or prospects for holding, external goods, we look at what kind of functionings they are able to achieve (Sen, 1999: 74). Sen proposed his alternative view claiming that the social primary goods approach does not consider a crucial element, such as the diversity of human beings (Brighouse and Robeyns, 2010). He particularly fosters to take more carefully into account the inter-individual differences in abilities of people to convert resources and services into valuable states or actions (Otto and Ziegler, 2010). In fact, Sen’s approach is based on the view that individuals are basically diverse, and that

personal, environmental and social conditions are the reasons for this fundamental diversity. Relating to this, Elizabeth Anderson (2010) affirms that Sen's approach is preferable to the resources approach because focusing on ends rather than means allows to be more sensible to individual variations.

As already underlined, Sen makes a step forward through the passage from commodities to functionings by emphasizing capabilities. In his view, what matters is not merely achieving functionings or satisfactions, but being free to achieve them. The author highlights the importance of the access to "real freedom of choice at every stage of life" and the possibility for people to live the life they value (Salais and Villeneuve, 2004 : 7). In this sense, the Capabilities approach critiques the assessment of individuals' poverty and deprivation through the measurement of commodities as this may provide a misleading picture. Thanks to this view, the issues of social quality and inequality can be better considered (Nussbaum, 2000). The approach advocates an egalitarian conception of social justice, which concerns just distribution of freedom and well-being (Arneson, 2005).

By adopting this approach, social vulnerability can be re-conceptualised in terms of capabilities and functionings. In Ranci's words, social vulnerability "takes the form of a life situation in which autonomy and the capacity for individuals and families for self-determination are threatened by the introduction of uncertainty into the main systems of social integration. The instability of the social position does in fact translate into a reduction of opportunities in life and of possibilities of choice. It is characterized no so much by the scarcity of resources tout court, as by the instability of the mechanisms used to obtain them" (Ranci, 2010, pg. 18). Social vulnerability may be tied to the scarcity of means, due to an unequal distribution of resources, or – as Sen emphasizes in his approach – to the difficulty in converting commodities into functionings. Indeed, as shown before in this chapter, the command on same resources does not necessarily imply same capabilities and same functionings. This can be extended to the field of employment policies and labour market, insofar as, following Ranci's examples (2010), temporary work has negative effects for some people only and temporary poverty may lead to permanent poverty, but this does not concern everybody. For most individuals, the lack of stability reduces freedoms and hampers the individuals' possibility of choice, which contributes to the increase of social vulnerability.

3.3 Capabilities, social rights and the market

A fundamental, even if controversial, aspect to consider when working with the concept of ‘capability’ is the relationship with other relevant concepts (i.e. “civil freedoms”, “democracy”, “social opportunities” and “equalities”) that are considered interdependent (Carpenter, 2009). One of these is the concept of ‘human right’. Sen tries to depict a difference between the concept of ‘human right’ and that of ‘capabilities’, remarking that the former is connected to the idea of substantive opportunities (which refers to having options) and freedom of processes (which refers to enjoying freedom of choice), while the latter is tied to the idea of ‘opportunity’ only, such as the opportunity to achieve valuable combinations of functionings (Sen, 2005). However, Sen deems that the Capabilities approach can help to better understand human rights. In particular, Villeneuve and Salais argue that the relevance of the concept of ‘capability’ partly “lies in its potential to clarify the relationship between social rights and the market order” (2004: 204).

According to Villeneuve and Salais (2004), the Capabilities approach offers a new way for thinking about the tensions between market order and social rights and try to analyse how Sen’s view may provide a framework for locating rights within a market setting. The authors begin by revisiting the conceptualisation of social rights, beyond which the Capability approach moves. They first start with a reference to Marshall’s formulation (1950), which is one of the most articulate. It distinguishes social rights from ‘civil’ and ‘political’ rights. Civil rights are defined as “rights necessary for the individual freedom – liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property, and the right to justice” (1950:10), while ‘political rights’ refer to “the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body” (1950:11). The definition of ‘social rights’ result much less delineated, but – according to Marshall – it includes different entitlements “from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in society” (1950:11). Marshall considered that civil rights were individual-oriented, which made them consistent with capitalism in the nineteenth century. By contrast, he deemed that social rights operated in conflict with the market: “Social rights in their modern form imply [...] the subordination of market price to social justice, the replacement of the free bargaining by the declaration of rights” (1950:68). In their revision of social rights, Villeneuve and Salais (2004) try to conciliate social rights and the market, reducing the conflict that – according to the authors – was left open by Marshall through the use of the capabilities. Indeed, Sen’s approach, which originates within the welfare economics, proposes a new way of combining both dimensions (social rights and the market), claiming for a “market-

creation function of the rules of social law” (Deakin, 2005: 4). In a capabilities approach, excluded and vulnerable individuals need to gain access to economic means, institutions of property and contracts (education and training, housing) in order to participate effectively in a market order, which may contribute to “enhance the aggregated value of production” (2005: 4). In Villeneuve and Salais’ words, “by providing the conditions under which access to these processes is made generally available, social rights may extend the scope of the market even if they do so by interfering with freedom of contract” (2004: 210). In fact, what in a neoclassical economic approach is viewed to distort the mechanisms of the labour market, namely social rights, in a Capability approach is considered to allow the enhancement of real choices for individuals while performing in line with the market itself. Social rights act as conversion factors and favour the conversion of resources (commodities) in actual functionings. Therefore, the authors carry out their revision by affirming that social rights in a way support the market order. It is important to bear in mind that the Capability approach encourages the participation in the labour market of individuals and proposes solutions, so that “the legitimacy and effectiveness of the market order can be maintained” (Deakin, 2005: 7).

As far as the relationship between rights and capabilities is concerned, Sen and Nussbaum have a slight disagreement. Sen has criticized the view of rights as “supplying side-constraints” (Nussbaum, 2000:14), whereas Nussbaum replaces them with central capabilities, claiming that these have not to be overcome by other social advantages (Nussbaum, 2000). In this regard, de Munck and Ferreras state that “evaluating a right as a capability does not only mean measuring its legal scope or asking what standard resources should be distributed to everyone in order for it to become accessible to all; it also means examining its effective use, in a given context, in the light of its possible uses” (2004: 226).

When considering the relations between the Capability approach and social law, it is necessary to take into account both the individualistic character (i.e. the right to health, right against unfair dismissal) and the collective character (i.e. the rights to strike, trade union representations and collective bargaining) of social rights. The Capabilities approach emphasizes the individual dimension, which has often been questioned by those who consider neoclassical economics or liberal egalitarianism as excessively individualistic. But, according to Robeyns (2000), Sen’s ethical individualism, which “postulates that individuals, and only individuals, are the units of moral concern” is not in contradiction with the recognition of the importance of connections among people, their social involvement and relations. In fact, Sen attributes great importance to debate and dissent, which are also at the basis of “collective rights”. Collective rights embrace both the social and economic sphere and include collective deliberation about ends and means that go beyond the

individual preferences. In this regard, Jean de Munck and Isabelle Ferreras (2004) state that the notions of collective rights and that of capabilities sustain and complement one another.

The question of collective rights also focuses the attention on the active involvement of individuals in decision-making. The recognition by Sen of the relevance of public discussion and social dialogue implies that the capability of choice itself can be considered as a collective, rather than an individual capability. Enjoying a broad range of capabilities requires indeed organizing collective actions through unions, political parties and councils that favour their attainment. The opportunity to carry out collective actions can be considered – besides a value in itself – the instrument to achieve other kinds of freedoms. Collective action is necessary for acquiring opportunities that have been created thanks to civil rights. This interconnection between the individual dimension and social and institutional structures also entails the participative role of people in reaching their own goals. In order to do this, a proper space has to be devised. Therefore, social arrangements should be thought to expand people's capabilities (Nussbaum, 2000). Social policy gains thus a crucial role, as we will see more in details in the next paragraph.

3.4 The Capabilities approach in social policy analysis

The Capabilities approach reveals an increasing influence in social sciences (Salais & Villeneuve, 2004) and in social policy analysis. Indeed, the concept of capability has become an analytical tool for describing and assessing socio-political realities (Jean de Munck and Isabelle Ferreras, 2004), which are re-interpreted according to the theoretical assumptions of Sen's approach. Generally, social policies embrace different conceptions of social justice and social inequality (Dubet et al., 2006), which are connected to the normative frame of societies. Therefore, it is important to consider the position of social and political institutions in determining the nature and connotations of justice and inequality (Sen, 1994). The Capability approach refers directly to the normative framework of public policies (Lowi, 2009) and to the values – in terms of access and distribution of opportunities – that are encompassed in each type of policy (Drèze and Sen, 1991; Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950). In Sen's view, the aim to be pursued by social policies is to struggle against inequality of capabilities and to broaden the access to effective freedoms, that is to widen the possibilities of what individuals can achieve in their life. According to Leonardi (2009), the more fully this condition is satisfied, the more individual and collective initiatives can be deployed, the more economic efficiency and social justice can be reconciled.

Public action plays a relevant role in the promotion of capabilities (Clark, 2006). For this reason, Sen's approach focuses on individuals and their relation to the social context around them. Indeed,

the growth of people's capabilities is strictly connected to the provision of facilities by public policies, namely employment, education and social protection. Hence, it is important to evaluate social policies within a specific country in order to have an overall glimpse of the individual conditions and their possibilities. In particular, according to the Capabilities approach, some innovative assumptions can be applied for the empirical analysis of social policy (Zimmermann, 2006): 1. the individual has to be considered as a person, with his/her needs, goals and preferences; 2. institutional setting and situated action have to be observed; 3. a dynamic conception of the context, resulting from the transformation of practices of interaction amidst individuals, has to be taken into account; and 4. relations of power and conflicts that contribute to changing situations and spaces of action have to be individuated. All these aspects will be developed in the following parts of this thesis.

Goerne (2010) classifies in typologies the applications of the Capability approach in social policy analysis. Three different types of applications can be distinguished, depending on their focus (outputs, processes or outcomes).

Figure 6. Representation of different applications of the Capabilities approach

Level of analysis	Purpose <i>Key words</i>	CA-external normative foundation	Examples
Outputs	Evaluation of policies <i>Individualisation, Plurality of options</i>	No	Do policies take diversity of needs into account? To what kinds of (alternative) functionings do policies promote access? How much choice do individuals have between alternative functionings?
Outcomes	Assessing inequality <i>Capabilities, functionings</i>	Yes	Description of selected capabilities or functionings of individuals. What is the range and quality of attained (or potentially attainable) valued functionings? What is the set of alternative functionings an individual does (or potentially can) attain?
Processes	Evaluation of policies <i>Effectiveness questions</i>	Yes	Do outputs translate into outcomes? Have policies promoted access to specific functionings? → Likely independent variables: do policies take into account diversity of needs, are they individualised?

Source: Goerne, A. (2010)

In the first case, the level of analysis is output-oriented and the ultimate purpose is the evaluation of policies. Goerne identifies this as the only kind of analysis with a normative basis that is implicit in the Capabilities approach; therefore, it is not supported by an external reference point. In this

sense, the approach acts as a framework to assess public policies and configurations of policies (regimes) in terms of the functionings to which they open the access for individuals. This level of analysis also allows for investigating the actual possibilities of choice for individuals and emphasizing the variety of individual needs. This emphasis can serve as a starting point for an analysis of policy outputs, which stresses especially the concepts of ‘individualisation’ and ‘diversity’ (Goerne, 2010).

In the second case, the analysis is outcome-oriented and its purpose is no longer the evaluation of policies, but rather the assessment of inequalities and individual well-being. An external normative foundation can be detected. In order to compare individuals, range and quality of valued functionings are studied and sets of alternative functionings to which individuals have access are carefully examined. Analysing the capabilities sets, rather than functionings, allows to achieve a more detailed overview of individuals’ situation, though capabilities are longer more difficult to observe. Indeed, in comparison to functionings, capabilities cannot be measured or reported into quantitative data. Some attempts of measuring functionings have been carried out by Tania Burchardt and Polly Vizard, who use the Capabilities approach to assess inequality in the UK (Burchardt & Vizard, 2007a; Burchardt & Vizard, 2007b).

Finally, in the third case, the analysis can be considered processes-oriented. The purpose, as it is in the case of output-oriented analysis, is the evaluation of policies. An external normative foundation is present. This level of analysis focuses on the process of transformation of outputs in outcomes and formulates the question whether policies promote access to specific functionings. In Goerne’s words, these processes “are mainly concerned with policy evaluation in the classical sense of investigating the effectiveness of policies with respect to a set of pre-defined capabilities or functionings” (Goerne, 2010: 16). According to the author, this approach can be easily combined with the outputs-oriented research strategy.

The Capability approach has been often used to assess social policies and their informational bases. The ‘informational bases of judgment in justice’ (IBJJ) concerns “the factual territory on which considerations relating to justice directly apply” (Sen, 1990:111). An example is constituted by several evaluations of the situation of poorest people in rich countries through the analysis of intervention programs. It has been observed that a significant percentage of poor people in terms of capabilities is not helped by public institutions, since these relies on standard measures that do not allow to observe the complexity of individuals’ situations. Indeed, standard informational bases of judgment in justice do not show the limitations suffered by poor and jobless people. However, as reported by Bonvin and Farvaque (2005b), some studies have been carried out through a Capability approach, which have made it possible to highlight the constraints (Burchardt, 2002; Burchardt and

Le Grand, 2002), unfreedoms (Schokkaert and Van Ootegem, 1990) and “penalties” (Sen, 1997) of poor and unemployed people. The choice of the informational basis of judgment in justice is crucial for the design and implementation of public policies, since it also orients the data selection during the phases of assessment of social issues that is useful for delineating public interventions.

The conversion of formal rights into real rights and freedoms has to be considered a goal for all public policies, whose aim is supposed to be setting the adequate conditions for the development of capabilities. Sen considers the provision of some basic capabilities as a duty of the State. In this regard, Bonvin and Farvaque highlight that “economic facilities provided by the market should be seen as a sort of instrumental freedom, but they cannot be separated out of the development of social opportunities and protective security, which are other kinds of instrumental freedoms to be guaranteed to people” (2005a: 4). In this sense, the State should not narrow its action to the delivery of entitlements – or social rights – (i.e. employment benefits, social protection), rather it should construct a capability-friendly social context, combining the establishment of commodities and the institution of conversion factors (*Ibid.*, 2005a). Applying this assumption to employment and social protection policies, it evidently results that individual competences should go hand in hand with availability of skilled jobs. Moreover, cash or in-kind benefits cannot be considered as ends in themselves, but as instruments for the widening of freedoms. According to Bonvin and Farvaque, employment and social protection policies should not be addressed to shape individual choice and behaviours, rather they should favour individuals’ choices. The following section deepens the application of the capabilities approach to employment and social protection policies, focusing on how welfare and work on one hand and State and market on the other hand relate each other.

3.5 Capabilities, welfare and work

The capabilities approach has more recently acquired importance in the debates on social and economic policy in Europe. The approach has contributed to shedding light on the relationship between work and welfare and on the dynamics underlying public action and its connections with the market.

The application of the Capabilities approach to the notions of ‘work’ and ‘welfare’ allows for producing interesting results, especially now that current transformations in employment and social policies have questioned their conceptualisation and function. This topic has been dealt with by several authors. One of these, Robert Salais (2003) develops it with particular attention. The author states that welfare theories usually focus on commodities that people can enjoy, like income and services, not considering the actual functionings they achieve. By contrast, in a Capability approach

to work and welfare what matters is what a person *can do and be* with the resources he/she can control and the effective freedom that is available to him/her. The approach represents a crucial difference between the way of thinking and structuring the provision of social protection carried out so far and that one belonging to a potential future. As Salais specifies, according to the Capability approach, work can be considered a valuable functioning. The attribution of “valuable” does not refer merely to income and monetary wealth, but includes working conditions and work-life balance. In this sense, the social representation of work, its contribution to personal life-satisfaction and its identitarian value cannot be neglected. Indeed, in the current knowledge-based society work cannot be considered a disutility only, linked to the wage, but an agency which brings its own value. Such approach assumes that systems of social protection have not to be formed according to normative social theories and political debates between policy-makers and experts, rather they have to rely on objective informational basis of judgment on social justice (IBJJ) and individuals’ conditions. Salais defines this change as a shift from the principle of “freedom from want”, which is typical of the existing systems of social protection in developed countries, towards the principle of “freedom to act”. In particular, “freedom from want” refers to providing people with the possibility to stay out of work and enjoy an income that allows them to survive in case of difficulty. It can be considered one of the main achievements of social protection systems in developed countries. Nevertheless, recent transformations of work and labour market may give the opportunity to the spread of a positive freedom, characterised by the effective possibility to act, do and choose. As far as these transformations are concerned, the European Social Agenda has fostered individual choice and the development of one's own life and career, identifying as one of its main objectives the balance between professional and private life and freedom to choose a valuable job. Moreover, new standards for employment, based on responsibility, personal initiative and autonomy, have arisen in order to reach a greater efficiency within the labour market. Such individual qualities and abilities were not encompassed in the traditional definition of work as accomplishment of tasks, hampering thus low-skilled labour force and facilitating workers with higher education and with specific personal characteristics. Currently, the neo-liberal approach considers the attainment of this cultural and psychological “baggage” is an individual affair and concerns people's responsibility gaining it. In addition, the role of the state can be viewed in terms of provision of punishments and incentives in relation to individual behaviours and merits. By contrast, according to a Capability approach, society has to arrange environmental infrastructure, external conditions and public services, so that people can obtain the material and non-material tools to gain that baggage. Consequently, developing personal potentialities becomes a collective affair and employment and social policies play a key role in guaranteeing possibilities.

With regard to work and welfare, Salais (2003) highlights the role of the relationship between state and market in fostering the implementation of the Capabilities approach. The conceptualization of this relationship produces a specific informational frame of judgment on justice that tied work and welfare. In particular, it brings to delineate forms of intervention of the public action on the market, shaping employment and social policies; this has relevant consequences on individual opportunities. The work-and-welfare relationship can mirror a logic of decommodification of work (Esping-Andersen, 1990) or a logic of freedom of work. The former is oriented towards protecting people from risks and guaranteeing them a decent standard of living conditions (negative freedom), which ensure them the aforementioned “freedom from want”; by contrast, the latter aims also to provide people with capabilities (positive freedom), which allows them to gain the aforementioned “freedom to be and to do”. Looking at the work-welfare relationship, the author describes four “worlds” – revisiting Esping-Andersen's classification (1990) – in which public action acts in different ways: 1. the market world, which fosters the market (liberal model); 2. the status world, which tries to substitute the market (social-democratic model); 3. the well-being world, which aims to protect against the market (conservative-corporatist model); and 4. the capability world, which shapes the market. Such worlds stem from diverse informational bases of judgment. In the market world, individuals' income is the only variable considered by public action, whose purpose is to compensate the shortfall up to a threshold. The informational basis focuses on the basic minimum standard of life. By contrast, in the status world, the informational basis relies mainly on past work commitment of the recipient and on wages earned. The focus here is on the compensation for lost wages in terms of generosity and duration, according to the status acquired. Both the market and the status world focus on freedom from want. The well-being world is aimed at ensuring through public services the main individual functionings, such as nutrition, health, and in particular, individual well-being. The development of this last functioning is considered extremely important in this world. The worlds mentioned above can be considered similar to the three world of welfare, quoted by Esping-Andersen. Nevertheless, theoretical and practical implications are different. The capability world emphasizes the importance of the development of positive freedom in life and work, which means freedom of being and doing. It includes both freedom of work (i.e. to choose whether to work or not to work, and the type of job) and freedom at work (i.e. participation in decision-making, development of professional skills). The capability world differs from the others as it does not compel individuals to adapt to the labour market nor limit its action to maintain their status. In this type of world, social expenditures are fundamental; the quantity of expenditures as well as the way they are employed is crucial in defining people's capabilities. In fact, in the capability world, social expenditures are mainly

invested in delivery of services in kind related to work, like active labour market policies; by contrast, in the market world they are mainly invested in monetary benefits. In this regard, Salais points out an important aspect, such as that the orientation of social expenditures toward services in kind does not necessarily stand for the presence of a capability world; likely, the orientation toward monetary benefits does not denote the existence of the market world. According to Salais, in the capability world, as well as in the well-being world, the informational basis is “contextual, in-process and deliberative”. Moreover, the use of general administrative classifications for categorizing individuals is discouraged in order to foster a better definition of the evolution of the individual situation.

Salais (2003) emphasizes the role of the political will to use resources for people’s well-being. In his opinion, effective freedom means having the conditions (conversion factors) to truly exercise it. In the field of education, for instance, acquired skills – that can be interpreted as a commodity – are useful only if accompanied by respective labour market structures which help turn them into outcomes (Goerne, 2010). Furthermore, skills are no longer considered as a productive possibility to accumulate capital, according to the economist view of the human capital, but as the opportunity for people to live the life they value. As told before, the Capabilities approach focuses on the enhancement of people’s capabilities, i.e. their real freedom to choose the life course they wish. In the field of employment and social integration policies, as argued by Bonvin and Galster, this entails that “if only poor opportunities are available, or if only one valuable opportunity is available among plenty of others of poor quality, freedom of choice remains formal” (2010: 73). Therefore, quality of jobs should be actively promoted through public actions. Besides, according to Bonvin and Farvaque, the objective of public action should be to create through public employment services the conditions for the individual to choose the job one has reason to value, what they suggest to call “capabilities for work”. In addition, the objective should also be to make possible the capability to negotiate the content and conditions of one’s job. They name this voice option “capability for voice” (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a).

After analysing the relevant contribution of the capabilities approach in the field of employment policies and in the definition of the relationships among State and market on the one hand and work and welfare on the other hand, we now move to observe the limitations of the approach and the critiques that have been advanced to it.

3.6 Critiques of the Capabilities Approach

The approach of capabilities has gained so far support and approval in the social and economic world. Nevertheless, some critiques have been directed to it in relation to theoretical assumptions and practical implications. As far as the theoretical contribution of the approach is concerned, Dean (2009) is one of the authors who, still appreciating its attractiveness, highlights relevant limitations. Specifically, he makes evident three neglected issues within the capability discourse: the first one is that human beings are interdependent each other. The second one is that power relations are reiterated in the individuals' participation in the public sphere. The third one is that the capabilities approach re-affirms the imperatives of capitalism.

With regard to the first issue, Dean underlines that the capabilities approach is mainly liberal-individualistic oriented (Dean, 2009; Burchardt, 2006), in spite of the fact that this does not necessarily results in the methodology. In fact, the approach acknowledges as main priority "individual liberty, not social solidarity" (Dean, 2009: 5). The author remarks that social solidarity and freedom must not be considered as mutually exclusive, since individual freedom to do and to be is deeply influenced by family and the society where one lives. In order to stress this aspect, Dean claims that "human society is axiomatically to be understood as an association of interdependent beings" (2009: 6). Therefore, individuals cannot be free from dependency on other persons, which – in his view – is partly neglected in the capabilities approach. In relation to the critique of individualism, Robeyns (2005: 107-108) distinguished a methodological individualism (it postulates that everything can be explained by reference to individuals and their properties only), an ontological individualism (it postulates that that only individuals and their properties exist, and that all social entities and properties can be identified by reducing them to individuals and their properties) and ethical individualism (it postulates that individual is the unit of moral concern and social affairs have to be evaluated on the basis of their effects on individuals). She affirms that the capabilities approach relies on the last one, which entails that this critique is wrong. With regard to the second issue, Dean (2009) highlights the contradictions between the participation in the public sphere and the importance that Sen attributes to collective deliberation for the definition of valuable capabilities and functionings. In fact, Dean claims that public deliberation can turn into the prevailing of hegemonic views, due to systematic inequalities that could hamper the participation of vulnerable groups. The third issue regards the relationship between the Capability approach and the capitalism, and in particular the market economy. Dean focuses on the distinction between markets for the exchange of goods and services, which serve human ends, and market economy, where inequality dominates insofar as individuals have different access to opportunities. Moreover, in a

market economy, non-marketable functionings are not considered. This does not occur in the Capability approach, which attributes values also to functionings like “imagine, think and reason [...], laugh and play” (Nussbaum, 2000: 78-79). According to Dean, the point is not the conciliation between the Capability approach and market economy, rather the fact that Sen’s approach is “inherently liberal-individualist” (2009: 10). The author argues that the Capabilities approach is unable to conceptualise and address the inequalities that are embedded in capitalism and considers the normative frame of Sen’s approach as “the restatement of the liberal ideal” (Goerne, 2010: 17). Nevertheless, Goerne disagrees with his view, affirming that several studies have been carried out by applying the capabilities approach for the study of inequalities (Goerne, 2010).

Another frequent critique to the capabilities approach concerns the difficulty of defining valuable capabilities and functionings that relate to the life individuals have reason to value. The question of the ‘valuability’ is tied to individual and social choices as well as to contingent and relative decisions, so that it can be very uneasy to make a definite list. This represents one of the most controversial aspects of the Capability approach. According to Sen, the approach should not be considered as a theory of justice, but as a “broad normative framework for the evaluation and assessment of individual well-being and social arrangements, the design of policies, and proposals about social change in society” (Robeyns, 2005: 93). Therefore, he does not define absolute and universal capabilities that are supposed to be valid for all societies in every time and place (Goerne, 2010). Sen prevents to propose a list of capabilities, since he states that the selection has to be left to personal judgment and public deliberation. However, he mentions some substantial capabilities, namely the ability to avoid “deprivation as starvation, undernourishment, escapable morbidity and premature mortality as well as the freedoms that are associated with being literate and numerate, enjoying political participation and uncensored speech” (Sen, 1999: 36). According to Zimmermann, the lack of a list of fundamental capabilities has made the approach “normatively incomplete”, although it is normative insofar as it considers equal freedom as a universal principle of justice (Zimmermann, 2012: 22). By contrast, Nussbaum (2000), Alkire (2002), and Burchardt and Vizard (2007a) have made several efforts to produce a proper list of capabilities and functionings. The elaboration of such list is one of the main points of divergence between Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen with regard to the conceptualization of the Capability approach (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993; Nussbaum, 2003). She critiques Sen’s decontextualized, static, universal notion of capability in comparison to a dynamic, contextualized, situated conception (Nussbaum, 2001). In one of her books, she clearly states her will to take a different path in relation to this issue: “I shall identify a list of central human capabilities, setting them in the context of a type of political liberalism that makes them specifically political goals and presents them in a manner free of any specific

metaphysical grounding”. (Nussbaum, 2000: 5). Nussbaum’s intention is to depict a list and to illustrate how it can be utilised for creating political foundations and laws. For this reason, in her view, the selection of valuable functionings is an extremely relevant issue. Furthermore, the issue of the definition of a list of capabilities and functionings has relevant consequences in terms of measurability. Such issue, which born with the Sen’s approach (Drilling, 2010), has not been solved and the phase of operationalisation remains a hardship for those who try to apply the capabilities approach at the empirical level (Alkire, 2005, 2008; Chiappero-Martinetti and Roche, 2009; Chiappero-Martinetti, 2008; Brandolini and D’Alessio, 2009; Kuklys, 2005), as it will be also in this research work. Other critiques by Nussbaum on Sen’s approach can be summarized in the following points: 1. Nussbaum’s purpose is going beyond the purely comparative use of the approach to propose the idea of a threshold level of capabilities, which serves as a basis for the constitution of a set of citizens’ rights that governments have to guarantee. In Nussbaum’s view, the notion of ‘threshold’ is more important than the notion of ‘capability equality’. By contrast, Sen never utilizes the idea of ‘threshold’; 2. Sen supports Rawls’ priority of liberty, while Nussbaum deems that all the capabilities are equally fundamental, even if both the authors agree that economic needs should not be met by denying liberty; 3. The distinction between well-being and agency, together with the distinction between freedom and achievement – which structures much of Sen’s work – is absent in Nussbaum’s version of the capabilities approach. Although she acknowledges that the concepts introduced by Sen are important, she still believes that they can be embodied as aspects of the distinction between capability and functioning (Nussbaum, 2000). Besides, Sen and Nussbaum share the assumption that capabilities should be understood to be valuable for each individual.

Finally, Thomas Pogge (2002) has criticized the capability approach, questioning its possibility to specify a clear criterion of social justice, which is fundamental for the evaluation of people’s situation in terms of actual freedoms. However, in replying to this critique, Sen’s words can be useful: “freedom, of course, is not an unproblematic concept. In so far as there are genuine ambiguities in the concept of freedom, that should be reflected in corresponding ambiguities in the characterization of capability [...]. If an underlying idea has an essential ambiguity, a precise formulation of that idea must try to capture that ambiguity rather than hide or eliminate it” (Sen, 1993: 33). Despite these critiques and limitations, we strongly consider that the capabilities approach is especially innovative and effective to such extent that we assume it for the dissertation. In this regard, we conclude quoting Robeyns, who well express its value: “the Capability approach will surely not be the easiest framework for well-being evaluation and analysis, but it might turn out to be the most relevant and interesting” (2000: 29).

3.7 Concluding remarks

The introduction of the Capabilities approach constitutes a cornerstone within the social sciences, due to its innovative character and the extension of its implications that embrace several social issues and fields. The Capabilities approach suggests focusing on the conditions and possibilities that allow people to realize valuable activities and achieve a state of well-being. In particular, it attributes a pivotal role to freedom and argues that capabilities – instead of functionings or commodities – are the appropriate political goal policies have to pursue. In this sense, Sen's approach serves as a relevant reference for employment and social policies analysis, allowing the assessment of public action in developing and advanced societies and not only in underdeveloped countries. It is currently spreading out within the European scenery, in particular with respect to the social and employment debates and, specifically, to the relationship between welfare and work. The approach shows relevant merits for underlying aspects of individuals' well-being that have often been neglected by traditional perspectives. However, it is important to bear in mind the numerous pitfalls that are likely to arise when using Sen's approach, which will appear also in this thesis. In particular, the issue of the ambiguity and the undefined nature of the approach and the question of its operationalization – tied to the absence of a fixed list of capabilities – constitute two of the most common critiques addressed to Sen's view. Nevertheless, the originality of the approach makes it a stimulating theoretical framework and a useful tool of analysis. In particular, its focus on individual capabilities and functionings more than on GDP and other economic indicators, its emphasis on conversion factors in addition to commodities, its attention for inequality and social rights are the peculiar aspects of the approach. Moreover, Sen's approach results to be a framework of thought, which can be used for policy evaluation. It also sheds a new light on the relation between work and welfare as well as on the connections between the public action and the market. In fact, according to the approach, work is a valuable functioning and public action should guarantee the proper conditions for achieving it as well as the possibility of remaining outside the labour market while pursuing it. All this leads us to employ the approach as the cognitive and normative framework against which assessing Spanish and Italian employment and social protection policies in terms of meanings, concepts and representations. In the next chapter, the methodology that will be used for applying the capabilities approach in this dissertation will be presented.

Chapter IV.

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This research work is an evaluation of the Spanish and Italian employment and social protection policies in the matter of flexicurity in the light of the capabilities approach, with special attention to the group of young people. The evaluation is in terms of cognitive and normative frameworks, to which meanings and practices are linked, more than in terms of outcomes. The analysis is carried out in two countries, Spain and Italy, which both belong to the Southern European Social Model. The assimilation within the same category in the effort of highlighting distinctions amidst the wide variety of the member states has partly attenuated the differences, whereas relevant divergences may appear from a more accurate study. The period under consideration in the thesis starts in 1997, when a new paradigm began to appear and the first important reforms were passed to show a new direction of the labour markets, like the Treu Law in Italy and the Agreement of 1997 in Spain. Additionally, in the same year the Treaty of Amsterdam, which introduced the EES at the European level, was signed. The period ends in 2008, when the financial crisis erupted and urgent measures were advanced under the coordination of the European Union but often without the consensus of national social partners. The focus of this dissertation is the country-level. This choice is linked to two reasons: on one hand, despite the fact that the decentralized governance plays a key role in both countries (as we will see also in our case studies), guidelines and general orientation of employment policies, included those addressed to young people, are mainly designed and planned at the central level; on the other hand, taking the country as the unit of analysis allows us to have a more complete overview of the European influence on the two member states and of the national situation where setting the policy assessment.

First, a process of contextualisation of policies in Italy and Spain through the analysis of statistical data derived from secondary sources will take place, since capabilities are closely related to the broader economic and social structures. Indeed, cognitive, institutional and political resources – and not only individual factors – are determinant in coping with social vulnerability according to the capabilities approach. In this regard, Prieto (2014) suggests the concept of “social employment regimes”, which includes “not only public labour regulation policies and models of production and growth, but also the various fields of social practice” (2014: 73). Such social practices embed

economy, social policies, models of organization of goods and services production, labour relations, social norms, corporate employment and labour policies. In Prieto's view, the practices interact with each other. The process of contextualization will make possible the identification of specific vulnerability profiles, in relation to the characteristics of the two countries under analysis. A special attention will be allotted to the youth that can be considered one of the most vulnerable groups that is affected by the change of paradigm in the two countries. Moreover, the capabilities approach is particularly salient for the study of the situation of young people who have high expectations of developing their own capabilities. Then, the empirical research will be developed through the qualitative analysis of interviews to Spanish and Italian key actors and experts. Two levels of analysis will be carried out simultaneously. The first level will focus on the perceptions and representations of the actors – as key informants – in matters of flexicurity policies and will be useful for observing which direction, according to their view, policies have taken in Italy and Spain. The second level will be centred on the flexicurity discourse, with the aim of making evident the cognitive and normative premises that actors use when dealing with key issues (unemployment, role of the State, social protection) and proposing solutions. Also the influence of the European rhetoric will be taken into account. The overall objective is to evaluate whether constructions and interpretations are oriented towards the informational basis of the capabilities approach. The aim is to assess if an interpretative framework centred on providing people with possibility of agency and the conditions to enable them to effectively pursue what they value in their lives exist. In this study the conceptual and discursive level (meanings, values and representations), rather than the technical-administrative level, has been deepened, so as to obtain considerations on cognitive and normative elements. Methods, approaches and perspectives have been chosen on the basis of such purpose.

This chapter will present the methodology used in the dissertation. In particular, three sections – referred to the comparative perspective, the qualitative method and the capabilities approach – will be drawn in order to better describe the reasons of our choices. Also the main advantages and shortcomings of the methodology will be shown.

4.2 The comparative perspective

This dissertation will be developed by adopting a comparative perspective. It is important to point out that using a comparative method does not signify to study a phenomenon or a particular issue in different national contexts, but it means pursuing the precise objective of comparing them in diverse setting. This entails utilizing the same research instruments both at level of secondary

analysis of national data and empirical work, which may result difficult in certain cases. Difficulties are tied to a wide number of theoretical and practical reasons. For instance, at the conceptual level, the notions of “work”, “training” or “young” do not mean the same in different countries; such notions can be interchangeable with others and the category of “young” may cover diverse age groups. Also the relationships among these notions can be constructed differently from one country to another. National databases are another example, since they are elaborated according to different definitions and a peculiar methodology that do not allow making comparisons. However, some steps forwards have been carried out in the statistical field by producing cross-national harmonised data (i.e. European Labour Force Survey) (Hantrais and Mangen, 1996). In an evaluative study – as is this thesis – it is important to take into account the conceptualizations and the aims of policies in a specific countries in order to comprehend their successes and failures. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that the terms that are used as normative criteria are often contested concepts (Hantrais and Mangen, 1996). Also, categories and meanings of statistics have to be reconstructed considering the society where they are generated (“espace d’appartenance”) (Maurice et al., 1987). One of the studies that have to be mentioned in this regard is that on “societal analysis” proposed by the Laboratoire d’Economie et de Sociologie du Travail (LEST) in Aix-en-Provence (Maurice, 1979; Maurice et al., 1986; Maurice et al., 1998). It emphasizes the concern for the specific characteristics of each country and the relations that develop in society, which is named “societal effect”. Indeed, Maurice et al. (1987) consider countries as peculiar forms of interactions, so that only “sets of phenomena which constitute, through their inter-dependence, national ‘coherences’” (Maurice, 1989: 182) can be comparable. As each element is connected to the whole, all term to term comparisons are inadequate because of the incomparability of categories of analysis that are discontinuous, which is in contrast with the continuity based on the comparability of totalities (Maurice, 1989; Théret, 2000). In this regard, also the opposition micro/macro disappears and starts to be viewed as a relation of interdependences, so that “actors” and “spaces” or “social structures” have to be considered in a dialectical relation (Maurice and Sorge, 2000). Applying the societal approach to the comparison of social policies entails the comparison of systems of social protection and the knowledge, of the logic of operation, history, values and norms that define their implementation in each country (Barbier, 1990).

The comparative perspective will be applied in the dissertation on two phases, each of which leading to different methodological implications and considerations. The first phase concerns the comparison of social structures and economic systems along with their transformations over the last decades. The following areas will be under analysis: a) labour market situation; b) contractual arrangements c) qualification of the work force; d) labour market policies in terms of education and

training as well as social protection against unemployment; and d) employment regulation. The second phase refers on the one hand to the comparison of the cognitive and normative frameworks used by the Spanish and Italian interviewed actors for constructing their representations of employment and social protection policies in their countries; on the other it refers to the representations of the actors, who act as key informants of the policies at the central and decentralized level. The two phases will be illustrated in more detail below.

As far as the first phase of the research work is concerned, the starting point is that social models are accountable to distinct labour market structures, education and training systems, welfare states and employment policies. Differences and similarities can be highlighted among models, but also between countries belonging to the same model. The need of exploring and comparing countries within the same model is linked to two considerations. First, a model cannot express the whole set of characteristics of a state and cannot adequately reflect the complexity of the national contexts. Since the classification entails a kind of simplification, it is important to bear in mind that countries are not accurately described by the model, which has to be considered an ideal type (Amable, 2003). Second, some important classifications of models were elaborated in the framework of the comparative socio-economic research in the first half of the 1990s. The literature supporting it has underlined common characteristics of welfare states and labour market systems by using data mostly from the 1980s or early 1990s. However, characteristics are contingent and undergo changes, so that countries within the same model may move closer or away from each other, sometime coming up to countries of other models (Karamessini, 2007).

In this study, Spain and Italy, which are assumed to share the ‘Southern European social model’, will be assessed. Divergences between them will be underlined, since in literature common elements are frequently emphasized, making national peculiarities disappear. Moreover, in the last twenty years substantial transformations in labour markets and welfare regimes have occurred, which bring us to analyse how the basic features of Spain and Italy have changed over this time. It is important to bear in mind that the notion of “Southern Europe” has not only a geographical, but also a substantive, cultural and political-economic connotation (Ferrera, 2006). Thus, a detailed contextualisation is fundamental for assessing public policies within the particular setting. In this regard, Mangen states: “Whatever the approach, there is a central and inescapable problem caused by the potential for conflict between meaning and the need to standardize in order to compare in a field like social policy where specific social, political and economic contexts are so important in shaping its content. Standardization, which detaches social policy from the contexts that produce it, will deprive it of meaning and hence produce invalid comparisons. The essential dilemma, of course, is where to draw the line in the inclusion of an array of contextual variables” (1986: VI).

Therefore, the second part of this dissertation is completely dedicated to contextualise the study through secondary data focusing on the main characteristics of the two countries under consideration. In particular, national legislation regulating the labour market and the socio-economic conditions at the national level will be carefully described. The analysis will allow for the identification of different profiles of social vulnerability in both countries. To this purpose varied sources will be used. Statistics and legislative texts will be particularly useful, but the information gathered will be integrated with the analysis of the national and comparative literature. Statistical data will be collected in order to observe several relevant areas, such as:

- the economic-productive system, with special attention to data on human development and economic growth, standards of living conditions and compensation per employee, as well as product-market competition;
- the labour market, with attention to the structure of activity, employment and unemployment, contractual typologies, the qualification of the labour force (with reference to gender division);
- individuals' perceptions and their main reasons for choosing/or not choosing living specific situations;
- labour market policies (active measures and unemployment benefits) as well as employment protection legislation;
- the conditions of the youth and labour market programs for young people.

The main sources will be international databases, which allow an easier comparison of data between countries. In particular, the databases of Eurostat, ILO (International Labour Organisation), and OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) will be used. Data will provide the general overview for carrying out the analysis of the flexicurity policies through the capability approach. Institutional changes will be linked to structural transformations and trends in the labour market and the welfare state in the two countries. The direction and intensity of change will be also commented upon.

As far as the second phase of this research work is concerned, the cognitive and normative frameworks of key actors in matters of flexicurity as well as their representations of policies will be investigated through the analysis of the discourses extracted by their interviews. The linguistic analysis has important implications when carried out at a comparative level in the field of social policies. Indeed, the language plays a pivotal role in the political activity that has to be taken into account in the social science research. In Barbier's words (2009: 1), the "linguistic form and the meanings involved in the political construction, negotiation and discussion" as well as the political culture have to be considered while carrying out investigations. The author argues that every

attempt of understanding political cultures, to which practices and meanings are linked, cannot disregard the knowledge of the tongue. He also adds that the use of the English language by the researcher is insufficient, since several notions cannot be properly translated and may result misleading (Barbier, 2004; 2002). In this regard, the author brings the example of the concept of 'workfare' that cannot be considered in the same way in the Italian case, where activation programs are marginal and in the Anglo-Saxon case, where a wide use of these kind of programs is made (Barbier, 2004). Hence, he claims the necessity that "interlocutors in English achieve an in-depth explanation of the programmes existing in their respective countries and of their specific insertion into a particular societal coherence" (2004:19). Following his lesson, in addition to efforts made to have a broad and deep overview of the Spanish and Italian contexts (see Part II), in this thesis extracts of the interviews will be always reported both in English and in the original language.

The comparative perspective is especially interesting when combined with the capabilities approach. Indeed, the approach emphasizes the importance of national institutions, socio-economic contexts and cognitive frameworks, which act as conversion factors and determine opportunities and freedoms in a specific country. Therefore, an overview of social models and flexicurity policies (including ideologies and values) as well as employment and welfare regimes allows to better understand the possibility of agency that is given to individuals for constructing their lives according to what they value. The method that will be used in this second phase for analysing the interviews will be better described in the successive paragraph.

4.3 The qualitative method

Before describing the method used for the examination of the interviews, it is important to clarify again that the main focus of this dissertation is the cognitive and normative framework, which is a key conceptual instrument for the policy analysis. The basic assumption is that values, norms and beliefs play an important role in determining policies and that their comprehension allows to have a broader overview of the orientation of governments' action (Barbier, 2009; Hall, 2000).

The starting point is the consideration that cognitive and normative frameworks have a deep influence on the way actors interpret the social world around them. In particular, according to Surel, cognitive and normative frameworks "are intended to refer to coherent systems of normative and cognitive elements which define, in a given field, 'world views', mechanisms of identity formation, principles of action, as well as methodological prescriptions and practices for actors subscribing to the same frame" (2000: 496). In spite of the broad importance of these frameworks, their links with

the institutional context are rarely made explicit (Surel, 2000). Cognitive and normative frameworks, to which meanings and practices are tied, shape social reality and establish ideas about what can be considered fair and legitimate in a specific society and what cannot (Muller, 1990). In this regard, Muller proposes that the purpose of public policies is not only solving problems, rather – and above all – constructing cognitive and normative frameworks for the interpretation of the world (2000). The way the actors construct the world makes manifest how they perceive the reality, where they are placed in this reality and how such reality should be. Indeed, in Muller’s words: “One become aware of the character both cognitive and normative of public action. The two cognitive and normative dimensions – explanation of the world and making the world be in accordance with norms – are irreducibly entangled in a process of making reality make sense. Following that, public policies allow to construct interpretations of the ‘real’, and at the same time to define normative models of action”¹¹ (2000: 195). Moreover, groups of actors establish which social issues have to be problematized and that policies have to address, providing specific solutions in accordance to the way the issue is formulated. For each issue, specific actions, which embed belief systems, values, advocacy coalitions and definition of priority, are proposed (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1999; Muller, 2000). In the light of this, Muller remarks that the cognitive analysis of public policies cannot ignore the factor of power relationships.

As shown so far, the cognitive study of public policies is based on the assumption that cognitive frameworks derive firstly from the interactions amidst individuals-actors and that then such frameworks achieve to be autonomous from their process of construction and become dominant interpretations of the world for all actors (Muller, 2000). The social constructivist approach underlies this assumption and states that reality comes to be constructed in the interactions among individuals who share meanings about it (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Therefore, actors are socialized to systems of meanings that are expressed into discourses about reality (Barbier, 2011; Badie and Hermet, 2001). The connection among ideas, public policies and discourses is especially highlighted by Schmidt. The author deems that ideas are at the basis of policies and institutions and “serve as guides to public actors for what to do, as well as being the sources of justification and legitimation for what such actors do” (2008: 308). As Schmidt argues, ideas result from discursive processes among actors sharing interpretations and opinions about goals and strategies (2011). Thus the study of discourses is the principal mode for researching cognitive and normative elements (Barbier, 2009; Radaelli, 1999; Campbell, 2004), since it favours the collection and investigation of

¹¹ My translation. We also report here the original version: “On prend conscience, à partir de là, du caractère la fois cognitif et normatif de action publique puisque les deux dimensions explication du monde et de mise en normes du monde sont irréductiblement liées dans un processus de mise en sens du réel: les politiques publiques servent la fois construire des interprétations du réel et définir des modèles normatifs action” (Muller, 2000: 195).

the concepts and expressions that construct and mirror the meanings of policies. Hence, the discourse analysis appears as a suitable instrument for this type of research.

Talking about discourse analysis means referring to a wide number of approaches and methodologies, but all of them stem from a growing trend to ascribe importance to the language¹². This trend has flourished also within social psychology (Parker, 1992, 1996; Potter and Wetherell, 1987, 1996; Edwards and Potter, 1992), influenced by linguistic, sociological and philosophical disciplines. At the end of the '80s, Potter and Wetherell clarified that "language orders our perceptions and makes things happen" (1987: 1) and thus shows how language can be used to construct and create social interaction and diverse social worlds. For the authors, the language is a means for the action and is used in accordance with a specific function, such as, for instance, the need for explaining, justifying, asking for apology or legitimating the power of a group of actors in society. The comprehension of the function – which can be more or less explicit – is tied to the context wherein it takes place. Assuming that discourses are driven by a function means that the language is constructed for a precise purpose and with the intent of producing certain consequences. The term 'construct/constructed' is particularly adequate to use in the authors' view, since 1. it indicates that the discourse is made through pre-existing linguistic resources conforming to personal characteristics; 2. it highlights that individuals choose to utilize some linguistic resources and not others and 3. it emphasizes that the discourse is oriented to action and has practical implications (Potter & Wetherell, 1996). Therefore, as the two authors state, the discourse can no longer be viewed as neutral, rather it has to be considered a social practice. This view has been recently underlined by a group of researchers who have developed important contributions in the field of linguistics under the name of critical discourse analysis (CDA), which, nevertheless, embraces heterogeneous theoretical frameworks and techniques of investigation. One of the common points relies on the interest for the relationship between discourse and society. Indeed, the CDA has been defined as the study of the language "as a social practice" (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), which indicates that the discourse is cast by social structures, while at the same time constituting them. A second common point among the different approaches that are embedded in the CDA is the focus on the relationship between discourse and power. In fact, the CDA observes "the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society" (Dijk, 2001: 353). Hence, the attempt of the CDA is making evident the hidden and implicit relations of power, dominance, discrimination and control that are performed through the use of the language. Such attempt involves the examination of social processes that generate

¹² Our attempt here is not to provide an overview of the wide literature on discourse analysis, but – most humbly – to highlight some hints about the method that will be used for carrying out the empirical work of this thesis.

discourses and of the structures where actors create meanings. Thus, the discourse is considered at the same time an historical product and an interpretation (Wodak, 2003), which also implies that similar words and expressions are reinterpreted within different ideological frameworks (Wilson, 2001). In this regard, Fairclough suggests that discourses are representations of social life and that groups of social actors represent it in different ways and with different languages (2003). As far as the field of politics is concerned, Chilton and Schaffner advance the hypothesis that a strategic function, which is put in practice by actors through linguistic choices, connects discourses and political situations (1997). As shown, the innovative charge of the CDA is not only constituted by the attention to the language, but also to the cognitive and social dimensions that are embodied in the production of discourses.

In order to highlight the relationships between language and the cognitive and social dimensions, the discourse analysis focuses on semantic and syntactic structures as well as on figures of the speech. One of these figures is the metaphor. The metaphor entails the use of a concept or experience for better explaining another concept or experience. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue, the use of metaphors occurs frequently in the ordinary conversations. Nevertheless, they are almost hidden in the discourses of the everyday life. Metaphors participate in the construction and delimitation of meanings. They structure perceptions and actions, becoming often unconsciously – recalling the title of Lakoff and Johnson’s book – the metaphors we live by. As Lizcano states, metaphors are an expression of the collective imaginary and “through them what is not said of what is said and what is unknown of what is known comes to light¹³” (2003:19). Moreover, metaphors have a pivotal role in the political discourses, insofar as they are partly responsible of the interpretation of social problems as well as of the configuration of their solutions. Metaphors combine a cognitive and a discursive dimension. As Cuvardic highlights (2004), both dimensions have been taken into account in several studies on how political actors use metaphors for defining social phenomena and advancing political proposals (Chilton and Ilyin, 1993; Dirven, 1989). Metaphors related to the discursive framework of health or environment (i.e. healthy, illness, contamination), of warfare (i.e. strategy, resistance), of movement (i.e. advancement, increase) are often employed in the political discourses (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 2004). As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) underline, other figures of speech are often used by political actors for suggesting meanings regarding specific social issues, namely the personification and the metonymy.

Discourses and metaphors as well as other figures of speech will be taken into account in this research work with the aim of observing national cognitive and normative frameworks. The first consideration is that each social model is characterised by a specific framework, which derives from

¹³ My translation.

cognitive categories and social processes involved in the construction of the knowledge. Indeed, the cognitive and normative elements that are embedded within a social model are responsible for shaping social institutions and designing policies, by defining strategic goals, public spending and benchmarks. In the field of employment, these elements lead to the establishment of the meaning and the generosity of social protection as well as the type of employment regulation, contributing to the configuration of the social model itself. The cognitive and normative dimensions are especially relevant when observing the influence of the European institutions on the Member States. As shown in Chapter I, the dissemination of meanings and ideas, which turn into new notions and expressions, is a powerful instrument that the European Union uses through the Open Method of Coordination for spreading out the European Employment Strategy among the countries. Ideas and discourses are therefore “adapted, translated and reinterpreted to fit in the societal and institutional constraints of the particular country. Hence, discourses may be studied for themselves: to what extent discourses help the implementation of new policies, how actors use them...? We understand discourses both as the 'carriers' of ideas, of signification (meaning), and at the same time as resources for actors” (Barbier, 2009: 10).

In this dissertation, an investigation will be performed on the meanings and concepts emerging among the actors that at national and regional level contribute to the construction of employment and social protection policies. These will be assessed in the light of the capabilities approach. In terms of Sens’ approach, policies – which are a significant manifestation of the cognitive and normative framework – build and select the informational basis that “serves as the grounds for decisions regarding public policies” (Salais, 2009: 224). Amartya Sen delineates the informational basis as follows: “The informational basis of judgment identifies the information on which the judgment directly relies and – just as importantly – ensures that the truth or falsity of the other information cannot directly influence the fairness of the judgment. The informational basis of the judgment therefore determines the factual territory on which considerations relating to justice directly apply (Sen, 1990:111). The definitions of the category of ‘job’ or of the concept of ‘unemployed’ represent substantial examples of the informational basis. Such definitions that are embedded in the cognitive framework have important implications in the design and application of employment policies. Indeed, a cognitive framework may be capability-enabler, or, conversely, may produce the conceptual conditions for making the individual more vulnerable. Therefore, it is important to evaluate whether policies are thought for improving people’s well-being and whether the individual is the actual focus towards which these policies are addressed. Implicitly, this suggests that, even if the general cognitive framework is taken for granted by individuals in their

daily-life, a conceptual and practical alternative is possible. The capability approach is one of these alternatives.

In this research work, the study of the Spanish and Italian cognitive and normative frameworks will be carried out through the qualitative discourse analysis of interviews¹⁴ to key actors and experts of employment and social protection policies. Our interest for these actors is linked to the influence they have in defining, reinforcing and transforming the way to conceive problems and interventions. Since the interviewees belong to different social groups (trade unions, regional governance, associations of employment agencies and ONGs), different cognitive and normative elements will emerge according to their specific positions. Two case studies for each country will be used in this research work. In particular, the Autonomous Community of Andalucía and the Community of Valencia will serve the development of the Spanish case, whereas the Tuscany Region and the Sicily Region will be utilised for developing the Italian case. The choice is linked to the fact that these regions function as relevant examples of different kinds of policies management, labour market and employment situation at the intra-national level. Furthermore, their specific features make them acceptably comparable at the international level. In more detail, 45 semi-structured interviews (22 Spanish and 23 Italian interviews) will be conducted, transcribed and examined. The interviewees are representatives of trade unions at national and regional level, public bodies at national and regional level, ONGs at national level, temporary agency associations at national level and national experts. The expert are important insofar as they contribute to the articulation of epistemic communities that delineate national debates. The main criterion of selection of the interviewees has been their political relevance and their role in determining the definition of policies. We assume that such definition depends on social forces and power relations; consequently, we have treated to gather the actors that have a major weight in those relations. The investigation will be carried out according to two levels of analysis. The first level will concern the contents of the actors' discourses and will be a direct analysis of the material they provide; the second level will be related to the concepts, semantics, cognitive frameworks and metaphors that are evident in the actors' discourses, which will be used for an indirect analysis of the meanings they implicitly use (discourse analysis). The social group and the country to which the interviewees belong will be strongly considered. Indeed, we expect to encounter several differences amongst the interviewees. One of these can stem from the difficulty – especially for those working at

¹⁴ The interviewees to the Spanish actors have been produced within the framework of the following projects “Políticas públicas y producción política de la categoría de cuidados: el caso de la ley de dependencia” and “Producción política de la categoría de cuidados: practicas institucionales y experiencias de implementación en la atención a la dependencia”. The projects have been carried out under the direction of Prof. Maria Amparo Serrano Pascual. Data have been used also for the doctoral dissertation “Reinvención del gobierno del desempleo: Francia y España ante el marco referencial de la flexiguridad” by Maria Paz Martín Martín.

decentralized level – of expressing the meanings and concepts they employ. In this regard, we report Schmidt's words "And yet it is often the case in a given society that, at a very basic level, "everyone knows" what the basic philosophy or world-view is, even if they may not be able to define it precisely or describe how it developed or changed" (Schmidt, 2008: 308).

Since a cognitive and normative framework may take different orientations, the aim in this thesis is to evaluate whether the framework emerging among the Spanish and Italian actors tends to be mainly vulnerability- or capabilities-oriented. The evaluation will be carried out through several indicators that will be illustrated in the following paragraph.

4.4 The capability approach

Given that the capabilities approach is first of all a conceptual framework, our purpose in this thesis is analysing Spanish and Italian employment policies in cognitive and normative terms and evaluating if they are capabilities-oriented. It must be kept in mind that the opposition – capabilities/vulnerability – we often use does not mean that no other option is available, nor can it be affirmed that Sen's approach is the most valuable option. Although, it is pushed forth in the effort to contrast some neoliberal tendency that currently dominate. Indeed, the approach can be considered an alternative framework for a critical assessment of public policies, based on the idea that policies should aim to improve what persons are actually capable of being and doing; therefore, the policy informational basis should be oriented to provide the appropriate social and environmental conditions for the development of the real freedom to choose the life one has reason to value: "public action ought not to stop after his delivery, and should aim at providing a capability-friendly social context, helping every individual to enjoy the real freedom to convert her command over commodities into valuable beings and doings" (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a: 4). In fact, conversion factors, which represent one of the most original contribution of Sen's approach, should create the conditions for the transformation of formal rights and freedoms into real rights and freedoms (Abbatecola et al., 2012). Furthermore, the responsibility of designing policies and implementing programmes that favour the enhancement of the individuals' capabilities is supposed to rely on the State. In our opinion, the capability approach is a framework that may be used to evaluate the orientation of cognitive and normative elements, since it is suitable to go beyond the evaluation of policies in terms of efficacy and to furnish a view that embodies the assessment of the relations between individual potentialities and social structures (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a).

More specifically, in this dissertation the capabilities approach will be used for the assessment of two aspects: 1. the first aspect concerns social structures and arrangements – labour law,

employment regulation, social security guarantees, expenditures in active policies and education. Relating to this, the second part of the research work will focus on the Spanish and Italian context, bringing secondary statistical data and observing the labour situation of individuals (unemployment rates, temporary rates, causes of being in a specific position). The overall issue is to study whether and how public policies provide people with the conditions, rights and resources that enable them to effectively participate in the market, secure a decent lifestyle and have the freedom to choose among valuable options. In this sense, the role of the entitlement system (e.g. the entitlement to unemployment benefit) is especially important: “Entitlements and commodities form the material basis of the capability set, even if they are not enough to guarantee the development of capabilities” (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a: 4). Commodities and conversion factors will be treated in the second part of the thesis, so to contextualise the last part of the empirical work. 2. the second aspect concerns to meanings, concepts and representations. These will be investigated in the last part of the thesis so to analyse which social constructions are used by Spanish and Italian actors when discussing flexicurity policies in their countries. In fact, the capability approach provides a cognitive and normative framework for evaluating conceptualizations related to institutions and policies. As Bonvin and Farvaque state, “Any evaluation process relies on a conventional agreement defining what is expected in a given context, from the actors involved [...]. Such conventions define what Sen calls the informational basis of judgment in justice (IBJJ), they are necessary in order to stabilise the concerned agents’ mutual expectations and to allow efficient and legitimate action” (2003a: 3). According to Sen, several informational bases of judgment are possible and it is not beneficial to establish in absolute terms its content, since in the author’s view it has to stem from a conventional agreement and deliberate social choice (1999). In Bonvin and Favarque’s words: “The choice of the adequate IBJJ is made through a public and situated discussion, it is context-dependent and intersubjective” (2003b: 8). The indefinite character of the approach makes it appreciable and at the same time difficult to apply. In this thesis, an attempt of delimitation has been proposed starting from the literature in the field. The capability approach offers thus a renewed basis of judgment, leading to alternative ways of defining concepts, like that of social vulnerability, which otherwise would be neglected by standard informational bases of judgment in justice. As we will see later, the definition itself of the concept of social vulnerability mainly pivots on the idea of lack of freedom of choice. Furthermore, the capability approach may serve as a normative foundation for addressing the evaluation of policies in comparative research (Goerne, 2010). This will be useful for this research work in order to answer to the following question: “How much capability-friendly are Spanish and Italian flexicurity policies in terms of concepts and

representations? Does a capability-oriented logic with regard to unemployed and especially in reference to young people emerge? If not, which does other logic prevail?”.

For the purpose of this thesis, qualitative inquires are considered as the most appropriate tool, since they allow highlighting the cognitive framework of policies through interviews with experts. This brings us to operationalize the capability approach by looking at conceptual and discursive data and collecting information both on the “content” side (real freedom of choice) and the “process” side (organizational framework and involvement into the decisional process). The first one concerns what Farvaque and Salais (2002) name the “substantial priority”, which refers to the fact that everyone effectively has the capability to achieve functionings conventionally admitted as valuable; the second one concerns the so-called “procedural priority”, which refers to the fact that policies and services are designed in such a way as to maximize the extent of valuable choices. Content-related and process-related conditions (concerning ideological orientation, specific meanings, as well as vertical and horizontal procedures) will be operationalized through several indicators. The indicators, which gather Bonvin’s contribution (2006), try to capture key aspects that, in our opinion, result fundamental in relation to the matter of social vulnerability. The level of operationalization is maintained relatively high, since following Sen’s approach the very essence of contents and processes has to be left to personal choice and circumstances. Three main categories or macro-indicators will be used for the assessment – market versus social oriented policies; restrictive view of opportunity as productive work versus valuable job; technocratic and centralized versus situated action (decentralization and social dialogue) – which will be operationalized in a major number of capabilities-indicators that derive from the analysis of the interpretations of the interviewees. Categories and micro-indicators will be described in the following sections.

4.4.1 The orientation: productive-market oriented vs. social oriented policies.

This category refers to the commitment by society and the State to the principle of offering people an adequate opportunity set. It also refers to their availability to an enlargement of the scope of public action, as entailed by the capability approach, in the direction of providing resources, entitlements and social conversion factors. In the rhetoric of the economic mainstream, opportunities are assimilated into employability and the development of human capital is directed to workers as human resources, rather than as individuals. By contrast, the capability approach focuses on both firms and individuals according to the assumption that a positive relationship between economic and social issues is achievable. This entails the integration of social and individual

responsibility in the fight against unemployment. This category is operationalized through the indicators below.

- *General directions of employment policies*: this indicator refers to the overall normative objective that policies have to pursue. In a capabilities approach, such objective is represented by the principle of social justice that must not be subordinated to the primacy of the market (Abbatecola et al., 2012). The focus here relies on three dichotomies, which have a referential function but do not pretend to explicate the whole reality: work-first approach versus capabilities approach, passive versus active orientation and supply-side versus demand-side employment policies. This last distinction is mentioned by Bonvin (2006) and endorses the question of whether people have to adapt to the market (supply-side programmes), or the reverse (demand-side programmes). In the first case (supply-side programmes), social and employment policies would be oriented to improve individuals' marketability (ability to compete on the labour market) as well as to facilitate the access to the labour market on the basis of their employability or job-readiness (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2003a). In this case, flexibility may easily become vulnerability when moving from a temporary contract to another does not result from a personal choice, but is rather an obligation that brings people into an unprotected work position without future perspectives. In this regard, "Employability and vulnerability need not to be considered as contradictory terms, but it must be understood that the two are dynamically related and that capabilities-friendly employability rests on the reduction of individual and collective vulnerability" (Supiot, 2001: 210). In the second case (demand-side programmes), which is embodied in the capability approach, the market has to adapt to individuals as well as its opposite. Indeed, the approach considers that an adequate equilibrium (capability-friendly employability) has to be pursued, which means avoiding putting more weight on the transformation of individuals than on that of the labour market (Bonvin, 2006) and reducing the tension between economic efficiency and social equity (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2003a). This proximity between the employability and the capability approaches calls for comparison of the two IBJJs, since not all employability policies are capability-friendly. Also, according to the capabilities approach, the distinction between active/passive policies is inadequate because only the interconnection between the two can support individuals in exercising their freedom of choice. Moreover, the capabilities approach refuses the work-first approach, insofar it promotes the development of capabilities and the valuable opportunities more than a quick integration into the labour market. Likewise, the capabilities

approach embraces the concept of flexicurity joint to that of individual freedom. As Supiot states, “The only route by which a positive combination of flexibility and security is possible is within a labour market policy centred upon people's experiences and paths of life and work” (Supiot, 2001: 205).

- *Specific orientations*: in a market rhetoric, the main orientation is the rapid integration of individuals into the labour market with the aim of reducing the cost of the dependency on the State and increasing productivity. By contrast, the capability approach is not focused on the growth of output per head, but on real freedoms to choose one's way of life and work. It aims to foster opportunities, which are not associated with reinforcing individuals' marketability and workers' competitive employability, but with the possibility – in terms of availability of time, commodities and conversion factors – to find a valuable job (Bonvin, 2006). Clearly, many other orientations can be pursued, not merely tied to a market or a capabilities logic.
- *Underlying assumptions of the cognitive and normative framework*: this aspect refers to the conceptualizations embedded in the cognitive and normative framework in relation to key notions (i.e. ‘unemployed’, ‘work’, ‘worker’ and the definition of the role of the State). These conceptualizations contribute to the delineation of the informational basis of public policies. The kind of information (needs, lack of income, merit, motivation, past behaviour, and so on) that are explicitly or implicitly considered as relevant when designing active labour market programmes and assessing jobseekers' circumstances determines if the capabilities approach is in play. In the rhetoric of the market mainstream, persons are often considered as means towards macroeconomic purposes (Bonvin, 2006). In this view, the individual is deprived of all the rich attributions that characterise him/her as a human being, since only the connotation of individual as a worker is recognised. In this regard, Sen affirms that the human capital approach envisages persons as productive tools, whose competitiveness should be improved in order to increase GDP and economic prosperity. The worker is thus identified with a human resource, rather than as an individual with wishes and needs.
- *Temporal dimension and overview*: this indicator takes into account the temporal dimension according to which policies are designed and implemented. The development of capabilities requires a long-term perspective, and cannot accommodate with short-term horizons or

presentism. As Bonvin and Farvaque make evident (2003a), the path towards employment or social integration may be very long. Therefore, fixing short deadlines for the application of employment policies means mainly preventing vulnerable groups of people to benefit of what the policies potentially offer.

4.4.2 The content: a restrictive view of opportunity as productive work vs. valuable job

Bonvin (2006) refers to this category as the opposition between productive work and valuable job. The definition of “valuability” is partly linked to the concept of “job quality” – which can be drawn from the literature and the European indicators – and partly has to remain open to individuals’ interpretations, expectations and demands. The capability approach promotes a view of work as a utility and a way to realise oneself in opposition to the restrictive conception of productive work as a marketable commodity (Bonvin, 2006). According to this, the capability approach foresees the real freedom to choose the work one has reason to value. It also considers that all people should be adequately equipped to avoid a valueless job, either through the real possibility to refuse it (thanks to a valuable alternative, be it decent unemployment benefits or another job), or through the possibility to transform it into something one has reason to value (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a). The authors argue that the existence of a valuable exit option, “is the very foundation of the capacity to negotiate the constraints connected to work” (2005a: 6). The main issue at stake is creating the conditions not only in terms of quantity and quality for valuable employment, but also in terms of access. For this reason, we consider more appropriate to extend the attribution of “valuability” to the whole process of integration of people into employment. Indeed, access to valuable jobs is feasible only if a logic of opportunities for individuals is appreciable behind policies and public employment services. In the rhetoric of the active welfare state, opportunities are defined as employability, whereas the concept of ‘opportunity’ is absent in the rhetoric of the conventional welfare state, which is limited to providing cash resources (Bonvin, 2006). By contrast, in the capabilities approach, the opportunities are not envisaged as instrumental to economic productivity on the labour market, but are strictly linked to freedom of choice. The introduction of the language of opportunity can be used as a normative framework against which policies can be assessed (Dean et al. 2004).

- *Availability of job opportunities in the labour market:* this indicator is based on the fundamental idea that employment policies cannot aim at improving job-seekers’ employability only, but also have to make the social context more inclusive. Indeed, in a

capability approach “employability without employment does not make sense” (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a: 7). In Sen’s approach, fostering the creation of job means, above all, increasing the freedom and possibility of choice. As Supiot states “The more jobs and the more opportunities for work and earning there are, the more assurance there will be of a certain security in life [...] The best security is therefore that which is based on job creation” (2001: 211). As clarified in the previous paragraph, the analysis of this aspect will not focus on the effective availability of job opportunities, but on how the interviewees interpret the issue.

- *Quality of job opportunities:* in a capabilities approach, the availability of jobs and the opportunity for the unemployed to come back to work is not adequate enough for broadening the possibility of choice, if the idea of “the superiority of low-quality jobs vis-à-vis all forms of non-work” dominates policies (Bonvin, 2006: 220). Indeed, the view of a quick labour market integration on the explicit ground that having a bad job is better than having no job at all does not take into account the “valuability” of employment (Bonvin, 2006). The issue of “valuability” is intrinsic into the approach and its definition cannot be established a-priori. In our view, it partly stems from individuals’ needs and desires and partly can be drawn from the rich literature on employment “quality” (Prieto et al., 2009; Guillén & Dahl; 2009; Davoine, 2006; Davoine and Erhel, 2006 and 2008; Davoine, Erhel and Guergoat-Larivière, 2008; Gallie, 2007). Great attention has been dedicated to the topic of quality also within European debates, especially during the European Council in March 2000 – when the Lisbon Strategy was launched – and later on in the European Council of Nice (2000), Stockholm (2001) and Laeken (2001). Thus it became an important concern of the European Commission (EC, 2001, 2003, 2006c, 2007a). At the European level, the concept of job quality has given rise to two definitions that have been formulated respectively by the EC and the ILO (“decent work”). The two definitions, which belong to diverse cognitive matrix and semantic domains, follow different logics and political goals (Prieto et al., 2009). The notion of job quality has become part of the debate within the EU and several indicators have been produced (i.e. working conditions, wage, development of skills, training, and development career, health and safety, flexibility and employment security, inclusion into the labour market). However, this thesis will focus on how the actors that have been interviewed construct the idea of quality, which contributes to the design and implementation of policies.

- *Access to job opportunities:* in order to gain valuable employment, individuals require more than formal access to possibilities (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a). They need to be provided with the proper means to enjoy opportunities, which includes 1. employment services (i.e. vocational guidance, re-qualification and training, traineeships, match of supply and demand) that favour the entry into the labour market and the achievement of valuable jobs; 2. an adequate social protection to unemployed throughout the transitional phases from one workplace to another through equal access to benefits; and 3. coordination and integration of the previous services and social security guarantees. This indicator focuses on the meanings of the possibilities and services offered to individuals in order to observe if they are interpreted as conversion factors that have to facilitate the access to job opportunities for everyone. In the capability framework, the promotion of a valuable transition and integration is a key political challenge.

4.4.3 The vertical process: technocratic and centralized mode of governance vs. situated and reflexive public action

This category refers to the procedure through which employment and social protection policies are designed, implemented and assessed. In this regard, the multi-level governance, according to which the regulatory framework moves closer to local levels, plays a relevant role in the capability approach. Indeed, decentralized governance is considered to better serve individuals' expectations and address diversity. Hence, policies should be placed in their territorial context (Supiot, 2001). In particular, Bonvin uses the word "situated" to refer to a public action located within established negotiation and decision-making process at national, regional and local levels. In the capabilities approach, policies should not be controlled according to a centralized and technocratic mode of governance that imposes predetermined functionings on benefit recipients; by contrast, they should be tailor-made and their content be agreed with regional and local actors, including job-seekers (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a).

- *Closeness to individuals: centralized vs. decentralized governance:* this aspect focuses on the process of decentralization and territorialization, which is fundamental for taking into adequate account individual circumstances and local situations. In fact, the capabilities approach requires a combination of top-down and bottom-up procedures in accordance with the notion of "situated public action" (Bonvin and Orton, 2009; Salais and Villeneuve, 2004; Bonvin, 2006). Such indicator starts from the assumption that a

strict top-down procedure – with clear-cut objectives, binding performance indicators, central directives and technocratic managerial modes of operation – hinders local agency and tailor-made interventions, whereas it is worthwhile to leave as much autonomy as possible to the local actors (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a).

- *Individualised tailor-made policies*: this indicator refers to the opportunities of choice that public action makes available to job-seekers, avoiding to impose “specific ways of being and thinking” (Abbatecola et al., 2012). In a capabilities approach the cognitive and normative framework informing policies has to be tailor-made oriented and its guideline has to be represented by the following question: “What is the individual able to do with the tools policies provide her/him with”? In fact, Sen’s approach stresses the aspect of human diversity and directs the attention to analyse policies in terms of individualisation. As Goerne underlines (2010), the normative position of the capabilities approach is that individualisation has to be preferred to standardization. Thus, policies should not lead to scheme careers but help people to build their own professional life. In this regard, the use of general administrative classifications for categorising individuals is discouraged in order to foster a better definition of the evolution of the individual situation (Bonvin and Galster, 2010). Hence, the opposition between the two aspects – targets vs. individualised tailor-made policies – is assumed here to indicate the extent to which the interpretations of employment policies are oriented towards a capabilities approach.
- *Evaluation of policies: quantitative output vs. global assessment of capabilities enhancement*: this indicator relates to the fact that, according to a capability-oriented approach, the success of employment policies should be evaluated in terms of capability enhancement for recipients. The increasing tendency to introduce quantitative performance targets in order to guide and control the action of policies reduces the local margin for manoeuvre. The capability approach is not in line with categories of social risks defined by central political bodies, as it occurs in conventional welfare, nor with ex-ante setting goals and predefined objectives, as it is in the case of the classical top-down procedures of the New Public Management (NPM). In fact, in both these case, situated public action that is promoted by Sen’s approach is not taken into account (Leonardi, 2009).

4.4.4 The horizontal process: technocratic and centralized mode of governance vs. situated and reflexive public action

The constitution of a situated and reflexive public action stems not only from a local deliberative approach in the development and assessment of policies (decentralization or vertical dialogue), but also from the involvement of social partners and individuals' representatives in their design and implementation (social dialogue and involvement of civil society organization or horizontal dialogue). In fact, the capability approach foresees the commitment of different bodies, according to the view that policies should be deliberated between all local actors. The participation of partners in the various decision-making and implementation processes plays a pivotal role in the process of policies construction and in ensuring the positive correlation between policies and needs of the recipients. This occurs if the participation is substantial, effective, and open to everybody.

- *Meaning of social dialogue and actors involved in the construction of employment policies:* this micro-indicator refers to the value and meanings given to the deliberative process that public action develops for social groups and specific collectivities. The capability's approach considers that the conceptions and decisions at the basis of public policies have to be shared by the actors involved in the policy construction. This implies that all partners – job seekers, civil officers, trade unions, employers, ONGs and temporary employment agencies associations – are allowed to take part in the design and implementation of labour market policies (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a) through collective bargaining, negotiation and social dialogue.
- *Kinds of participation in social dialogue:* this indicator concerns the role and the type of influence played by the actors. In this regard, Bonvin and Farvaque state that one of the conditions that have to be satisfied in a capabilities approach is “The setting up of a substantial discursive space guaranteeing that all partners' point of view is duly taken into account in the course of public policy design, implementation and assessment” (2003b: 16). Thus, different kinds of involvement of social partners in social dialogue can be distinguished: 1. advisory vs. decision-making participation 2. effective and substantial vs. formal participation 3. participation in the design and/or implementation of policies.
- *Effectiveness of social dialogue:* According to the capabilities approach, deliberative democracy has to be efficacious and operative. In this regard, as Supiot's report affirms

(2001), it is important to create the space for public deliberation, within which social actors can exercise their freedom to act. Such space cannot be announced or promoted only, rather it has to be effective.

After presenting the indicators, we focus now on the drawbacks of the approach at an operative level. In fact, the phase of operationalization of the capabilities approach still leaves many unresolved problems (Leonardi, 2009), as we have seen in the previous chapter in the paragraph related to the limitations of the capabilities approach. One of the difficulty relates to the low definition of the indicators we have proposed, which leaves open the research to many interpretations and shadow areas where it is not clear what capabilities encompass and what they do not. This is mainly linked to the blurred character of the approach. Moreover, as far as the categories showed before are concerned, it can be noticed the trend of configuring the indicators in terms of polarization through the use of the notion “versus (vs.)”. This does not mean that the answers of the interviews will be conducted towards one direction or another nor that our interpretations won’t consider what is placed in the middle between the two poles. The simplification is mainly oriented to make evident the differences that the indefinite character of the approach could hide. Furthermore, it must be remarked that the issues of equity and justice are crucial in the capabilities approach; in this thesis, no specific indicator has been designed in relation to them, since we considered more adequate that both issues are pervasive in all the indicators that have been previously proposed. Finally, as Goerne underlines, “there is still some lack of clarity regarding the question of what the capabilities approach actually is, how it should be interpreted and operationalised, and not least whether it is an adequate and useful concept for the analysis of social policy in Europe” (2010: 6). Nevertheless, its innovative charge and contribution are unquestionable. In spite of the drawbacks of the approach, we are strongly convinced that its originality and relevance far exceed its limitations.

4.5 Concluding remarks

The use in this dissertation of a varied methodology allows us to have a broad overview of the Spanish and Italian policies in the last decades and assess the flexicurity policies in the light of the capability approach. In particular, a comparative perspective will be adopted in this study, where Spain and Italy will be at the center of the analysis. Statistical data, secondary sources and legislative texts will be utilized for the second part, whereas a qualitative discursive method will be employed in the last part of the research work. Indeed, the second part aims to provide a general and

synthetic overview of the Spanish and Italian situation, in terms of labour market, welfare system, social institutions and reforms. By contrast, the qualitative method will allow deepening the issue of social vulnerability in relation to flexicurity by assessing the meanings, concepts and representations involved within policies that have taken place in the last decades. The assessment will be carried out in relation to capabilities indicators that have been drawn on the basis of the literature and the analysis of the interviews. The presence of a soft definition of the indicators is mainly tied to the approach itself, which deliberately provides mainly principles and views more than strict variables. Therefore, principles and views remain largely open to researchers' interpretations. In spite of the difficulties that the application of the approach entails, due to the lack of a rigorous demarcation of the indicators, we consider that its use for the study of public policies is more than valuable. Also, the low level of clearness of the approach will allow for the use of combined discursive, conceptual and normative elements. Indeed, the effort consists not only in identifying the cognitive and normative frameworks that contribute to the policy construction, but also evaluating them against the cognitive and normative framework of the capabilities approach.

In the following parts of this doctoral dissertation, the capability approach will be applied to the Spanish and Italian flexicurity policies in order to assess them in terms of cognition, norms and values and to identify their specific orientation. In particular, next chapters (Part II) will investigate social conversion factors in the two countries, which are absolutely crucial in defining the opportunities for people to achieve what they value. These chapters will serve to contextualise the study developed in the last part of this thesis.

PART II. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS – FLEXICURITY POLICIES: WHICH CONVERSION FACTORS AND COMMODITIES?

In part II, it will be showed that labour markets and welfare states in Europe have undergone manifold transformations in the last twenty years, which have resulted in a complex and perpetually changing picture. Common trends can be highlighted between the European member states because of the effort by the EU to make them converge on each other according to specific demands and guidelines delivered in several occasions, like the Lisbon European Council (2000) and the Stockholm European Council (2001). In this context, the diversification of forms of employment and the spread of atypical, flexible and unstable contractual arrangements have been a crucial mechanism in transforming employment regulation, national labour market structures, and social protection systems (OECD, 1999a; EC, 2006) as well as the characteristics of the labour supply (OECD, 2002). Therefore, the study of these elements cannot be neglected, when assessing substantial freedoms and possibilities of choice in Sen's view.

As shown in the Chapter III, the development of capabilities requires not only the provision to individuals of commodities and material resources, but also effective factors of conversion. These factors allow the empowerment of individuals, when equipped with sufficient resources and means to convert these into capacity to act. Conversion factors include both individual aspects (i.e. skills and competences) and social parameters, which will be deeply explored in this second part of the dissertation. In particular, economic and social opportunities as well as the legal framework related to the pillars of flexicurity will be studied in the following chapters at the light of the specific Spanish and Italian social models. The attempt here is to assess the potential development of individual capabilities in relation to productive systems, employment and welfare regimes as well as national reforms. Indeed, Sen allots a central role to context in shaping individuals' opportunities. The analysis of the conversion factors will allow to define the Spanish and Italian profiles of vulnerability, where the concept of vulnerability indicates the involuntary condition in which individuals are bound to live. Indeed, these profiles depend on a complex set of institutional configurations. The aim of this part of the thesis is therefore to make evident the economic and socio-political aspects of vulnerability in Italy and Spain through the analysis of different social models, including labour market, public support, the selectivity in the access to benefits and the generosity of the benefits distributed.

The following chapters try to describe the main features of the Spanish and Italian labour markets and social protection systems over the last decades, as well as the transformations that have occurred in this time. Chapter V and Chapter VI will try to delineate the Spanish and Italian profiles of social vulnerability. Chapter VII will describe the national legislation as regards to the four

pillars of flexicurity, with the intent of having an overview of the policy-design orientation. Finally, in Chapter VIII a special attention will be reserved to the specific target group of young people, so as to shed light on whether the youth suffers a condition of vulnerability or is capability-enabled to enjoy real opportunities of choice.

Chapter V.

Economic aspects of social vulnerability: social model, economic-productive system and labour market

5.1 Introduction

Social models, economic-productive systems and specificities of national labour markets are decisive factors in defining possibilities and freedoms for individuals, insofar as, according to the capability approach, the institutional and socio-economic context contributes to the production of the conditions for well-being, and hence is important in understanding social vulnerability. Social and economic research has extensively investigated and still continues to investigate the relationship between these factors and exclusion patterns, focusing, in particular, on the connections between unstable employment and marginalization. Already in the 1990s, the introduction of new forms of employment and the spread of atypical work arose questions about the consequences, in terms of career opportunities and life-course choices, of labour market flexibilization and the exposure of non-standard workers to employment and income discontinuity (Fellini and Migliavacca, 2010; Taylor-Gooby, 2004; Paci, 2005).

Economic insecurity is generally associated with vulnerability, since a high risk of income difficulties may hinder the possibility of enjoying life opportunities. Living in a state of monetary fragility and likely to fall into material deprivation because of negative events concerns a number of people wider than those strictly defined as “poor”. Indeed, the likelihood of suffering economic hardship across the life-course goes beyond permanent poverty, including temporary poverty – when the individual is affected by isolated episodes – and recurrent poverty – when the individual exits and enters this condition (Curatolo and Wolleb, 2010; Layte and Fouarge, 2004).

Employment instability “is not a vulnerabilizing factor in itself”, as Fellini and Migliavacca remark (2010: 92); rather, in the authors’ view, it is so when leaving this condition is hard or when the connection between this and fragmented labour market careers is strong. In this dissertation, it is also considered that the relationship between labour market instability and social vulnerability must not be taken for granted, but we also state that it has to be defined on the basis of what individuals desire and value as well as on the basis of the institutions available for avoiding that instability converts into vulnerability. Accordingly, a high level of flexibility and a great rate of part-time contracts do not correspond directly to a higher or lower level of social vulnerability, but it is the

individuals' possibility of decision-making that orients them in one direction or another: "People's 'capability' (what they actually can do and be) stands for their effective positive freedom: for instance, (...) the freedom (...) to work full time if this is one's wish" (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007: 53). This represents our way of applying the capability approach in the assessment of national labour markets. The effort here is to extract from data the component of the individual choice in order to evaluate whether the context has allowed its development. Unfortunately, statistical sources of this kind are barely available, so that this research work would welcome a larger production of data that highlights the gap between what individuals wish and their actual life experience.

This chapter describes the main features of the Spanish and Italian economic-productive systems and labour markets as well as the transformations that have occurred since the mid-90's. The aim is to examine the economic aspects of vulnerability in Italy and Spain, which refer to how much the labour market weakens individuals, insofar as it does not provide an adequate livelihood or the stability they consider necessary to themselves. These aspects, as we will see, are closely associated with unstable employment and income insecurity.

The analysis begins by describing the economic-productive systems and standards of living conditions. It carries on by defining the employment situation within the Spanish and Italian labour markets in the last twenty years, through the observation of the activity, employment and unemployment rates in comparison with the other EU countries. The variation of the Spanish and Italian rates by gender and age will be also considered, in order to evaluate how individual characteristics interact with social conversion factors. The unemployment situation will be deepened focusing on long-term unemployment, the incidence of unemployment by duration and the incidence of discouraged people. The analysis moves on exploring the evolution of the temporary and part-time employment in this period according to sex and age. It appears fundamental here to highlight the reasons that brought individuals to stay in those conditions, which in the end is essential to defining a situation of vulnerability, as it assumes a non-choice. Some attention will be also paid to individuals' perceptions of their labour situation and financial insecurity. The analysis of the economic aspects of vulnerability finally includes the study of the relation between the qualification of the labour force and unemployment or atypical contracts. Indeed, labour market makes education and skills useful increasing employability, allowing people to have more opportunities and reducing the risk and the impact of vulnerability. The results will help in identifying the profiles of social vulnerability in Italy and Spain from the economic and labour viewpoint.

5.2 The Spanish and Italian economic systems

A brief introduction to the Spanish and Italian economic system is required here in order to comprehend the situation in which the social vulnerability develops. The economic system plays a key role in defining which possibilities are available for the individuals and in expanding the freedoms they enjoy (see Chapter III), even if productivity indexes cannot be considered the only factor to take into account when analysing the national well-being. Indeed, disregarding social policies and institutional settings – that will be treated in the next chapter – would be misleading with regard the understanding of the whole picture. In this paragraph we will focus mainly on three elements:

1. human development and economic growth,
2. standards of living conditions and workers' compensation,
3. product-market competition.

First of all, the Human Development Index¹⁵ (HDI) furnishes a list of countries on the basis of their development, embracing more than economic variables. It is a comparative measure of life expectancy, educational attainment (expected years of schooling and mean years of schooling) and income (measured by Gross National Income – GNI per capita, PPP\$), published by the United Nations Development Programme. Its creation was influenced and encouraged by Sen's approach, and it can be considered a standard means of measuring well-being and the impact of economic policies on quality of life. The HDI is also used to distinguish developed, under-developed and developing countries. Both Spain and Italy fall in the category of developed countries with very high HDI.

¹⁵ The HDI is a single composite statistic that serves as a frame of reference for both social and economic development. It results from the aggregation of three components (education, life expectancy at birth and wealth) and is expressed as a value between 0 and 1 (United Nation Development Programme).

Figure 7. HDI Spain

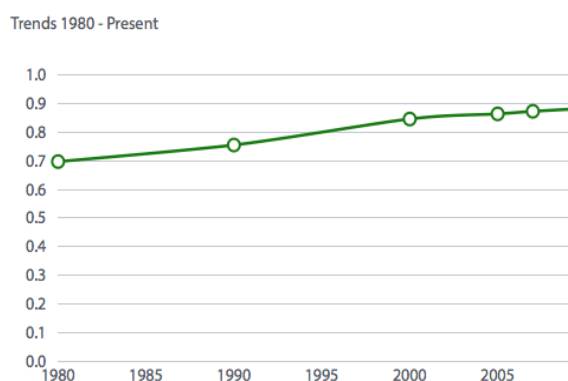
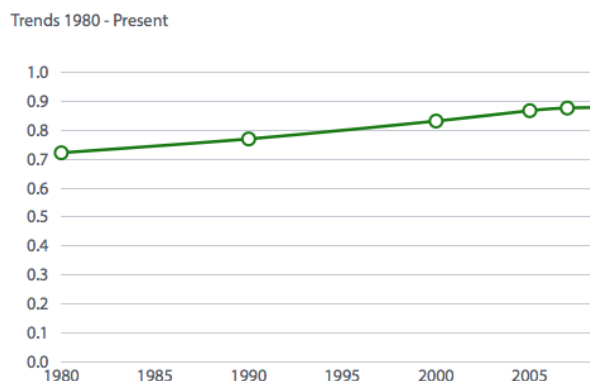


Figure 8. HDI Italy



Source: Human Development Reports. United Nations Development Programme website

According to the Human Development Report (2013), Spain ranks in the twenty-third position in 2012, with a punctuation of 0.756 in 1990, 0.847 in 2000, 0.865 in 2005 and 0.874 in 2007 while Italy ranks in the twenty-fifth position with a punctuation of 0.771 in 1990, 0.833 in 2000, 0.869 in 2005 and 0.878 in 2007. Comparing the data over the time, it can be noted that Spain has been increasing slightly more than Italy in the period nearly 2000, even if its starting score was lower (Fig.7-8). As shown by the figures, the two countries reveal very similar punctuations that become even closer from 2005. Moreover, it is interesting to observe that they are collocated in a medium position in comparison to the other very high HDI countries.

The Human Development Index born partly in opposition to the Gross Domestic Product, pretending to be a powerful tool for measuring the socio-economic progress and highlighting the relation between material wealth and human development within countries. Indeed, the expansion of individual's choices is not determined by national wealth itself, but rather by governmental decisions about how to use it through investments in public policies. In addition to the HDI, it is interesting to analyse also other traditional measures of national economy and standard of living in order to explore the contribution of the Spanish and Italian specificities in the reduction of social vulnerability.

The Gross Domestic Product¹⁶ (GDP), which is defined as the “value of all goods and services produced less the value of any goods or services used in their creation” (Eurostat), can provide general information of the Spanish and Italian economic activity. In particular, the GDP growth rate

¹⁶ If the real expenditure on GDP is divided by the number of inhabitants in each country, the resulting real expenditure per inhabitant can be used as an indicator of the relative standard of living of the inhabitants of each country. Since we are referring to the standard of living *relative* to another country, or group of countries, it is often preferable to express GDP per capita in PPS as volume indexes per capita, fixing the value of one country or group of countries at 100 (Eurostat).

shows that Spain reveals an impressive situation over the years (Fig. 9). Growth in Spain is substantially faster than in Italy and in the average of the other European countries, even if all of the countries perform similarly pursuing the same trend. A growth stop in 2000 followed a dizzy development started in 1996. Countries' economy slowed markedly since 2000 until 2002, when they started changing their tendency. Both Italy and Spain's growth rate rose of near 1.5 points from 2002, albeit a generalised decline appeared in 2006. Italian growth rates at that time came down showing a sharp decrease. However, all over the period under analysis Italy suffers low productivity and a worsening of its economic performance, lagging well below the EU average.

Figure 9. Real GDP growth rate – volume (percentage change on previous year)¹⁷



Source: Eurostat. Own elaboration

Focusing now more on an individual dimension and observing the GDP per capita (volume indices of real expenditures per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS), EU-15 =100), which can be considered a measure of the standard of living conditions¹⁸ (Eurostat), it is noticeable that Italy holds higher punctuations in comparison to Spain over the time, even if it reveals a decreasing trend that has reduced the gap between the two countries (Tab. 1). By contrast, Spain has been characterised by an increasing trend, so that in 2008 its punctuation was very close to Italy. Although the countries are close to the EU-15 average, Spain has shown lower punctuations, while in Italy the volume of GDP per capita has been 2-5% higher than in the EU-15 until 2000.

¹⁷ The calculation of the annual growth rate of GDP volume is intended to allow comparisons of the dynamics of economic development both over time and between economies of different sizes. For measuring the growth rate of GDP in terms of volumes, the GDP at current prices are valued in prices of the previous year and the thus computed volume changes are imposed on the level of a reference year; this is called a chain-linked series. Accordingly, price movements will not inflate the growth rate (Eurostat).

¹⁸ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/The_EU_in_the_world_-_economy_and_finance

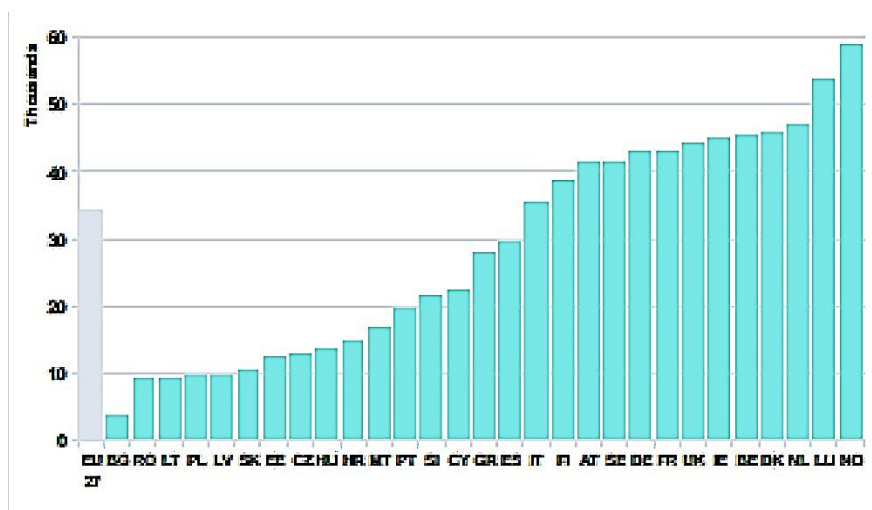
Table 1. GDP per capita (volume indices of real expenditures per capita in PPS, EU-15 =100)

	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15	100	100	100	100
SP	79	84	90	93
IT	105	102	93	94

Source: Eurostat. Own elaboration

We now move to observe the compensation per employee and growth real compensation¹⁹ (Fig. 10-11).

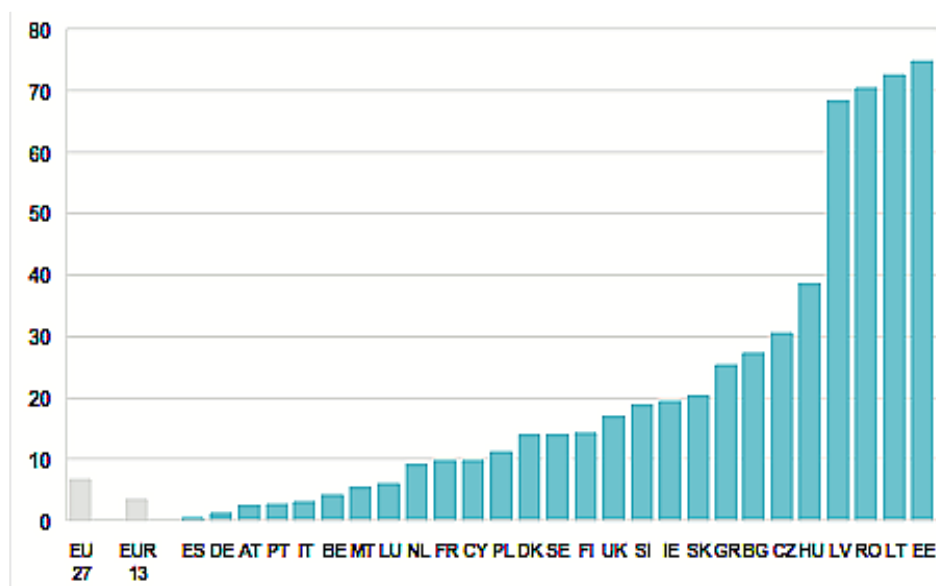
Figure 10. Compensation per employee 2007 (%)



Source: AMECO, from Benchmarking working Europe 2008.

¹⁹ According to Ameco database, compensation of employees is the total remuneration payable by an employer to an employee in return for work done by the latter during the accounting period. Compensation of employees encompass wages and salaries in cash and wages and salaries in kind, as well as employers' social contribution (expressed in euro).

Figure 11. Growth real compensation per employee 2000-2007 (%)

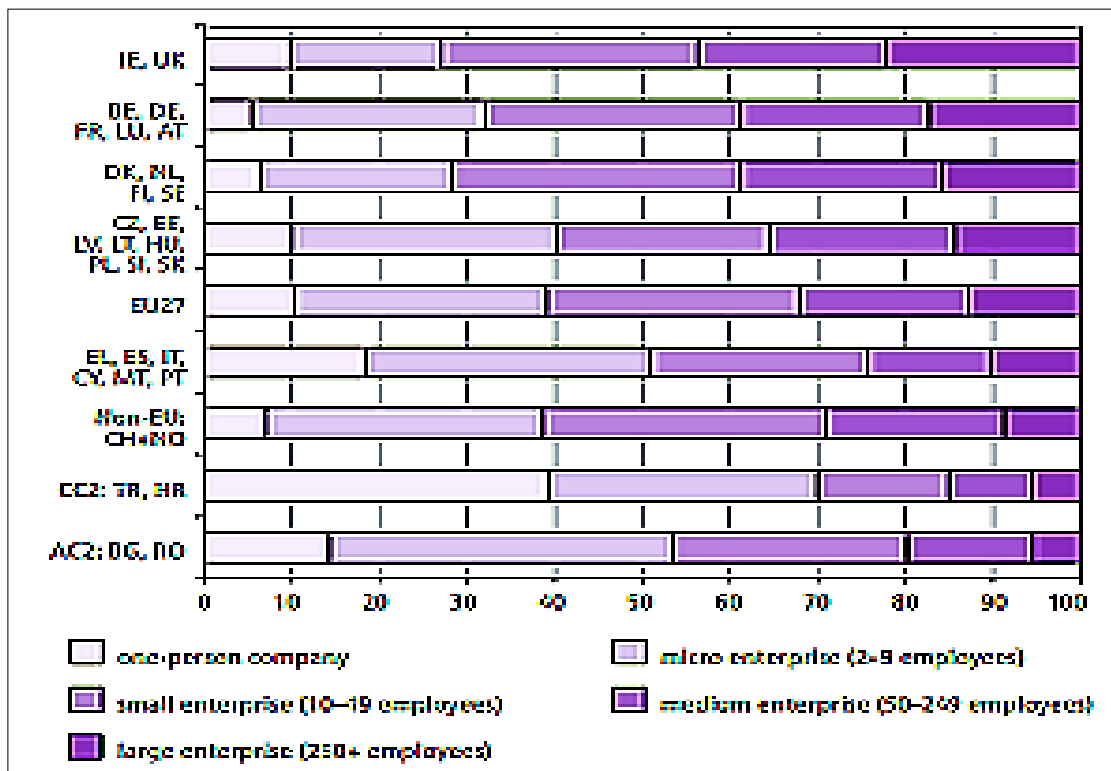


Source: AMECO, from Benchmarking working Europe 2008.

Average yearly compensation per employee (Fig. 10) appears similar in Italy and Spain in comparison to the other European members, converging on around 30000 €. Although, an important difference can be detected as they constitute the “watershed” between high and low compensation countries. Indeed, Italy is the first country where compensations are higher than the European average, which is nearly 35000, followed by the Continental, Anglo-Saxon and Northern countries where compensation achieves more than 58000€. By contrast, Spain is the first country where wages and salaries are lower than the EU-27 average, followed by other Southern and Eastern countries where compensation reaches barely 30000 € or even 20000 € (ETUI, 2008). Observing growth of compensation (Fig. 11), it can be noticed a very limited growth in the EU-27 in the period between 2000 and 2007, since wages and salaries increased by only almost 7%, which means less than one percentage per year. Moreover, different levels of wage growth are detectable within the EU and the convergence between the member states is still far from being achieved. Most noticeably, compensation growth has been absolutely minimal in Spain and Italy, amounting to less than 5% in 2000-2007 or less than half a percent per year. In particular, Spain shows the lowest growth of compensation in this respect and it is closely followed by Italy. Although GDP per capita and yearly compensation per employee in Spain and Italy are close to the EU-15 average, examining both growth real compensation and real GDP growth rate, it can be observed that real wage growth remains behind productivity growth.

Finally, the third element we take into account in order to have a general glance of the Spanish and Italian economic systems is the product-market competition between firms and between individuals (Amable, 2003). The intensity of competition may stem from competition regulation and the average size of firms, among others (Amable, 2003; Nicoletti et al., 2000). With respect to the former, Spain and Italy are characterised by the involvement of the State, substantial product-market regulation and price-rather than quality-based competition (Amable, 2003; Hall and Soskice, 2001). Regarding the latter, we now observe the distribution of employment in order to understand the entrepreneurial structure and the average size of firms in different countries.

Figure 12. Distribution of employment by company size and country group



Source: Fourth EWCS, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions 2007

In the figure above (Fig. 12), we can see the prevalence of small enterprises in Italy and Spain, showing an entrepreneurial structure formed mainly by one-person companies, micro firms (2-9 employees) and small firms (10-19 employees). In contrast, medium and large enterprises represent only a bit more than 20% of all national companies. Observing the figure and at the light of Amable's research (2003), the two countries, that are included in the same group, result characterised by low product-market competition. These features make these countries different from most of other European members. Nevertheless, relevant differences that do not appear in this

figure can also be detected between them. In particular, low intensity of competition and the extended presence of small firms within the Spanish economic model produce low salaries and high flexibility, which is also partly due to the development in recent years of sectors with low productivity, namely construction, tourism and low-quality jobs services (Banyuls et al., 2009; Prieto, 2014). The expansion of tertiary activities has also concerned the Italian product market that is characterized, moreover, by a predominance of small and medium-sized firms, usually family-owned, on one hand and industrial districts in the North, mainly specialized in manufacturing and low-skills intensive sectors, on the other hand (Simonazzi et al., 2009; Borghi, 2007). This dualism of production models, mirroring the North-South divide and concerning more than the economic sphere (employment, social services, health care, education) (Simonazzi et al., 2009; Fargion, 2005), makes Italy a ‘deviant case’ (Simonazzi et al., 2009: 201), characterized by ‘a mix of logics, a high degree of institutional incoherence and an apparent absence of complementarities’ (Molina and Rhodes, 2007: 223). For this double face, some scholars place Italy within both the Southern European and continental countries. Also the Spanish case is considered to belong to different categories of economic systems because of contradictory trends, as, for example, the close relations among some firms and the state join to generate an increasing tendency towards liberalization (Banyuls et al., 2009; Crouch, 2005). The extensive presence of underground economy and poor jobs in terms of security, wages, working conditions and the qualification required are made evident in both Italy and Spain (Simonazzi et al., 2009; Ybarra et al, 2002, Banyuls et al., 2009).

As shown in this paragraph, Spain and Italy generally go hand in hand with each other. They reveal close similarities in their economic systems and in the entrepreneurial structures in comparison to other European countries. Nevertheless, Italy displays a higher standard of living, in terms of GDP per capita and compensation per employee, while Spain performs an extraordinary economic growth over the period under analysis, often followed by sweeping decline. This striking trait, while following the same trends as Italy and the European average, makes the Spanish context very different from the Italian situation. Thus, Spain experiences an economic boom between 1997 and 2007 even if the living conditions of individuals remain lower than Italy, where people enjoy better conditions, at least in the Northern regions, in a stagnant economic system. After considering the production system, Spanish and Italian labour markets will be described in order to observe how social vulnerability emerges in relation to employment and contractual arrangements.

5.3 Labour market: activity, employment and unemployment

In order to define the economic aspects of individuals' vulnerability, it is fundamental to analyse the activity, employment and unemployment rates, which can attest to whether the Spanish and Italian contexts foster individual substantive freedoms. Before starting, we have to describe the meaning of these concepts and bear in mind the notion of 'choice' they enclose. In particular, the definition of unemployment represents the cornerstone for this analysis. Reporting the definition of Eurostat, unemployment is the condition in which persons (16-74 aged, in Spain and Italy) "*were not employed during the reference week, had actively sought work during the past four weeks and were ready to begin working immediately or within two weeks. The duration of unemployment is defined as the duration of a search for a job or as the length of the period since the last job was held (if this period is shorter than the duration of search for a job)*". As noted, 'unemployment' refers to the duration of a search by someone who is unwilling to stay in a specific situation and therefore is looking for a change with the aim of achieving a position they value. This is consistent with our assumption of "vulnerability", as the condition the individual does not consider desirable for him/herself and that prejudices her possibility of choice, contrasting thus with Sen's idea of a meaningful life. Moreover, the definition of 'unemployment' is that which better represents the condition of vulnerability in comparison to other notions like "persons seeking work but not immediately available"²⁰ and "persons available to work but not seeking"²¹. In fact, these two notions generate doubts and shadows that would make the complex concept of vulnerability less understandable. Unfortunately, it cannot be deduced from this that "employment" is the condition where someone wants to be, since this is not included in the definition of employment as expressed by Eurostat. Nevertheless, it is interesting to rest on these data in order to have an overall view of the Spanish and Italian context.

5.3.1 Activity and employment rates

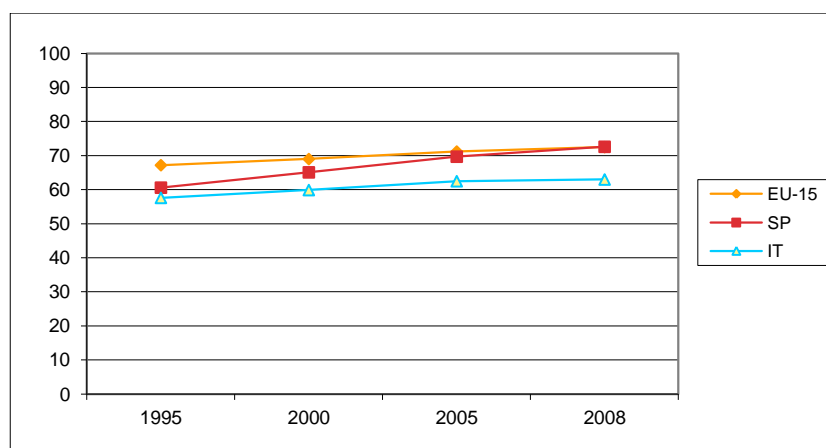
Observing activity rates can help to outline the general situation of labour force available in Spain and Italy. It is calculated as the proportion in percentage points of persons in the labour

²⁰ Persons seeking work but not immediately available are the sum of persons neither employed nor unemployed who: (a) are actively seeking work during the last 4 weeks but not available for work in the next 2 weeks; or (b) found a job to start in less than 3 months and are not available for work in the next 2 weeks; or (c) found a job to start in 3 months or more; or (d) are passively seeking work during the last 4 weeks and are available for work in the next 2 weeks (Eurostat).

²¹ Persons available to work but not seeking are persons neither employed nor unemployed who want to work, are available for work in the next 2 weeks but are not seeking work (Eurostat).

force²² in relation to the total population of the same age (15-64). This kind of data is especially useful, insofar as it provides a more precise idea joint with the unemployment rate of the size of the obstacles individuals meet in their own life project concerning the labour market. Moreover, the activity rates have acquire a greater importance, when the idea of the activation of population for achieving a situation of full employment has been introduced by the Lisbon Strategy.

Figure 13. Activity rate (%) (total sex, 15-64, total Isced)



Source: Eurostat

Both the European average and Italy show slight upward trends while in Spain activity percentage increases significantly by over 10%. Italy consistently holds the lowest activity rate while the European average, starting as the highest in 1995, is matched by Spain in 2008. Italy reports an activity rate of below 60% in 1995 but increases to 63% by 2008. By 2008, Spain and EU-15 are nearly the same at roughly 73%, and are both roughly 10% higher than Italy's rates. According to some scholars, the general low level of the activity rate here can be explained by the high presence of undeclared work, that in Italy seems to acquire a special relevance because of the broad extension of the phenomenon (Antonelli and De Liso, 2004).

In order to analyse the activity rate by gender, we can observe the following table.

²² Activity rate refers to the percentage of active population, which which comprises employed and unemployed persons. By contrary, inactive population consists of all persons who are classified neither as employed nor as unemployed (Eurostat). For the definition of employed and unemployed persons, see respectively "employment rate" and "unemployment rate" in the following notes.

Table 2. Activity rate (%) (15-64) by gender

MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15	77,7	78,2	79	79,5	EU-15	56,8	59,9	63,5	65,4
SP	75,5	78,5	80,9	81,8	SP	45,8	51,8	58,3	63,2
IT	73,2	73,8	74,6	74,4	IT	42,4	46,2	50,4	51,6

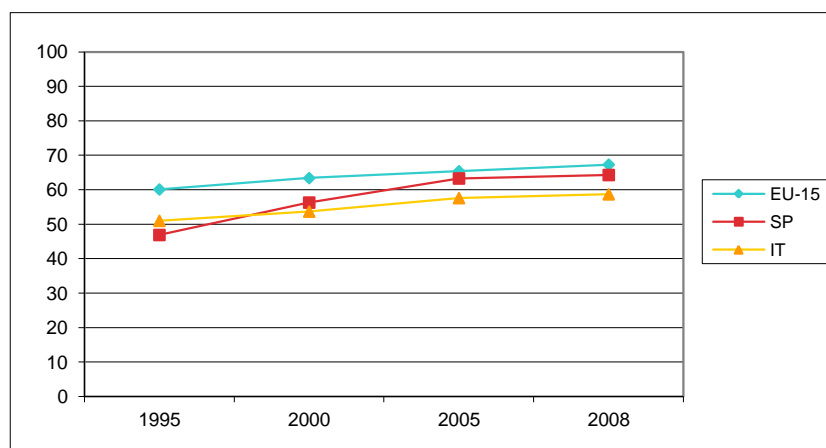
Source: Eurostat

In each country, male activity rate is higher than female activity rate from 1995 to 2008; however, females consistently show greater increases than males. By 2008, males are still demonstrating an activity rate of at least 15% higher than females. Also, the highest activity rate for males is detectable in Spain in 2008 at 81.8%, while the highest for females is detectable in EU-15 in the same year at 65.4%. In 1995, EU-15 reported the highest activity rate for males at 77.7%, but this percentage only increases to 79.5% by 2008 and is overtook by Spain. For females, EU-15 reported the highest activity rate in each year since 1995. Italy consistently reports the lowest activity rates for males and females for each year. One of the reason reported by literature of this gender segmentation in Italy is the difficulty to combine household demands with the condition of inclusion offered by the labour market and social services, so that the need to reconcile care and paid work still remains unmet also because of inadequate public support (Antonelli and De Liso, 2004; Simonazzi, 2006). Nevertheless, the rise of female participation over this period is contrasted by the almost stationary activity rate of men. The impressive involvement of women in the labour market represent a noteworthy factor to take into analysis.

The employment rate provides relevant information on the composition of the labour market in the countries. It is defined as the percentage of employed persons²³ in relation to the total population of the same age (15-64). We should bear in mind the goal promoted by the Lisbon Strategy of achieving a 70% of employment rate for the overall population and 60% of female employment rate to be reached by 2010, which has fostered all the European member States to engage this challenge. The focus has been shifted from the reduction of unemployment rates to the increase of employment rate. Indeed, the concept of “full employment” and “more jobs” promoted in 2000 relies on this statistic.

²³ According to Eurostat, employment rate refers to percentage of employed persons, such as persons aged 15 and over who performed work, even for just one hour per week, for pay, profit or family gain during the reference week or were not at work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent because of, for instance, illness, holidays, industrial dispute, and education or training. This follows the definitions and recommendations of the International Labour Organisation.

Figure 14. Employment rate % (total sex, age 15-64)



Source: Eurostat

Europe and Italy show slight upward trends in percentages of the employment of male and female workers, while Spain shows a significant increase from 47% to 64% from 1995 to 2008, overtaking Italy but remaining lower than EU-15 in 2008. EU-15 consistently reports the highest employment rates from 1995-2008, increasing from 60% to roughly 67%. Italy shows a slight increase, beginning at 51% in 1995 and ending in 2008 with roughly 59%. This low and almost stationary employment rate growth is linked to a poor job creation (Simonazzi et al., 2009). Moreover, the employment rate in Italy grows slowly in comparison to Spain and the European average; again, we have to bear in mind that a lot of employed people are involved in the hidden economy and do not appear in the official data (Antonelli and De Liso, 2004). Nevertheless, employment rates in Spain increases quickly, following the high economic growth that characterises this period.

Table 3. Employment rate (%) (15-64) by gender

MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15	70,5	72,8	73	74,2	EU-15	49,7	54,1	57,8	60,4
SP	62,5	71,2	75,2	73,5	SP	31,7	41,3	51,2	54,9
IT	66,9	68	69,9	70,3	IT	35,4	39,6	45,3	47,2

Source: Eurostat

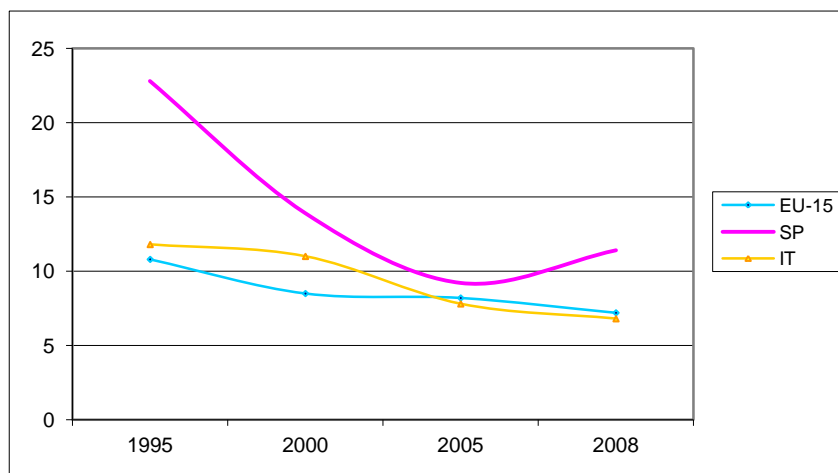
Males consistently show higher employment rates in each country and each year, but females show greater increases than males in employment percentage from 1995 to 2008. By 2008, males have an employment rate of at least 14% more than females. This rate is highest in EU-15 for both

males and females at rates of 74.2% and 60.4%, respectively. EU-15 consistently shows highest employment rates for each gender from 1995-2008. Greatest increases over the observation period are reported in Spain for males and females, where the increases were 11% and 23.2%, respectively.

5.3.2 Unemployment and long-term unemployment rates

Unemployment can be considered a form of vulnerability, mainly because its own definition includes the fact that individuals are in a situation in which they would not want to be²⁴. In this section, different kinds of data will be examined. The first one is the unemployment rate, which corresponds to the percentage of unemployed persons in relation to the labour force. The unemployment rate, that we will observe later in this paragraph, represents the result of the effect of obstacles individuals face in the labour market.

Figure 15. Unemployment rate (%)



Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

The table shows that unemployment rates in Italy and EU-15 have undergone little changes; the levels are very close to each other, even though the decrease which was registered between 2005 and 2008 was slightly stronger in Italy (6,8% in 2008), after a period of higher unemployment rate (11,8% in 1995). By contrast, Spain has the highest unemployment rate year on year, while Italy and EU-15 show general downward trend in unemployment percentage all through the period from 1995 to 2008. The most striking element in Spain has been a remarkable drop in unemployment

²⁴ According to Eurostat, unemployment rate is the number of unemployed people in percentage points of the total labour force (employed and unemployed people). This definition follows the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation. The definition of unemployment is further specified in the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1897/2000.

rates, from 22,8% in 1995 to 9,2% in 2005, followed by an increase of roughly 2%. Due to this recent opposite trend, unemployment reaches the highest levels in Europe (11,4%).

Table 4. Unemployment rate (%) by gender

MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15	9,6	7,3	7,6	6,7	EU-15	12,5	10	9	7,7
SP	18	9,5	7,1	10,1	SP	30,8	20,4	12,2	13,1
IT	9,2	8,4	6,3	5,6	IT	16,2	14,9	10,1	8,6

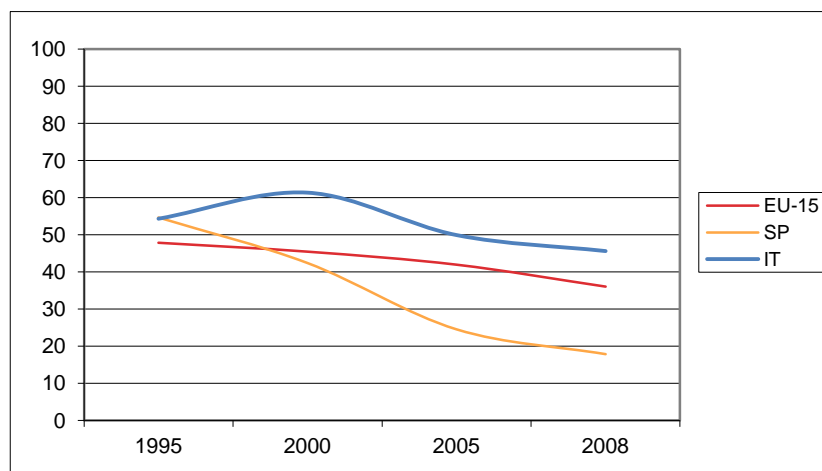
Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

The table shows that similar observations can be carried out in relation to unemployment for Spanish men, whereas it seems that women have suffered from lower rates of unemployment. This is evident when we look at the high rates in female unemployment which was registered in Spain in 1995. Unemployment for women in Italy and Spain has remained higher than in the EU 15, even though the levels in 2008 between Italy and the European Union did not indicate a marked difference. Higher percentages of females than males are unemployed in each year, with Spain having the highest unemployment rate among males and females. Spain, Italy and EU-15 show downward trends in unemployment rate for each gender. By 2008, the unemployment rate for males is still lower than that for females, but in no case does this discrepancy exceed 3%. In particular, unemployment rate in Spain display striking gender disparities, and female unemployment as well as activity rate continued to increase. Females still remain those who suffer major probabilities to remaining unemployed and lacking substantial freedoms.

This study analyses now long-term unemployment²⁵, which refers to people that have been unemployed for one year or more. It provides a measure of how the economic vulnerability develops over time in each country.

²⁵ The long term unemployment rate is the share of unemployed persons since 12 months or more in the total number of active persons in the labour market. Active persons are those who are either employed or unemployed (Eurostat).

Figure 16. Long-term unemployment (%)



Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Italy shows the highest long-term unemployment rate all over the 2000s, while Spain and the EU-15 show general downward trend. Spain begins with the highest long-term unemployment rate in 1995 (54,7%), but by 2008 shows a long-term unemployment rate of less than 20%, lowest than the European average of nearly 18% in that particular year. It is interesting to note that the overall rates were already lower in Spain than the EU-15 at the beginning of the 2000s; also, changes in Spain have been more abrupt, whereas the trend for EU-15 countries shows a rather moderate decrease, especially at the beginning and end of the period under consideration here. In Italy, the levels have always been higher than the other countries, reaching the 61,3% in 2000, followed by a marked fall since 2000 until 2005 (45,6%). Finally, it should be pointed out that it is harder in Italy to re-enter the labour market, as shown by the same findings above.

Following is an analysis of long-term unemployment according to gender.

Table 5. Long-term unemployment (%) by gender

MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15	47,1	44,4	41,5	36,8	EU-15	48,5	46,4	42,3	36,2
SP	48,9	36,3	20,4	13,8	SP	60,3	46,8	27,8	21,9
IT	54,8	61,4	47,7	43,6	IT	53,9	61,2	51,9	47,5

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Both Italy and Spain have been characterised by higher long-term unemployment rates than the EU-15. This appears equally to men and women, even though the rates were at their lowest in 2008.

The overall decrease in unemployment in Italy has been slightly higher for women than men. By contrast, the male-female gap in Spain is much wider, as Spanish women still seem to suffer considerably. In Europe and Italy, males and females show similar long-term unemployment rates in each year, while more females are consistently unemployed for long-term periods in Spain. Italy shows highest long-term unemployment rate. Moreover, Spain, Italy and the EU-15 show general downward trend in long-term unemployment. Spain begins with long-term unemployment rate around 50% in 1995, but by 2008 shows a long-term unemployment rate of nearly 20%, the lowest in comparison to Italy and the European average in that particular year for women and less than 14% for men.

In this section, the incidence of unemployment by duration is also observed. The data are recorded by OECD which considers “the share of the five durations – less than 1 month, >1 month and < 3 months, >3 months and <6 months, >6 months and <1 year, 1 year and over – of unemployment among total unemployment”. [These are expressed in percentage points and refer to 25-54-year-old males and females.] According to OECD metadata, duration in Italy refers to “the shorter of the following two periods: the duration of search for work, or the length of time since last employment”, whereas in Spain “[it] is measured by the duration of job search”. As regards to Spain, the duration defined as "Less than one month" refers to the difference in months between the current month and the month when the person begun to search job”.

Table 6. Incidence of unemployment by duration (%)

		1990	1995	2000	2005	2008
Spain	< 1 month	1,8	3,3	4,6	11,7	12,2
	> 1 month and < 3 months	15,2	11,6	15,1	23,7	27,7
	> 3 month and < 6 months	12,9	12,2	15,5	16,9	19,8
	> 6 month and < 1 year	16,2	15,8	17,3	15,1	16,5
	1 year and over	54,0	57,1	47,6	32,6	23,8
Italy	< 1 month	2,0	3,9	3,9	7,6	8,6
	> 1 month and < 3 months	1,9	3,4	7,2	13,5	16,1
	> 3 month and < 6 months	10,9	12,5	11,3	14,8	15,5
	> 6 month and < 1 year	15,4	16,7	16,3	14,2	14,1
	1 year and over	69,8	63,6	61,3	49,9	45,7

Source: OECD

The majority of unemployment in Spain and Italy has a duration of 1 year and over. Nevertheless, unemployment duration is lower in Spain and decrease substantially over the years,

such as nearly 30.2% from 1990 to 2008, while Italy has higher unemployment rate in that category for each year listed and the decrease is less remarkable accounting at 24.2% from 1990 to 2008. In Italy, 45.7% reports unemployment lasting 1 year and over, while Spain only reports 23.8% in 2008. Outside of the 1 year and over category, similar percentages are seen in time periods between 1 month and 1 year for each country, all ranging below 20%. In both Spain and Italy, a period of unemployment lasting less than 1 month is rarely seen from 1990 to 2000, but increases in prevalence by 2008, ending at 12.2% for Spain and 8.6% for Italy. In both countries, the lowest unemployment rates reported are for those unemployed less than one month.

We now move on to focus on the incidence of discouraged workers. Again, data are collected by OECD, according to which discouraged workers are those “who are not seeking employment because they believe that there is no work available, but who nevertheless would like to have work”. Here, the data are expressed as percentage points of the total labour force and population. The next table focuses on workers in the age group 25-54.

Table 7. Incidence of discouraged workers (%)

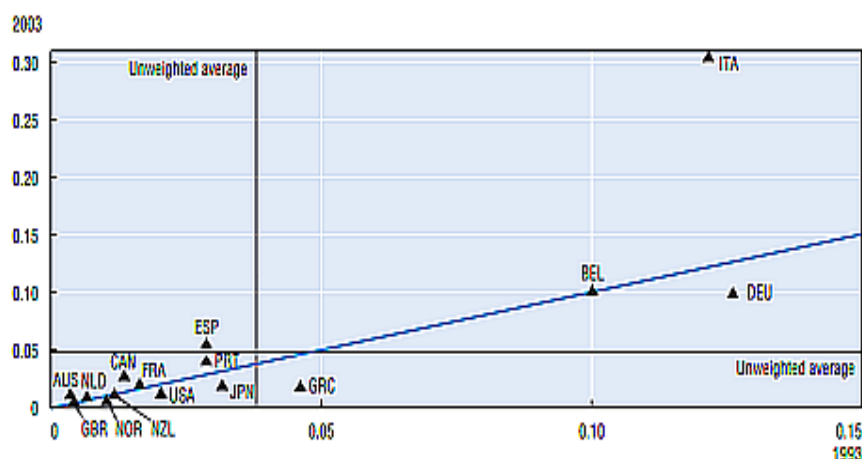
		2000	2005	2008
Spain	Share of labour force	0,8	1,3	0,9
	Share of population	0,5	0,9	0,6
Italy	Share of labour force	1,0	3,0	3,4
	Share of population	0,6	1,9	2,2

Source: OECD

People seem to be more discouraged in Italy, and they have become even more so all throughout the period under examination here. Not only are the levels lower in Spain – where, after all, a slight increase was registered in 2005 – but the changes that have taken places have not been so strong as in Italy, whereas 2005 saw a peak in the levels of discouragement on the overall population. In both countries, discouraged workers make up a greater percentage of the labour force than they do of the entire population. Italy consistently reports a higher percentage of discouraged workers in both the labour force and entire population in each year. This statistic is especially relevant in considering that the achievement of substantial freedoms is not only linked to conversion factors that allow to convert resources in opportunities. Indeed, an additional element has to be taken into account, such as the individuals’ perception of opportunities available in the context where they leave.

Another aspect to consider is related to unemployment disparities within the countries, which show how job opportunities are distributed in the national context.

Figure 17. Regional unemployment disparities in 1993 and 2003a



a) As measures by the Theil index of regional unemployment rates.

Source: OECD (2005), OECD Employment Outlook, Chapter 2, Paris.

Italy shows the highest level of unemployment disparities in 1993 and 2003, while Spain presents a lower level in comparison to Italy but more than the most of the OECD countries. This mirrors in a way one of the main features of the Italian social model, which is characterised by a sharp divide among South and North regions, with Southern Italy (Mezzogiorno) representing the economically depressed area of the country. Indeed, in the last decade Italy has become one of the most unequal Western countries (Borghi, 2009; OECD, 2008d; ILO, 2008), with the Southern regions showing high unemployment and spread informal work at the northern regions a stronger occupational basis. This information is very relevant vis-a-vis the capability approach that claims equality of possibilities for individuals.

5.3.3 The poor and at-risk of poverty rates

The study now moves on to observe national differences in the degree of inequality in the structure of income distribution. Looking at this, Table 1. details the proportions of the population distributed according to income classes based on national media income values²⁶ (Curatolo and Wolleb, 2010: 63-64).

²⁶ For more information about the calculation of the national and the EU-15 median and the classification of individuals in classes, see Curatolo and Wolleb (2010: 63-64).

Table 8. Population shares by country, region and income class-2001*

Country or macro-region	Poor	At risk	Middle class	Affluent	Wealthy	Total
Denmark	6.5	22.3	39.8	17.9	13.5	100
Netherlands	3.7	24.9	35.0	17.8	18.6	100
Belgium	6.2	24.4	35.2	15.3	18.9	100
France	8.0	23.1	34.1	15.4	19.4	100
Ireland	16.7	22.4	27.4	16.4	17.1	100
Italy	12.1	23.7	30.0	16.4	17.8	100
North-West	3.9	15.5	32.0	23.2	25.4	100
Centre and North-East	5.6	18.9	33.5	20.8	21.2	100
South	22.4	32.6	26.2	8.6	10.2	100
Greece	16.7	22.5	26.7	12.3	21.8	100
Spain	13.0	23.6	29.1	14.1	20.2	100
Centre and North-West	19.1	25.4	31.0	12.1	12.4	100
East and Madrid	6.8	19.2	27.5	16.0	30.5	100
South	18.2	31.3	30.5	12.5	7.5	100
Portugal	12.6	21.0	27.6	13.6	25.2	100
Austria	6.8	23.5	37.1	17.6	15.0	100
Finland	6.0	25.4	35.6	17.2	15.8	100
Sweden	6.6	20.3	40.1	18.6	14.4	100
Germany	6.0	20.7	38.6	16.5	18.2	100
Luxembourg	3.9	26.2	35.4	16.6	17.9	100
United Kingdom	9.2	23.6	30.0	14.8	22.4	100
EU-15	9.0	22.8	33.2	15.7	19.3	100

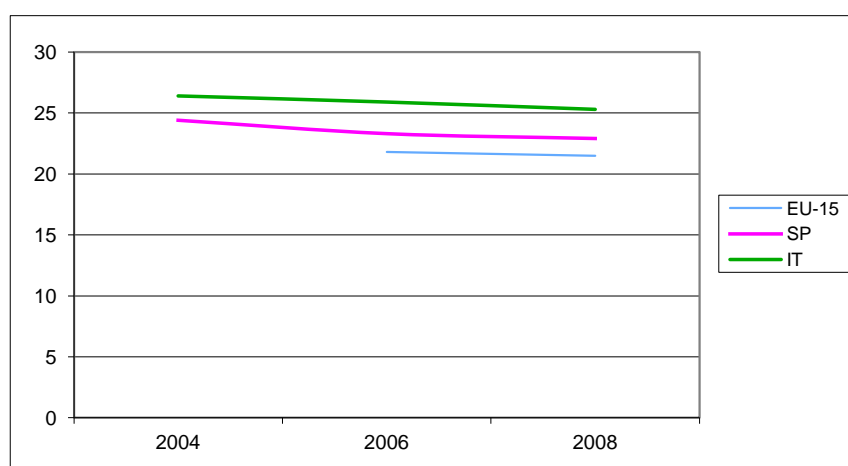
Notes: *Share of people by income class according to the national median.

Source: ECHP, Curatolo and Wolleb's calculations (2010)

As shown in the table, Nordic countries and those belonging to Central Europe reveal a more egalitarian income distribution, with a low percentage of poverty and a great concentration of the population falling in the middle class (35-40%). In this case, the proportion of poor people is around 6-8%, while the proportion of affluent and wealthy families varies among countries, with the Northern countries revealing a more attenuated presence of wealthy families in comparison to wealthy ones. By contrast, in the Mediterranean countries the percentage of poor people is high (12-16%), with a lower concentration in the middle class (26-30%) and a larger number of wealthy people (17-25%), with the United Kingdom showing a similar pattern. In particular, Italy and Spain exhibit in average 12,5% of poor people and 19% of wealthy people, even if higher levels of both these proportions result in the Spanish context. A higher share of affluent people appears in Italy,

reaching a 16,4% in comparison to a share of 14,1% in Spain. Distributive inequalities are even more evident when observing macro-regions. For instance, in Italy North-Western and Center/North-Eastern regions show the lowest percentage of poor people in Europe, but the highest in the South. South Italy indeed accounts for a very high number of individuals in poverty. Some scholars explain this with the large amount of unemployed, long-term unemployed, low percentage of dual-earner households and unemployed heads of families (Simonazzi et al., 2009; Morlicchio and Pugliese, 2004). This occurs also in Spain, where Eastern regions and Madrid exhibit very low rates of poverty, while the rest of the country suffer a considerable greater poverty. This structure of income distribution looks compatible with the traditional categorization of welfare regimes, according to which higher levels of poverty characterise liberal and Mediterranean systems. Wide internal inequalities and several poor families are thus a common element of the Southern social models (Curatolo and Wolleb, 2010).

Figure 18. Population at-risk-of-poverty rate (percentage on total population)



Source: Eurostat

As can be seen from the figure, the percentage of the population at-risk-of-poverty is slightly decreased in Spain and Italy in the period between 2004 and 2008. In particular, in Spain the level of risk has been reducing and converging with the average of the European Union, while the risk-of-poverty rates is still an important issue in Italy, being far higher than the EU average. While Italy shows a decrease of roughly 1%, reaching 25% in 2008, Spain accounts for 22,9% getting closer to the European average of 21,5% in the same year. The lack of data does not allow having a more extensive view of the population at risk since the 90's.

In a comparative perspective, two completely different pictures emerge. On one hand, Spain shows increasing trends in activity rates, employment rates, especially among females, and a

noticeable decrease in unemployment rates. Even if positive and impressive changes are evident all over the 2000s, the general situation remains in a certain extent dramatic in terms of unemployment, especially since 2005. On the other hand, Italy reveals a more depressed situation with low involvement of people in labour market and small changes concerning unemployment. Nevertheless, three main aspects are remarkable in this country: 1. the high level of long-term unemployment; 2. the broad presence of discouraged people; 3. the great national disparities in terms of unemployment, poverty and income. Moreover, it is worth observing a fact, such as the great difference between the two countries in terms of unemployment rate in comparison to employment rate. This is linked to statistical issues, since unemployment rate is calculated by Eurostat in relation to the labour force (employed and unemployed), whereas employment rate is calculated in relation to the total population. This means that the proportion of persons who are neither employed nor unemployed has a relevant weight on the Italian unemployment rate. On the basis of the data available, the hypothesis are twofold: the first hypothesis is that such proportion can be formed by women participating in the labour market, since Spain exhibits a higher female activity rate (Medina, 2013). The second hypothesis is that the proportion could be composed by the high discouraged people in Italy, who abandoned their job search, whose incidence is less considerable in Spain.

In the next paragraph, we will try to explore the contractual arrangements spread within the two countries in order to obtain a more precise overview of the Spanish and Italian labour market and of individuals' opportunities.

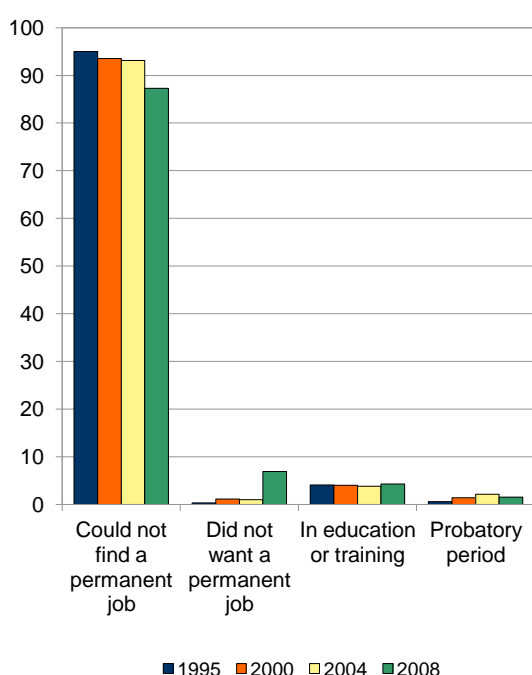
5.4 Contractual typologies within the Spanish and Italian labour markets

This section will look at flexible contractual arrangements (temporary and part-time employment) of employees and at their possibility of choice with regard to their own situation as indicators of social vulnerability. The section thus begins with the analysis of the reasons that lie behind temporary employment. Indeed, in a capability approach, this kind of statistics is viewed as crucial insofar as, because of it, all the following data acquire a specific sense in defining if adaptive preferences have directed the decision-making process, instead of a substantial opportunity to do what is valued. The meaning of temporary employment rate and part-time employment rate varies according to the individual decision process they embed.

5.4.1 Temporary employment

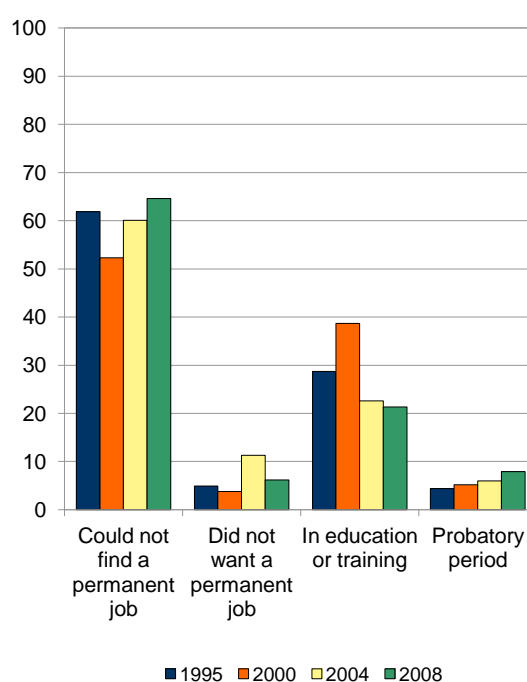
Firstly, analysing the reasons behind temporary employment we focus on workers who “Couldn’t find a permanent job”, and look at the overall distributions in percentage points for workers aged 15-64.

Figure 19. Main reason for the temporary employment (%), SP



Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Figure 20. Main reason for the temporary employment (%), IT



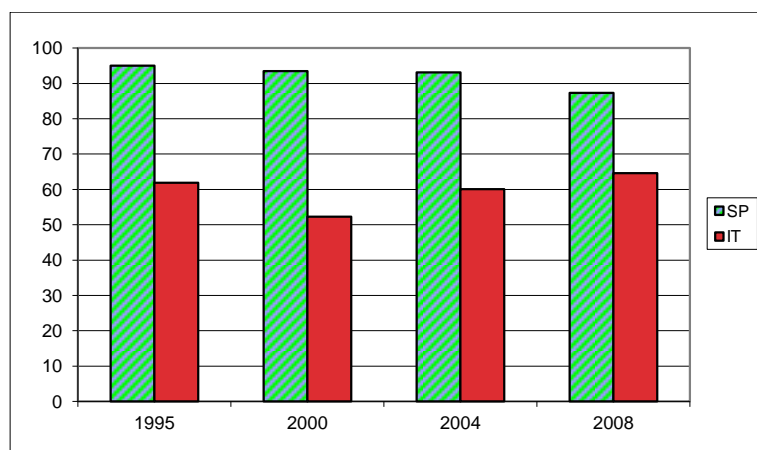
Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Roughly 87-95% of workers in Spain reported to have engaged in temporary employment because they could not find permanent work, while a lower number of workers in Italy reported the same. More workers in Italy than in Spain stated that they did not want a permanent job, even if the Spanish proportion increases of roughly 6% in 2008 and the Italian proportion decreases of nearly 5% between 2004 and 2008, after a rising fluctuation between 1995 and 2004. Moreover, Italy exhibits a strong presence of temporary employees in education or training, while small percentages of Spanish employees were in education or training and therefore not seeking permanent employment. While nearly 39% of Italian workers declare to be in education or training in 2000, the percentage falls nearly 21% by 2008; by contrast, proportions look stationary under the 4% in

Spain. Generally, very few Spanish workers reported being in a probationary period, which is stated more frequently in Italy. There appears to be an increase in Italian workers engaging in temporary employment due to being in a probationary period from 1995 to 2008, but percentages remain under 8%, while in Spain, proportions remain more or less steady over the years varying between a minimum punctuation of 0.6 in 1995 and a maximum punctuation of 2.1 in 2004.

The impossibility for workers to find a permanent employment accounts as the main reason behind the use of fixed-term contracts in Italy over the period 1995-2008 as shown by the previous table. The majority of workers in Spain reported to have engaged in temporary employment because they could not find permanent work, but this trend was less remarkable than in Italy. Focusing on this option (“couldn't find a permanent job”), we now compare the Spanish and Italian cases.

Figure 21. Main reason for the temporary employment (%): “couldn't find a permanent job”

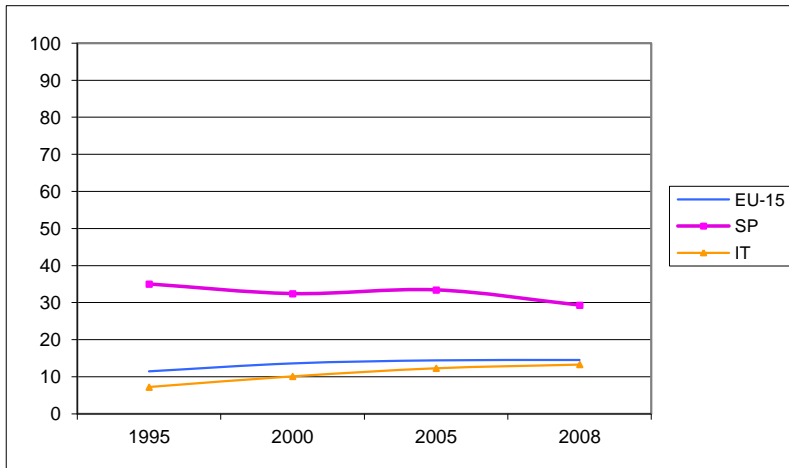


Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

In Spain the number of workers claiming the impossibility to find a permanent employment started diminishing towards the end of the 2000s, even though Spain is where the overall findings are higher – that is, a greater number of Spanish people seem to choose temporary employment because they cannot find a permanent job. Percentages remain fairly constant, although Spain shows slight but noticeable decrease from 2004 to 2008. By contrast, an increasing trend is noticeable in Italy in 2000s from a nearly 50% to more than 60%, after a decrease of roughly 10% between 1995 and 2000. Differences between Spain and Italy are lowest in 2008, in which Spain is roughly 20% higher than Italy.

After considering the scarce will of Italian and, above all, Spanish people to engage temporary employment, we now move to observe how much this kind of contractual arrangement is spread in the both countries²⁷.

Figure 22. Temporary employees as percentage of the total number of employees (%)



Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Overall, the percentage levels of temporary employees in the EU-15 and Italy have been lower than Spain throughout the 2000s, where the use of temporary contracts is seemingly more widespread, even though there has been a decrease since 2006. A hypothesis is that this may be closely linked to the low levels of long-term unemployment in Spain in comparison to Italy. Both EU-15 and Italy show slight increases in percentage of temporary employees, while Spain shows slight decrease despite a higher starting percentage. We have to consider that in 1997 a labour reform was introduced in order to provide a subsidy for permanent contracts; this produced a slight decrease in temporary employment, reaching the 35% in 2006 (Banyuls et al, 2009). By 2008, Spain remains to have the highest percentage of temporary employees at roughly 30%, while the European average and Italy are both around 14%.

Looking at how individual characteristic interact with conversion factors, the following table describes how temporary employment varies by gender.

²⁷ According to Eurostat, employees with a temporary/limited duration contract are those “whose main job will terminate either after a period fixed in advance, or after a period not known in advance, but nevertheless defined by objective criteria, such as the completion of an assignment or the period of absence of an employee temporarily replaced”.

Table 9. Temporary employees (%) by gender

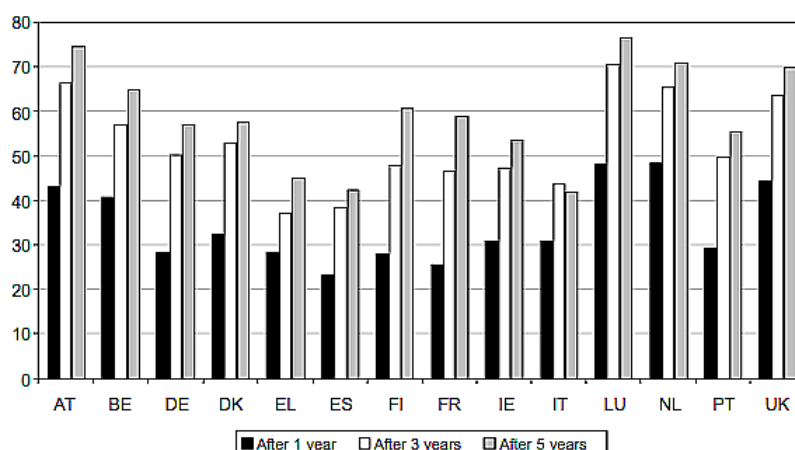
MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15	10,7	12,8	13,7	13,6	EU-15	12,6	14,7	15,1	15,5
SP	33,3	30,9	31,7	27,7	SP	38,3	34,7	35,7	31,4
IT	6	8,8	10,5	11,5	IT	9,2	12,2	14,7	15,7

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

A greater percentage of female workers are temporary employees when compared to males, but upward trends in Europe and Italy are detectable among males and females from 1995 to 2008. Only Spain shows a downward trend in percentage of temporary employees among males and females in this period. Moreover, in Spain, the percentages of males employed have always been much higher than the other countries under consideration, even though a decrease was recorded in 2008. As regards the percentage of women employed with temporary contracts, the percentages concerning Italian women have increased consistently (around 4 percentage points) since 1995. The percentage of Spanish women employed with temporary contracts was twice in 2008 as compared to Italy. However, overall percentages have been fluctuating throughout the period from 2001 to 2008. A general precariousness in the labour market can be detected among women who experience therefore a greater lack of choice.

It is interesting now to observe the opportunities of mobility from flexible employment contract to permanent job, which means for people shifting to a less vulnerable position. In this regard, a debate about the likelihood of flexible contracts becoming “stepping stones” to permanent jobs has developed (ETUI, 2014).

Figure 23. Moving from flexible employment contract to permanent job, by time and country



Note: The data indicate the transition rates from a flexible employment contract to a permanent job, between the first observation and one year later, three years later and five years later. Data are weighted and adjusted for sample and population size differences across countries.

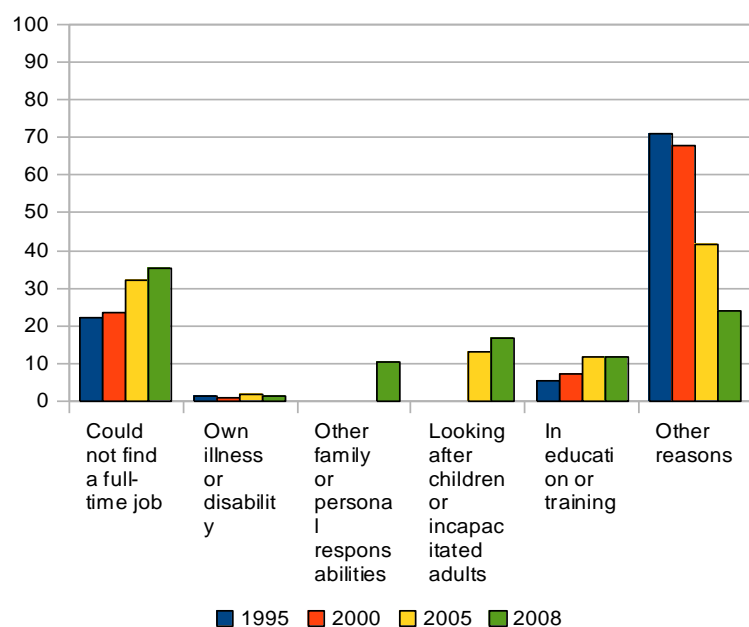
Source: Muffels et al. 2008, based on Eurostat, ECHP panel data 1995-2001 and data from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS).

Spain shows the worst situation after one year (nearly 25%) and occupies very low positions after 3 and 5 years (40% in average), probably considering the noticeable diffusion of temporary contracts. Each country except Italy shows a similar trend; from observations taken after 1 year to those taken after 5 years, more workers are reporting a transition from a flexible employment contract to a permanent job. By contrary, Italy shows an increase from 1 year observations (nearly 30%) to 3 year observations (nearly 45%) but decreases, albeit slightly (<5%), by the 5 year observation. It is interesting to note how the difference of mobility between ‘after 3 years’ and ‘after 5 years’ result less marked than between ‘after 1 year’ and ‘after 3 years’, and this is especially evident in Spain and Italy. By contrast, Austria and Luxembourg show the highest transition rate at the 5 year observation mark, both ranging around 75%. Along with Netherlands and United Kingdom, Austria and Luxembourg also report high transition rates after 1 year, each around 45%.

5.4.2 Part-time employment

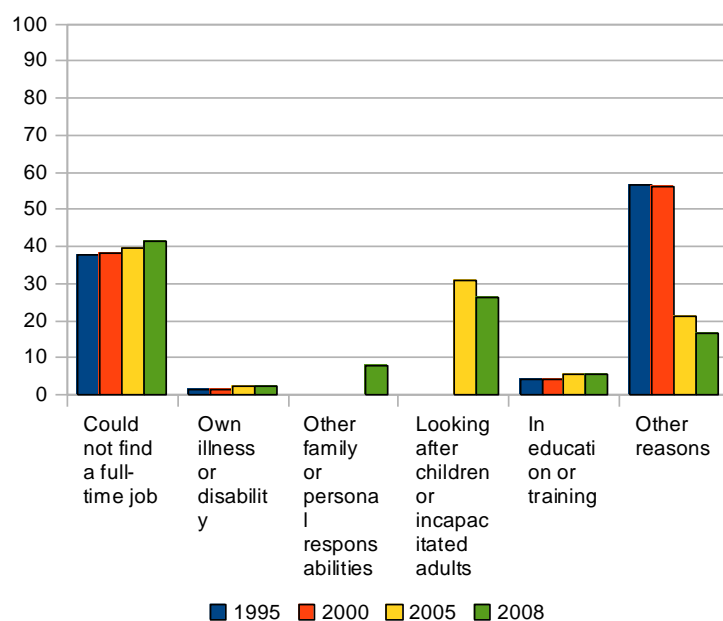
The second aspect dealt with in the present section is part-time arrangements²⁸. Again, firstly the reasons why people choose part-time employment will be analysed. Among them, the difficulty in finding a full-time job is the most salient for this research. Other reasons are also reported (Fig. 24-25):

Figure 24. Main reason for part-time employment (%), SP (age cohort 15-64) Figure 25. Main reason for part-time employment (%), IT (age cohort 15-64)



(age cohort 15-64)

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)



(age cohort 15-64)

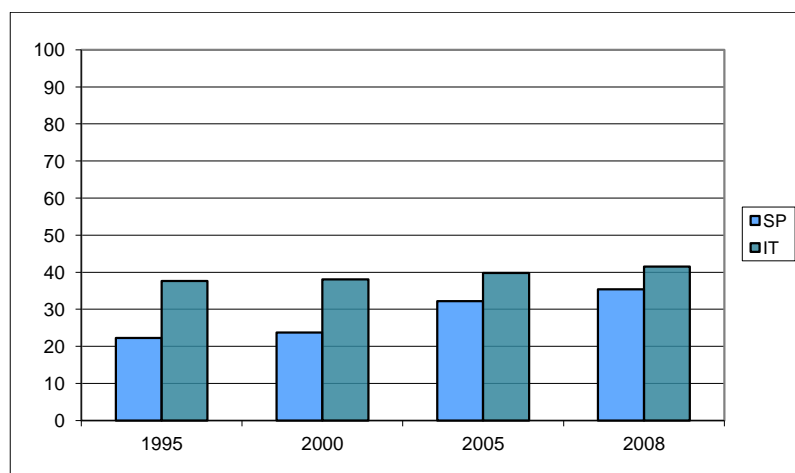
Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

In Spain, from 1995 to 2005, the majority of employees reported ‘other reasons’ when questioned regarding their engagement in part-time employment (71% in 1995). This occurs also in Italy from 1995 to 2000, even if in a lower measure in comparison to Spain (more than 55% in 1995). By contrast, in 2008, the majority of Spanish and Italian employees reported that they could not find a full-time job and were therefore engaged in part-time employment (on average, nearly 38%). In particular, in Italy, the option “other reasons” was reported as the main reason for part-time

²⁸ Eurostat distinguishes between full- and part-time employments “on the basis of a spontaneous answer given by the respondent”. Indeed, differences between Member States and branches of activities do not allow the establishment of a clear-cut distinction between part-time and full-time employment.

employment each year until 2000, in which the majority of workers started to report not being able to find a full-time job (more than 40%). Upward trends in employees reporting family or caregiving-related reasons for part-time employment have been noticeable since 2005 in both countries. Child/adult care is considerably different between Spain and Italy, with more workers in Italy reporting it as their reason for part-time employment in 2005 and 2008 (between 31-26%) than in Spain (roughly 15%). Also the only data referred to ‘other family or personal responsibilities’ is reported frequently in both countries, more – or almost equivalent – than ‘in education or in training’ reason. The education and training-related reason that is more marked in the Spanish context, is generally less frequently chosen by Spanish and Italian employees in comparison to other options (no more than 12%). Furthermore, since 2005 the trend of workers declaring that they cannot find a full-time job because ‘in education or training’ arises in both Spain and Italy. The growth is more noticeable in Spain, accounting to roughly 4%. Finally, the reason ‘own illness or disability’ is scarcely reported in each country and over the years, remaining under the 2,5%. Focusing on the reason ‘Could not find a full-time job’, we now observe the differences between Spain and Italy between 1995 and 2008.

Figure 26. Main reason for part-time employment (%): Could not find a full-time job



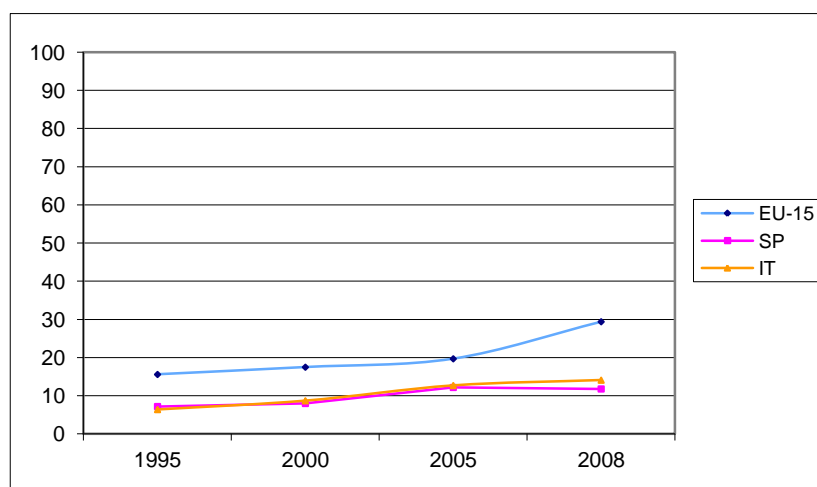
Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Both countries show slight upward trend, starting in 1995. After a period of approximate stability around 22%, a consistent number of workers in Spain started resorting to part-time jobs in order not to fall within the unemployed strands of population, reaching more than 35% in 2008. This change followed a sudden rise in the total number of part-time jobs between 2000 and 2005, as we will see in the next figure. The growth is less marked in Italy, where percentages of people reporting they could not find a full-time job increase of barely 2 points. The key aspect emerging from the findings

is the shortening of the gap between Italy and Spain during the second half of the 2000s as compared to the years between 2001 and 2005. Besides lessening the gap between the two countries by the end of the 2000s, the changes finally seem to indicate a growing difficulty for people looking for what they value. By 2008, differences in percentage between Spain and Italy have narrowed to roughly 6%.

We now observe the part-time employment rates, in order to have a more precise overview of the trend of this contractual arrangement.

Figure 27. Part-time employment as percentage of the total employment (%)



Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

An analysis of part-time employment for the active population (15-64) indicated that there are marked differences between Italy and Spain, on one hand, and the rest of Europe, on the other. First, the overall influence of part-time contracts in the two Southern countries is weaker than in EU-15, where the trends are also decidedly more stable, but showing a moderate increase over the years. Italy and Spain seem to share a similar pattern, as major changes occurred between 2000 and 2005, shifting from nearly 8% in 2000 to a point of nearly 12% in 2005. Each country shows slight increase in percentage, moving from 6.4% in Italy, 7.2% in Spain, with the European average of 15.6% in 1995 to a punctuation of 14.1% in Italy, 11.8% in Spain, with the Europe average at roughly 30% in 2008.

We now observe the influence of gender on part-time employment rate.

Table 10. Part-time employment (%) by gender

MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15	4,7	5,7	7	7,6	EU-15	31,1	33,3	35,8	36,2
SP	2,5	2,7	4,3	4	SP	16,3	17	24	22,6
IT	2,7	3,7	4,3	4,8	IT	13,1	17,3	25,6	27,8

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

In general, a higher percentage of females than males are part-time employees in each country for each year; by 2008, males have roughly 20-25% fewer part-time employees than females in each country. Indeed, women account for much higher percentages in both countries. In Italy, these features are accompanied by the fact that more men are also employed with part-time contracts in comparison to Spain. The rates for male part-time employment in Italy show a moderate increase over the years. There was a sudden rise in the number of Spanish males employed part-time in 2005 as well. Interestingly, female employment presents different trends. In particular, Italy and Spain in 2005 have been characterised by a sudden rise in the number of women employed part-time. In Spain, the number of part-time male workers also rose, besides the aforementioned differences in the overall number of part-time job available in the country. And, whereas the rates for the male population at the end of the 2000s did not show any marked difference between the two countries, there are seemingly many more women in Spain who are currently involved in part-time contractual arrangements.

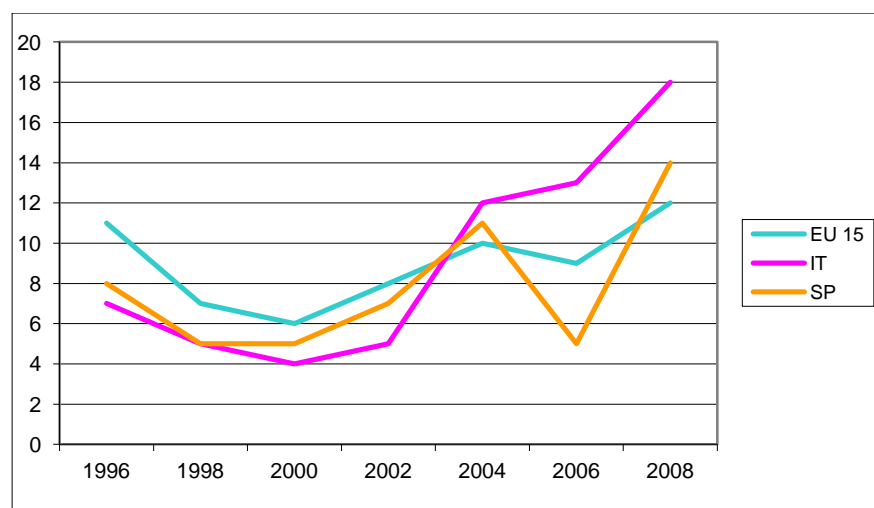
To sum up, most people reported as staying in a situation they do not value and that they could not achieve any better. A marked gap was detected between the contractual arrangements available in the labour market and individual wishes. This is especially true with respect to temporary contracts, in comparison to part-time contracts, and for the female group. Moreover, it must be noted that the lower the satisfaction of people, the higher the diffusion of part-time jobs becomes, broadening the discrepancy between the two over the years in both Italy and Spain. This does not occur with regard to fixed-term contracts, since the discordance looks to weaken in the Spanish case and strengthen in the Italian case.

The section now moves on to look at some data referring to the individual life-course and the perception of economic vulnerability. This will provide a more comprehensive view on social vulnerability in the countries that are the objects of our study.

5.4.3 Individual perception of economic-labour vulnerability

In order to have a greater overview of the economic aspects of social vulnerability in Spain and Italy, it can be interesting to consider observing the individual perception of labour and economic conditions. Indeed, vulnerability and capabilities, that are closely linked to personal and social conversion factors, produce feelings of insecurity or satisfaction. After the deep insight of these factors, carried out in the previous sections, we consider useful to report such feelings and perception for a better understanding of the general situation in the two countries under analysis. As far as income insecurity is concerned, various Eurobarometer (EB) surveys have investigated the likely evolution of the household financial situation. According to Bertozzi and Bonoli (2009:18), “the extent to which people expect their financial situation to get worse may be seen as an indication of the perception of economic insecurity. This is micro-level data, and to obtain the sort of macro-level data (that are discussed in this chapter), we need to aggregate them”. Likely, we report also the perception of respondents stating they expect a worsening in their personal job situation, assuming it can be a measure of dissatisfaction related to one’s condition.

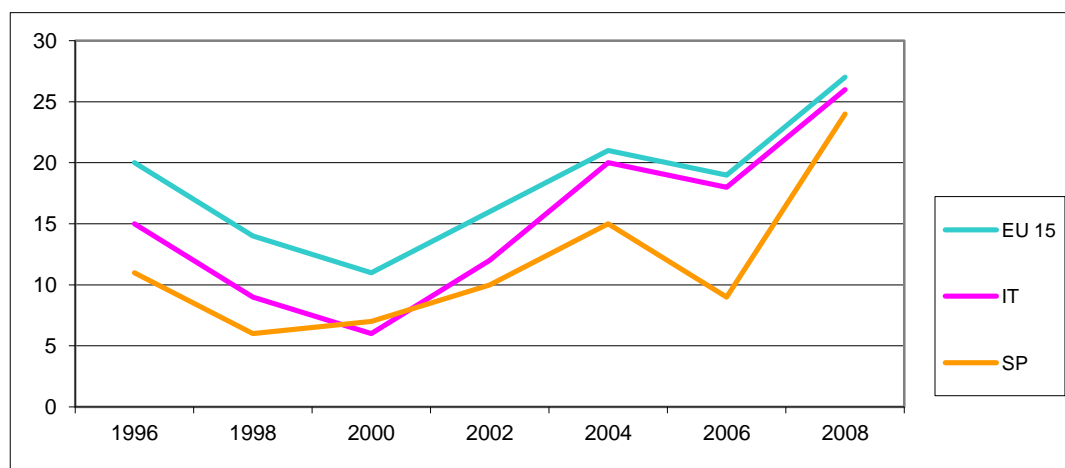
Figure 28. Perception of labour dissatisfaction. Proportion of respondents answering that they expect their personal job situation to get worse over the next 12 months (% of valid responses)



Note: The data relating to the European average concerns EU-25 starting from 2004.

Autumn wave: EB (46, 1996; 50, 1998; 54, 2000; 58, 2002; 62, 2004; 66, 2006; 70, 2008)

Figure 29. Perception of financial insecurity. Proportion of respondents answering that they expect their household's financial situation to get worse over the next 12 months (% of valid responses)



Note: The data relating to the European average concerns EU-25 starting from 2004.

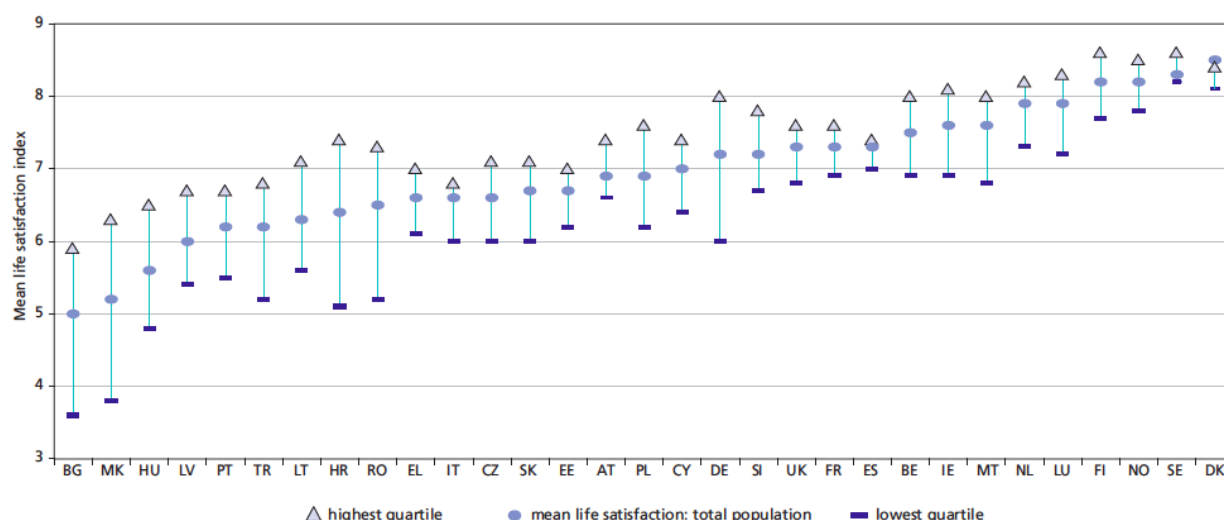
Autumn wave: EB (46, 1996; 50, 1998; 54, 2000; 58, 2002; 62, 2004; 66, 2006; 70, 2008)

The first figure, which concerns individual perception of one's own labour situation, indicates that the general perception is fluctuating over the years and this is especially so in the case of Spain and the European average. Italy exhibits a different picture, insofar as individual perception, after a slight decrease between 1996 and 2000, strongly rises until 2008 reaching a punctuation of 18% in comparison to the 14% in Spain and 12% in the EU-25. A decreasing tendency until 2000 is also evident in Spain and the European average, that, nevertheless hold higher punctuation than Italy until 2003. Spain shows a sudden fall in 2006 with a punctuation of 5%, highlighting a higher perception of job satisfaction. The same trend is also evident for the European average, which reaches 9% in the same year.

The second figure relates to perceptions of financial insecurity in Spain and Italy and compares them with the European average. The data collected indicate that there used to be less people in Spain who thought they would likely lose their job in a year in the mid-2005 (12%), but since then the number has increased, with a rather high rise towards 2008 (24%). Fear and/or certainty of losing one's job in Italy started to become a generalized problem even earlier on, as can be seen from the rise in preoccupation which took place in 2005. By contrast, according to the European average, people are generally more insecure about their jobs, though it should be pointed out that the situation changed towards the end of period under examination here. Financial insecurity by now seems to be a problem touching people all across Europe. By 2008, similar percentages of respondents in each country are reporting that they expect their household's financial situation to get worse over the next 12 months.

Finally, some data relating to the average life satisfaction, by income, will be reported. Life satisfaction embraces several fields (health, education, employment status, age, family status), but, according to the European Quality of Life Survey, also household income has a significant impact (Fig. 30).

Figure 30. Average life satisfaction, by income quartile and country



Question 29: All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days? Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means very dissatisfied and 10 means very satisfied. Income quartiles are determined for each country separately by using the country data on equivalent net household income (Questions 67 and 68).

Source: European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) 2007a

As shown in the figure, in each country, people in the bottom income quartile express on average a lower level of life satisfaction than those in the highest quartile, even if Northern countries result more egalitarian in the mean of life satisfaction. Probably due to a barely developed system of social protection and high levels of income inequality, such a gap is quite evident in Italy, while it is less noticeable in Spain. Here, indeed, the difference between levels of life satisfaction expressed by people in the richest and poorest income quartiles appears fairly reduced. Moreover, the mean of life satisfaction is at least one point higher than in Italy, making Spain closer to other Northern countries and other member states like Belgium and Netherlands. In addition to this, it is useful to know what the European Quality of Life Survey (2007a) reports about the impact of employment status on life satisfaction. Indeed, it makes evident that being unemployed reduces the levels of life satisfaction which are lower for jobless people in comparison to the average for employed people among European countries (EU-15). This suggests that, on one hand, the high levels of unemployment that characterise the Spanish context may be particularly relevant in weakening the life satisfaction in Spain, while other variables are worthy to be taken into account for the Italian

context, namely national inequality and income insecurity. It would be also interesting to analyse data strictly related to the perception of capabilities and functionings, which still are scarcely available (Lehweß- Litzmann, 2014) with the exception of few examples (Anand and van Hees, 2006).

After considering life satisfaction's countries, which can be considered a key aspect when working with the capability approach and well-being perspectives, the next section investigates how personal conversion factors – education and skills in this case – influence the possibility for people to enjoy opportunities and substantial freedoms.

5.5 Qualification of the labour force

As stated in the Chapter III, education and acquired skills, which can be considered as a commodity, are useful only if accompanied by respective labour market structures which help turn them into outcomes (Goerne, 2010). They are no longer considered as a productive possibility to accumulate capital, according to the economist view of the human capital, rather as the opportunity for people to live the life they value. Education is viewed nowadays as one of the most important factors to take into account in order to define the vulnerability and the possibilities of people. A description of the Spanish and Italian labour force through the level of education will be here provided, using the ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) as a reference system²⁹. Personal conversion factors, such as education attainment level and gender, will be carefully analysed.

Table 11. Activity rate (%) by education attainment level (ISCED)

	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15				
ISCED 0-2	56,4	58,5	57,5	57,8
ISCED 3-4	74,2	75,6	76,8	77,5
ISCED 5-6	86,7	86,6	87,1	87,3
SP				
ISCED 0-2	56,6	60,9	62,7	65,6
ISCED 3-4	56,6	63,7	72,1	75,4

²⁹ The ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) was designed by UNESCO in the '70 in order to make possible compare education systems in different countries. ISCED 1997 distinguishes 6 education attainment levels: pre-primary education (level 0), primary education or first stage of basic education (level 1), lower secondary education or second stage of basic education (level 2), upper secondary education (level 3), post-secondary non-tertiary education (level 4), first stage of tertiary education (level 5) and second stage of tertiary education (level 6).

ISCED 5-6	83,5	84,3	86	87,3
IT				
ISCED 0-2	49,4	50,2	50,7	50,3
ISCED 3-4	69	71,1	71,9	72,3
ISCED 5-6	87,3	86,3	83,6	82,3

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

The majority of the activity rate is seen in ISCED levels 5-6, in each country and for each year; these percentages decrease in Italy by 5.0% and show increases in EU-15 and Spain by 0.6% and 3.8%, respectively. The percentage decreases as ISCED level is decreased. One notable trend in the data is seen in Spain, where an increase in ISCED 3-4 from 56.6% to 75.4% from 1995 to 2008 is reported; no other country shows such a drastic increase or decrease of similar magnitude.

Table 12. Activity rate (%) by ISCED and gender

MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
ISCED 0-2									
SP	75,7	79,6	79	79,2	SP	38,1	42,3	45,4	50,9
IT	68,5	68,1	67,4	66,1	IT	31,5	32,1	33,6	33,6
ISCED 3-4									
SP	64,7	72,2	80,7	82,5	SP	48,4	55,1	63,5	68,3
IT	78,4	79,7	80,6	81,1	IT	59	62,5	63,3	63,5
ISCED 5-6									
SP	87,7	88,6	90,1	90,9	SP	78,9	80	82	83,8
IT	92,1	91,3	88,3	87,2	IT	81,7	81,2	79,5	78,3

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

For both males and females, the difference in percentages between ISCED levels 0-2 and 3-4 is much smaller than the increase seen in ISCED level 5-6. For females in Spain in ISCED 0-2, an increase from 39.1% in 1995 to 50.9% in 2008 was reported; this value stands out, especially compared to males of that same group that only increased from 75.7% to 79.2%. A similar trend is seen in Spain for ISCED 3-4, except in this case males also show a large increase, from 64.7% to 82.5%.

Table 13. Employment rate (%) by ISCED

	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15				
ISCED 0-2	48,3	51,7	51	51,2
ISCED 3-4	66,8	69,6	70,7	72,4
ISCED 5-6	80,9	82,4	82,7	83,8
SP				
ISCED 0-2	43,1	51,5	55,7	55,5
ISCED 3-4	42,5	54,9	65,8	67,4
ISCED 5-6	68,5	75,1	80,1	81,7
IT				
ISCED 0-2	43,3	44,1	46	46
ISCED 3-4	60,7	63,5	66,8	67,9
ISCED 5-6	80,6	81	78,5	78,5

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

The highest employment rate is seen in ISCED 5-6, in each country and for each year. The percentage decreases as ISCED level is decreased. In general, most groups show an increase in employment rate from 1995 to 2008. The only exception is ISCED 5-6 for Italy, which decreases from 80.6% in 1995 to 78.5% in 2008. Most increases are slight (<10%), but a notable growth is seen in Spain for each ISCED group. The largest increase in Spain is in ISCED 3-4, which increases from 42.5% to 64.7% in the period 1995-2008.

Table 14. Employment rate (%) by ISCED and gender

MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
ISCED 0-2									
SP	61	70,9	72,5	68,4	SP	25,8	32,3	38,1	41,5
IT	61,6	61,5	62,4	61,5	IT	26,2	26,5	29,2	29,6
ISCED 3-4									
SP	53,1	66,1	75,6	75,3	SP	31,9	43,7	56,1	59,6
IT	71,6	73,6	76,2	77,1	IT	49,2	53,5	57,5	58,6
ISCED 5-6									
SP	76,7	82,4	85,3	86,2	SP	31,9	43,7	56,1	59,6
IT	87,6	87,5	84,3	84,3	IT	49,2	53,5	57,5	58,6

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

For both male and female workers, the difference in percentages between ISCED 0-2 and 3-4 is much smaller than the increase seen in ISCED 5-6. Also, female workers tend to show a greater increase in employment rate from 1995 to 2008 than males. This increase is especially strong for Spain for groups ISCED 0-2 and 3-4, which show increases from 25.8% to 41.5% and from 31.9% to 59.6%, respectively. Male workers in Spain also showed an increase from 53.1% to 75.3% for ISCED 3-4, which is the largest increase among the male groups. The only decrease seen is in Italy for ISCED 5-6, where employment rate decreased by 3.3% from 1995 to 2008. All other groups show an upward trend.

Table 15. Unemployment rate (%) by ISCED

	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15				
ISCED 0-2	14,2	11,6	11,4	11,4
ISCED 3-4	10	7,9	8	6,5
ISCED 5-6	6,8	4,9	5	4
SP				
ISCED 0-2	23,9	15,3	11,1	15,4
ISCED 3-4	24,9	13,8	8,8	10,6
ISCED 5-6	17,9	10,9	6,8	6,4
IT				
ISCED 0-2	12,3	12,2	9,3	8,6
ISCED 3-4	12	10,7	7	6,2
ISCED 5-6	7,6	6,2	6,1	4,6

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Unemployment rates show a downward trend from 1995 to 2008, for each country and for each ISCED group. The lowest unemployment rate is seen in ISCED 5-6, for each country and for each year. However, for some groups that reported higher unemployment rates in 1995, the decrease in percentage is greater than that of higher ISCED groups. For example, ISCED 3-4 in Spain begins at 24.9% in 1995, but decreases to 10.6% by 2008; this is the largest decrease present in the data. Spain, in general, reports the greatest decreases in unemployment rate from 1995 to 2008, but also begins in 1995 with the highest unemployment rate for each ISCED group compared to Spain and EU-15. This also occurs in Italy, even if the extent of the decrease is less evident.

Table 16. Unemployment rate (%) by ISCED and gender

MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
ISCED 0-2									
SP	19,5	10,9	8,3	13,6	SP	32,4	23,6	16,1	18,4
IT	10,1	9,7	7,4	7	IT	16,9	17,6	13	11,8
ISCED 3-4									
SP	18	8,5	6,4	8,8	SP	34,2	20,8	11,8	12,7
IT	8,7	7,7	5,5	4,9	IT	16,6	14,4	9	7,8
ISCED 5-6									
SP	12,5	74,2	5,4	5,2	SP	24,4	15,3	8,3	7,6
IT	4,8	4,1	4,5	3,3	IT	11,3	8,6	7,7	5,8

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Lower unemployment rates are seen in higher level ISCED groups. Both Spain and Italy show a decrease in unemployment rate among male and female workers from 1995 to 2008; this decrease is larger among female workers, whereas no male worker group decreases by more than 10% for any country. The largest decreases are seen among female workers in Spain for ISCED 3-4, where the unemployment rate decreases from 34.2% in 1995 to 12.7% in 2008, and ISCED 0-2, where the decrease is from 32.4% to 18.4%. Overall, the unemployment rate appears to decrease more drastically in Spain than it does in Italy; this applies to both male and female workers.

Table 17. Temporary contracts by ISCED

	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15				
ISCED 0-2	-	7.521,70	7.729,90	7.796,80
ISCED 3-4	-	6.347,50	7.693,40	8.468,70
ISCED 5-6	-	3.802,50	4.784,40	5.155,50
SP				
ISCED 0-2	2.128,50	2.312,40	2.546,70	2.269,10
ISCED 3-4	553,2	705,1	1.186,50	1.231,30
ISCED 5-6	575,2	955,7	1.426,40	1.371,00
IT				
ISCED 0-2	558,9	640,3	804,9	842,3
ISCED 3-4	350,6	650,9	891,4	1.033,30
ISCED 5-6	106,3	202,9	322,1	437,7

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Each country shows an increase in temporary contracts for each ISCED group from 1995 to 2008. The greatest increase is reported in EU-15 for ISCED 5-6 from 2000 to 2008, in which the number of temporary contracts increased from 3.802,50 to 5.155,50. EU-15 reports the greatest number of temporary contracts at 8.468,70 among ISCED 3-4 workers in 2008. EU-15 reports the highest numbers for each category from 2000 to 2008. There is no noticeable trend other than higher numbers of temporary contracts being reported, in general, by ISCED groups 0-2 and 3-4. The only exception is in Spain, in which ISCED 5-6 is slightly larger than ISCED 3-4 in 2008.

Table 18. Part-time contracts by ISCED

	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15				
ISCED 0-2	8.306,50	9.070,70	9.529,20	9.717,30
ISCED 3-4	8.538,70	12.167,50	15.728,50	17.415,40
ISCED 5-6	3.383,40	5.117,20	7.233,80	8.302,50
SP				
ISCED 0-2	564,9	675,6	1.044,20	1.079,20
ISCED 3-4	154,9	247,2	592	644,1
ISCED 5-6	168	296,5	661,6	657,1
IT				
ISCED 0-2	737,2	769,2	1.123,90	1.200,90
ISCED 3-4	408,3	805,9	1.314,70	1.554,60
ISCED 5-6	111,2	187,8	374,8	482,6

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Each group shows a general upward trend in number of part-time contracts reported from 1995 to 2008, with the greatest increase shown by EU-15 for ISCED 3-4. EU-15 reports the highest number of part-time contracts for each year and ISCED group; the highest value, 17.415,40 is reported in 2008 for ISCED 3-4. Each group reports a lower number of part-time contracts as ISCED level increases with the lowest values reported in ISCED 5-6 for each country. Also, smaller increases from 1995 to 2008 are seen in higher ISCED groups, excluding ISCED 5-6 in Spain which is comparable to ISCED 3-4.

As mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter, low product-market competition as well as price-competition rather than quality-competition do not require highly skilled workforce, which provokes relevant consequences, namely the question of the over-qualification of the labour force.

This is especially true in Southern European countries (Amable, 2003), where the phenomenon of over-qualification has to be considered as a relevant aspect of the labour market.

Figure 31. Indicator of qualification mismatch OECD and selected countries (2005); percentages of employees and self-employed (over-qualification)

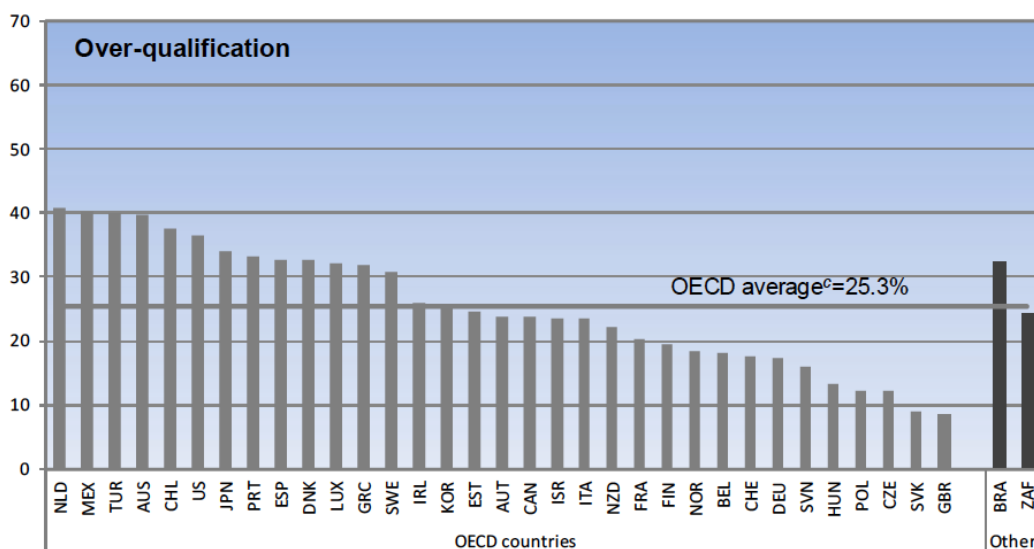
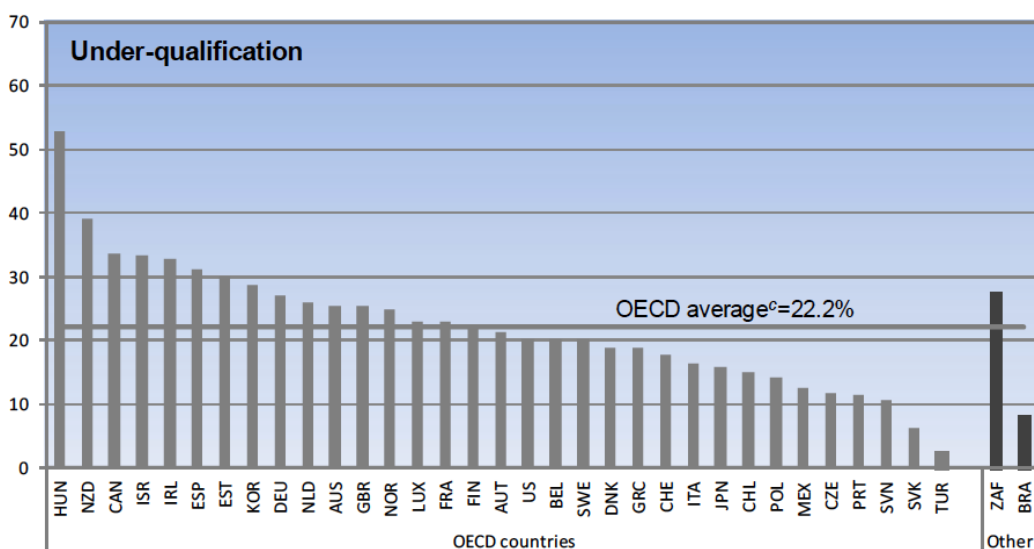


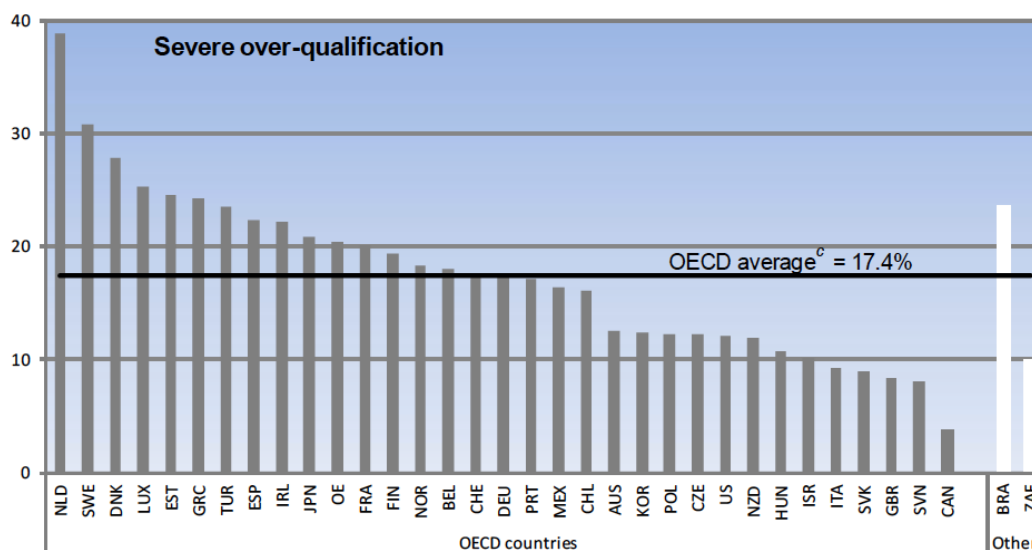
Figure 32. Indicator of qualification mismatch OECD and selected countries (2005); percentages of employees and self-employed (under-qualification)



- Over-qualified workers are those whose qualifications are higher than required by their occupation. Under-qualified workers are those whose qualifications are lower than required by their occupation.
- Trainees and apprentices are excluded
- Unweighted average of OECD countries shown.

Source: OECD Employment Outlook 2011, based on European Survey of Working conditions (2005) for European countries, on International Social Survey Programme (2004-2005) for the other countries.

Figure 33. Indicator of qualification mismatch OECD and selected countries (2005); percentages of employees and self-employed



- Severely over-qualified workers are those whose qualifications are more than one ISCED step higher than required by their occupation – e.g. a tertiary graduate (ISCED code 5) is classified as severely over-qualified if he/she holds a job that requires upper secondary qualifications or less (ISCED code 3); on the other hand someone holding a tertiary qualification (ISCED 5) but working in a job where the modal qualification is a post-secondary non-tertiary qualification (ISCED 4) will not be classified as severely over-qualified. The modal qualification in each occupational group at the two-digit level is used to measure qualification requirements.

- Trainees and apprentices are excluded

- Unweighted average of OECD countries shown.

Source: OECD Employment Outlook 2011, based on European Survey of Working conditions (2005) for European countries, on International Social Survey Programme (2004-2005) for the other countries.

As shown in the figures, Spain reports having more over-qualified workers than Italy; while Spain is above the OECD average of 25.3% at roughly 32%, Italy is below it at roughly 23%. The OECD Employment Outlook (2011) declares that a third of Spanish workers are over-qualified. Observing the percentages related to under-qualification, we notice that Italy remains under the OECD average of 22.2% at nearly 16%; by contrast, Spain also suffers under-qualification with a punctuation of more than 30%. Here, the phenomena of over-qualification and under qualification are both evident. According to the OECD document, the qualification mismatches may mirror the very rapid rise in average educational attainment, which would produce both graduate over-qualification and upgrading of qualification requirements in jobs. This would result in the apparent under-qualification of experienced and older workers lacking a formal qualification and having, instead, acquired skills within the labour market (2011: 14). Finally, in order to better understand the gravity of the Spanish situation, the last figure concerning severe over-qualification is also reported. This exhibits a high proportion of workers with more than one ISCED level than required by their occupation, showing thus great qualification mismatches. While Spain reports a punctuation

of nearly 23%, Italy shows roughly ten point less than the OECD average of 17.4%. Italian workers, who are mostly engaged in jobs requiring at least one ISCED step less than they have, seem to barely suffer the a severe qualification mismatch.

To sum up, it is evident in the European average, in Italy and Spain that the higher the ISCED level, the higher the employment rates and lower the unemployment rates, and this seems true for both genders throughout the period under analysis. Thus, education acts as a proper conversion factor that allows the expansion of capabilities, since it influences the possibility of a person to convert capabilities in functionings. Nevertheless, the situation is not linear for temporary and part-time jobs alike, where workers in ISCED 3-4 are affected more than workers in ISCED 1-2 by temporary and part-time contracts for most of the period under consideration. In particular, in Italy and in the EU-15 the weight of fixed-term jobs is hold by workers in ISCED 3-4 in a growing number, especially in the recent period, followed by people in ISCED 1-2 and ISCED 5-6. By contrast, in Spain people with ISCED 3-4 are less engaged in temporary jobs all over the years, while the lower and the highest levels of ISCED experience worse working conditions. In a certain measure, higher education opens up job opportunities, but this is less evident in the Spanish case, as the study on workers in ISCED 5-6 reveals. In this regard, it is important to take into account that Spain shows a significant phenomenon of over-qualification, maybe partly due to low competitiveness of the labour market, which requires poor skills, and partly linked to the sharp rise of educational attainments, which seems to have also produced effects of under-qualification in experienced senior workers. This fact is tied to the consideration that educational arrangement and personal competences have to be combined with a proper socio-economic context that turns them in opportunities for individuals.

5.6 Concluding remarks

The productive system and labour market have undergone several transformations in Europe in the last twenty years, and this is especially evident in Spain where deep and sudden changes occurred. Periods of expansion and financial crisis have affected Spanish economy and important reforms have been made to encourage the use of more flexible contracts. By contrast, Italy shows more moderate changes with regard to labour market and productivity started decreasing considerably since 2000. Observing GDP growth in the period under analysis, Spain reveals a successful performance in comparison to Italy and the European average. Spanish growth took place suddenly in a few years until 2000 when it stopped and rose again in 2002. Then, it suddenly subsided by the end of 2007. By contrast, Italy shows higher punctuations in GDP per capita than

Spain and the European average, which indicates better standard of living conditions. Punctuations decrease over time, whereas they increase in the Spanish case reaching almost the same percentage than the Italian case in 2008. In both countries, growth compensation have stagnated through the 2000s, but Spain exhibits lower yearly compensation than Italy and the European average. Spain is characterised by low quality jobs in terms of security, wages and the qualification required, which is connected to the strong presence of a highly labour intensive sector, like construction, catering and tourism. Also in Southern Italy poor jobs in terms of both pay and working conditions are overspread, following the sharp North-South divide. Both countries are characterised by low intensity of competition and small firms.

In the time-frame 1995-2008, Spain shows a substantial growth of active population, partly due to the increasing number of women participating in labour market, while a gradual growth can be observed in Italy. Both countries are characterised by an increase of employment rates and a decrease of unemployment. Such trends are more strongly accentuated in Spain. Moreover, Italy exhibits lower punctuations than the European average in activity and employment rates, whereas unemployment rate keeps higher until 2005 when it begins to decrease. Participation of women in labour market rose significantly in both countries, even if it remains below the male employment rate and the European female employment average. Females are still those who experience more the lack of choice within the labour market. It is interesting to examine the long-term unemployment trend, which leads to divergent configuration in the two countries: in Italy it increased until 2000, and then it started decreasing, remaining stably higher than the EU average. By contrast, in Spain long-term unemployment decreased considerably from 1995 until 2008.

The economic aspects of vulnerability in Italy and Spain, which refer to how much the labour market weakens individuals, are closely associated with unstable jobs and income insecurity. Temporary employment achieves a punctuation of 30% in Spain, while Italy converges with the European average which is around 15%. It is relevant to consider that the percentage of people who wish a permanent employment while holding a temporary contract is very high in Spain, reaching 90%, while this is true only for 60% of the Italian respondents. Even if in a smaller measure, the same can be told for part-time employment, but there are more people in Italy who would rather work full-time. This means that the labour market does not provide the livelihood or the stability they consider necessary to them and that society has not been able to provide adequate conversation factors that allow people to pursue what they value. It is interesting to note that the perception of financial insecurity is lower in Spain during the period 2007-2008 than Italy, where workers show a stronger perception of insecurity about their own financial condition as well as low life satisfaction. The reasons for this remain unclear.

A strong segmentation in labour market outcomes can be highlighted in both countries, which fare particularly badly in relation to certain labour market groups – such as women and low-qualified workers. This is especially evident for low female employment rates and high female long-term unemployment rate, in particular in Spain. Unemployment affects mainly low-qualified workers, women in large measure, who are easily encountered in flexible employment forms. Indeed, part-time and temporary employment is more common among this group of workers, even if, with regard to women, it may be due to the need to connect their professional life with care activities, which in turn is connected to the lack of caring facilities. Therefore, the growing spread of this type of contract and the still high level of unemployment make workers increasingly vulnerable. Therefore, education acts as a conversion factor that contribute to achieve more job opportunities. However, the relation between the level of ISCED and the contractual arrangement is not linear, since it also occurs that workers with higher ISCED are employed in temporary and part-time job more often than workers with lower ISCED. In particular, Spain shows considerable problems related to under-qualification and severe over-qualification, which result to be stronger than in the Italian context.

Observing the data collected in this chapter, two different forms of social vulnerability can be outlined in Italy and Spain. In the Italian context, social vulnerability develops within a “static” context, characterised by very high levels of long-term unemployment – which lasts in many cases 1 year or more – and a rather high number of discouraged individuals, that is, people who wish to work, but are not searching for a job because they believe there is none available. In this case, the context seems to disseminate thoughts and feelings of hopelessness, which affects individuals’ perception of opportunities and, consequently, their actions – or not-actions –, producing thus a paralysing vicious circle. By contrast, social vulnerability in Spain develops within a more “dynamic” and unstable context during the period under analysis. Long-term unemployment ranks in the lowest positions between European Member States. The gap between the number of people unemployed for less than 1 month and over 1 year is not as marked as in Italy, probably due to the consistent use of temporary contracts. As a result, the percentage of discouraged workers is also quite low. Within this context, individuals seem to plunge from a provisional situation into another. These forms of social vulnerability have been accentuated over the time in both countries.

Chapter VI.

Social protection, activation policies and socio-political aspects of social vulnerability

6.1 Introduction

Distinct social models contribute, together with other social and economic factors, to produce different levels of social vulnerability in different geographical areas. In particular, the type of social protection embedded in the social model is one of the main aspect to take into account for the analysis of social vulnerability in a country. In Ranci's words, "the hypothesis supporting this analysis is that, other factors remaining constant, the welfare system contributes to the structuring of peculiar vulnerability profiles through selectivity in the access to benefits and the generosity of the benefits distributed" (Ranci, 2010, p. 22). With regard to unemployment, social expenditures, active labour market policies and employment protection play a key role in securing individuals from social vulnerability. In particular, cash benefits can be envisaged as a one of the tools of decommodification, which is crucial in the availability of the exit option from the labour market. The concept of "decommodification"³⁰ concerns the possibility to remain outside the market and acts as an entitlement provided by social protection to individuals. This concept is especially relevant, since welfare provision is mainly a matter of social rights.

In a capability approach, social protection³¹ represents the solidarity of a country towards each person and social expenditures are viewed as a collective investment in individuals' capabilities. It is the attempt of a more equal and fair distribution of life chances in society. A generous welfare state is often considered the necessary condition for guaranteeing capability for work and capability for voice (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005). In particular, cash benefits provide people with more time to choose the employment they value. However, cash transfers are limited insofar as they depend on the contributions that the unemployed have paid during the previous period of employment (Bartelheimer et al., 2012). Furthermore, conspicuous investments in active policies reveal the

³⁰ The concept of "decommodification" can be defined as "the degree to which individuals or families can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation" (Esping-Andersen, 1990: 37) or "the degree to which welfare states weaken the cash nexus by granting entitlements independent of market participation" (Esping-Andersen, 1999: 43).

³¹ Social protection systems are considered either as conversion factors or providers of resources depending on the author.

assumption of a long-term perspective oriented to favour the growth of skills and competences of job-seekers, aiming to durable and continuous professional trajectories. This assumption contrasts with the idea of Work first that fosters the quick integration of unemployed into the labour market, regardless the precariousness of the job (Torrents, 2006). Both in the case of cash benefits and active policies, looking at the amount of expenditures of a country is not sufficient enough, since also the type of help provided has a relevant weight. Indeed, the way expenditures are managed has to be carefully examined, when considering effective freedom and possibility of choice made accessible to individuals (Salais, 2003).

This chapter tries to depict the socio-political aspects of vulnerability in Spain and Italy, observing the efficacy of the social system in protecting individuals when they are unemployed and in furnishing them with possibilities and tools for tackling the drawbacks and pitfalls of the market. An analysis of social expenditures and active labour market policies³² (LMPs) as well as of the employment protection legislation will be carried out, in order to identify if policies are oriented to enforce a logic of Work First or to promote long-term professional trajectories. These can be considered useful measures to prevent social vulnerability, insofar as they represent different forms to intervene in the labour market. Each measure will be observed in detail in the following paragraphs.

6.2 The Southern model and labour market policies

The South European model includes both Italy and Spain, even if the use of different criteria for classifying European countries by social scientists has produced diverse categories over time. For instance, Italy was placed in the corporatist or conservative regime and Spain was neglected in Esping-Andersen's typology (1990). Stephan Leibfried (1991) suggested a fourth type of country, a "rudimentary welfare-state regime", characterized by the lack of an articulated social minimum and a right to welfare, represented by the Southern-European countries not included in Esping-Andersen's analysis (Spain, Greece and Portugal), as well as to a lesser extent by Italy and France. Later on Maurizio Ferrera (1993; 1996) presented a new classification of welfare states, identifying four kinds of welfare states (pure occupational, mixed occupational, mixed universalistic, and pure universalistic). Both the Italian and Spanish cases offer a very good illustration of the continuing tension between the two polar models of social solidarity (universalism and occupationalism). Also Ebbinghaus (1998) introduced a "Latin" residual Welfare State, which added Italy as a borderline case, and Spain as a welfare laggard given its late democratic and industrial development. Latin

³² In this chapter, we adopt the expressions 'passive' and 'active' policies used by the Eurostat.

Welfare State is considered a variant of the conservative welfare state and it is defined as *latin particularistic-clientelist subsidiarism*. The social protection system is often characterised by clientelism, especially in Italy (Ferrera, 1997: 19–20; Fargion, 2001: 231). The strong presence of clientelism is tied to the high level of particularism with regard to cash benefits. The difference with the other continental welfare states results from a multitude of factors: the deeper influence of subsidiarity and family, the presence of the historical friction between State and Catholic church, more conflictual left-right politics, larger regional disparity in economic development and a tendency towards clientelist politics (Ferrera, 1996). It is characterized by fewer Welfare State benefits and more traditional intermediary institutions, such as Church and family. The Southern model is considered a familiaristic model, due to the great relevance of the role of family in the accomplishment of welfare obligations, with adverse implication for women (Ferrera and Hermerijck, 2003; Saraceno, 1994; Trifiletti, 1999; Esping-Andersen, 1999). The role of the family and above all of the woman within the Mediterranean model is especially emphasized by Moreno (2002; 2003). Women, or “superwomen” as he calls them, have combined their non-paid household activities with their paid professional duties, until becoming the most effective shock absorber within the Mediterranean model.

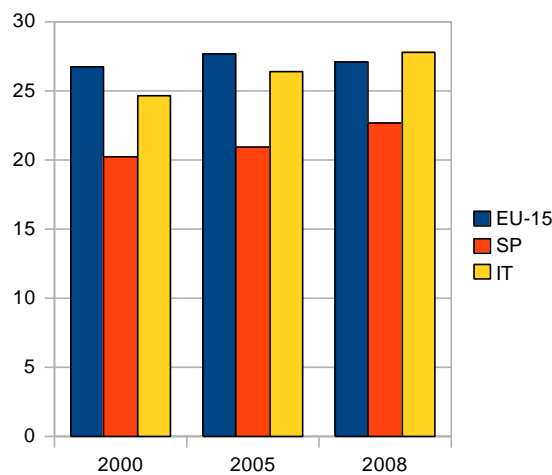
Spain’s and Italy’s welfare state display a number of common institutional traits. Indeed, both Spanish and Italian systems are mixed in terms of coverage: they refer to the Beveridge model in the field of health care with universal national health services and to the Bismarckian model in the field of income transfers. These countries present moderate level of social expenditures and the safety net underpinning social insurance is only weakly developed. The weakness of state support tends to be tied to financial constraints, more than to liberal convictions. Nevertheless, important differences can also be detected between the two countries. First of all, the degree of social protection maturity is higher in Italy, where the welfare system developed historically much earlier (Ferrera and Hermerijck, 2003). By contrast, the Spanish social protection system underwent a late development, which also slowed the achievement towards reaching the European standards. Then, although income maintenance is mainly linked to the labour market participation and social contribution, several non-contributory programmes tied to retirement, unemployment and minimum income and financed from general revenues are available. Such programmes are aimed to reduce the protection gaps of the welfare system (Guillén, 2007), which is absolutely absent in the Italian context. Indeed, Italy, within the EU25, is the only place jointly with Greece and Hungary that misses a minimum income scheme as a safety net for the poor (Sacchi, 2007). Also, the Italian welfare state is strongly imbalanced, since the greater part of benefits are for old risks (i.e. old age and illness), whereas new social risks are mainly neglected (i.e. family/work life balance).

In Southern European countries social protection against unemployment is scarcely developed (Ferrera, 2006) and the degree of State intervention has been mostly low. Two important elements come into play at this point. First, the so-called “familismo”, whereby the family and social network as well as intergeneration solidarity become the primary source of support and assistance for people (Saraceno, 1994; Esping-Andersen, 1999), thus preventing in a certain extent the State from consistent intervention. Within this framework, the *male breadwinner model* has been considered for a long time as the primary referent for managing public aid and employment policies. The situation has been changing recently due to many factors, which have deeply transformed society, like the new demands of the productive system, the participation of women in the labour market and their emancipation, worker’s mobility across countries, the lower stability of bonding family relations and new patterns of the family structure. The second factor is the role played by peripheral economy and undeclared work, which covers a broad extension of national productive activities in both countries (Ludovici, 2000). Some scholars link the impossibility of financing with a greater amount the income support systems to the large presence of underground economy that reduces the tax basis (Simonazzi et al., 2009). Another important characteristic feature of Spain and Italy is the segmentation of the system of income support for unemployment. Indeed, the Spanish and Italian welfare state patterns have created a widening gap between labour market insiders with extensive coverage and under-protected labour market outsiders, with a middling group of semi-peripheral workers moving backwards and forwards across the line in some cases (Moreno, 2000). ‘Insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ are characterised by considerable differences in terms of opportunities, entitlements and guarantees. These differences between the levels of unemployment benefits and the categories of recipients constitute the most significant feature of Spanish and Italian employment protection, as well as in as the other countries of the Southern model. This is even most pronounced in the clientelistic Italian welfare state (Ferrera, Hemerijck and Rhodes, 2000; Ludovici, 2000), which shows a distributive distortion whereby there is a great discrepancy between different categories of workers. Three categories are traditionally outlined. These are guaranteed workers (employees in medium-large firms and the public sector), semi-guaranteed workers (employees in small companies, private owned businesses, and freelancers), and non-guaranteed workers (workers in the submerged economy, especially in the South). In the Italian familistic model the fact that at least one member gets a standard employment contract and stays in the first group (*cittadella del garantismo*) has always been crucial to gaining social protection (Ferrera, 1996). Because of the inefficiency of the Italian welfare state, families determine and shape the life chances of individuals (Simonazzi and Villa, 2009). The Italian welfare is also characterised by a high level of fragmentation, as the system lacks a homogeneous combination of structures and services within the

country. The dualism of both production and social models mirror the North-South divide (Simonazzi et al., 2009). Also Spain shows such dualism (Toharia and Malo, 2000) as well as marked territorial disparities with unequal distribution of public services. Finally, both Italy and Spain are considered a form of low-cost social model, based on high flexibility and residual public protection and services (Martín Artiles, 2008).

We now observe in the following figure how total expenditures have varied over the time in Spain and Italy in comparison to the European country average and how they are distributed, with special attention to the unemployment question (Fig. 34 and 35).

Figure 34. Total expenditures in social protection (% of GDP)



Source: Eurostat

While Europe is roughly stabilized over the eight year period, both Spain and Italy show upward trends in percentage GDP dedicated to social protection. EU-15 reports higher expenditure rates than Spain and Italy until 2008, where Italy reaches roughly 27%, beating EU-15's rate. Spain consistently reports the lowest percentages all over the years, increasing from roughly 20% in 2000 to roughly 23% in 2008. From 2000 to 2005, EU-15 increases from roughly 27% to 28% but drops to its starting rate by 2008; while EU-15 reports one of the highest values, its increase from 2000 to 2008 is lower than that of other countries.

Table 19. Total expenditures in unemployment (% of GDP) in comparison to other social questions

EU	2000	2005	2008	SP	2000	2005	2008	IT	2000	2005	2008
Sickness/ health care	7,07	7,68	7,74	Sickness/ health care	5,83	6,3	6,84	Sickness/ health care	5,97	6,78	6,99
Disability	2,10	2,09	2,09	Disability	1,58	1,53	1,59	Disability	1,44	1,52	1,58
Old age	10,16	10,37	10,08	Old age	6,8	6,49	6,82	Old age	12,5	12,86	13,6
Survivors	1,82	1,77	1,60	Survivors	2,06	2,01	1,97	Survivors	2,54	2,53	2,49
Family/ children	2,13	2,11	2,15	Family/ children	0,97	1,18	1,5	Family/ children	0,9	1,11	1,26
Unemployed	1,58	1,65	1,38	Unemployed	2,3	2,53	3	Unemployed	0,4	0,51	0,51
Housing	0,57	0,61	0,55	Housing	0,16	0,17	0,19	Housing	0,01	0,02	0,02
Social exclusion	0,30	0,32	0,36	Social exclusion	0,13	0,22	0,28	Social exclusion	0,04	0,05	0,06

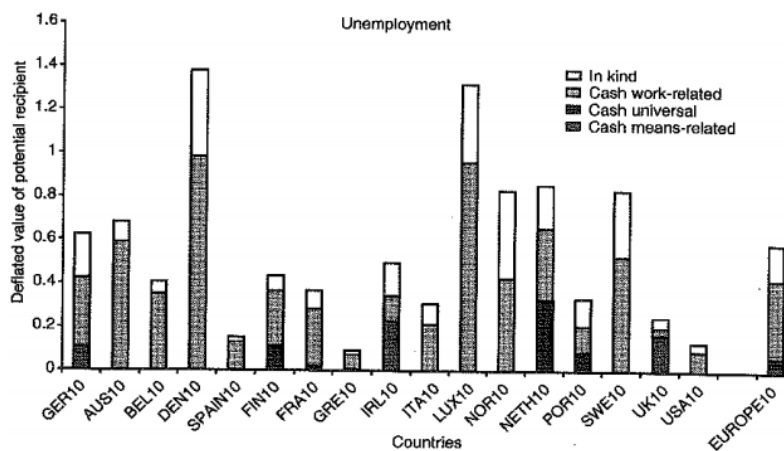
Source: Eurostat

Sickness/health care, old age and survivors each receive the highest share of the total expenditure in both Italy and Spain throughout each time period with Spain receiving a slightly lower percentage than Italy by 2008 for sickness/health care and Italy receiving a considerably larger percentage for old age by 2008 when nearly half the GDP is dedicated to it. Sickness/health care also receives a large percentage, particularly in EU-15 where values reach 7.74% by 2008; values never exceed 7% for Spain and Italy, although they increase from 2000 to 2008. Old age also receives a larger percentage of the GDP in EU-15 and above all Italy that reaches nearly twice the percentage seen in Spain; Italy reports the highest percentage GDP dedicated to old age in 2008 also in comparison to the EU average, at 13.6%. Indeed, here social expenditures plot an institutional bias in favour of old age protection (Ferrera and Hermerijck, 2003), whereas risks linked to housing, social exclusion and unemployment remain mostly uncovered. Housing and social exclusion each receive lower percentages of the total expenditure than any other category for each country and in each year, dedicating less than a percentage in each case. For Italy, housing receives only a fraction of a percent of the GDP, making it the least addressed social issue. Another outstanding comparison is in the percentage GDP dedicated to unemployment rate for each year, as Spain gives roughly 10% more than Italy even as both countries show upward trends over the 8 year period. A greater percentage of the GDP is dedicated to unemployment in Spain than it is in Italy, even if it is necessary to bear in mind the higher level of unemployment rates in Spain more than in Italy. Moreover, observing the data, we can see that the flexibilization of the labour market has not been accompanied by higher unemployment benefits schemes (the so-called ‘shock absorber’) (Simonazzi et al., 2009). Finally, there are no outstanding increases or decreases over the 8 year period; rates seen in each country remain fairly stable and do not increase by more than a

percentage, except for old age and sickness/health care in Italy and for sickness/health care in Spain.

Observing the generosity of expenditures can provide only a partial overview of the country situation. Therefore, Salais (2003) proposes to analyse how they are used, focusing of four types of expenditures in the field of unemployment: three of them are in cash (means-tested, universal and work-related) and one is on services in kind (active policy measure).

Figure 35. The rate of deflated social expenditure per capita (for the unemployed)



Note: Values are expressed as the expenditures per potential recipient divided by the mean workers' remuneration of the country³³. At equal capacity to pay, the resulting ratio expresses the rate of investment per capita each country has accepted to subtract from its current spending. In the same way, this ratio also measures the percentage of mean individual remuneration reserved for collective solidarity, or, in other words, 'the value of solidarity' in force in each country.

Source: Salais (2003).

As plotted out in Figure 3, the mean deflated ratio for unemployment in Europe is nearly 0.6 and is composed mainly by work-related benefits and service in kind. Focusing on the countries under analysis in this thesis, we observe that Spain, whose mean expenditure per unemployed person is 0.15 of the mean wage can be considered as investing less in the capabilities of the unemployed less than Italy, which spends nearly 0.3 of the mean wage. In contrast, Italy can be seen as valuing solidarity for the unemployed in the case of job loss slightly more than Spain. In addition, Italian expenditures are invested more in services in kind than Spanish ones. In Salais's view, the more social expenditures are oriented towards services in kind and the more these are related to work, the higher the probability of being oriented to the capabilities approach. Although, it is evident that neither Spain nor Italy exhibit such trends, since both expenditures in terms of benefits and active

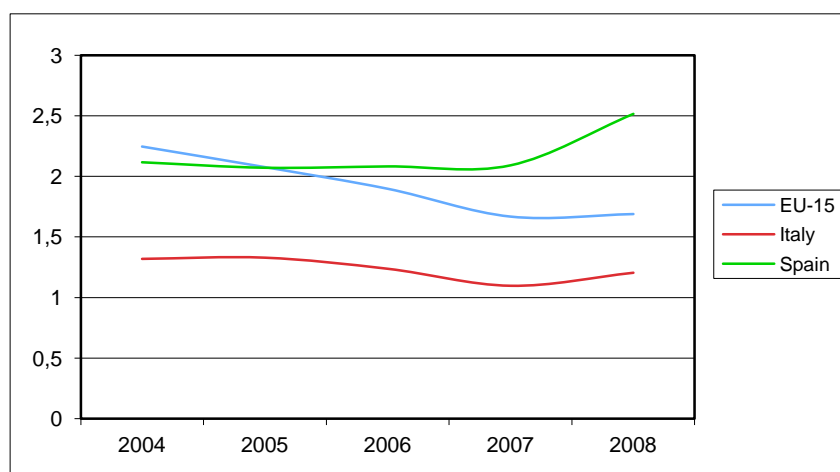
³³ For details, consult Salais (2003), pp. 335-340.

policies are very low. In comparison to other countries, like Denmark and Luxembourg and other Northern countries, which combine measures improving employability and income replacement resources, Southern countries seem to show a drift far from a capability approach.

With regard to unemployment expenditures, it is important to analyse labour market policies (LMP). The transformations that have taken place in the last decades in Europe have deeply influenced labour market policies with regard to the function and goals of unemployment benefit schemes. Indeed, the main aim has shifted from that of providing replacement income between jobs towards that of fostering the transit towards employment as quickly as possible. All unemployment benefit schemes have undergone reforms that have cut back on the generosity of the systems in terms of replacement rates and duration, promoting the activation of the unemployed. Activation requirements relate to proof of regular job search, participation in active labour market policies either via a job placement or training, and failure to comply with these obligations can be sanctioned by benefit cuts. However, the preponderance of active policies on unemployment benefits varies widely across social models. There is also considerable variation from one country to another in the importance accorded to income provision and enabling support (ETUI, 2008). In the following figure, we will observe Spanish and Italian labour market policies (LMP) in order to examine the extent to which each country is committed to intervening in their labour markets and the kinds of programmes they favour. They include expenditures for labour market services³⁴, out-of-work income maintenance and support, early retirement, training, job rotation and job sharing, employment incentives, supported employment and rehabilitation, direct job creation, and start-up incentives.

³⁴ According to Eurostat's definition, LMP services cover all services and activities of the Public Employment Services (PES) together with any other publicly funded services for jobseekers.

Figure 36. Total public expenditure on labour market policies (% of GDP)



Source: Eurostat

The total of public expenditures for LMPs in Italy is among the lowest in Europe, where overall average expenditure is higher in spite of a downward trend registered towards the end of the 2000s. In Spain, expenditures used to be just below the average of European countries, but over the years it has witnessed a significant increase, and indeed accounted for 2.5 per cent of the total GDP in 2008. Europe and Italy show slight downward trends until 2007 when each roughly level off, while Spain remains stable until 2007 in which its percentage expenditure increases by one-half percent. It is important to recall that the level of unemployment rates in Spain are still much higher than in Italy and with respect to the European average during all the period under consideration and increase after 2006. Although unemployment rates are lower in Italy, the country exhibits a deficient system of labour market policies in comparison to the European average, where unemployment rates are slightly higher since 2004, but total expenditures are much higher.

Focusing now on 2006, we can compare expenditures for each type of action in Spain, Italy and other European countries (Table 20).

Table 20. Expenditures in LMPs (% GDP 2006)

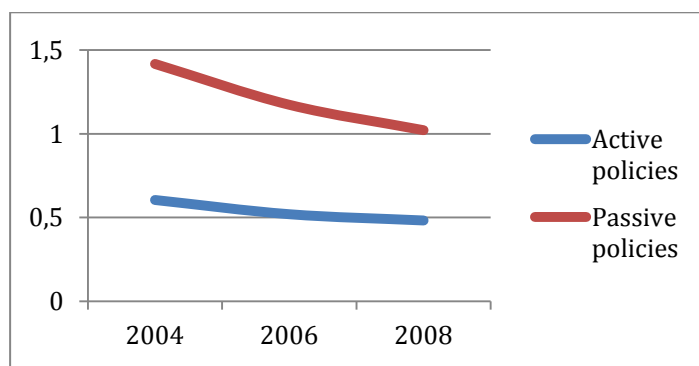
	Spain	Italy	EU-15
Total expenditures	2,1	1,2	1,9
LMP services	0,1	0,03	0,2
Active policies (2-7)	0,6	0,4	0,5
Passive policies (8-9)	1,4	0,8	1,2

Source: Eurostat, Labour Market Policy

As shown by the figure, in Spain total expenditures for labour market policies in percentage points of GDP is considerably higher than in Italy and slightly more than in the EU-15 average with 2.2 points. In detail, passive policies play a predominant role in labour market policy in terms of public resources allocated to unemployment benefits and public concern, overcoming the European average. This is also due to the high unemployment rate that characterise the Spanish labour market. In this regard, a significant difference can be outlined between the two countries under analysis, since expenditures for passive policies in Spain are higher than in Italy. Policies oriented towards activation of unemployed workers have not received particular attention as compared to passive policies in Spain, in Italy or in the other European countries. However, Spain shows the strongest orientation to activation in comparison to Italy and EU-15, while the lowest expenditures in active policies are detectable in the Italian case. Little attention has also been paid to labour market policy services, with Italy displaying nearly 0 percentage points in this dimension.

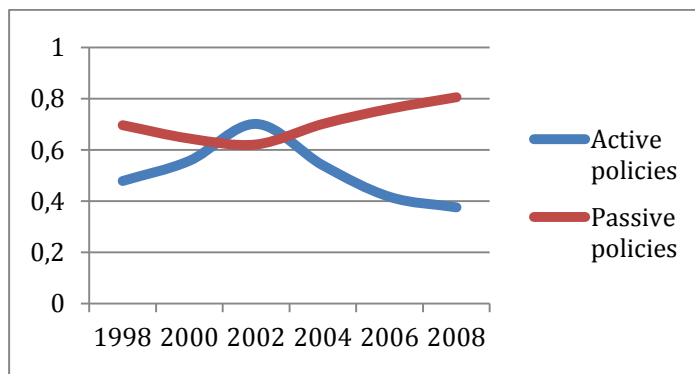
In the figures below, we can observe the trends over the years of active and passive policies for the two countries under analysis and the European average in order to underline the attention directed to each labour market policy (Fig. 37, 38 and 39).

Figure 37. Expenditures in labour market policies (%GDP) – EU-15 (2004-2008)



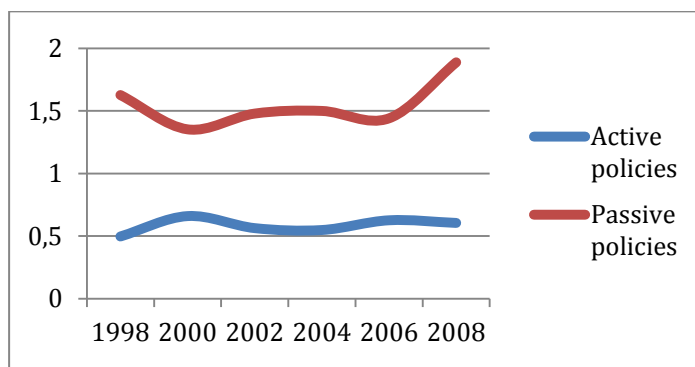
Source: Eurostat

Figure 38. Expenditures in labour market policies (%GDP) – Italy (1998-2008)



Source: Eurostat

Figure 39. Expenditures in labour market policies (%GDP) – Spain (1998-2008)



Source: Eurostat

As shown in the figures, the European average shows a decreasing trend over the years, which may be tied to the contraction of unemployment rates in the same period. It is interesting to notice that passive policies decline in a greater percentage than active policies. Indeed, passive policies represent the 1.4 % of GDP in 2004 and drop to 1% in 2008. Active policies show only a slight decrease from 0.6% in 2004 to 0.4% in 2008. Active policies and passive policies show the same trend, which is not true for the Italian case. Indeed, in Italy passive policies show an increasing trend, whereas active policies display the inverse tendency. Percentages of passive policies shift from 0,7% to 0,8% after a slight decrease between 2000 and 2002. By contrast, active policies raise until 2002 from 0.47 to 0.7%, before decreasing to 0,38% in 2008. Passive and active policies therefore exhibit opposite trends in Italy during this time. Nonetheless, the amount of expenditures in passive policies is not so much dissimilar than expenditures in active policies as in the other countries. According to some authors, the implementation of activation policies without a proper development of the unemployment protection system has boosted the weakness of the welfare structure (Gualmini and Rizza, 2014). The situation in Spain is barely different. Whereas passive

policies increase from 1998 to 2008 with a fluctuating oscillation, shifting from 1,6% to 1,8%, active policies fluctuate slightly all over the period, after increasing until 2000. It is important to remember that unemployment rates began to raise considerably since 2005, which can be tied to the increase in passive policies in 2006, as it is evident in the graphic. The gap between the Spain and the EU-15 decreases over the time because of a widespread decline in this expenditures in the EU as a whole (Banyuls et al., 2009). However, Italy shows the highest level of investment in activation policies in 2003, whereas Spain and the European average exhibit a more moderate trend that remain roughly steady over the time in comparison to the stronger variation that is evident in the Italian case.

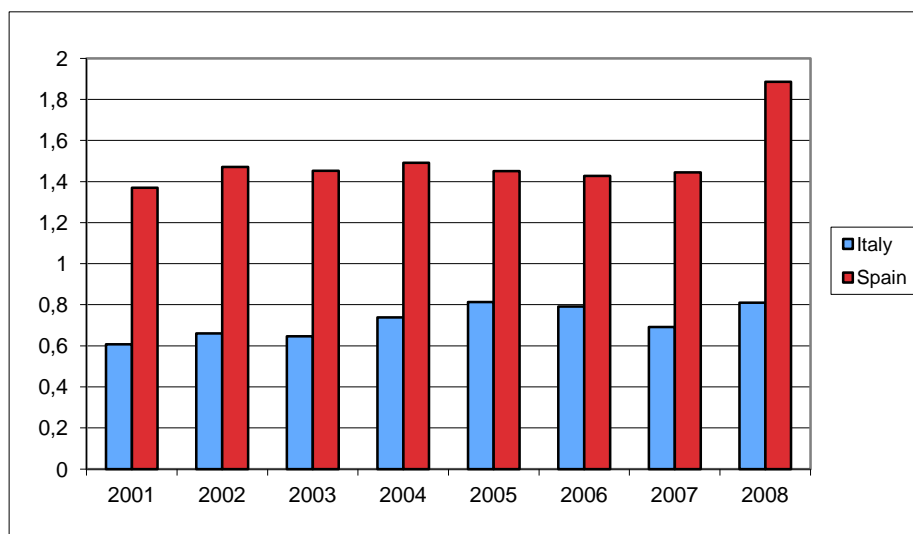
The following section observe in more detail passive labour market policies and their structure within the two countries under analysis.

6.3 Passive Labour Market Policies

Welfare systems are characterized by the type of risks they cover and the extent to which they do so. The level of generosity of the intervention notably influences the degree of protection against social vulnerability and highlights a capability-approach orientation. The features of welfare systems stem from long-term conflicts and debates and are therefore strongly country-specific. The borderline between the risks that can be taken care of on a private basis and those which require public intervention changes according to several factors, such as the development of markets, demography and the prevailing visions of solidarity in a society. In Salais' words, "the set of criteria and rules in social protection systems that determine who has rights and to what kind of aid" are included in the informational basis of public policies (Salais, 2009: 225).

Passive labour market policies, which refer to unemployment allowance and constitute the distinctive features of the Southern European social countries, include out-of-work income maintenance and support, as well as early retirement.

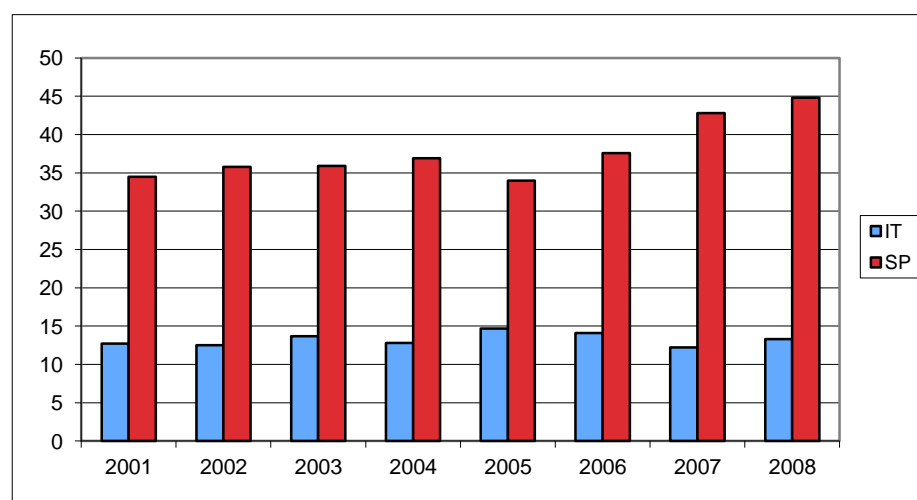
Figure 40. Total expenditures in passive labour market policies (% of GDP)



Source: Eurostat

It is here that one of the most important differences between Spain and Italy can be detected. Throughout the 2000s, overall expenditure in Spain has been higher than Italy, especially in 2008. By contrast, whereas the decade ended with what seems like a significant increase in Spanish rates, the mild increase in expenditure which was registered in Italy remained within the figures already noted during the mid-2000s; so much so that the gap between the two countries at the end of the period was highest. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that Spain showed the highest level of unemployment rates over all this period of time. Despite this, expenditures in Italy and Spain are far from adequate in terms of financing for labour market policies and, consequently, far from a capabilities approach.

Figure 41. Participants in total passive labour policies (participants per 100 persons wanting to work)(categories 8-9)



Source: Eurostat

Passive labour market policies cover a greater number of people in Spain than Italy, especially in the post-2006 years. The number of people that received passive measures in Spain is approximately triple in comparison to Italy throughout the period under exam; moreover, this gap widens towards the end of the period, reaching nearly 45%. It is interesting to notice that in 2005 Spain exhibits the lowest levels of participants in passive labour policies, which also corresponds to the lowest levels of unemployment rate during this decade. Still in Spain, the post-2005 period is marked by a gradual increase in percentage rates, whereas the percentages in Italy are fluctuating through time.

Table 21. Participants in passive labour market policies (participants per 100 persons wanting to work), by gender

MALES	2001	2003	2005	2007
SP	44,8	45,8	44,3	53,2
IT	16,3	17,1	18	15,6
FEMALES	2001	2003	2005	2007
SP	27,8	29,3	28	36,6
IT	7,7	7,5	8,5	8,2

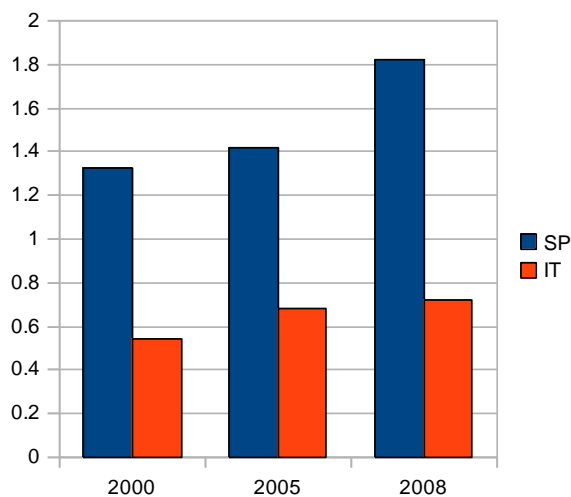
Source: Eurostat

Italy is characterised by half the number of women covered by these measures in comparison with men. The same can be said for Spain, even though it is clear that the gender gap is less prominent than in Italy. What is interesting to highlight, however, is that the number of women benefiting

from passive policies has risen more than men in the long run in both countries, as can be shown by a comparison between findings for 2001 and 2007.

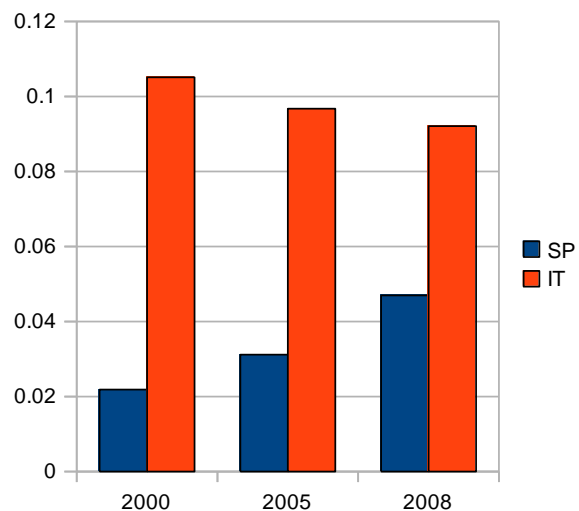
Expenditures in passive labour market policies will be now observed in detail, by type of action (Fig. 42 and 43).

Figure 42. Out-of-work income maintenance expenditures



Source: Eurostat

Figure 43. Early retirement and support expenditures



Source: Eurostat

With regard to out-of-work maintenance and support expenditure, Spain shows an upward trend in percentage while Italy shows a slight increase starting in 2000. By 2008, Spain has more than doubled Italy's percentage, overcoming 1.8%. Moreover, with regard to early retirement expenditure, Spain shows an upward trend while Italy shows a downward trend, beginning in 2000. Hence, the two countries are closer to one another in percentage than in 2000. Still, Italy has roughly twice the percentage of early retirement expenditure than Spain by 2008.

We now move to observe the structure of the Spanish and Italian protection systems in the case of unemployment, since duration and conditions of income support influence the possibility for individuals to achieve a valuable transition and a new employment (Bartelheimer, 2012). As Ferrera states (2006), the Italian system is quite complex, and develops along two main levels, which are composed by different sub-levels that will not be taken into account here. The first level consists of a "general allowance" for unemployment and includes different schemes. The most common scheme foresees an allowance of 40 percent of the last three months of wage are paid for up to six months, or until as many as nine months for over 50 (agricultural and construction workers can benefit from a special allowance). Funds come from employers. An additional level of

unemployment benefits known as “Mobility allowances” (*Indennità di mobilità*) was introduced by Law 223/1991 for workers, for instance after their company has had to undergo massive firings. Its duration varies from a minimum of 12 months until a maximum of 36 months (48 months in South Italy), but under certain conditions it can last until the retirement of the employee. However, this benefit is only allocated to workers holding a permanent contract, that have worked for more than 12 months in a firm. In Italy, Law 80/2005 introduced some significant changes to the existing legislation and extended general allowance. Ordinary benefits were also extended to workers whose contract has been suspended due to temporary circumstances. The second level of unemployment benefits consists of the Wage Guarantee Fund (*Cassa Integrazione Guadagni, Cig*), allocated when the working time has been reduced or the contract is suspended for transitory economical and productive reasons (partial unemployment or temporary unemployment, without loss of the job). Its duration is 13 weeks and can reach a maximum period of 12 months (24 months in some areas of the country). It concerns employees of firms of the industrial and craft sector, without consideration for the dimension of the firm. *Cig* also includes a kind of extraordinary benefits that are reserved for people who have worked in companies of the industrial and construction sector with more than 15 employees as well as some tertiary service with more than 50 employees. Its duration is 12 months in case of industrial crisis or 24 months in case of corporate restructuring or re-organization. Funds come mainly from the public expenditures and, in a smaller measure, from employers’ financing. With *Cig*, a sort of negotiation emerges between governments and social actors (above all the unions), in such extent that it has often had a political connotation aimed at meeting employers, trade unions and politicians’ requests. It follows that these kinds of benefits are strongly influenced by the government appointed, and this becomes especially true in times of crisis (Ferrera, 2006). The most relevant aspect is that the Italian protection system is characterised by high fragmentation, in that whole categories of workers remain uncovered in case of unemployment (Berton et al., 2009; Leonardi et al., 2011).

In Spain, in order to be able to receive unemployment benefits, Spanish workers must be legally unemployed, and have to register their unemployment at the National Employment Institute (*Instituto Nacional De Empleo, INEM*³⁵) within a maximum of 15 days after becoming unemployed. A general allowance for unemployment (*el paro*) is allocated to those workers with at least 360 working days in the last six years; its amount varies according to workers’ contribution to the national social security body. Spanish unemployed may get up to 24 months of benefit accounting to as much as a maximum of 70 per cent of wage, which makes the Spanish system of

³⁵ Following Law 56/2003, INEM is currently called Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal, SPEE (National Public Employment Service).

shock absorbers much generous than the Italian one. Moreover, this type of contributions-based cash transfer with low conditionality can be defined as capability-friendly (Bartelheimer et al., 2012). An additional benefit known as *Subsidio por Desempleo* or *Subsidio por insuficiencia de cotización* (Unemployment Subsidy) is given to those workers who have been employed for less than a year, but at least 3 or 6 months depending on the presence or not of family responsibilities. The amount of the subsidy varies in relation to the family responsibility of the unemployed and the period of contribution. Benefiting of this subsidy means consuming the contributions accumulated; therefore, there is the attempt to force the unemployed to keep working until reaching the 360 working days, which would allow them to acquire the general allowance for unemployment. Another type subsidy is reserved to unemployed people over 52 that have already benefited of the general allowance and the unemployment subsidy and have paid contribution for at least 6 years of their life. It runs until the age of retirement, when the subsidy ceases and pension starts. This is the only case in which contributions are reserved for pension, while enjoying the subsidy. Recipients must subscribe a commitment to work (*compromiso de actividad*). The subsidy provides 80% of an indicator, the IPREM (*Indicador Público de Renta de Efectos Múltiples*). IPREM was introduced in 2004 for substituting the *Salario Mínimo Interprofesional* (Minimum Interprofessional Wage). One of the most relevant differences between Italy and Spain is yet another benefit established by the Spanish system, the *Renta Activa de Inserción*, RAI (Active insertion income). It is the last benefit available provided by the Spanish public employment system. It is aimed at unemployed people with great difficulties in finding employment and with scarce livelihoods, namely over 45 year old long-term unemployed, over 45 year old returning immigrants, people with disability and victims of gender violence less than 65 years old. They must subscribe the commitment to work, which states the conditionality of unemployment benefits (*compromiso de actividad*). Such commitment includes the availability of the unemployed to seek employment, undertaking the employment proposals that the Public Employment Service offers, participating in training, accepting “adequate placements”. However, it results to be more formal than effective (Bartelheimer et al., 2012; Salas, 2011).

Generally speaking, accessibility to employment entitlements in the form of unemployment benefits is allowed after a period of labour market participation – at least 52 working weeks in the two years preceding the beginning of unemployment conditions in the Italian case and 52 working weeks in the six years preceding the beginning of unemployment condition in the Spanish one (OECD, 2004). Moreover, accessibility to the entitlements has a short term effect – up to 7 months in the Italian case and up to 24 months in the Spanish one (OECD, 2004). The following table

illustrates the net replacement rate of unemployment insurance benefits at the beginning of unemployment and the duration of the unemployment insurance benefit (Tab. 22):

Table 22. Net replacement rate and duration of unemployment insurance (2004) unemployment and the duration of the unemployment insurance benefit

	Initial net replacement rate ^a (percentage of net earnings in work)	Unemployment insurance benefit duration ^{b,c} (months, equivalent initial rate)	Average of net replacement rates over 60 months of unemployment (percentage of net earnings in work)
IT	54	6	22 (+2)
SP	67	21	49

a) Initial net replacement rate is an average of cases of a single person and one-earner married couple, an average of cases with no children and with two children, and an average of cases with previous earnings in work 67% of average production worker (APW) level, 100% of APW level and 150% of APW level. Typical-case calculations relate to a 40-year-old worker who has been making contributions continuously since age 18. Net income out of work includes means-tested benefits (housing benefits are calculated assuming housing costs are 20% of APW earnings) where relevant but not non-categorical social assistance benefits. Taxes payable are determined in relation to annualised benefit values (i.e. monthly values multiplied by 12), even if the maximum benefit duration is shorter than 12 months. See the source for further details.

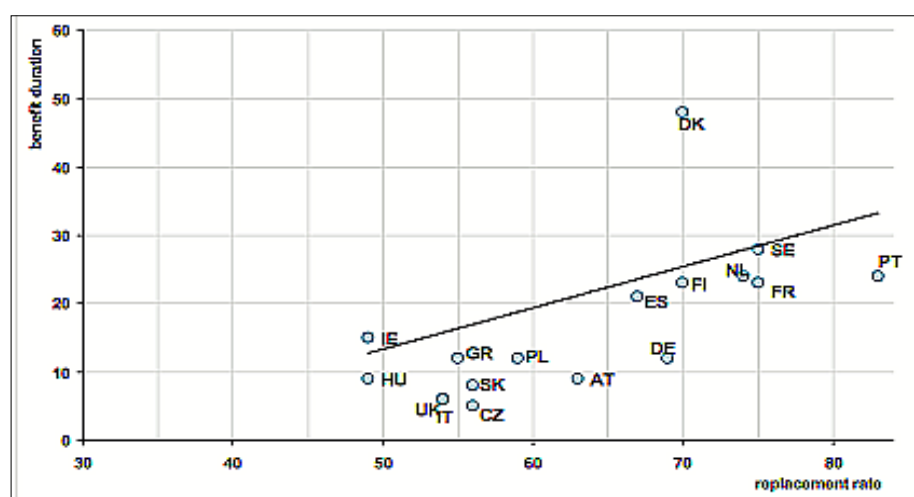
b) Duration is shown as zero for Australia and New Zealand since they do not operate unemployment insurance schemes. The net replacement rates in the first column for these two countries reflect means-tested unemployment benefits which are not subject to a time limit.

c) Months equivalent initial rate for the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Spain where the benefit level declines during the UI period (e.g. for Spain, where the nominal replacement rate declines from 70% to 60% after six months, the months equivalent initial rate is calculated as six months plus 6/7ths of 18 months).

d) As note a) except that the net replacement rates are averaged over five years of unemployment, the three previous earnings levels considered are 67%, 100% and 150% of the average wage (all workers), and non-categorical social assistance benefits are included in out-of-work net income. Values in brackets are percentage point changes between 1995 and 2004, which are only available for a small number of countries. Data for Korea and New Zealand correspond to 2001.

Source: Extracted from OECD, 2004, Benefits and Wages: OECD indicators, Paris.

Figure 44. Correlation between benefit duration and replacement rate, 2004



Source: OECD (2006:60), from Benchmarking working Europe 2008

The figure above displays the correlation between the net replacement rate of unemployment insurance benefits at the beginning of an unemployment spell and the duration of the unemployment insurance benefit. It can be observed the variation in the net replacement rate between Spain and Italy, with a nearly 54% in Italy and a nearly 67% in Spain. As also shown by the previous figure, a great difference between the two countries can be underlined in the duration of unemployment insurance benefit, with a low of 6 months in Italy and a high of 21 months in Spain. Thus the Spanish system is more generous in terms of the allocation of unemployment benefits and guarantees longer coverage than the Italian one. Moreover, Italy shows levels of both replacement rate and benefit duration lower than the most of the other European countries, while Spain occupies an intermediate position in comparison to the member states. Finally, it is interesting to notice in the figure above the positive correlation between the net replacement rate and the duration of benefits, indicating that there is no trade-off between replacement rates and duration of benefits. By contrast, a correspondence between the two can be observed, as high replacement rates are accompanied by relatively long durations and low replacement rates by short durations.

The general analysis carried out so far highlights that, despite the fact that Italy and Spain belong to the same model of welfare, unemployment benefits in Spain look much more generous than in Italy. Despite the apparent evidence of this data, it is good to provide some clarifications to avoid jumping to wrong conclusions. In fact, after examining more deeply the systems of income replacement for unemployed, we can make evident the high level of temporary work in the case of Spain, consisting mostly of fixed-term contracts of less than one year and low wages. This means that a significant group of employees find difficulties in gaining access to unemployment benefit, because they cannot work a sufficient number of weeks as required by law; also, in the case of access, the allowance unemployment is low, due to low wages on which the compensation is calculated. In contrast, Italy is characterised by high selectivity and fragmentation of compensation for categories of workers, according to industry affiliation, company size, type of contract, age and geographical area. In this condition of fragmentation, many workers remain excluded from unemployment benefits and in a position of vulnerability, without no opportunity of choice regarding what they value.

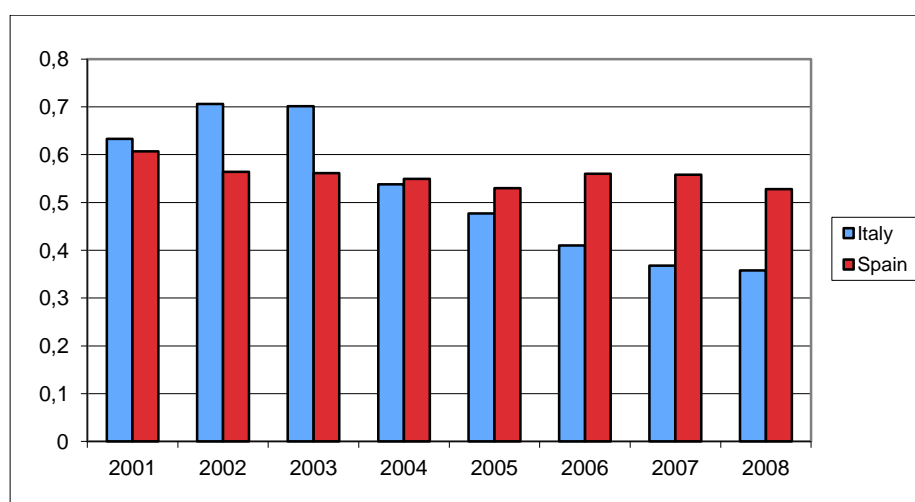
6.4 Active Labour Market Policies

Active labour market policies are viewed as alternative approaches to employment protection in order to curb unemployment. They attempt a fair balance between labour demand and supply and

appropriate retraining schemes, in the event that a mismatch between the two makes employability difficult. Active measures may take the form of direct employment subsidies to foster job creation or indirect incentives. They include training, job rotation and job sharing, employment incentives, supported employment and rehabilitation, direct job creation, and start-up incentives. In a capability approach, active labour market policies are viewed to favour individuals' opportunities to achieve what they value, depending if the goal is the development of capabilities or a quickly entrance in the labour market no matter the type of job available.

We now observe the percentages of public expenditures employed in active labour market policies (Fig. 45) as well as the number of people involved in active labour market programmes (Fig. 46 and Tab. 23).

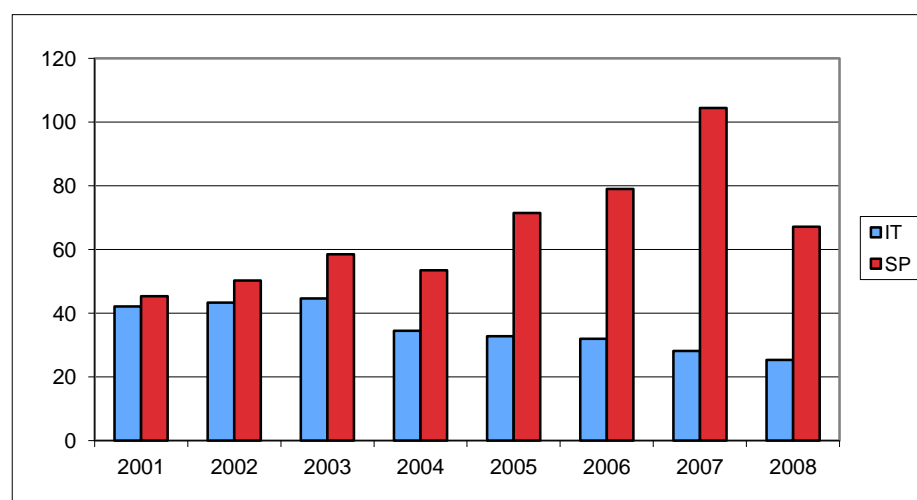
Figure 45. Public expenditure on active labour market policies (% of GDP): total LMP measures



Source: Eurostat

From 2001 to 2008, levels of public expenditures in LMP in Spain have not been characterised by marked changes, even if the years 2005-7 registered a slight increase following a slow and constant decrease started at least in 2001. By contrast, the levels in Italy have decreased in a more relevant way since 2003, following a rise occurred in the previous years. A comparison between the two countries places Italy in a rather lower position from 2004, but marks a major shift of orientation from the early 2000s when the main trend was an increase of expenditures in active labour market policies.

Figure 46. Participants in total active labour policies (participants per 100 persons wanting to work) LMP (categories 2-7: active labour market policies)



Source: Eurostat

The figure indicates the number of participants in labour market policies per 100 persons in search of a job. Whereas the trend for Spain is fluctuating and characterised by a series of rises and falls, the one for Italy is more stable, with only a few changes throughout the eight years under examination. The most remarkable change is in 2003-2004, when the Italian trend changes direction: after a period of slight increase follows a prolonged period of decrease until 2008. A case in point is the number of people benefiting from LMPs in Spain, which was nearly five times higher than Italy in 2007. Once again, these findings place Italy beyond Spanish standards as regards the development and implementation of LMPs.

Table 23. Participant to active labour market policies (LMP participants per 100 persons wanting to work): LMP (categories 2-7) by gender

MALES	2001	2003	2005	2007
SP	69,9	83,0	n.a.	n.a.
IT	n.a.	n.a.	34,8	35,0
FEMALES	2001	2003	2005	2007
SP	29,5	42,3	n.a.	n.a.
IT	n.a.	n.a.	16,7	17,4

Source: Eurostat (n.a.: data not available)

As shown in the table, some marked difference between Italy and Spain emerge when we look at the findings from the point of view of gender. First, the number of men who benefited from labour market policies in Spain is nearly double in comparison to Italy even if the lack of data forces to

compare data referred to different years; also the gap between Italian and Spanish women is well marked. Great achievements have been made in Spain to favour activation, to such an extent that the percentage of male and female participants to active LMPs increase nearly ten points, even if the gender gap remain. By contrast, very few achievements have been obtained for Italian men and women and not great differences are evident between 2005 and 2007. Also, the gap shows that nearly twice as many men could benefit from ALMPs, as opposed to women.

Expenditures in active labour market policies will be observed now in more detail, by type of action (Tab. 24). The way expenditures are distributed is relevant, insofar as it gives hints about the policy orientation towards the logic of Work First that enforce a quick integration into the labour market or, rather, towards a long-term perspective that aim to the professional growth of the job-seeker and a durable employment situation (Torrents, 2006).

Table 24. Expenditures in active labour policies by type of action (% of GDP)

SP	2000	2005	2008	IT	2000	2005	2008
Training	0,167	0,148	0,149	Training	0,247	0,201	0,178
Job rotation and job sharing ³⁶	0,004	0,008	0,009	Job rotation and job sharing	0,000	0,002	0,003
Employment incentives	0,308	0,290	0,265	Employment incentives	0,226	0,210	0,153
Supported employment and rehabilitation	0,027	0,019	0,025	Supported employment and rehabilitation	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Direct job creation	0,106	0,066	0,065	Direct job creation	0,051	0,009	0,007
Start-up incentives	0,046	0,051	0,093	Start-up incentives	0,038	0,051	0,024

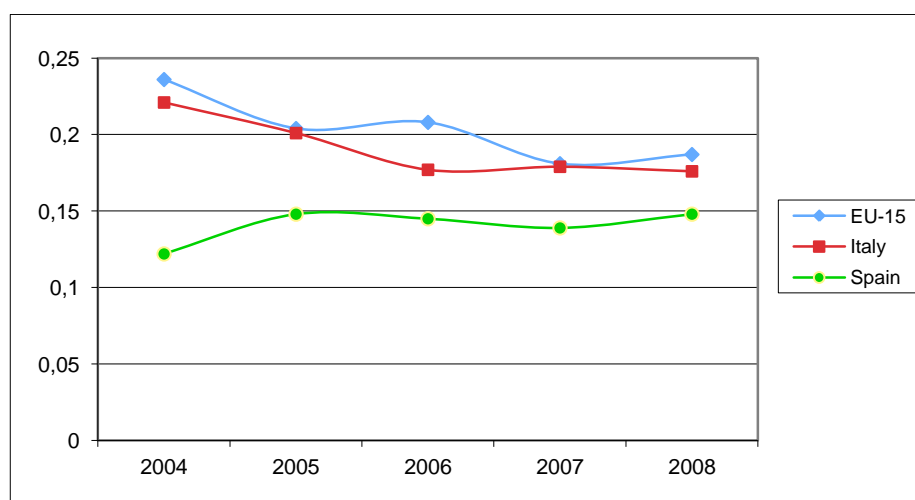
Source: Eurostat (n.a.: data not available)

Highest expenditures in Spain are employed in employment incentives, which reveals a marked trend towards quick integration into the labour market of specific vulnerable groups, which is not so evident in the Italian case. Expenditures in each country are mostly invested in training and employment incentives. Both categories show a downward trend from 2000 to 2008. Nearly all other percentages decrease from 2000 to 2008, with exceptions in job rotation/sharing in both countries and in start-up incentives, although increases are only a small fraction of a percent (for example, a 0.003% increase in job rotation/sharing in Italy). There are no outstanding increases or decreases in any of the expenditures with all increases or decreases being less than 1%.

³⁶ Recently, Eurostat has included the category “Job rotation and job sharing” in the category “Employment incentives”.

A special concern is directed to the training measure, to which most of expenditures are oriented jointly to employment incentives. Before starting, it is important to bear in mind that the institutional and regulatory environment of training differs across countries. While other countries have a strong tradition of lifelong learning and their training supply is diversified and efficient, like Denmark and Netherlands, Southern European countries generally pay less attention to the issue (Amable, 2003). According to the literature (Amable, 2003), public expenditures in training is rather low in Southern European countries, either in the form of direct subsidies to individuals or employers. Spanish and Italian expenditures will be observed in detail in the following figures. The first figure concerns an overall training index, which includes transfers to individuals and employers as periodic cash payments, lump-sum payments, reimbursements, reduced social contributions, reduced taxes, and transfers to service providers (Fig. 47).

Figure 47. Overall training expenditures (% of GDP)

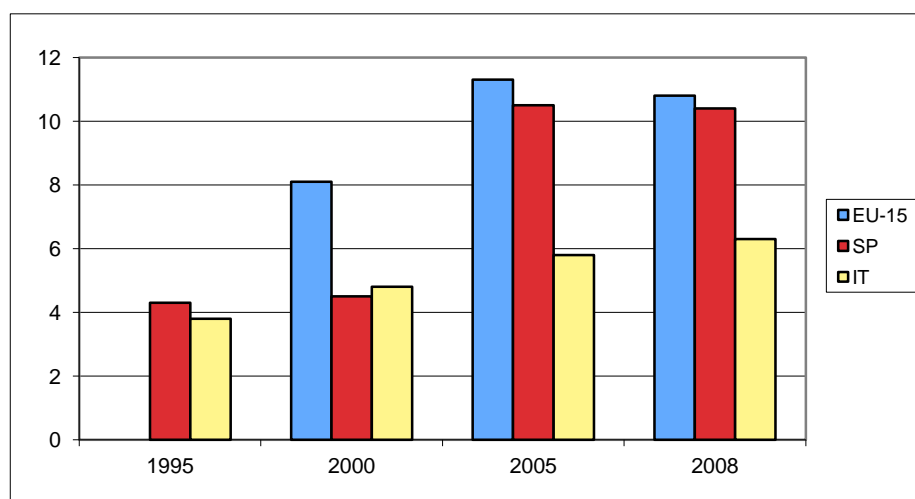


Source: Eurostat

The figure looks at the resources allocated to training, which represents one of the active labour market measures, in Italy and Spain via a comparison with EU standards. Public involvement in training is rather low in the two countries, both in the form of direct subsidies to individuals and employers. Both Italy and EU-15 countries, who exhibit similar percentages, have registered a decrease over the period under analysis, whereas Spain remains stably low, reaching 0,15% of GDP in 2008.

The percentage of adult population aged 25-64 participating in education and training can be observed in the figure below (Fig. 48).

Figure 48. Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) (%) (Age from 25 to 64 years)



Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey – data from 1992 onwards)

As can be seen from the figure, Italy and Spain are characterised by similar percentages of people accessing lifelong programmes in their active life in the period 1995-2000. Afterwards, a change of orientation was recorded in Spain, which seemed to acquire more awareness in the field, to such an extent that, in 2005, the gap between the two countries becomes rather wide, with Spain almost reaching the European average. By contrast, the percentage of people involved in lifelong programmes in Italy has remained stable throughout the period after 2005 with a slight increase and consistently lower than Spain.

Data on public expenditures and participation in institutional and workplace training³⁷ as well as on participation rates to formal and non-formal education and training³⁸ are taken into consideration here (Tab. 25, 26 and 27).

³⁷ According to OECD, “Institutional training” refers to programmes where most of the training time (75% or more) is spent in a training institution (school/college, training centre or similar) and “Workplace training” refers to programmes where most of the training time (75% or more) is spent in the workplace. OECD analyses also two forms of training that are not considered here: “Alternate training” (formerly called Integrated training), which refers to programmes where training time is evenly split between a training institution and the workplace; and “Special support for apprenticeship”, which refers to programmes providing incentives to employers to recruit apprentices from labour market policy target groups, or training allowances for particular disadvantaged groups.

³⁸ According to Eurostat, “Formal education and training” is defined as education provided by the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions that normally constitutes a continuous “ladder” of full-time education for children and young people, generally beginning at the age of 5 to 7 and continuing to up to 20 or 25 years old. Moreover, “Non-formal education and training” is defined as any organised and sustained learning activities that do not correspond exactly to the above definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions and cater to people of all ages. Depending on national contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Four types of non-formal learning activities can be singled out (those categories are not detailed in the online tables): courses, workshops or seminars, guided-on-the-job training (planned periods of education, instruction or training directly at the workplace, organised by the employer with the aid of an instructor) and lessons.

Table 25. Institutional and workplace training expenditures

Institutional training	2004	2006	2008
SP	0,15	0,16	0,17
IT	0,05	0,04	0,04
Workplace training	2004	2006	2008
SP	0,01	0,01	0,02
IT	0,03	0,01	0,01

Source: OECD

In neither cases – institutional training and workplace training –, are high percentages of GDP allocated to training expenditures, and percentages show little change over the 4 year period. By 2008, Spain has increased its workplace training by 0,01% and has not changed its institutional training rate, while Italy has decreased its institutional training from 0,1% to nothing and its workplace training from 0.03% to 0.01%.

Table 26. Participation stock on training programmes (% of the labour force)

IT	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Institutional training	-	1,32	-	-	-
Workplace training	0,51	0,22	0,15	0,20	0,20
ES					
Institutional training	0,84	0,69	0,98	0,90	0,64
Workplace training	-	0,54	0,59	0,50	0,47

Source: OECD.

Table 27. Participation rate in education and training (%) by type of education and training

Formal and non-formal	2007	Formal	2007	Non-formal	2007
EU 27	34,9	EU 27	6,2	EU 27	31,5
SP	30,9	SP	5,9	SP	27,2
IT	22,2	IT	4,4	IT	20,2

Source: Eurostat. Adult Education Survey³⁹ (AES).

As shown by the first table, the percentages calculated on the labour force reveal that the involvement in institutional training in Italy is much stronger than in workplace training, although, unfortunately, data are available only for 2005. The same can be said also for Spain, even if in this

³⁹ According to Eurostat, the AES provides information on the participation of individuals aged 25 to 64 in education and training according to the three forms of learning activities defined in the Classification of Learning Activities (CLA): formal, non-formal and informal learning as well as on the purpose of the learning activities. In this table, we will report only formal and non-formal learning. The reference period for the participation in education and training is the twelve months prior to the interview.

case the gap between the two types of training is shorter than in Italy. However, participation in workplace training is stronger in Spain than in Italy, while the opposite can be stated for the institutional training, taking into account only the percentage in 2005. All data fluctuate over the year, without sharp increasing or decreasing trends.

Observing in the second table the participation rates in education and training reported by the AES, we can notice that Spain and Italy show a moderate participation in formal and non-formal training in comparison to the European average, with Italy reaching only 22,2%. Both countries are characterized by a low level of complementarity between formal (5,9% in the Spanish case and 4,4% in the Italian case) and non-formal training (27,2% in the Spanish case and 20,2% in the Italian case). EU-27 shows the highest percentage of non-formal training with a rate of 31.5% in 2007. Moreover, EU-27's formal training rate of 6.2% in 2007 is the highest out of the formal training rates for Spain and Italy, despite it is lower than non-formal training.

As shown by the previous tables concerning education, both Italy and Spain are characterized by a deficient level of training. The training system is not efficient enough to allow workers with low baseline qualifications to improve their skills as they move on in their working life: 'continuing education and training in Italy tends to reinforce, rather than moderate, disparities that arise from initial education and training' (OECD, 2006: 3). This clearly means going in the opposite direction of the capabilities approach.

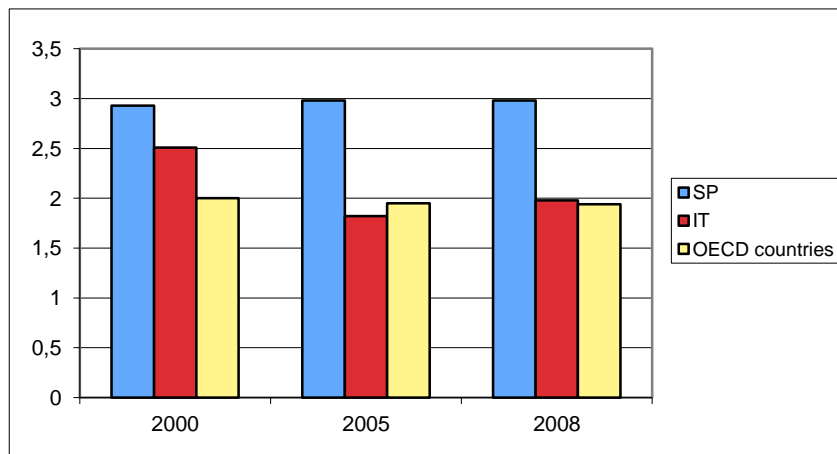
6.5 Employment Protection Legislation (EPL)

Employment protection concerning labour-market flexibility includes the relatively easy possibility to hire and fire workers at low cost, the easy use of temporary employment, the definition of unfair dismissal, and the period of notice. The Employment Protection Legislation (EPL)⁴⁰ index elaborated by the OECD (2004) measures the strictness of employment protection, considering all these dimensions. EPL provides employment stability, but a wide debate concerning its effects on unemployment has developed (OECD, 2004). Such effects will be not taken into account here. The index, which only concerns legal regulation, is considered to partly provide a distort picture of the strictness of employment protection, especially for the case of Spain and Italy (Leonardi et al., 2011). Still, the authors deem that it is important to take the OECD index into account. The index covers three different measures (or indicators) of employment protection: protection of regular workers against individual dismissal, specific requirements for collective

⁴⁰ The EPL, which is calculated according to the rigidity of the legal and actual regulations on hiring and firing, is mainly based on legislative provisions, but it also incorporates some aspects of contractual provisions and judicial practices (OECD, 2004).

dismissal and regulation of temporary forms of employment. Drawing from the Employment Protection indicators, some differences between Spain and Italy can be pointed out. These measures will be observed in more detail later on in this paragraph. First, the overall EPL index (Fig. 12) will be analysed.

Figure 49. The overall EPL index (version 1)

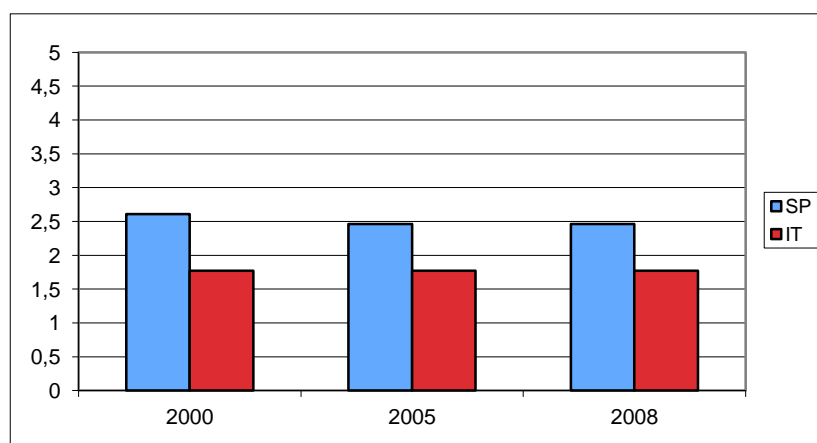


Source: OECD

The figure shows that the overall EPL index for Spain is considerably higher than for Italy and OECD countries, and remains stable over time. Italian levels are especially close to the OECD countries' average between 2005 and 2008. The levels changed in 2005 when, according to OECD data, employment protection legislation in Italy decreased. The Spanish situation seems to mirror the traditional trend of the Southern European countries of fostering strict employment protection and scarce labour market policies. Italy shows a move away from that trend from 2000. However, some Leonardi et al. (2011) claim the importance of taking into account Spanish high temporary rates and mobility, when observing the strictness of employment protection legislation in Spain and Italy. In particular, according to Vero et al. (2012), a strict employment protection may be tied to the spread of temporary contracts and a contraction of open-ended jobs, since permanent jobs produce high stability, which may contrast with employers' interests.

We now move on to analyse the different components of the EPL index. Individual dismissal EPL index refers to the regulation of individual dismissal of workers employed with regular contracts. It includes three aspects of dismissal protection: procedural inconveniences that employers may face when starting the dismissal process; notice periods and severance pay; and difficulty of dismissal as determined by the circumstances that allows the dismissal of workers, such as the conditions for "fair" dismissal.

Figure 50. The individual dismissal EPL index (version 1)



Source: OECD

As shown by the figure, Spain is characterised by a higher percentage of individual dismissal EPL than Italy. This indicates that the protection of regular employment and the regulation of individual dismissal of workers employed with regular contracts are higher in Spain. In both countries, statistics remain unchanged from 2000 to 2008 with an overall homogeneous level of protection, even if Spain shows a slight decrease around the early 2005. The strictness of employment protection legislation in the Spanish labour market has often been used for explaining the high unemployment rates, insofar as this specific labour market policy would produce an increase of unemployment, especially among young people (Scarpetta, 1996).

OECD documentation (2008) illustrates this aspect in more detail. In particular, Italy and Spain do not present marked differences as regards to procedural inconvenience that can be detected. In both countries, administrative procedures require a delay of one-day before the start of notice. Instead, an analysis of the length of the notice period shows that there are marked differences between the two countries. In fact, Italy foresees a 6-to-12-day notice for blue collar workers at different tenure of service, and 15-days-to-4-months for white collar workers. The structure of the Italian labour market is strongly influenced by the category of workers. This confirms that segmentation is a characteristic feature of the Italian labour market. By contrast, in Spain the length of the notice period is 30 days for every professional category of every tenure of service.

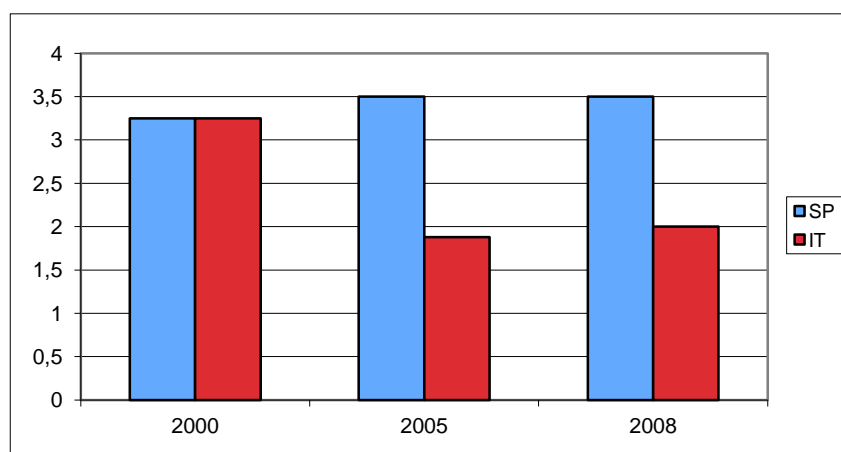
Another relevant point is the analysis of the conditions of fair or unfair individual's dismissals. In Italy dismissals are defined as "termination of contract only possible for 'fair cause' or 'fair motive', including significant non-performance of the employee, and compelling business reasons" (OECD, 2008a). In Spain fair dismissals relate to "objective grounds, including economic grounds, absenteeism, lack of adequacy for the job, lack of adaptation to technological changes made in the enterprise after, if appropriate, a training course of three months, and lack of funding of public plans

or programmes developed by the public administration or non-profit organisations” (OECD, 2008b). When none of these grounds are proven, and when dismissal is based on discrimination, or carried out with a violation of fundamental rights, or based on situations derived from maternity (pregnancy, birth, feeding, childcare), unfair dismissal is recognised fully in Spain. In Italy, an unfair dismissal appears every time there is discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, gender, and trade union activity. Unfair dismissal may be claimed no later than 60 days in Italy and 20 working days after the actual date of the dismissal in Spain.

An analysis of compensation pay and related provisions following unjustified dismissal shows that in Italy the “option of reinstatement is fairly often made available to the employee”. Workers in companies with more than 15 employees in an establishment or in companies with more than 60 employees can choose between reinstatement and financial compensation of up to 15 months. For more establishments that are not included in these cases, the employer is free to choose between re-employment – different from reinstatement in that it does not lead to compensation rise for the period between dismissal and the court decision – and compensation of 2.5-6 months – according to worker’s experience and firm size). In the event of unfair dismissal, in Spain, the employer can choose between reinstatement with back pay – the wages of the period from the dismissal to the final decision by the court - and compensation with back pay – 45 days wage per year of “seniority” up to 42 months. An additional option in Spain foresees that if the dismissed employee is a worker’s legal representative or union delegate, the employee can choose between reinstatement and compensation. If the dismissal is proved discriminatory, the worker is always reinstated. Typical compensation at 20 years tenure is 15 months in Italy and 22 months in Spain.

The second component of the EPL index refers to temporary employment. The indicator measures the regulation of fixed-term and temporary work agency contracts and the restrictions on firm’s use of temporary employment, according to the type of work for which these contracts are allowed as well as the length of contracts.

Figure 51. The temporary employment EPL index (version 1)



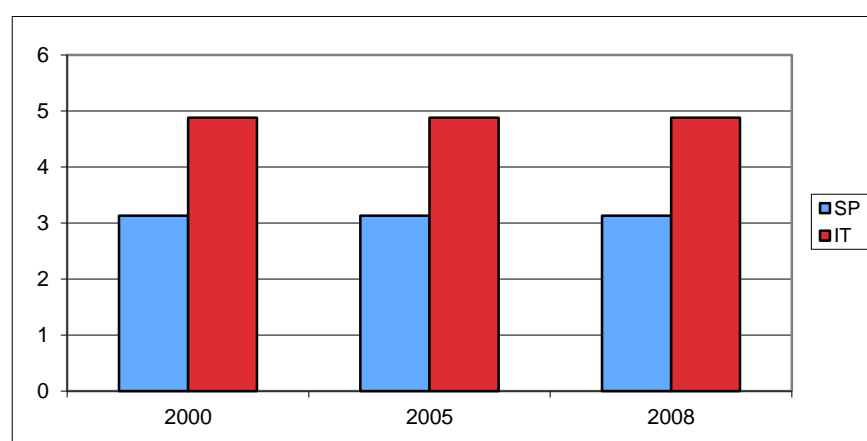
Source: OECD

As shown by the figure, Spain displays a stable high employment protection over the years with regards to temporary work. Still, it is important to bear in mind that the use of fixed-term contracts has often turned into an abuse, with heavy repercussions on the Spanish population. Italy shows a marked decreasing trend after 2000, which remain unchanged until 2008. Higher degrees of fluctuation in Italy as opposed to a slight increasing tendency in Spain appear in the figure. Such fluctuating dynamics have resulted in a lower degree of employment protection in Italy that has relaxed the regulation of temporary employment, with the risk of reinforcing labour market duality. The opposite can be said for the Spanish case. Spain reveals a strict employment protection in temporary employment, while provision for regular contracts remain less stringent. Italy show the same trend, even if to a lower degree.

OECD documentation (2008c) deepens this aspect. Indeed, a look at the regulation of temporary work in Italy indicates that fixed term contracts are used for technical, production and organizational purposes, including the replacement of absent workers. In Spain, fixed term contracts may be signed for specific work, due to the accumulation of tasks and replacement or for training contracts (in-practice contracts and contracts for training purposes), as well as to hire workers with disabilities and to cover the amount of working days left uncovered by employees close to retirement by replacing them with another temporary worker from the same enterprise, or with an unemployed worker. In Spain the use of temporary contracts is very widespread and their duration may be shorter than in Italy. Such a large diffusion in Spain is tied to the application in the past of reforms aimed at easing the use of temporary contracts. These reforms have not be flanked by changes in the provision of regular or permanent forms of employment, but some restrictions in the use of temporary employment have been introduced after 1997.

Collective dismissal refers to the additional costs for collective dismissals. Indeed, most countries apply additional delays, costs or notification procedures in case of dismissal of a large number of workers at the same time. This measure includes additional costs which fall beyond those applicable for individual dismissals. It does not reflect the overall strictness of the regulation of collective dismissals, which is given by the sum of costs for individual dismissals plus any additional cost for collective dismissals. The definition of collective dismissals in Italy refers to firms with at least 15 employees over a period of 120 days, a minimum of 5 workers in a single production unit or at least 5 workers in several units within the same Province. In Spain, it refers to a minimum of 10 workers in firms with less than 100 employees within 90 days; at least 10% in firms from 100 to 299 employees; at least 30 workers in firms with more than 300 employees (OECD, 2008). We now observe the EPL index for collective dismissal in Spain and Italy in the period 2000-2008 (Fig. 52).

Figure 52. The collective dismissal EPL index (version 1)



Source: OECD

As shown by the figure, Italy displays high levels of collective dismissal protection in comparison with Spain, where the levels of protection are lower. In both Italy and Spain, the trends remained stable throughout the 2000s. This is the only case where Italy exhibits a level of protection higher than Spain.

The figures reported so far show the employment protection in both countries. This measure is relevant according to the capabilities approach, since it acts as an important conversion factor that guarantees workers with a legislative protection when they are employed. Employment protection can be linked, on one hand, to the level of unemployment and, on the other, to the segmentation of

the labour market. According to the EPL index, there is a lower restriction in Italy in terms of individual dismissals than Spain; this aspect is counteracted by a more rigid legislation for collective dismissals. By contrast, Spain seems to have a high level of protection for individual dismissals and temporary employment, but a lower level of protection for collective dismissals. However, this data provide only a partial and misleading view of the Spanish situation, which is characterised – as seen in the previous chapter – by a broader use of temporary contracts in comparison to Italy and to the other European countries.

6.6 Concluding remarks

The analysis of the Spanish and Italian social protection system shows two interesting aspects: the first one is related to the low level of overall expenditures by Spain in comparison with the EU average, which highlights the deficiency of the system, partly due to its late development for the Francoist dictatorship. The second one is the extraordinarily high level of expenditures in Italy to cover pension and health care costs, at the expense of all the other social problems, especially unemployment. This huge investment in pensions is partly tied to the principles embedded into the familistic model that promotes the protection of old workers at the expense of the youth, as we will see later on.

Expenditures in unemployment are rather low in the two cases, even if an important increase can be observed in 2008 in Spain in association with growing rate of unemployment while a steadily dramatic situation persists in Italy. Also expenditures per potential recipient divided by the mean workers' remuneration in the two countries are lower than the European average, even if Italy exhibits nearly the double percentage than Spain. The ratio between the mean of the expenditures per unemployed person and the mean wage can be interpreted as a type of collective investment in people's capabilities. Consequently, both countries seem to allot low value to solidarity for unemployed in case of job loss. Moreover, Italian expenditures invested into services in kind are higher than in Spain, which, in Salais's view, increases the probability they are oriented to the capabilities approach. Despite this, the collective investment in expenditures for unemployment in both countries is lower than most of the other European member states. Since a generous welfare state is often considered the condition for guaranteeing capability for work and capability for voice as well as for a more equal distribution of life chances in society, data show how far the situation is from that suggested by Sen's approach.

Observing the distribution of expenditures between different forms of labour market policies it is evident that public expenditure in LMP services are relatively low in both countries, but Spain

shows a moderately higher level than Italy. In both countries the largest expenditures are mainly oriented to passive policies and unemployment coverage, compared to the development and financing of active labour market policies. Such a particular configuration of the welfare state, namely the Southern European model, stresses the importance of family, which support in large measure the weight of social protection, and contributes to reducing the institutional action. This has a great impact on the development of employment policies in Spain and Italy. However, the amount of expenditures in passive policies is much larger in Spain, also considering the high employment rates, and reach 1,8% in 2008, whereas in Italy it accounts around 0.6-0,7%. In the Italian case, a little difference in expenditures between active and passive policies is detectable during the period under analysis, whereas the distinction is more evident in the Spanish case. Moreover, the variation of expenditures in active policies over the time is much more marked in the Italian case where they achieve the highest punctuation in 2003 at 0,71%, whereas they are roughly steady at 0.5-0.6% in the Spanish case.

A careful examination of labour market policies shows that passive policies, and in particular out-of-work maintenance, are favoured in Spain, while Italy displays high levels of early retirement expenditures. In particular, replacement rate and duration of unemployment benefits reach higher levels in Spain than in Italy, where passive policies are still relatively underdeveloped. The study of the active labour market policies throughout the period under analysis shows a variable picture, with a slight increasing trend in Spain, and a decreasing one in Italy in the most recent years. In detail, employment incentives are the more considerable active measure in Spain, which show a marked trend toward a Work First logic that aims at a rapid integration of the unemployed into the labour market. Therefore, a long-term perspective oriented to the empowerment of job-seekers seems to lack. In Italy, such measure is not so marked as in the Spanish case, but still represent one of the principale one. Moreover, in each country a special concern is directed to training. With regard to education and lifelong learning as useful tools to prevent social vulnerability, both Italy and Spain show low levels of expenditures in education and training in comparison to the EU average, even if expenditures inverted by Spain are notably less. Furthermore, expenditures in formal/institutional training as well as in informal/workplace training are low in both countries. Both active and passive measures ensure a low support against social vulnerability to individuals. It is also important to bear in mind that both countries are characterised by important internal disequilibria: their social transfer systems display both peaks of generosity for certain occupational groups and serious gaps of protection for others. “Insiders” and “outsiders” have been traditionally separated by a sharp divide as regards guarantees and opportunities.

As regards to participation in active and passive policies, the percentage is rather higher in Spain than in Italy. Also a look at lifelong learning programs has demonstrated that Spanish people participate more than Italian people, and the participation rates increase over time, which is not the case in Italy. The percentage of men enjoying the opportunities offered by active and passive policies is higher than women both in Italy and Spain. It is also interesting to note that nearly twice as much passive support is focused on men in both countries. This can be linked to the heritage of the male breadwinner model, according to which benefits are given to the head of household, generally a man, in order to support the whole family.

A case in point is employment protection. The EPL index shows high levels of overall employment protection in Spain, which result in high protection for both dimensions of individual dismissal and temporary employment. However it is important to bear in mind how flexible the Spanish labour market is nowadays, due the excessive use of temporary contracts, which has to be considered in order to have a general overview of the Spanish situation. By contrast, Italy shows low levels of overall employment protection, especially in these two dimensions. The reverse is true for collective dismissal.

In conclusion, Spain and Italy countries demonstrate several target inefficiencies that make labour market policies scarcely successful in tackling individual needs and reducing their vulnerability. Spanish and Italian social model seems particularly oriented towards a low-cost social model. This is especially evident in the Italian case, which is characterised by scant expenditures in passive and active policies, denoting a low developed and a low generous system in covering unemployment risks. Possible explanations may rest in institutional factors, like the central role of the family and scarce accountability of the state, as well as the orientation towards inequality embedded in social and political practices. It is important to remember that in Italy and Spain the eligibility criteria for the access to social protection are tied mainly to labour market participation. This is true in Spain, where unemployment rates are largely above the European average, despite the presence of non-contributory transfers (minimum income and non contributory unemployment subsidies). But it is also true in Italy, where the long-term unemployment rates are especially high in comparison to the Spanish situation and non-contributory transfers do not exist. This consideration brings us to realized how much vulnerability-oriented the Spanish and Italian systems are. Moreover, the insufficient expenditures in active and passive policies reveals the prevalence of the logic of Work First, which is even more evident in the Spanish case where the most important measure of active policies is that of employment incentives. Since labour market policies represent relevant conversion factors that enable individuals to construct long-term professional trajectories according to what they value, we can conclude that no space for “capability for work” and

“capability for voice” seems to be available. Furthermore, considering the analysis of the rates of atypical contractual arrangements carried out in the previous chapter, we can observe here that the increase of flexibilization of the labour market has not been flanked by a raise of social protection. Therefore, flexibility and security do not proceed hand in hand, contrasting the flexicurity strategy, which favours the process of social vulnerabilization more than the development of individual capabilities and the development of the whole country according to Sen’s view.

Chapter VII.

The legal framework of flexicurity policies: which protection against social vulnerability?

7.1 Introduction

Together with the available economic and social opportunities, the legal framework constitutes another important factor of conversion that contributes to the development of the capacity to act. In fact, capabilities require “an adequate combination of all these factors: sufficient resources, individual abilities to use them, non-discriminatory social values and legislative provisions and available opportunities for valuable social and professional integration for all” (Bonvin and Orton, 2009: 567). Regulation of non-standard contracts, fostering of activation policies and lifelong learning and social security play a pivotal role in protecting from social vulnerability, according to the European proposal. Therefore, it is important to analyse where the process of reforms in Italy and Spain have been oriented over the last decade. The overall orientation of the Italian and Spanish legislation will be observed according to the capability approach, which is useful for a better understanding of the policy assessment that will be carried out in the last part of this doctoral dissertation.

In this chapter, the evolution of the Spanish and Italian labour legislation will be studied, taking into account political changes over the time. In fact, we should bear in mind that in Spain, the right-wing Aznar government in office during the period 1996-2004 was replaced by the center-left-wing Zapatero government until 2011, while in Italy the continuous turnover of left- and center-left-wing governments from 1996 to 2001 was then followed by the right-wing Berlusconi government in office until 2008, with a break in 2006-2008 of the center-left-wing Prodi government. We will analyse the regulation of labor market relations over the last decades in Italy and Spain, which deeply transformed the entry process into the labour market. Then, the flexicurity trade-off will be traced through the analysis of the reforms in the field of welfare and social protection, so as to define the specific balance between flexibility and security of each national context. Also, the modernization of public employment services and their role in the activation policies as well as the component of the continuous vocational training will be observed in order to have an overview of the legislative configuration of flexicurity that the two countries have promoted. It is worth remembering that activation policies stem from the assumption that providing the unemployed with

adequate tools for re-training and re-entering the labour market has to be preferred to supporting them by means of unemployment benefits. This has often produced a disqualification of unemployment benefits and an excess of responsibility on the individual who is considered accountable of his/her labour situation and of his/her own life project.

The first part of the chapter develops a historical perspective on the legislations in matters of flexibility and security since the half of the 1990s. The literature considers this decade as a crucial moment in the passage towards a flexible labour market, which brings us to dedicate attention at this specific historical period. In the second part of the chapter, the four pillars of flexicurity identified by the European Commission (2007c) – contractual arrangements, life-long learning strategies, activation policies, and social security system – will be dealt with in more detail. Continuity and change with the past will be the subject of a careful analysis of the reforms undertaken over the recent period until 2008. A few reforms, protocols and white books will be studied, which will allow the identification of the main elements of the social and political orientations of employment and social policies in matters of flexicurity.

7.2 Historical perspective

Before moving on to examine the recent reforms, a brief introductory note on the evolution of labour market legislation in Italy and Spain over the 1990s is required. In Italy, this period was characterized by several transformations, mainly due to political transitions and to the pressures exerted by the European Community after the Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties. Also changing demographic, social, and economic contexts were the important causes of reforms which took place. Due to these constraints, Italy “recalibrated” its own welfare state, which led to a strong trend towards more flexibility into the labour market, whereas measures related to social security substantially replicated the traditional Italian model with heavy consequences of segmentation between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ (Madama and Coletto, 2009). Looking at shock absorbers (*ammortizzatori sociali*), the only considerable innovation dates back to the 1991 with the introduction of the ‘mobility allowance’. As shown in Chapter VI, it is a rather generous unemployment benefit (around 80% of the previous wage for 12 months, extendible for up to 48 months in relation to the worker’s area of residence and age) restricted to collective dismissals of workers with open-ended contracts and already covered by the Wage Guarantee Fund (*Cassa Integrazione Guadagni, Cig*). Moreover, the Amato Agreement 23 July 1993 (*Protocol on incomes and employment policy, bargaining arrangements, labour policies and on support of the productive system*) can be considered a first step in this direction, in addition to the contribution it gave to the

entry in the EU Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). This tripartite central agreement also represented an important moment for the *concertazione*, with unions and employers discussing wages and workers' rights at different stages. The concertazione, which was taken forward through interconfederal agreements, had a lasting effect on the labour relations in the decade after. The Agreement 23 July, 1993 was followed by the *Pact for Labour* (1996) that drafted a series of guidelines on employment policies, which would later be established and activated by the Law 196/1997 or Pacchetto Treu (so-called by the name of the Minister of Labour and Social Protection who proposed it). This law will be described in detail during the next paragraph.

In Spain, labour legislation has developed later than the rest of western countries and in 1992 was affected by the European Union in the attempt to enter into the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). In this regard, the *Plan de Convergencia* proposed changes in matters of training, social protection against unemployment, legitimization of private employment agencies, integration into the labour market. Questions related to the flexibility as well as issues concerning training and how to match it with actual requirements of the labour market were two conjoined themes of debate on employment policies in Spain since the 90's (Aragón, Cachón and Serrano, 2000). The deregulation of the labour market initiated in the 1990s and the introduction of temporary contracts have fuelled the growth of employment instability up until today, especially among young people. Over the years, governments have tended to accuse the rigid regulatory framework of preventing the development of a labour market more in keeping with European standard and expectations.

Reforms of the labour market which took place in the 1990s were oriented to cut back unemployment benefits in order to face the wide demand of atypical workers (Del Pino and Ramos, 2009). Indeed, the increase of active population, the broad use/abuse of flexible contractual arrangements, the high employment turnover as well as the frequent transitions inside and outside the labour market increased the costs of social protection and produced an important financial deficit, leading the need by the government to reduce them. More specifically, the Royal Decree 1/1992 (*Ley 22/1992 de Medidas Urgentes de Fomento del Empleo y protección por desempleo*) established higher requirements to access unemployment benefits, so that the minimum period required for having access to contributory benefit was extended from 6 to 12 months; also, the ratio between contributions and benefits was modified (from two month contribution/one month of benefit to three month contribution/one month of benefits); finally, the replacement rate shifted from 80% to 70% for the first six months, and from 70% to 60% for the next six months, and the period of reference became the last 6 years rather than the last four. The reform also aimed to stimulate open-ended contracts for young people, women and persons over-45 years old, diminishing thus the high number of flexible contracts. Moreover, the access to unemployment

benefits was linked to the availability of the unemployed to accept any job offers or to participate in training courses. The decree also introduced ALMPs (active labour market policies) as a new concept within the debate on Spanish labour market legislation. Indeed, the decree made it clear that augmenting active labour market policies had to go hand in hand with a considerable contraction of passive labour market policies, which reveals the orientation towards activation, which is in line with the new paradigm : *“It is required to adopt urgent measures that allow, on the one hand, reallocating public spending to strengthen active employment policies aimed at encouraging open-ended contract for those groups with special difficulties in finding work and to provide more training to the unemployed; and, on the other hand, rationalizing spending in unemployment benefits, ensuring the future financial stability of the system and the effective protection to unemployed actively seeking job”* (Law 22/1992, Art. 1). A dichotomy between the concept of “active” and “passive” ensued, and it has since played a fundamental role in future legislation in the field of employment promotion and social protection. In this new outline, the State came to play the role of controller, that is, it slowly became clear that its function was to regulate and monitor the general trend of the new policies, but with a keen eye on regulatory mechanisms. The Real Decree gave rise to several protests by trade unions, without reaching however significant effects.

The labour market reform in 1993/4 was the first major attempt to change drastically the outline of the labour market inefficiencies. It developed between December 1993 and April 1994 with the aim of reducing unemployment and creating employment, by increasing firms’ competitiveness and outsiders’ flexibility. The reform, as a package, involved several other laws, namely Law 22/1992 (*de medidas fiscales, de reforma del régimen jurídico de la función pública y de la protección por desempleo*), 10/1994 (*sobre medidas urgentes de fomento de la ocupación*), 11/1994 (*por la que se modifican determinados artículos del Estatuto de los Trabajadores, y del texto articulado de la Ley de Procedimiento Laboral y de la Ley sobre Infracciones y Sanciones en el Orden Social*), 14/1994 (about regulation of temporary employment) and 42/1994 (*de medidas fiscales, administrativas y de orden social*). The reform included therefore several elements and changes: first of all, it shrank the amount of unemployment benefits through Law 22/1994 and strengthened the control on recipients; then it created apprenticeship-contracts, replacing the old form of training-contract, broadening the age of access and its minimum duration from 3 to 6 months, with incentives for firms adopting them. These contracts were later on called “rubbish contracts”, due to the lack of protection against unemployment they offered (Sola, 2014). Moreover, it promoted collective bargaining at the expenses of State intervention in labour market legislation, widening its competences and fields (Monaco, 2007). The collective bargaining would have determined also the duration of contracts. The employment regulation underwent a significant shift from a legislative approach to an approach

based on collective bargaining. In particular, “the focus shifted to the level of each sector or branch of industry, a level at which the specific characteristics of each industry could be taken into account” (Aragón, Cachón and Serrano, 2000: 187). The shift in attitude from State-imposed flexibility to a flexibility measured within the context of social partners’ agreement is referred to by Aragón, Cachón, and Serrano as passage from “imposed” to “agreed” flexibility. However, the authors state that “although it may appear in principle to be aimed at increasing the participation of the social partners in the regulation of the labour market, in practice it actually led to a major breakdown in the social dialogue” (*Ibid.*, 186). Indeed, this did not mean greater collective autonomy, rather it increased the individual autonomy of employers (Rey and Falguera, 1999). The reform was received with strong opposition by the Unions, since it made easier for employers to fire workers by decreasing the costs of dismissals, given the emphasis placed by the new legislation on the deregulation of the labour market (Aragón, Cachón and Serrano, 2000). The reform also raised the possibilities for employers to manage the unemployment and modify working conditions. Finally, through Law 14/1994, the reform legalised and regulated Temporary Employment Agencies (*Empresas de Trabajo Temporal*, ETT), ending the State monopoly on demand/supply intermediation. However, some authors remark that the Law was unclear, which led employment agencies to hold a contradictory role that was often questioned (Rey and Falguera, 1999).

In sum, the main change which took place over the 1990s in both Italy and Spain was a marked trend towards flexibilization of labour market. The process was already in an advanced state in Spain, whereas it fully erupted later on in Italy. Therefore, Spanish government was committed to face the drawbacks of the deregulation when the Italian one was transforming the regulatory framework in the same direction. This produced an important phenomenon of segmentation in both countries between standard and atypical workers. The overall trend towards the normalization of atypical workers was also registered together with the reinforcement of the tendency towards a less regulated labour market. Nevertheless, social protection followed a different path. Indeed, in Spain it resulted in cutbacks of unemployment benefits, while in Italy it was mainly linked to the traditional schemes of standards employment with scarce attention paid to new flexible contractual arrangements. At the same time in the two countries, active employment services started to acquire a pivotal role, making room to the entrance of private employment agencies in the field of the intermediation between demand and supply. The following sections will discuss in more detail the implication of these major changes within the four pillars of flexicurity.

7.3 Pillar 1: Flexible and reliable contractual arrangements

Italy

The *Treu Reform*, launched in 1997 by the Prodi's government, is arguably the most remarkable attempt at flexibility. It accelerated the process towards this direction started in the 80s, legalizing forbidden forms of contracts (like interim work) and spreading out other no-standard⁴¹ forms of contracts that were already in use within the labour market (like co.co.co.⁴²). Due to the low contractual cost of both interim work and co.co.co, employers were led to hire people and renew their contract as long as possible, which leave the employee lacking of guarantees and with the impossibility to have a proper pension. In particular, coordinated and continuous collaborators, namely freelance workers under the supervision of an employer, were engaged since the 70s. In 1995, Dini's reform introduced a pension fund for these workers, who enjoyed a pension security one third less in comparison to standard employees. The reform in a certain way legitimized the use of co.co.co. contracts, which guaranteed entry and exit flexibility (Boeri and Garibaldi, 2008), but the Pacchetto Treu made it possible their extensive diffusion among firms because of their low contributory costs. In this sense, the Pacchetto Treu can be considered a cornerstone during the so-called "reorientation of Italian labour policy". With this term, Paolo Graziano (2004) indicates policy changes that opened up the Italian labour market during the 90's, making it more flexible and more workfare oriented. The reorientation was favoured by the introduction of the *concertazione* in 1993, a pattern of trilateral decision-making involving trade unions, government and employers' organizations. According to Graziano, "Such method, providing a 'double legitimation' (social and political) for the decisions adopted by the centre-left governments, made possible the adoption of policies (such as the Treu reform of 1997) that probably would have not occurred in other circumstances" (2004: 19). The new legislation, which loosened restrictions and sanctions of the temporary work, was implemented by Legislative decree 368/2001 that made fixed-term contracts much more generalized in terms of application. Due to the traditional Italian diffidence to this type of labour (Blanpain and Graham, 2004), standard work remained unchanged, producing consequently the development of a labour dualism between protected and atypical workers. Moreover, the Pacchetto Treu introduced temporary employment agencies (*agenzie di lavoro interinale*), which were already present in other European countries. Tiraboschi (2008) attributes the causes of such delay to the fairly conservative trend of Italian policies, not strongly oriented

⁴¹ Standard arrangements have to be intended as full-time permanent contracts.

⁴² Co.co.co. is used to indicate coordinated and continuous collaborations.

towards change. The reform eased regulation for youth work-training and apprenticeships, by changing the length of contracts, raising the minimum and maximum age of admission and opening apprenticeship to all sectors. The reform also created incentives for on-the-job training (OECD, 1999b). The end purpose of the *Pacchetto* was to increase employment, particularly among the young, and to respond challenges of the labour market. Moreover, it tried to promote entrepreneurship by extending to the North and Center Italy the special provisions that were originally considered a measure for the South of the country thanks to the *prestito d'onore* (Law 608/96). The Treu Reform introduced financial aid (incentives) as well as technical assistance (under the form of tutorials/tutoring by experts in the field) to those over-18 years old who either were or had been employed for at least six months. Financial aids were given to increase female entrepreneurship and non-profit organisations. Furthermore, incentives helped the younger cohorts set up new firms; also, those small- and medium-sized companies which employed younger workers could benefit from funding.

The legislations considered so far attempted to increase the employment rate, especially in the South, by setting up measures to increase competitiveness; they also addressed issues of flexibility of labour and market policies, as well as direct intervention on labour supply through the development of training schemes. However, they posed the problem of the modernization of welfare system. In this regard, the final report issued by the *Onofri Commission* (Commission for the analysis of the macroeconomic compatibility of social spending) in 1997 stated that reforms of the Welfare system were needed in terms of social expenditure, especially in matters of improving social assistance and shock absorbers (Antonelli and de Liso, 2004). Due to the push towards globalization and economic pressures by the EU, the *Onofri Commission* was an attempt to modernize the Italian welfare state in order to respond to new labour market demands, cover the traditionally excluded subjects and dismantle the role played by the male breadwinner, favouring female employment.

In 2001, the Italian government published the White Paper on the Italian labour market (*Libro Bianco sul mercato del lavoro in Italia*), which put forward the guidelines of the 2003 reform of the labour market, such as the much debated and controversial *Legge Biagi* (Law no. 30 14 February 2003). Drafted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies Maurizio Sacconi and Prof. Marco Biagi, the White Paper was one of the main documents to deal with the evolution of the labour market accompanied by a reform of welfare. Part One of the Paper contains an analysis of the Italian labour market, which outlines four main “critical” areas of intervention: the South; younger cohorts entering the labour market for the first time; workers suffering from unemployment at a later stage in their lives; low female employment rates and their effect on the provision of services

and family care. Part Two sets out objectives and the means available to achieve them. The objectives include fostering flexibility and security, increasing employment and labour quality (more and better jobs), equal opportunities and social inclusion through the use of social dialogue and the “federalist” decentralization of labour market regulation to the Regions. Furthermore, it recommends the liberalization of temporary work agencies, promoting the cooperation and the competition between public and private employment services, aiming to facilitate the integration of public and private employment services into a single national system.

The main intent of the Paper, released by the new Berlusconi government that held office from 2001 to 2006, was to reform employment relations and labour laws towards a greater flexibility and mobility, following the idea that the system of regulation in place turned the labour market especially rigid and less competitive (Antonelli and de Liso, 2004). Indeed, it was based on the assumption that the Italian labour market was hampered by workers’ protection which impeded the entrepreneurial initiative of employees came out. Thus, the White Paper makes evident the need to free the labour market from regulatory mechanisms which are considered obstacles to its development (Blanpain and Graham, 2004). In order to overcome regulatory obstacles, the government’s proposals focused on three points, namely activation policies, lifelong learning and social protection, which are the pillars proposed by the flexicurity model. On this matter, the document refers to UK and Dutch model, as well as to EU directives, which seem to be used in order to legitimate the introduction of new forms of employment contracts (Blanpain and Graham, 2004). The Paper proposed a “re-modulation” of employment protection legislation and the introduction of new and more flexible contractual typologies (Antonelli and de Liso, 2004). The document attempted to achieve a *“trade-off between flexibility and security, with the goal of reaching more employment trying at the same time not to lead to precariousness”* (White Paper: 46). In the paper, the concept of security no longer refers to the worker’s job place, but rather to employment and labour market. In fact, the paper suggests that *“the notion of security given by the impossibility of removing the individual from his/her job has to be substituted with a concept of security provided by the possibility to exert effective choice in the labour market”* (White Paper: 63). The general assumption is that whole system of social protection is adapted to the new requests of the flexible labour market, characterized by consecutive creation and destruction of job places as well as by discontinuous and irregular workers’ careers. Accordingly, social protection is not considered as a means to decommodification that allows individuals to choose what they value in their life, since the possibility of choice is mostly viewed as to be exerted within the labour market. Moreover, the Paper foresees the introduction of a core of minimum measures of care for all kinds of workers, conditioning unemployment benefits to the acceptance by the unemployed of specific

obligations: “*The provision of any form of "social safety net" must be preceded by an agreement with the recipient. Indeed, the recipient has to accept to actively seek employment following the path agreed in advance with the public employment services. The path may include training and possibly the involvement of private intermediaries*” (White Paper: 56). The attempt of the Paper is avoiding benefits act as a disincentive for the job search, which again affirms the primacy of labour market over the individual and his/her possibility to develop capabilities. In fact, according to the capability approach, provisions of basic benefits cannot be conditional upon the recipients’ behaviours, since reducing material well-being cannot be conducive to the enhancement of capabilities (Bonvin and Orton: 2009).

The Paper also contains the Work’ Statute, which had been proposed by Biagi and Tiraboschi. With this Statute, the authors attempted to monitor the different contractual arrangements, focusing on individual security. The Statute focused on the changing context of job relationships, depicting the traditional regulatory labour system as obsolete as well as the established dichotomies work in large/small firms, with/without guarantees, employed/self-employed. Therefore, it claimed that a new approach based mainly on fundamental rights regarding all types of employments is required instead.

The White Paper seems to assume as inevitable and desirable the idea that the European Social Model has to be modernised in the direction they trace, according to the European institutions’ requests expressed in the Green Paper “Partnership for a new organisation of work” (COM(97) 128) and in the Communication “Modernising the organisation of work – a positive approach to change” (COM(98) 592). In the Paper, the Government declares to consider urgent to concretely carry out the process of modernization, which the Treu reform failed to do effectively. Moreover, it demands social partners to take part in the process repeatedly, in a way depicting them as scarcely innovative. In fact, the parliamentary stability and internal cohesion led Berlusconi to embrace a strategy of destitutionalisation of *concertazione* and a *dividi et impera* tactic (Ferrera and Gualmini, 2003). This “social dialogue” approach led some employers’ organizations and trade unions, namely Confindustria and CGIL, to assume a conflictual position against the government and to act through bilateral agreements (Graziano, 2004).

The *White Paper* was followed by a series of laws and draft bills which extended its scope, fostering the liberalisation of the labour market. In fact, an effort in this direction was made in 2000 through the reform of the renowned Article 18, contained in the Workers’ Statute of 1970. The article prevents the motivated dismissal of insider workers employed in firms with more than 15 employees. A derogation was proposed with regard to three specific cases: if a firm with more than 15 employees ‘emerged’ from the black economy and had a clear intention to settle its contributive

position; if a firm passed the 15 employees threshold due to the hiring of new 'typical' employees; if a firm transformed temporary workers into permanent ones (Graziano, 2004). The referendum to reform Article 18 on the protection of workers in companies with more than 15 employees from non-motivated dismissal was one of the most troublesome reforms under the first Berlusconi government. The referendum did not produce results, but other attempts to make labour market more flexible followed. Legislative Decree 368 of 2001, implementing the European directive 1999/70/CE relative to the framework agreement on fixed-term employment, regulated hiring fixed-term workers, extending the use of temporary job contracts. Temporary contract is no longer an exception in comparison to standard employment contract. Employers had not to transform the temporary contract into a permanent one and can resort to temporary contracts much more freely and for longer periods of time, with the sole exception that there had to be a period of inactivity between two consecutive contracts with the same company. These attempts to make labour market more flexible ended up causing protests by Unions.

In 2002, CGIL called for a general strike that turned into a massive demonstration. By contrast, CISL and UIL did not participate and during the following months they signed, together with the government, the *Pact for Italy* (Patto d'Italia). The pact promoted a welfare-to-work approach and included measures to increase employment in the South, even if it agreed on the liberalisation of the labour market as contained in the *White Paper* (Graziano, 2004). It promoted higher incomes, placement services and opportunities in employment and training. In particular, it tried to reorganize job placement services by improving co-operation with workers' local employment offices and co-ordination of labour supply and demand, training needs, personnel selection and job placement (Blanpain and Graham, 2004). Besides, it contained a milder version of the reform of Article 18. A political battle with some the CGIL and other minor trade unions ensued. However, a referendum called by CIGL to extend Article 18 to firms with less than 15 employees failed to reach the quorum, and the protests were silenced.

Openly liberist, the Law 30, known as *Legge Biagi* was approved in February 2003 and finalized in the following September. The final version of the law came with Legislative Decree no. 276 (10 September 2003). The overall aim was to enrich the flexible market with possibilities, widening the typology of atypical contractual arrangement. The underlying idea was that the suppression of rules on entering the labour market was the only way to increase employment, since the causes of high rates of unemployment had to be traced in the highly regulated labour market. The Italian labour market was structurally changed by the *Biagi Law*, which modified job placement services and labour arrangements. In particular, the Biagi Law repealed Law 1369 of 23 October 1960 that outlawed intermediation in the hiring of labour and which banned labour subcontracting, so that the

state monopoly on job placement came to an end (Blanpain and Graham, 2004). Other authorised organizations were allowed to treat with work placement: trade unions, employers organizations, municipalities, universities, chambers of commerce. Thus public and private operators started to act in a competitive market regime. At the same time, due to decentralization, local authorities assumed a crucial role in the government of labour market policies (Gualmini and Rizza, 2014). New employment contracts were added to those already existing, and the overall picture of the Italian system has since then appeared fractured and multifarious. Following is a summary of the features of contractual arrangements available in Italy⁴³ (Tab. 28):

Table 28. Main contractual arrangements available in Italy in the period 2003-2008

<i>Permanent work (Contratto a tempo indeterminato)</i>	This category refers to standard contractual arrangement to be intended as full-time permanent contracts.
<i>Temporary work (Contratto a termine/a tempo determinato)</i>	One of the most diffuse forms of atypical contractual arrangement in Italy, temporary work used to be non-renewable for more than three years. Treu package widened the number of valid cases of the use of fixed term contracts as well as the Legislative Decree n. 368/2001. The contract could be renewed only if the worker would occupy the same positions, and evidence was given of employers' needs; but, it could not be extended if the previous contract had already covered the three years legally sanctioned. Legislative Decree 112, later converted into Law 133 of 6 August 2008, extended the use of temporary job contracts to encompass the ordinary activity, which did not fall within the specific clauses included in the Legislative Decree 368/01 (such as those connected to productivity and technical management of companies).
<i>Part-time work (Contratto part-time)</i>	Re-launched in 2000 by the Salvi Decree (Legislative Decree 61/2000), part-time work was modified by the <i>Legge Biagi</i> , including flexible clauses that made it more advantageous for employers, for example increasing working time. Law 247/2007, implementing the Protocol on Welfare, softened some of the modification introduced by the <i>Legge Biagi</i> and provided facilities for turning – even if temporally – full-time contracts in part-time contracts at request of worker justified by care duties. This labour arrangement – that is especially spread out among women – has been often object of discrimination in comparison to full-time jobs.
<i>Job sharing (Lavoro ripartito)</i>	This was a new contractual arrangement introduced by the <i>Legge Biagi</i> , whereby two workers may agree to participate in the same working activity. It is a highly flexible form of work subject to the same contractual arrangements as part-time jobs.
<i>Job on-call</i>	Introduced by the <i>Legge Biagi</i> , on-call jobs are characterised by

⁴³ Informations are gathered in the INPS web-site.

<i>(Contratto di lavoro a chiamata/intermittente)</i>	an intermittent and discontinuous nature of working relationships. There are two different forms of on-call jobs according to whether the employee is granted an “availability benefit”.
<i>Apprenticeship (Contratto di apprendistato)</i>	This kind of contract is geared to train and employ young people, with the aim of making them gaining access to job and facilitating the transition from school to work. In particular, 1997 Law n. 196 (Treu Package) was important in that it extended the use of this type of contract to all production areas/sectors. The Biagi Law introduced three types of apprenticeships: 1. Apprenticeship for obtaining a professional degree, which is reserved to young people between 15 and 25 and concerns all production sectors; its maximum duration is three years; 2. Professionalizing apprenticeship for obtaining a professional qualification, which is reserved to young people between 18 and 29 and concerns all production sectors; its maximum duration is five years; 3. Apprenticeship for high education and research for obtaining a tertiary educational degree and specializations, which is reserved to young people between 18 and 29 and concerns all production sectors. The duration of the contract is delegated to Regions, in agreement with the trade unions and employers organizations, universities and other educational, vocational and research institutions. Law 133/2008 suggested modifications with regard to the professionalizing apprenticeship and the apprenticeship for high education and research.
<i>Project based contract and coordinated/continuous collaboration contract (Contratto di collaborazione a progetto/contratto di collaborazione coordinata e continuativa)</i>	According to the <i>Biagi Law</i> , coordinated and continuous contracts (also known as co.co.co) were substituted by project based contracts, which tie up the collaboration to specific projects, work programmes or phases of work programmes. Moreover, project based contracts provide more protection to the contract holder (e.g. application of health and safety legislation, unpaid leave in case of pregnancy, illness or injury). However, the result-oriented nature of the co.co.co., which makes it different from standard jobs, remains unchanged.
<i>Permanent and temporary job supply (Contratto di somministrazione)</i>	The first step in the direction of these contracts was carried out by the <i>Pacchetto Treu</i> , which introduced the so-called <i>lavoro interinale</i> under the condition of specific temporary demands from the labour market. Legislative Decree 276/2003 changed the previous legislation and instituted two different forms of job supply: permanent (staff leasing) and temporary. Accountability for the worker is shared between the firm and the recruitment agency. Accordingly, firms usually pay contributions, whereas recruitment agencies deal with the salary and the monitoring of the job. Law 247/2007 abolished the permanent form of this kind of contract (staff leasing), due to its uselessness for firms.
<i>Placement contracts (Contratto di inserimento/ex contratto di formazione e lavoro)</i>	Introduced by the <i>Legge Biagi</i> , this kind of contracts is specifically aimed at integrating and/or re-integrating the most vulnerable categories of workers (young and old people, long-term unemployed, women living in the under-developed areas of the country). An individual placement project is formulated, defining the training needs of the unemployed for a certain job. Placement contracts replaced the older training contracts whilst

	working applied in the private sector; these remained in force in the public sector instead.
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On one hand, the *Legge Biagi* introduced minimal guarantees for atypical workers (e.g. on-call jobs and para-subordinate coordinated and continuous collaborations); on the other, the problem of how to effectively control the use of flexible forms of labour remained unsolved.

The Biagi law provoked strong reactions. On 9 March, 2002 Biagi was murdered in Bologna by the New Red Brigades. It is interesting to point out that, for those who do not want to associate the memory of the leader to the new legislation, and who see a fundamental difference between Biagi's original ideas and the actual law, the Law is referred to as simply Law 30, Law Maroni or Law Sacconi, from the names of the Ministries in charge at that time. Tiraboschi clearly has a point when he states that, despite their radically different and almost irreconcilable political cultures, the *Biagi Law* and the *Pacchetto Treu* were substantially similar as regards their efforts of changing the Italian labour market. Both laws purported to achieve a proper liberalization of the market, that, in Tiraboschi's opinion, has to be viewed as "modernizing and updating the legal framework", removing the neoliberal connotation (Tiraboschi, 2008: 439). Furthermore, they established continuity with the past, in particular with the reforms of July 1993 (the Amato Agreement) and September 1996 (the Pact for Labour) on training programs and more flexible contracts (Tiraboschi, 2008). In its attempt to legislate on the use of temporary contracts, the twofold objective of the *Biagi Law* – to further employment of disadvantaged categories and to fight against irregular work – proved as yet another step towards a deregulation of the labour market in Italy, substantially increasing atypical contracts (Madama and Coletto, 2009).

During the last Prodi government, law 247 of 24 December 2007 (*Protocol on Pensions, Employment and Competitiveness*, also known as *Protocol on Welfare*) attempted to reform partially the *Biagi Law* by removing on-call jobs and permanent job supply contracts. Nevertheless, the Legislative Decree 112/2008 by the second Berlusconi government counteracted the former in its attempt to re-establish a deregulation of the market and acquire more fixed-term contracts. Both on-call jobs and the permanent jobs supply contracts were later reintroduced by Law 113/2008.

Spain

During the second half of the 90's, small reforms followed the important laws of 1992 and 1993-94, undertaking a strategy "drop by drop" (Del Pino and Ramos, 2009). In this period, which was characterised by economic growing and rising employment rates, further reforms were introduced with the objective of achieving flexibility and promoting transitional labour markets, even if

sometimes the declared objectives were different. For instance, the Agreement of 1997 aimed to lessen flexibility by eliminating temporal contracts introduced in 1984 and replacing them with other contractual arrangements fostering open-ended contracts for the case of disadvantaged groups (under 30 young people, over-45, long-term unemployment). Nevertheless, the Agreement also foresaw the reduction of the dismissal costs for these types of open-ended contracts, differently from standard contracts, which led thus to soften the difference between fixed-term and open-ended contracts. This partly contradicts the agreements' declared purposes of 'promoting stability', whose meaning remains unclear (Fernández and Serrano, 2014). Hence, the Agreement of 1997 tried to curtail temporary employment rates by reinforcing the flexibility among insiders and shortening the costs of dismissals for standard employment. However, as shown in Chapter V, temporary employment rates barely lowered in the following years, even if unemployment rates achieved to decrease. The agreement maintained thus a continuity with the past and confirmed the path traced by the previous laws. In these circumstances, a sort of "culture of flexibility" took place (Toharia, 2005; Recio and Roca, 2001).

With the Agreement for Employment Stability of 1997, the right-wing Aznar government that was in office from 1996 until 2004 reached the consensus of trade unions, in contrast to the past. Later on, the consensus cracked again because of important disagreements with the government regarding Law 12/2001. The law aimed to tighten the rules governing valid cases for the use of fixed-term contracts. Moreover, it added guarantees for part-time contracts, while at the same time maintaining their flexibility through the devise of "complementary hours" introduced in 1998 (Royal Decree 15/1998). The law also introduced a new type of placement contract for implementing public services, especially in the social field. However, one of the major divergent points between trade unions and government concerned part-time contracts, insofar as the former claimed a clear distinction between part-time and full-time contracts stating that the number of complementary hours of part-time contracts had not to overcome 10% of full-time; by contrast, the law established 15%, blurring thus the distinction between the two contractual arrangements.

The period from 2002 to 2008 was marked by a shift towards employment flexicurity under the pressures of the EU at international level. Active employment policies are now considered the new solution to the issue of unemployment, whereas employment protection and maintenance income support moved to the background. As early as 2002/3, it became clear that the deregulation of employment protection would give way to a rise in the vulnerability of individuals. In this sense, Law 45/2002 (*Ley de medidas urgentes para la reforma del sistema de protección por desempleo y mejora de la ocupabilidad*) was crucial, as we will see later on in this chapter. In fact, its attempt was to break the rigidity of the labour market, which ended up reinforcing the overall lack of

security.

Reforms introduced in Spain on contractual arrangements over the last ten years also include Royal Decree-Law 5/2006 (*para la mejora del crecimiento y del empleo*) and Law 43/2006 (*para la mejora del crecimiento y del empleo*). Royal Decree-Law 5/2006 identified fixed-term contracts as an important issue to tackle and focused on the reduction of temporary work by stimulating new contractual arrangements and allowing more flexible forms of open-end contracts. Moreover, according to the Decree, workers who had been hired temporarily for more than 24 months in a time-span of three years had to have their contract changed into a permanent one. Therefore, the attempts of tackling temporary work were carried out at the expense of weakening the stability of standards contracts and shading the differences between them, following the direction of the 1997 Agreement. Hence, the meaning of the concepts ‘permanent employment’ and ‘employment stability’ changed, due the lower guarantees the new open-ended contracts offered in comparison to old standard contracts (Fernández and Serrano, 2014). The Government promoted the diffusion of the new permanent form of work, characterised by low dismissal costs for companies and employers, securing thus the activity of the companies at the expensed of social rights (i.e. workers’ protection). Also Law 43/2006 of 29 December encouraged permanent recruitment via social security allowances given to companies and provided incentives for converting temporary contracts into open-ended ones with less compensation for dismissals as well as measures to limit the abuse of temporary recruitment (Cerviño, 2009). The law also sought measures to deal with issues of unemployment for workers over 45 years old and other vulnerable categories, like women and youth. Law 5/2006 and Law 43/2006 followed the Agreement to Improve Growth and Employment (*Acuerdo para la Mejora del Crecimiento y el Empleo*), whose twofold declared aims were to promote stability and quality of employment as well to limit excessive use of temporary contracts. The Agreement for the Improvement of Growth, signed by the government and the social partners the 9 May 2006, states: “it is fundamental fostering a long-term and balanced model of economic to be based on firms’ competitiveness, productivity growth and social cohesion. The enhancement of employment security, which is the aim of this Agreement, will contribute to progress in this direction”. In this sense, the security of employment for workers is mainly viewed as a tool for increasing the competitiveness of firms and productivity.

Following is a summary of the features of the main contractual arrangements available in Spain in 2008 (Tab. 29):

Table 29. Main contractual arrangements available in Spain in 2008

<i>Permanent contracts (Contratos indefinidos)</i>		This category refers to standard, permanent contractual arrangement, including those with government incentives. A characteristic of these contracts is that there are no Social Security subsidies. This category includes a wide number of different contracts (permanent ordinary contract, permanent contracts for vulnerable groups, contracts for converting temporary contracts into open-ended ones) that were introduced mostly in 2006 by legislation as an attempt of curtailing temporary job. Nevertheless, it achieved mainly to blur the difference between fixed-term and open-ended contracts.
<i>Temporary work (Contratos temporales/de duración determinada)</i>	<i>Contracts for a specific project or service (Contratos de obra o servicio determinado)</i>	These contracts relate to work activities taking place in the company's business; their duration may vary according to the company's need. Workers who have been hired for more than 24 months in three years with at least two subsequent contracts are supposed to become permanent employees of the same company.
	<i>Casual contracts due to production overload or backlog (Contrato eventual por circunstancias de la producción)</i>	These contracts are stipulated in the event of special needs by the company, and are highly marked-oriented – dependant on production overload or backlog. The maximum duration is six months; however, in exceptional case, they can last more but must not exceed 18 months employment. Just like for contracts for specific purposes, workers who have been hired for more than 24 months in three years with at least two subsequent contracts become permanent employees.
	<i>Contracts to substitute employees entitled to return to their job (Contratos de interinidad)</i>	These contracts aim to cover a vacancy while the entitled employee is out of work. Their duration varies according to the terms of the replacement. The return of the substituted worker is established by law. These contracts foresee that the name of the worker and the cause of his/her replacement be given. In specific cases, Social Security benefits are provided.
<i>Part-time work (Contrato a tiempo parcial)</i>		These contracts concern both permanent and temporary jobs and foresee a shorter working time than full-time contracts. Nevertheless, Law 12/2001 blurred the

		difference between the two forms of contracts, which causes disappointment among trade unions.
<i>Fixed-discontinuous contracts</i> (<i>Contrato fijo discontinuo</i>)		These contracts aim to cover permanent job positions in different periods of time. Social Security benefits are provided.
<i>Training contracts</i> (<i>Contratos formativos</i>)	<i>Contracts for traineeship and learning</i> (<i>Contratos para la formación y el aprendizaje</i>)	These contracts are aimed to young people from 16 to 21 year of age who are not in a position (for lack of professional requirements) to get a work experience contract. The work experience has to be required for obtaining a degree. These contracts may last from a minimum of a year to a maximum of 2 years. Social Security benefits are provided. They replaced the old training contracts (<i>contratos para la formación</i>) that in 1997 had substituted temporary work experience contracts (<i>contratos temporales de fomento de empleo</i>).
	<i>Work experience contracts</i> (<i>Contratos en prácticas</i>)	These contracts are aimed to facilitate the entrance into the labour market to young people with a university degree or high professional qualification. These contracts may last from a minimum of six months to a maximum of 2 years. The work experience has to be consistent with the degree. Social Security benefits are provided in case of under-30 young people. There is not a maximum age limit, although the contract has to be released by four years after obtaining the degree.

Within this framework, the financial crisis erupted in 2008. New reforms were introduced and presented as a group of measures that were necessary for coping with the state of emergency. Such reforms will be not analysed in this dissertation, since new orientations, meanings, conceptual bases and justifications arose in that period, suddenly modifying – arresting or accelerating – the processes that slowly had been developing since the 90s.

7.4 Pillar 2: Activation policies

Italy

After the Bassanini Law (59/1997) transferred many functions and tasks managed by the State or decentralized bodies, Legislative Decree 469/1997 delegated duties and functions related to placement and active employment policies to regional, provincial, and local authorities. Article 4 of the Decree established the criteria for the organization of the regional system in the light of the new decentralization of powers. One of the major introductions was the institution at the provincial level of employment centers that replaced the old offices since 1999, with the Regional Authority responsible for coordination, planning and evaluation of employment services at the local level. These centers covered routine administrative and job placement functions at the same time that offered a number of important and innovative “user-oriented” services to both job-seekers and firms, applying active labour market policies. The goal was to build a network of employment services in order to meet the diverse needs of users and facilitate the matching of labour demand and supply.

Legislative Decree 21 April 2000, n. 181, amended by Legislative Decree n. 297 in 2002, provided measures to facilitate the matching between demand and supply of labor. This decree was issued by the Government under the Legislative Decree 469/1997, which put the State in the exercise of a general role of guidance, promotion and coordination of placement and active employment policies. Moreover, it was issued for the implementation of Law 17 May 1999, n. 144, which prescribed to revise the criteria for the assessment of individual situation, identified potential recipients of measures of integration into the labor market and defined the conditions of unemployment. According to the Decree, the state of unemployment had to be proved by the presentation of the unemployed to local authorities, accompanied by a declaration indicating the work activities previously carried out by him/her, as well as his/her immediate availability to employment. The competent offices were required to verify the persistence of the unemployment conditions, carry out periodic interviews, and provide orientation within three months since the beginning of the unemployment spell as well as proposals of initiatives of job placement or training and/or retraining. Failure by the unemployed to comply with these obligations and to submit to interviews led to the loss of unemployment status. The rejection of a job offer brought to the loss of seniority of unemployment status, while accepting a – open-ended, fixed-term or temporary – job offer formulated by the competent service brought to the suspension of seniority of the status of unemployment. Furthermore, Legislative Decree 181/00 tried to address systematically the issues

related to unemployment in order to promote effective prevention strategies, especially for young and long-term unemployed.

The *White Paper* was the first document to promote officially a welfare-to-work approach through the modernization of employment services which helped vulnerable people re-enter the Italian labour market. Public Employment Service (*Pes*) play a pivotal role in this direction. Public Employment Service aimed to bridge the gap between labour supply and demand, providing information to workers (i.e. employment opportunities and knowledge of relevant legislations). The welfare-to-work approach of the *White Paper* attributed and promoted responsibility and participation for workers facing trouble in finding a job. Like the *Pacchetto Treu*, the *White Paper* acknowledged the role played by the promotion of “employability”, that is closely connected to the establishment of active labour market policies like the improvement of private and public employment services. The Paper thus proposed a modernization and liberalization of public employment services (Blanpain and Graham, 2004).

The Legislative Decree 19 December 2002, n. 297 implemented the reform of employment services, with interventions aimed at encouraging firms to adapt their demand to active people under certain conditions, thus speeding up the process of matching labour demand and supply of labor. The Legislative Decree 297/02 proposed the abolition of ordinary unemployed lists and the provision of the possibility of hiring directly out of any list. In addition to simplifying the procedures for placement, the decree aimed to redefine public functions. Indeed Regions defined the operational guidelines that employment services have to carry out in this area.

The framework of the reforms was completed in 2003 with Law 30, known as the Biagi Law, and the related legislative decree n. 276 of 2003, which aimed to improve the new organization of the labor market. The reform brought to several important news, starting with the liberalization of employment services. Indeed, the legislation provided for the creation of a mixed system in which, alongside the traditional employment centers, employment agencies and other authorized private operators operate to offer a broader range of qualified services. It thus expanded the range of agencies authorized to conduct matching activities between labour demand and supply in order to create a more efficient system. Private agencies, employment agents, and universities flanked public employment services. Also interim employment agencies could become placement agencies with the possibility of providing training. The public and private employment services were connected through an informational network, the Labour Information System (SIL). Moreover, it was created the *Borsa Continua Nazionale del lavoro* (BCNL) which gathered data related to active workers and job-seekers in order to match labour demand and supply.

Spain

A first consideration to make relates to the fact that the two main laws on Spanish social security systems, Law 22/1992 and Law 45/2002 (see also the section on social security in this chapter) were developed with an attitude towards the policy of activation – workers had to behave as active agents for their own working conditions, instead of mere recipients of state assistance and welfare benefits. Law 22/1992 was the first law to introduce the notion of active participation in “overcoming” unemployment, and paved the way to consistently reduce workers’ reliance on passive measures by stressing notions of responsibility and will on the part of job-seekers. Furthermore, Law 45/2002 introduced the so-called “compromise of activity” which workers had to sign, and according to which they could by no means refuse an “adequate collocation” (meaning, a job position) after a period of unemployment when it was offered by public employment services.

The orientation towards activation policies outlined above followed the trend of reduced state intervention in favour of a more liberal approach to the labour markets (Rodriguez and Martin, 2014), as sanctioned by a series of reforms that took place since 1994. In fact, Law 10/1994 authorized the recruitment by employers of workers without the intermediation of the National Employment Institute (*Instituto Nacional de Empleo*, INEM) and legalized no-profit private placement agencies. The law “takes into account that public employment services cannot cover all the complex and diversified labour supply, which requires high expertise and proximity to the source of employment. Therefore, [the law] makes possible the existence of not profit placement agencies and allows the activity of temporary employment agencies. These will contribute to making the labour market more transparent and effective, while providing guarantees with a certain level of oversight and control, according to the government's project” (*Exposición de motivos*, 2a). Furthermore, Law 14/1994 established all the norms that regulate Temporary Employment Agencies (*Empresas de Trabajo Temporal*, ETT), aligning them to the legislation of other European countries. Moreover, the law aimed to provide some guarantees in terms of labour rights and social protection to the workers. These reforms were followed by Law 29/1999 on the issue of occupational safety and health of workers employed by temporary employment agencies and Law 12/2001, which changed the existing legislation.

The period that began in 2002 was characterised by a tightening of the grip by European summits and guidelines, as well as by an increase of workers’ awareness about the notion of “employability” – that is a major consciousness on the individual role in shaping one’s own way out of unemployment. This period was one of economic prosperity, and this obviously played its part in the legislation that was taken afterwards. In particular, Law 45/2002 (*de Medidas Urgentes para la*

Reforma del Sistema de Protección por Desempleo y Mejora de la Ocupabilidad) strengthened issues of employability, restricted the criteria to access benefits as well as introduced both a “compromise of activity” and the notion of “adequate collocation”. This was part of a broader project involving the shift from passive to active behaviour on the part of workers.

Another relevant reform of this period was Law 56/2003, whose main innovation was the introduction of decentralization as regards employment policies. In the framework of a national basic law, Autonomous Communities received several competences, previously held by the INEM (*Instituto Nacional de Empleo*), such as the management of unemployment benefits and recruitment incentives; intermediation; definition of employment strategies on the basis of the needs of the specific Community; and agreement at regional level with other bodies involved in the implementation of employment policies. Hence, the Law on Employment 56/2003 eliminated the old National Employment Institute (INEM) and gave way to the new National Employment System (*Sistema Nacional de Empleo*, SNE), more decentralized than the pre-existing one, including a State Public Employment Service (*Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal*, SEPE) and all the Regional Public Employment Services. Thus, Law 56/2003 strengthened the decentralization of labour market policies, which was then entrusted to the control of the Autonomous Communities; as a result, State participation in the policy started to decrease over time. Competences regarding employment policies were decentralized, in favour of a number of private entities and agencies which were then replacing the earlier centralized system. Indeed, according to the legislation, Public Employment Services, non-profit placement agencies, ETTs, and other collaborative bodies could then enter the dialogue on labour markets as social agents actively engaged in the promotion of measures for all categories of workers. This new system also sought to endow citizens with adequate measures to improve their own employability, as stated in the Law 56/2003: “This means public employment services have to provide the unemployed with preventive and personalized care, under the principles of equal opportunities, non-discrimination, transparency, gratuitousness, effectiveness and quality in the provision of services, with a focus on disadvantaged groups (...). Employment policies should serve as incentive for the effective integration of the unemployed into the labor market, encouraging active job search as well as geographical and functional mobility” (*Exposición de motivos*, 2a). Also, the law remarks the importance that recipients subscribe a personal employment agreement: “For the performance of individual and personalized job itinerary, it will be required the subscription and signing of a personal employment agreement. Through this agreement, on the one hand, recipients of the itinerary are committed to actively participate in improving their employability as well as to actively seek employment or start an own business; and, on the other hand, the Public Employment Service is committed to the planning of actions and

all the necessary measures” (Chap. II, Art. 19 septies). As stressed in Law 56/2003 and later on in Royal Decree 5/2006 – that sought to promote alternative permanent flexible contracts –, the globalization of economy and the progression of the European integration were identified as two of the main reasons for justifying the transformation of the national employment system. Flexicurity and activation policies were presented as the unique solution for facing the new global and economic challenges (Fernández and Serrano, 2014). Ultimately, these reforms proved to be in keeping with the orientation of the labour market towards actual market demands, rather than towards the care of workers.

7.5 Pillar 3: Lifelong learning programs

Italy

First introduced in Italy in 1955, vocational training-cum-employment contracts (like apprenticeship) developed consistently towards the beginning of the 1990s. Training systems provided opportunities to work at one time and to participate in training at others, as well as to mix the two options.

The most relevant reforms, agreements and papers in the field of lifelong learning in Italy are reported here:

g) The Pacchetto Treu (Law 196/1997), which identifies apprenticeships as the main instrument for allowing young people enter the labour market and increase youth employment. Indeed, the Law extended its use to all productive sectors as well as widened the age period for having access to apprenticeships.

h) The White Paper that underlines the weakness of the Italian training and the lifelong learning system. Therefore, it proposed improving public intervention on the school-work-training transition and ongoing training. Apprenticeship (*apprendistato*) was acknowledged as a fundamental training tool, while the work/training contracts (*contratti formazione/lavoro*) were considered useful means of recruitment.

i) Law 383/2001, art. 4 (the so-called *Tremonti bis*), which introduced incentives (through de-taxation) both for companies investing in employees’ training (i.e. personnel involved) and for the costs undertaken by companies to promote training courses;

j) Ministry Decree 166/2001 [*Disposizioni in materia di accreditamento dei soggetti attuatori nel sistema di formazione professionale*], which established that all private and public institutions funded by the European Social Fund had to respond to particular criteria to be

authorized to deliver training courses, including their management and logistic ability, economic situation, and the number of professionals involved in training programs. Moreover, internships and traineeships are promoted with the purpose of facilitating the integration among School, University, Vocational trainings and firms.

k) IV Agreement (*IV Protocollo di Intesa*) between MIUR (Ministry for Education, University and Research) and Confindustria subscribed in 2002. The Agreement aimed to promote the dialogue between the public administration and the employers' organization in order to favour the exchange of informations related to the need of the labour market and, consequently, to adapt the formative supply.

l) Finally, other laws which focused partially on lifelong learning and investments in the school system over the period 2001-2003 included the Constitutional Law 3/2001 that decentralises competence in matters of training and employment policies; Law 53/2003 (*Delega al Governo per la definizione delle norme generali sull'istruzione e dei livelli essenziali delle prestazioni in materia di istruzione e formazione professionale*) that restructures the education and training system; the *Biagi Law* (Law 30/2003, *Delega al Governo in materia di occupazione e mercato del lavoro*) that modifies apprenticeships, internships, and training cum employment contracts; and the Legislative Decree 276/2003 for the actualization of Law 30 (Eurydice, 2009/2010a).

With regard to the lifelong learning pillar, in Italy reforms have developed along two different paths. On the one hand, training-based contracts have been introduced in order to facilitate young people's entry into the labour market. On the other hand, specific measures have been devoted to continuing training of workers (Madama and Coletto, 2009). Looking at training-based contracts, Law 30/2003 paid close attention to apprenticeship contracts, which are by now the most relevant contractual arrangement with a training purpose. The Law introduced three different types of apprenticeships according to their target, as illustrated in Table 15 in this chapter: apprenticeship finalised to education and training; vocational apprenticeship; apprenticeship for obtaining a diploma or advanced training skills. With regard to ongoing training of workers, the Law continued the policy of the *Pacchetto Treu* and declared that labour leasing agencies had to pay into bilateral funds (specifically created for the purpose), that is, a contribution amounting to 4% of the wage paid to temporary agency workers hired on fixed-term contracts. Training and retraining courses were financed in this way, with the overall attempt to promote job placements, as well as specific social security measures to protect the income of temporary agency workers. A case in point is *Forma.Temp* (*Fondo per la formazione dei lavoratori in somministrazione con contratto a tempo determinato*). *Forma.Temp* was a no-profit bilateral body made up of representatives of

employment agencies and the Unions representing workers for temporary agency. Employers' organisations and the three main trade unions also promoted the creation of other bilateral bodies for continuing training. In addition, through specific inter-confederal agreements, they established the Intersectoral continuing vocational training funds (*Fondi paritetici interprofessionali per la formazione continua*) (Madama and Coletto, 2009).

Over the years 2006-2007, the MUR⁴⁴ (Ministry for Universities and Research) under the Prodi acknowledges the inadequacy of the Italian lifelong system in equipping workers as well as organizations to face current social and economic transformations. The government identifies as one of the major problems the lack of flexibility of the training system and established two main areas of intervention to be pursued by Universities towards the implementation of training systems. These concerned 1. the provision of training within the institutions themselves, after the undertaking of suitable organizational changes and 2. the co-operation between Universities and venues like other training bodies, companies, and the social partners. In 2007, the Ministry created the Working-group for Lifelong Learning made up of structured academics and supervised by a MUR representative. Through a series of guidelines, the activity of the Working-group aimed to provide Universities with a system able to welcome adult learners, either by setting up specific centres or consolidating existing ones (Federici and Ragone, 2008). In the same year, social partners and the government signed the tripartite agreement on continuing vocational training in order to promote lifelong learning and coordinate the initiative of the continuing training system (Pedersini, 2009).

Spain

Training has been a fundamental object for reform during the 1990s, mainly thanks to funds coming from Europe. The reform in 1993/4, in particular, introduced contracts for traineeships and learning (*Contratos para la formación y el aprendizaje*) and work placement contracts (*Contratos en prácticas*) directed towards the youth. The latter was tailored for young people with any form of higher educational experience allowing them to exercise a profession. The contracts attempted to improve their professionalization and to help them leading a future career in their field, thereby

⁴⁴ In 2000, under the D'Alema government, the Bassanini Reform (Legislative Decree no. N. 300/1999) unifies the structure of scientific research and higher education. Therefore, the Ministry of Public Education (MPI) and the Ministry of University and Scientific and Technological Research (MURST) are assembled into the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR). The unification came into force with the second Berlusconi government, formed in 2001. In 2006, with the second Prodi government, it was decided to separate and distinguish the Ministry in its old components, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of University and Research. However, in 2008, with the Berlusconi government, they are again merged again into one ministry.

requiring different parameters according to the profession. The work experience had to be consistent to the qualification. The former aims to allow young people to gain a work experience, which is required for obtaining educational studies. Despite the name ‘contracts for traineeship and learning’, these contracts were conceived as measures to create actual jobs, rather than to improve young people’ training and skills (Aragón, Cachón, and Serrano, 2000).

The Spanish regulation on lifelong learning has been subject to a wide series of measures and changes, which demonstrate the particular attention paid to issues of ongoing professionalization of workers, both at national and territorial (Autonomous Communities) level. As shown in the Chapter VI, the two branches of adult education and training in Spain are divided according to whether the training programmes (both formal and informal training) are provided by education or employment administrations.

As regards the training provided by employment administrations, Royal Decree 282/1999 introduced regulations on employment workshops, the so-called *talleres de empleo*. Other reforms in this kind of training include:

- Law 12/2001, which aimed to promote the effective access of employers to lifelong learning in order to allow them to enhance qualifications for further mobility within the labour market;
- Act on Qualifications and Vocational Training (5/2002), which introduced the National Catalogue of Professional Qualification as instrument to supervise all forms of training provisions that aimed to ensure relevant recognition and accreditation of professional competences acquired through formal/informal training programmes or work experience;
- Royal Decree 1128/2003, which regulated the National Catalogue on Professional Qualifications introduced in the 2002 Act (see above). The Royal Decree dealt with the issuing of curricula both for training by education and employment administrations.
- Act on Employment 56/2003, which made clear that occupational and continuing training play a pivotal role, when setting forth new employment policies was necessary in order to reach employment goals;
- 2006 Act on Education, which, just like for training by education administrations, underlined the importance of offering lifelong learning opportunities. As far as adult education is concerned, the Act also promoted the cooperation of different stakeholders (public administrations, local corporations and social agents) in the field;
- Agreement for Training and Employment, which was signed by social parties in 2006. The Agreement foresaw incentives for firms implementing training actions in form of subsidies and social security allowances as well as training leave for workers;

- Royal Decree 395/2007, which regulated the system Vocational Training for Employment. It integrated in a single system occupational and continuing training, aimed respectively to job-seekers and employed workers. Furthermore, it illustrated the vocational training programmes available, their structure and financing as well as the involvement of public administrations. This decree on vocational training for employment contained the clauses indicated in the Agreement for Training and Employment (see above) (Eurydice, 2009/2010b).

The reforms on training systems managed by education administrations include:

- 2006 Act on Education, which defined the general principles to follow for performing educational actions. The law dealt with lifelong learning and adult education. It also promoted cooperation among public administrations (education and employment administrations), local corporations and social agents across the country. Adult education was then implemented at territorial level within each Autonomous community;
- Royal Decree 1538/2006, which established the general organisation of vocational training in the education system. Moreover, it set up programmes and training modules (*módulos profesionales*);
- Royal Decree 1892/2008 on university education, which foresaw the requirements of access to tertiary education for adults over 25 and 45. The Decree also provided opportunities for those who demonstrated professional qualifications in spite of their lack of entry requirements to access the university education (Eurydice, 2009/2010b).

In Spain, each Autonomous Community is responsible for the overall performance and management of training programmes, either at formal or informal level. The Ministry of Education and the departments of education of the communities monitor the correct application of legislations in the field. Although there is no body or organization supervising training systems at national level, the Subdirectorate General for Lifelong Learning at the Ministry of Education serves the purposes of a main, controlling body. This, together with the Centre for Innovation and Development of Distance Education [*Centro para la Innovación y Desarrollo de la Educación a Distancia*] and National Institute for Qualifications [*Instituto Nacional de las Cualificaciones*] allows for the control and maintenance of training standards throughout the country. Finally, there are bodies and organizations within the different communities which supervise the effective functioning of local programmes and initiatives.

7.6 Pillar 4: Social security system

Italy

With regard to the social security pillar, all reforms launched over the period starting from the '90s to 2008, were oriented towards a “conservative approach”. Indeed, they extended the duration and increased the generosity in terms of replacement rate of the existing schemes, but left the eligibility criteria unchanged (Madama and Coletto, 2009).

Law 196 of 1997 allowed another category of excluded workers – those belonging to cooperative organizations – to enter the social security system. Also another important reform, Article 35, paragraph 5, of Law no. 448 of 1998, led to redefine the concept of involuntary unemployment. Indeed, it stated that the unemployment benefits cannot be provided to the workers who become unemployed as a result of their own resignation. In this way, the law underlined the rigorous connotation of the involuntary nature of unemployment situation, which cannot be defined merely as a lack of work. Later, fair resignation was assimilated to dismissal (CNEL, 2003). Maybe connected to the approaching of election, in 2000 Law 388 extended to 9 months the duration of treatment for workers older than fifty years (art. 78, paragraph 19), considering that their relocation on the labor market presents several difficulties. Moreover, it was increased the amount of the ordinary treatment of unemployment to the extent of 40%. This increase did not include a specific kind of allowance – the unemployment benefits with reduced eligibility (*indennità di disoccupazione a requisiti ridotti*) –, which can be due to financial reasons, since in paragraph 25 it was formulated a promise of extension. The eligibility requirement of this specific allowance is only 78 days of work in the previous year, allowing atypical workers to have access to unemployment benefits. Therefore, the law extended the allocation of benefits to those employees who were already covered, whereas certain categories of workers remain cut out from every scheme. Therefore, a transformation in the system of shock absorbers (*ammortizzatori sociali*) has been viewed as a priority by the governments, albeit no substantial changes have been promoted so far (CNEL, 2003).

The *White Paper* proposed reforming social shock absorbers so that they act as employment incentives. Individuals receiving shock absorber benefits must be “actively seeking employment”. The Paper extended shock absorbers to workers who could not benefit from consistent support when re-entering the labour market after a period of inactivity. Benefits should be homogeneous, and their dispersion to be avoided with the help of training programmes for the unemployed who tried to re-enter the labour market. Law 80/2005 introduced some changes to the existing legislation

and extended general allowances only for the period between 2005 and 2006. Ordinary benefits were also extended to workers whose contract had been suspended due to temporary circumstances. While this change has helped quite a significant number of workers, it has also ended up augmenting the level of fragmentation in the field of social protection, since the provisions for the unemployment benefits with reduced eligibility remained unchanged.

The Protocol on Welfare issued by the Prodi government in 2007 attempted to merge the gap in social protection measures between permanent and temporary workers. Different categories were grouped under the same label, and the allocation of unemployment benefits was interconnected with the creation of active labour policies. Proposals drafted in the Protocol included the improvement of social security measures for the young, the reform of shock absorbers, incentives to employment, and the development of job placement services, as well as a series of additional measures to help the unemployed and/or people with non-continuous job relationships, women, and para-subordinate workers. However, all the measures were rejected by the second Berlusconi government, mainly due to the government's belief that the simplification of State apparatuses is the only true way forward. This has reduced measures of control systems, which up until then had operated in order to uncover abuses in the labour market.

Recent significant reforms to increase social security include the Finance Act of 2008 (Law 244/2007), which was built on the Agreement on Welfare, Labour Market and Pensions for Equity and Sustainable Growth signed in 2007. The Agreement intended to improve protection in case of unemployment, but left the unemployment eligibility criteria unchanged (Pedersini, 2009). Later on, the Finance Act of 2008 (Law 244/2007) extended the duration and improved the amount of unemployment benefits. The Finance Act also extended the maximum duration and the replacement rate of unemployment benefits with reduced eligibility, although they are paid for a lower number of days and are less generous in terms of amount in comparison to ordinary benefits. Moreover, these benefits are not paid out at the moment of job loss, but in a unique instalment in the following year. Therefore, their support during unemployment spells is insufficient, since the unemployed is uncovered in the period between the onset of unemployment and payment of the benefit. Once again, this measure has had the effect of confirming, rather than curbing, the discrepancies between insiders and outsiders, that is the segmentation between atypical and regular workers (Madama and Coletto, 2009).

As far as the social security pillar is concerned, a last glance has to be reserved to the *Green Book on the future of the social model* "The good life in the active society" published in 2008 by the re-established Berlusconi government, after two year centre-left Prodi government. The Book presented the strategy of the government with regard to social policies matters, pursuing as a value

“the centrality of the person and his/her relationships, like the family” (p. 3). It proposes “a Welfare of opportunities addressed to the person as a whole, which is able to strengthen his/her autonomy by intervening in advance with tailor-made services and stimulating accountable behaviours and life style as well as useful conducts for oneself and the others” (p. 3). We report here Borghi’s interpretation of the Book (2009), who considers that at the very base of the document two elements lie, namely employment and family. In fact, a crucial role for the labour market performance is attributed to the individual responsibility of being full performative in an active society; consequently, welfare benefits must be given only to deserving citizens, who “*with their active behaviour and responsible style of life, can and want to operate as multiplier of resources and wealth and anyway to prevent conditions of need*” (p. 14). In Borghi’s view, beyond such individual responsibility and the active society, as conceived by the Green Book, are families and civil society: “*Foreseeing for providing is a paradigm that has no more to be applied only to Welfare state, but it must be concerning directly persons and families’ chooses*” (p.16). At the same time, social and labour market policies are mainly considered instruments for economic growth. In the end, reporting Borghi’s words, “from the Italian perspective, security results to be mainly a private (individual, family, community) matter” (2009: 14).

Spain

Beginning from the second half of the 90s, the decrement of unemployment benefits was carried out through a legislation of “small steps” and sometimes was hidden within technical laws (Del Pino and Ramos, 2009; Cabeza Pereiro, 2003 as quoted in Moreno, 2009). Indeed, in Spain the reforms of social security in this period have developed along cost containment and retrenchment strategies. The overall attempt was to reduce the financial deficit and the costs of social protection produced by the high job turnover as well as the frequent transitions inside and outside the labour market, due to the wide use of temporary contracts. The reforms in this period were also informed by the activation policies promoted at European level. In this circumstances, Law 22/1992 was issued.

Law 22/1992 was activated for two main reasons, such as the high expenditures which had been accumulating in the social protection system and the pressures around the Maastricht Treaty, which demanded strict requirements for convergence. Although, trade unions considered that this second reason was mainly used by the government for implementing a policy oriented to social protection reduction (Del Pino and Ramos, 2009). In that year, a Convergence Plan (*Plan de Convergencia*), including cuts in social protection against unemployment, was prepared and sent to the European

Economic Community. The social climate surrounding the reform was tense, as the leading Union UGT [*Union General de Trabajadores*] was opposed to the PSOE government in charge, which took the reform along without debating with the social partners. The reform aimed to reduce the benefits allocated and hardened the requirements to access them due to high expenditures of these measures; it also sought to curb temporary employment and to promote the passage to permanent contracts, especially for younger cohorts, women, and people over the ages of 45. The Convergence Plan set in order to follow up to the EU, too, was aimed towards relenting excessive use of temporary arrangements and to move towards a system in which workers could actively participate for their re-entry into the labour market. The lack of agreement between the government and social partners led to a major strike called by the latter to prevent the signing of the law agreement. According to Del Pino and Ramos (2009), this first key legislation in the field had the ultimate effect of leaving certain vulnerable subjects uncovered by the new structure of social protection benefits. This orientation by the PSOE government carried on during the following years. In fact, also Law 22/1994, which was embedded in the broader reform 1993-1994, lessened the amount of unemployment benefits and strengthened the control on recipients.

The second main law of the Spanish social security system was Law 45/2002, which had a much more European orientation, in terms of promotion of flexibility and activation principle (Del Pino and Ramos, 2009), whereby self-consciousness and responsibility were key factors to quickly re-enter the labor market after a period of unemployment. When Law 45/2002 (*de Medidas Urgentes para la Reforma del Sistema de Protección por Desempleo y Mejora de la Ocupabilidad*, the so-called ‘*el decretazo*’) was introduced, the public opinion was having feelings that a neo-liberal legislation would be inevitable considering the attitudes of the PP government in charge at the time. This second law was the result of a long cooperation between the government and the Ministries of Work and Economy, which was seeking to cut both quantity and duration of the benefits, as well as to strengthen the criteria for the allocation of unemployment benefits. By signing a “compromise of activity”, the unemployed committed to actively search for employment and accept any “adequate collocations”. The original government proposals stated that, after receiving the benefits for as long as a year, workers had to accept any job available within 30 kilometers, and, what is more striking, even when the wage would be lower than the benefit itself.

With regard to the opinion on the Law, trade unions viewed the reform as a way to limit unemployed and workers’ rights, included the possibility of choosing the profession one values and developing it. By contrast, labour markets would benefited from rapid integration of the unemployed, thanks to active policies, avoiding their dependence from unemployment benefits. According to the trade unions, the orientation of the government was evidently in opposition with

the capability approach. Due to the strong protests that follow the proposal of the Law, some efforts sprang up to create a more moderate version. A watershed moment for the process of approval of the reform was the appointment of Eduardo Zaplana as Minister of Labour of Aznar Government, who promised to apply some significant changes to the draft proposal issued by the government. In particular, he made the “adequate collocation” requirements more morbid, by establishing that a compromise was issued only once the unemployed worker has received the allowance for at least 100 days. Even if the subscription of the compromise of activity remained mandatory for receiving unemployment benefits over the time, the lack of compliance was not followed by sanctions. Of course, the withdrawal of the aforementioned proposal of law back in 2002 resulted in reaching the Unions’ consensus. Zaplana’s intervention was particularly regarded as truly effective, and the process of approval could finally rely on a more sustained and productive social dialogue between all parties involved. However, in 2007, the Spanish government declared that the Law 45/2002 (*decretazo*) was nullified, since reasonable justifications for applying urgent measures were missing.

Law 22/1992 and Law 45/2002 were the major reforms of Spanish social security system, although the latter was only a failed attempt. Both aimed to restrict unemployment protection, even if the different economic context from which they developed gave them completely different meanings (Del Pino and Ramos, 2009). Indeed, if the crisis of the 1980s and the financial deficits of social security influenced feelings for the need to reform, the second reform under consideration here was introduced at a time of generalized economic well-being, producing thus divergent conditions for public responses to both legislations. A comparison between the contexts and development of the two legislations dealt with in this section shows that, first of all, pressures from the EU were more functional for the approval of Law of 1992 in terms of the future of Spain as a member of the EMU (Economic and Monetary Union). Secondly, despite the fact that both reforms were highly criticized by trade unions, the Law of 1992 encountered less resistance on the part of public opinion, probably due to the state of crisis that invested the country towards the beginning of the 1990s. One of the strongest elements for the evaluation of both laws is also the change of attitude undergone by the Unions, whereby social dialogue was pursued in 2002 in comparison to the open protests of 1992. Finally, the influence of the economic contexts should not be underestimated. As Del Pino and Ramos (2009) argue, in times of crisis governments are more likely to have an attitude open towards change and application of their proposals without taking into account social partners, as shown by the approval process of the Law of 1992.

Since 2003, the government of Zapatero marked the beginning of a more consistent dialogue with social partners than that had hitherto occurred, although also Aznar government had pursued

social dialogue in the end of the '90s. Law 43/2006 (*para la Mejora del Crecimiento y del Empleo*) promoted permanent employment and sought to further the labour market. Furthermore, it increased protections for specific vulnerable cohorts (social workers employed by cooperatives, over 45 years old, and workers with fixed-discontinuous contracts). As far as self-employed work is concerned, Law 20/2007 (Self-Employed Workers' Statute) extended unemployment protection and social security coverage to more than three million workers, by establishing a compulsory system of contributions, the right to paid leave for illness and industrial accidents, paternity leave and other benefits. Organic Law 3/2007 stressed the need for equality of treatment of men and women employed in order to tackle gender discrimination and foster employability of women within the labour market. In terms of social security, the law extended maternity leave (Cerviño, 2009). Finally, towards the end of the 2000s, the government discussed the need to improve unemployment protection and the pension system so as to be able to face better the upcoming crisis.

After the descriptive presentation of Spanish and Italian legislation in the field of employment policies, we will try to make a synthesis of some key aspects in order to better compare the legislative frameworks in the two countries and assess them in the light of the capabilities approach. These aspects refer to 1. activation policies, 2. the commitment to work and the conditionality of unemployment benefits, 3. the kind of obligations and punishment tied to the violation of the commitment and 4. the unemployment protection. The composition and articulation of these aspects are relevant in defining the orientation of employment policies towards a capabilities approach. In order to have a more comprehensive view, we will also include the data of expenditures presented in the previous chapter in relation to activation policies and unemployment protection (Tab. 30).

Table 30. Synthesis of key aspects of the labour legislation in Italy and Spain

	Activation policies	Commitment to work (conditionality of unemployment benefits) and definition of "adequate collocation"	Obligations/sanctions	Unemployment protection
Italy	Strengthening of the emphasis on active labour market policies at the end of the '90s and the beginning of the 2000s,	Late introduction of the commitment and poor definition of the concept of "adequate collocation"	Loss of the unemployment status in case of failure by the unemployed to comply with the obligation of carrying out a re-training path or rejection of a job	Increase of benefits in terms of amount and duration. No substantial change of eligibility requirements.

	followed by a marked decrease.		offer.	
Spain	Slight strengthening of the emphasis on active labour market policies at the end of the '90s and the beginning of the 2000s, followed by a slight decrease.	Formalization of a commitment of activity with Law 45/2002. Elaborated definition of the concept of "adequate collocation".	Loss of the protection in case of infractions. Increase of flexibility of the sanctionatory system since 2002.	Contraction of unemployment protection, until the outbreak of the financial crisis.

Source: own elaboration.

As far as the pillar of activation policies is concerned, it is important to consider the emphasis given to active measures that enable people to achieve the job they value as well as the expenditures inverted in active labour market policies. A scarce attention to this pillar may indicate the orientation to a work-first approach that aims to make people to enter as soon as possible the labour market. By contrast, a strong interest to the pillar and generous expenditures in long-term measures hint at an orientation to the approach of capabilities. In both Italy and Spain, the emphasis on active policies seems to be strong at the end of the '90s and at the beginning of the 2000s. Then it decreases notably, especially in the Italian case, whereas the contraction seems to be slighter in the Spanish case. However, as shown in the previous chapter, expenditures in labour market policies are mainly invested in employment incentives, which serve as a short-term measure for a rapid transition towards a situation of employment. This is especially evident in the Spanish case, where this kind of expenditure constitutes the strongest investment in comparison to other measures. Also in the Italian case, the action "employment incentives" represents the highest expenditure, along with the action "training".

We now move to observe the aspect of the conditionality of unemployment benefits. A strict conditionality reduces freedom of choice and the possibilities for job-seekers to reach the job they value. In Spain, a narrowing of the criteria for the allocation of unemployment benefits occurred with Law 45/2002, leading to a major control on the availability of unemployed to work through the formalization of a commitment of activity (*compromiso de actividad*). Still, a form of individual monitoring was exerted also before the Law (Torrentz, 2006), even in a less formal way. With the commitment, which was required to the recipients of unemployment benefits, the unemployed declare to actively search employment, participate to active actions and accept any "adequate

collocations” proposed by public employment services. In this sense, it is evident that an orientation to a work-first approach emerges. However, strong protests by trade unions led the Government to make requirements more morbid, by establishing that a commitment had to be issued only once the unemployed has received the allowance for at least 100 days. In 2004, a new law established that the subscription of the commitment was mandatory only for recipients of unemployment benefits. As far as the previous period is concerned, the law is unclear. As regards the definition of “adequate collocation”, Law 45/2006 considers relevant four aspects: 1. habitual occupation and specific requests of the unemployed, which is taken into account for a year (during which the unemployed has been receiving unemployment benefits); then other possibilities of occupation will be considered by employment services; 2. location of the new job place, in that the distance of the job place must not exceed 30 km from the residency of the unemployed and the 25% of the time of the working day; 3. kind of contractual arrangement, according to which the new employment has to provide a wage that is appropriate in relation to the tasks required, independently of the amount of the benefits and 4. personal situation of the unemployed.

In Italy, the commitment (*dichiarazione di immediata disponibilità, D.I.D.*) was introduced later than in Spain. The Decree-Law 185/2008, then converted into Law 2/2009, introduced the obligation to sign the D.I.D. in order to obtain the status of “unemployed” and receive unemployment benefits. The Decree 292/2002 defined the status as the condition in which persons are not employed, actively seek employment and are ready to begin working immediately. Thus, the right to unemployment protection was bonded to the subscription of the declaration. According to the commitment, the unemployed must accept any “adequate collocation” or active measures for their re-training path. Still, recently the mandatory character of the D.I.D. has been extended also to other people, included those who are not covered by the protection. In this case, the acceptance of a job offer is not compulsory. As far as the definition of “adequate collocation”, the Decree-Law 249/2004 (art. 1-quinquies.) focuses on two main points: 1. wage of the new employment in comparison to the salary of the previous employment, since the wage of the new job cannot be lower than 20% of the salary of the previous job and 2. location of the job place, insofar as the job place must be at a distance of less than 50 km from the place of residency and achievable in less than 80 minutes by public transport.

Then, we study the aspect of the obligations of the job-seeker and the sanctions in case the unemployed does not comply with the commitment to work. It is important to understand the role given to sanctions in order to have a clear view of the policy orientation. In Spain, a sanctionary logic was present before 2002. Still, with Law 45/2002, the lack of compliance of obligations started to be more flexible, even if the subscription of the commitment of activity remained

mandatory for receiving unemployment benefits. Indeed, the law allowed more tolerant sanctions for nonconformity in comparison to the past (Torrentz, 2006). The sanction was established according to the gravity of the infraction. Minor infractions are punished with the loss of unemployment protection for short-period of time, while major infractions may lead to the permanent loss of benefits. Still, the commitment is considered to accomplish a formal function only (Bertelheimer et al., 2012; Salas, 2011). In this regards, Serrano and Magnusson affirms that “this scope for coercion is rarely used” (2007a: 309). In the Italian case, Decree-Law 185/2008 establishes that whenever the employed refuse to subscribe the commitment, the right of receiving unemployment benefits will be lost. Moreover, once the commitment has been signed, the lack of compliance with the obligations, such as the acceptance of any “adequate collocation” or the proposal of a re-training path, leads to the impossibility for the unemployed to receive retributive supply and social security contributions. However, as we will see in the last part of this thesis, some interviewees question the effectiveness of the sanctionary system, due to the impossibility by the public employment services to make job offers. Besides, the literature remarks that sanctions and obligations remained marginal for a long-time during the ‘90s (Fargion, 2003).

Finally, we analyse the aspect of unemployment protection, which is a key element for allowing unemployed to stay outside the mechanisms of the market until they achieve valuable job opportunities. In the Spanish case, a strong contraction is evident since 1992. In particular, Law 22/1992 and Law 45/2002 were oriented to restrict unemployment benefits. As shown in the previous paragraph, Law 22/1992 aimed to reduce the financial deficit and the costs of social protection tied to the wide use of temporary contracts. Law 45/2002, which had a European inspiration, was oriented towards the same direction, even if for different reasons, as seen before. Nevertheless, Zapatero government promoted a greater protection for some vulnerable social groups through Law 43/2006 and increased unemployment benefits for self-employees with Law 20/2007. The increase of benefits was especially evident since 2006, when also unemployment rates rose. In the Italian case, the situation was different. With Law 388/2000, the amount of the ordinary treatment of unemployment increased and protection for workers older than fifty years became more generous in terms of duration. However, it is important to bear in mind, as shown in the previous chapter, that expenditures in unemployment were constantly much lower than in Spain. Still, Spain exhibited always higher unemployment rates. In addition, over the time in Italy, the main orientation was prevalently conservative, in that eligibility criteria remained unchanged and only slight efforts were accomplished in the direction to allow vulnerable social groups being covered by the public protection. Most of these resulted to be insufficient, with the effect of reinforcing fragmentation and maintaining the divide between permanent and temporary workers.

A comparative look at Italian and Spanish flexicurity policies shows that there are significant differences. Policies in Spain seem to be mainly work-first oriented, whereas this orientation is less marked in the Italy. In fact, in the Spanish case, reforms have developed along cost containment and retrenchment of unemployment benefits, flanked by strong expenditures in employment incentives. In the Italian case the main trend was a raise of the protection in terms of duration and replacement rate, especially since 2000. Nevertheless, it did not turn to an expansion of the protection to vulnerable social groups. Moreover, the commitment of activity and the sanctionary apparatus were introduced earlier in the Spanish case than in the Italian case. Still, they developed gradually over the time leading at a flexible and articulated system. By contrast, in the Italian case, they develop later but appeared to be more rigid and poor in their definition.

7.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter has shown that, in Italy, flexicurity in its early stages only covered flexibility and the rules on hiring with the introduction of atypical contractual arrangements, whereas the levels of social protection for atypical workers as regards to firing and wage maintenance remained almost unchanged. In fact, the analysis of these reforms suggests that measures on employment in Italy have mainly tended to introduce high flexibility, instead of building a favorable environment for the creation of adequate levels of flexicurity. Significant steps forward have been taken also with regard to active labour market policies, thanks to the modernization of public employment offices and the liberalization of job placement services. By means of a conclusion, it is possible to claim that the reforms of social security systems in Italy have been only partially successful, since over the time benefits have been made more generous, in terms of both duration and amount, but eligibility requirements have not be transformed. Consequently, standard workers enjoy both a high degree of job security and social security in case of dismissal; by contrast, non-standard workers not only suffer of a low degree of job security, but also have scarce access to social protection or are totally excluded. Furthermore, territorial discrepancy – meaning the South/North divide – overlaps with two other structural deficiencies, such as gender differences in employment rates as well as between overall employment rates and young employment. Therefore, one of the main critical issues at stake concerns equity, insofar as flexibility and security are unequally dispensed among workers. To this point should be added that significant reforms on shock absorbers were introduced only during the early 1990s, that is, long before debates and developments of more flexible labour markets. The effects are clearly manifold, but the current fears among atypical workers of incurring in conditions of permanent social vulnerability are undoubtedly among the most preoccupying. Indeed, the legal

framework does not act as a substantial and effective factor of conversion spreading valuable opportunities in terms of job security, lifelong learning, income maintenance. Rather, it seems mainly to contribute to a dis-homogeneous distribution of capabilities within the population.

In Spain, the 1990s were characterised by significant reforms of the labour market, whereas later on less relevant laws were issued, maintaining the same direction that had been assumed in the past. The general direction was contracting temporary employment that, introduced in the 1984 (Dolado et al. 2002), revealed their drawbacks. Nevertheless, the solution provided was mainly addressed to promoting more flexible permanent contracts, so as to reduce the difference between the fixed and open-ended contracts. Moreover, the main effort was fostering activation policies, which was reached with the laws in 1992 and 1994, when also temporary employment agencies were legitimised to take part in the process of intermediation between workers and firms. The two main trends of the reforms that took place during this period were to increase activation and holding flexibility of the market on one hand, and to decentralize services and employment programs to Communities and Regions on the other. Autonomous Communities acquired an essential role in managing activation policies. Furthermore, activation measures and modernization of employment services went hand in hand with a considerable contraction of unemployment protection, while also employment protection was lessened. The laws issued during the 2000s were mostly oriented to maintain a situation of deregulation of employment protection, which would give way to a rise in the vulnerability of individuals. In fact, the Spanish labour market system witnessed a shift from the collective to the individual perspective in matters of workers' vulnerability and the same can be said of the issue of personal responsibility in facing situations of unemployment. In the view of trade unions, the rapid integration into the labour market become a goal to achieve at the expenses of individuals' freedom to pursue what they value, which especially contrasts with the capability approach. Besides, the most significant laws of 1992 and 2002 raised a great deal of controversy with the social partners, which viewed it merely as a move towards an open neo-liberalism. However, the meaning of flexicurity and, above all, of how to connect flexibility with acceptable levels of security was for a long time, and still is, at the core of the debate on labour market policies.

In conclusion, significant differences can be detected between Italian and Spanish flexicurity policies. In Spain, policies seem to be mainly work-first oriented, since reforms have developed along cost containment and retrenchment of unemployment benefits and high expenditures were inverted in employment incentives. This orientation was evident also in Italy, even if in a lower measure, where "employment incentives" represented the second way of inversion of public expenditures after "training" and the main trend was a raise of the protection in terms of duration

and replacement rate, especially since 2000. Still, the eligibility criteria remain unchanged, increasing the fragmentation between protected and vulnerable social groups. Moreover, a “commitment of activity” and sanctions in case the commitment was infringed were introduced earlier in the Spanish case than in the Italian case and developed gradually. As far as the concept of “commitment” is concerned, the definition results to be more articulated in the former case than in the latter, while the sanctionatory system became more flexible in recent time. Hence, the Spanish case seems to present a structured system that aims to enable unemployed to quickly re-enter the labour market and punish them whenever they are not available to accept job offers and re-training paths. Although, the system has become more morbid over the time as regards the disciplinary mechanisms. The Italian case seems to present a weaker emphasis on the idea of work-first, which does not mean that a capabilities-oriented approach was present. Furthermore, the sanctionary system remained undefined until recently when rigid norms and a restricted concept of “commitment” were introduced. However, the effectiveness of the application of such norms is debatable. Nonetheless, no change on eligibility criteria for the access to unemployment protection was carried out, which led to lower opportunities and guarantees for vulnerable people. In the following chapter, the situation of the youth will be considered, since it constitute one of the most vulnerable groups in the Spanish and Italian contexts.

Chapter VIII.

The social vulnerability of the youth in Spain and Italy

8.1 Introduction

The attention on the youth's position in the labour market has been growing within the political debates in Europe, especially since the 1997 agreement concluded by the member states in the Luxembourg Summit. The problem of unemployment, which hinders the integration of young people and, by consequence, their transition to independent adulthood, has recently become one of the main public concerns. This is due to the social transformations that have occurred in the last twenty years, which have led to deep changes in the condition of being young; generally speaking, the difference between a clear passage from adolescence to adulthood as occurred in the past and an uncertain duration of the transition that has started to take place recently can be highlighted. Indeed, in the past the personal trajectory followed a relatively predictable path, according to a specific order of life events: after the completion of the studies, young people were likely to enter the labour market in permanent full-time jobs – achieving thus their own autonomy and independence – and establish stable relationships as a basis for building their own family. Nowadays, the longer duration of the educational path and the strong employment insecurity on one hand, and the multiplication of the possibilities to develop alternative life trajectories patterns on the other, has produced a great plurality of paths and often reversible routes, which have made the process of growth laborious and blurred. The integration of young people – and especially of first-time job seekers – is currently characterised by high intermittent employment, flexibility and unemployment. Furthermore, transitions from education to work and from family dependence to independence have become more discontinuous (Lopez Blasco and Du Bois-Reymond, 2004; Gentile and Meyer, 2009). Youth is now conceived as a life condition marked by unpredictability, vulnerability and reversibility (Cavalli and Galland, 1995; Bynner et al., 1997; Walther et al., 1999; Plug et al., 2003; Lopez Blasco and Du Bois-Reymond, 2004). This is one of the reasons for which this dissertation pays attention on this group that more than others in Italy and Spain is at risk of ending up in a condition of social vulnerability.

The capabilities approach is especially relevant for the case of the youth, insofar as perhaps it is in this period of life when the need of developing own potentialities is more urgent and expectations of following what one values are more pressing. Also, it is in this period when the frustration linked

to the impossibility of achieving a condition of autonomy and independence can produce the representation of a constrain-oriented society instead of one that fosters freedoms. Employment policies play a key role in reducing the insecurity and uncertainty that affect the shaping of existential projects of young people, which – according to Sen’s view – cannot be considered as a “private matter”. This view strongly contrasts with the flexicurity strategy. Indeed, the strategy is characterized by a marked individualistic and moralizing emphasis that may suite with empowered social groups, while it does not result applicable to vulnerable groups as it is the case for the youth, revealing thus its paradoxical nature. Due to the great influence on defining possibilities and vulnerability, the configuration of employment policies and the contribution of youth programmes are therefore observed here, in order to better understand the vulnerability of the youth in Spain and Italy.

This chapter pays special attention to young people and the context where they live. The analysis of the situation of the young in Spain and Italy will allow for a closer look at the level of the focus adopted by each country. Labour and institutional specificities will be examined in order to have a broader view of the integration of young people into the labour market in both countries. The analysis will be carried out looking at gender differences in order to underline the presence of more vulnerable individuals within the group of young people.

8.2 Definition of the youth

The precarious and complex position of young people within the labour market requires open and plural definitions of the concept of “youth”. In general, the “youth” is defined as the “border” situation between dependence and autonomy (Cavalli and Galland, 1996) or, as Margulis (1996) affirms, as the result of different and contradictory social discourses, according to which the youth can be seen in different ways. Serrano (1995) specifies more in detail these different ways. Firstly, youth can be defined as a *state* or *status*, such as a social position accompanied – according to the current reference values – by a positive valuation. The characteristics attributed to the youth group act as a model for the adult society, rather than the contrary. Also, the youth can be defined as *stadium*, such as a condition of transition from one state to another or a process. The main feature of the youth is the uncertainty, so that it can be defined in reference to other phases of life, like the childhood or adulthood, which allows distinguishing it. This position can be seen, on one hand, from a psychological approach, which focuses on the different changes at the biological, cognitive and social level that lead to a reorganization of the whole towards the condition of being adult; on the other hand, it can be seen from a sociological approach, which considered it as a social process

relative to the specific context in which it develops. This makes it possible to distinguish a plurality of youth and social groups within this age group. Finally, the youth can be defined as a *generation*, which looks at young people as a group in a phase of denial of society, rather than of integration into that. Young people are thus considered as subjects of socialization and social agents, who can lead to change society, rather than objects of socialization, pursuing the social reproduction and the preservation of the social order. In this case, the relationship between generations appears as essentially conflicting. The fact that there are different ways of understanding youth can be interpreted as symptomatic of the ambivalent position of young people within the labour market, which leads them to adopt different and even antithetical forms of “being young” (Serrano, 1995).

As far as youth paths are concerned, Plug and du Bois-Reymond (2005) use the image of “yo-yo” movements to describe the complex transition patterns that prevails nowadays in the labour market. Indeed, as the authors state, “young people may find themselves in situations of multiple status at the same time (blending areas of life) in, for instance, combining work, schooling and care” (Plug and du Bois-Reymond, 2005: 65). Different forms of yo-yo transitions can also be identified (du Bois-Reymond, 1998) according to the personal resources available to each young adult (cultural knowledge, support received by family and education). In fact, as Bauman asserts, fragmented transitions follow different timetables and have a variety of different rationales, which indicates the shift from modern to late modern societies (Bauman, 1995). Within this situation, a diversification and individualisation (Beck, 1992) of pathways to adulthood has been produced. Individualization of transitions means that young people’s subjectivity has gained importance in building their own biography.

The category of “young” is fluctuating and vague, so that it is problematic to achieve an exhaustive definition, thus revealing the difficulty of tracing boundaries and breaking points between childhood, youth and adulthood. This is much more visible in the new generations because this phase seems to be prolonged, covering age groups traditionally attributed to childhood, and – above all – the age groups traditionally considered adults. In particular, it is difficult for policy makers to deal with the concept of “youth”, which varies over time, by gender and culturally. The solution that has been adopted for defining youth in policy provision is to use the criterion of age. Thus, many policies are age-structured (Jones, 2005). The trend, especially in Italy, has fostered a change of attitude as regards the age cohort accounting for the whole category, whereby “the young” refers generally to people aged 15 to 34 years, whereas earlier demographical studies placed the category within the 15 to 24 age group. Phases and boundaries can change depending on the social context in which they develop, defining the position of young people within the labour

market and society. The concept of youth is therefore a social construction that is historically and geographically modified by cultural context and reference standard.

8.3 The scenery

The European scenery shows a discouraging picture of the conditions that young people are experiencing nowadays. The framework for defining individual trajectories of youth varies from country to country, depending on different social models and, more specifically, on educational and vocational training systems. In particular, a distinction between different countries has been proposed by Gangl (2003) in order to compare different school-to work transition patterns (ETUI, 2008). Countries are classified in three categories⁴⁵: 1. General qualification system; 2. Extensive vocational training system; and Lower level of education attainment system. The “general qualification system” is characterised by high percentages of people failing to progress beyond secondary level. The “extensive vocational training system” is characterised by low percentages of people failing to progress beyond compulsory schooling and a significant proportion of people holding tertiary qualification; also, vocational qualifications are mainly gained by upper-secondary-level school-leavers. “Lower level of education attainment systems” includes countries with a weak system of vocational training. We can now observe the classification of the countries, so to have an overview of the position of Spain and Italy in comparison to the other Member States (Fig. 53):

Figure 53. Classification of countries according to school-to work transition

General qualifications	Extensive vocational training systems	Lower level of educational attainment
United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Belgium	Austria, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden, Finland	Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece

Source: Gangl et al. (2003), from Benchmarking working Europe 2008

⁴⁵ The parameters used for the classification are: the nature of vocational specialisations on offer; the number of occupations trained for; the level of entry qualifications required; the dominance of school-based vs. dual forms of training; the extent and nature of provision for work experience during training; and the extent and nature of direct or indirect employer involvement in design and provision (ETUI, 2008).

As shown in the figure, UK, Ireland, France and Belgium are mainly characterised by general qualifications, whereas Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany, among others, are in the category of “extensive vocational training systems”. “Lower level of education attainment system” includes the Southern European countries, and, in particular, both Italy and Spain. In these countries, which also present high youth unemployment rates, school-to work transition is particularly problematic (ETUI, 2008).

Difference in transition patterns are also taken into account by Serrano (2000), who considering a number of indicators (i.e. demographic trends, schooling, labour market participation and legislation, public spending), illustrates the heterogeneity of young people’s situation in Europe. In particular, studies of cross-national variations in patterns of transition to adulthood show a broadly North/South divide (Jones, 1995, 2002; Iacovou and Berthoud, 2001; Aassve et al., 2006). In fact, with reference to this specific age cohort, the situation is particularly dramatic in the Southern European countries, where the contribution of the State is barely identifiable. By contrast, family of origin has an important role in supporting transitions of young people to adulthood, which, consequently, brings deep imbalances due to the differences in socio-economic conditions of families. Moreover, the role of the family is considered by some authors to be the cause and the effect of a poor support to the youth by the welfare system (Saraceno, 1994; Micheli and Rosina, 2010). Within this complicated picture, the familism in Italy can be seen as “an important and complex mechanism”, as reported by Francesca Bianchi (2005), that has mainly worked to “absorb generational tensions, attenuate economic difficulties and, above all, make up for deficiencies in other social institutions and protect against the kind of marginalisation that is found in highly segmented labour markets” (215). In this regard, unemployment is a kind of marginalisation. In fact, in Italy, family is the only shock absorber available for youth, whereas in other – usually Northern – European countries adequate welfare measures are provided for youth unemployment (Crouch, 2001). Thus the well-being of young people is strictly connected to the support given by families. Also in Spain, the family represents a very important factor, being considered the principle institution of provision and distribution of the well-being (Gentile and Mayer, 2009). Besides, it leads to relevant effects on culture and policies (Naldini, 2003). Spanish youth often take into account their families when doing future planning. This is because the Spanish youth values the institution of family in terms of personal and emotional stability. Particularly, with regard to economic support, families are the main source of security for its members (Moreno, 2000). So, both young Italians and Spanish are forced into prolonged dependency on their families, which functions – as well as education – as a “waiting hall” for young people until they can enter the labour market” (du Bois-Reymond and Lòpez Blasco, 2003).

Alongside the extension of education and the deferral of integration into the labour market, the age of leaving home is also rising. Indeed, young adults in Southern European countries live with their parents for longer than those in other Western countries (Biggart et al., 2002), which mirrors differences in labour market, social and employment policies, family support and education. Italy is a case in point here. A 1998 report by the National Research Council (Menniti et al., 2000) shows that there are two structural features that permeates the behaviour of Italian young people: the lack of youths having independent households as opposed to staying in their parent's homes; and, the tendency to build up families (i.e. having children) nearly exclusively within marriage. It is also important to point out that studies on the role played by the family began to appear only as late as the end of the 1990s, which means that Italy has somewhat failed to take into account "a set of behaviours that appears to have shaped not only demographic trends, but also imbalances in the labour market" (Bianchi, 2005: 216). Reforms in the field started to be implemented only during the last decade and regarded improving overall investments, facilitating young people's entry into the labour market as well as providing incentives for housing. In Spain, the general trend of young people is to stay at home until they reach employment stability. The shortage of residential mobility among youth mainly depends on the buying and renting options in the housing market. Renting is seen as provisional and inconvenient in the long-term and Spanish young people prefer to wait until they have enough resources to buy their own property (Jurado Guerrero, 2001). Living at home is a preferable option to be able to save up money to later invest in home ownership (Garrido Medina y Gil Calvo, 2002). This is mainly due to inaccessible housing in Spain as well as difficulties related to the integration into the labour market, which hamper youth's emancipation.

The following section tries to provide a brief description of the situation of the young within the Spanish and Italian context. Special emphasis will be given to the role of employment and education for young people. Also the active and passive policies implemented by each country to fight youth unemployment – in terms of public expenditures and young participation in these policies- will be carefully observed.

8.3.1 Young people within the labour market

Southern European countries, which present high unemployment rates, also show great difficulties related to the process of integration into the labour market of young people. Indeed they also display the highest youth unemployment rate in Europe (Caroleo and Pastore, 2007). However, in the period between 1995 and 2008, the youth unemployment rate has slightly reduced (see table 35), which has occurred at the cost of an extensive diffusion of temporary contracts. In fact, the

attempt for attaining greater labour market flexibility, which mainly affects young people. This is particularly true in the case of Spain, and, to a lesser extent, in that of Italy. Moreover, as shown in the previous chapters, the Spanish case is characterised by a dual or segmented labour market, which have important effects on youth employment. Indeed, the labour market is composed by insider workers – mainly adult males – who have secure jobs and comparatively high wages, achieved through the collective bargaining, and outsiders workers – women, immigrants and young people –, who suffer high turnover, job insecurity, low wages and extended flexibility with limited opportunities for promotion and little or no union representation (Gentile and Mayer, 2009; Polavieja, 2003). This can be highlighted also in Italy, where, as Bianchi states referring to Ichino (1996) and Esping-Andersen (1999), the generation gap between young people and adults seems to correspond to the dualism between insiders (workers with high levels of protection) and outsiders (young people).

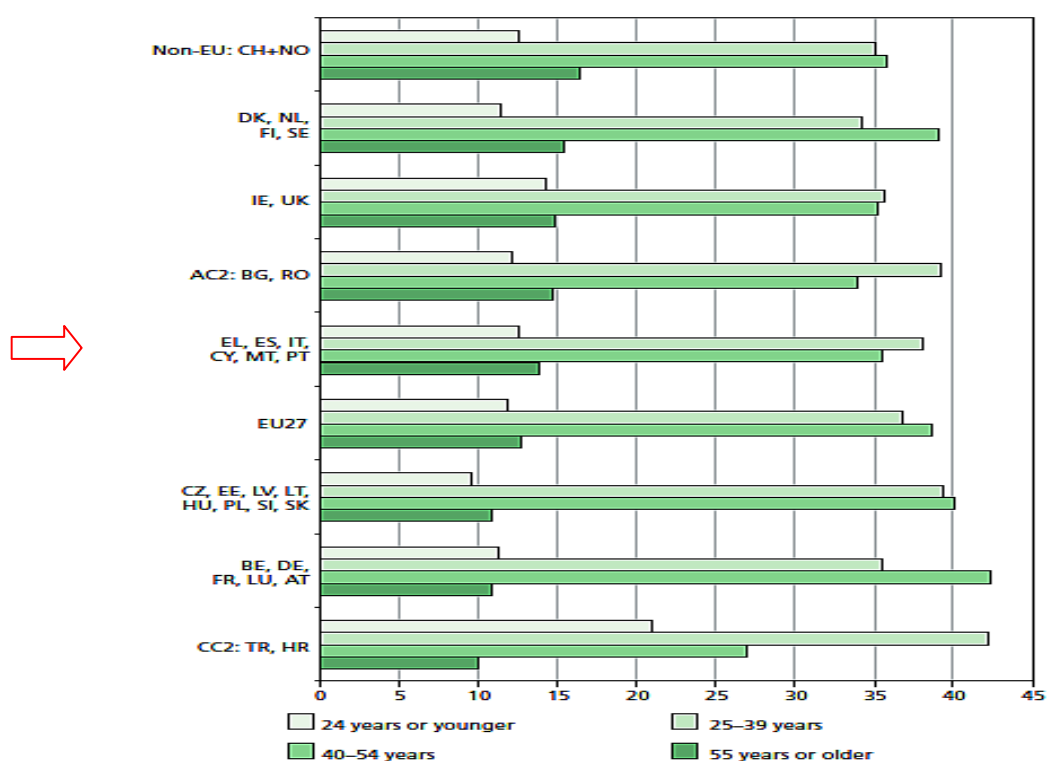
We now move to observe some statistical data concerning the condition of the youth in Italy and Spain. Before starting, it is important to have an overview of the dimension of this group, which is reported in the following tables (Tab. 30). The table presents the number of 15-24 years old young people over the period 2000-2008 taking into account gender differences. Then the successive figure will show the age distribution of workers among different countries, which will hint the status of employed by different age cohort (Fig. 54).

Table 31. Number of young people in Italy and Spain, by gender

SP	1995	2000	2005	2008	IT	1995	2000	2005	2008
Total	601,762	483,689	443,543	449,269	Total	654,246	579,983	567,708	583,171
Males	308,467	247,941	228,153	230,946	Males	334,114	297,087	291,152	299,351
Females	293,295	235,748	215,390	218,323	Females	320,132	282,896	276,556	283,820

Source: Eurostat

Figure 54. Age distribution of workers by country group (%)



Source: Fourth EWCS, by European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working conditions, 2007b

First of all, Table 30 reveals a greater presence of young people in Italy in comparison to Spain; also, the number of Spanish young people show a sharp decrease since the 1995, whereas the Italian group exhibits a slighter decline over the years with a soft rise in 2008. In both countries, the number of males is barely higher than females for each of the considered years. The number constantly descend during the period 1995-2008, albeit in the Italian case the number of females undergoes a light variation between 2000 and 2008. Then, the Figure 15 displays that, in each country, citizens age 24 or younger and 55 or older constitute the smallest proportion of the labour force, and that citizens between the ages 25 and 54 make up the largest proportion, each group often ranging between 30 and 40%. In Southern European countries, it is evident that the proportion of early entry into employment is not so considerable. Indeed, roughly 13% of the labour force is 24 or younger, roughly 37% is 25-39, roughly 36% is 40-54, and roughly 14% is 55 or older.

Below the activity, employment, unemployment rates as well as the percentages of atypical contracts will be analysed. As regards the distribution of the rates, it will be dealt with hereafter according to three different age cohorts: 15-24, considered as the group of the very young people, 25-54, in which the group of the young adults and adults fall, and 55-64, gathering older people.

Table 32. Activity rate (%) by age

	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15				
15-24	47,2	47,5	48	48,4
25-54	80,7	82,4	84,2	85,3
55-64	39	40,6	47,2	50
SP				
15-24	41,6	43,1	47,7	47,7
25-54	74,3	78	80,9	83,8
55-64	36,6	40,8	45,9	49,2
IT				
15-24	38,7	38,1	33,8	30,9
25-54	71,9	74,2	77,4	78,1
55-64	29	28,6	32,6	35,5

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

While the activity rate of 15-24 year old people rose from 1995 to 2008 in Spain to almost match that of Europe, the activity rate in Italy declined from 38.7% to 30.9% in the same period. For all of Europe, the activity rate for 15-24 year-olds was lower than the rate for older age groups, especially for the 25-54 aged cohort. Spain and Italy also follow this pattern. However, the activity rate for the older age groups in Spain and Italy is lower than the European one. For each country, 25-54 year-olds showed an increase in activity rate from 1995 to 2008, with Spain showing the greatest increase from 74.3% to 83.8%, although its activity rate in 2008 was still slightly lower than that of EU-15. Seemingly the largest increases occur in the 55-64 year old age group for each country, with both EU-15 and Spain showing increases of more than 10% from 1995 to 2008.

Table 33. Activity rate (%) by gender and age (15-24 years old)

MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15	50,4	50,9	51,2	51,5	EU-15	44	44,1	44,6	45,2
SP	44,6	46,7	52,3	51,5	SP	38,6	39,4	42,9	43,7
IT	43,9	42,2	38,7	35,9	IT	33,6	34	28,7	25,7

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

From 1995 to 2008 Spain was able to increase its activity rates of males and females to the levels of the activity rates of Europe. However the rates in Italy declined nearly 10 points for both

genders. Overall the rates for females are much lower than males. In Spain in 2008 the activity rate for males was 51.5% and for females 43.7%, while in Italy males were at 35.9% in 2008 with a female activity rate of 25.7%. It is noticeable that over the time the gap between males and females increases in the Spanish case, reaching more than 10 percentage points in 2008.

Table 34. Employment rate (%) by age

	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15				
15-24	37,5	40,5	40	40,9
25-54	72,3	76,5	78,2	80
55-64	36	37,8	44,2	47,4
SP				
15-24	24,4	32,5	38,3	36
25-54	59,5	68,4	74,4	75,3
55-64	32,3	37	43,1	45,6
IT				
15-24	25,6	26,4	25,7	24,4
25-54	65,6	68	72,3	73,5
55-64	28,4	27,7	31,4	34,4

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

The employment rate for 15-24 year old people in Spain and Italy, as well as the EU-15, is much lower than older age, especially the 25-54 year old age group. Although, the difference between the youngest cohort and the 55-64 year old people is not so marked. In Italy and Spain the employment rate for 25-54 year-olds increased from 1995-2008, albeit the increase in Spain was much more remarkable. Rates in Italy almost match that of Spain, at 73.5% and 75.3% respectively. However, for 15-24 year old people, the rates do not match up. The employment rate for 15-24 year-olds in Italy decreased between 1995 and 2008 to 24.4% of nearly 1%. By contrast, in Spain it rose from 24.4% to 36% of more than 10%. With regard the oldest group, employment rates are higher in Spain than in Italy, reaching 45% in 2008. In Italy, employment rates in this group rise much more slowly (6 percentage points) in comparison to Spain (13 percentage points), and reaches 34.4% in 2008. Overall Europe has a higher employment rate.

Table 35. Employment rate (%) by gender and age (15-24 years old)

MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15	41	44	42,9	43,5	EU-15	34	37	37,1	38,3
SP	29,5	38,2	43,5	39,3	SP	19,5	26,7	32,8	32,5
IT	30,4	30,7	30,4	29,1	IT	20,9	22,1	20,8	19,4

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Considering the EU-15, employment rates of 15-24 year old females were low compared to that of males, even if the employment rate of males slightly decreased from 1995 to 2008 and the employment rate of females slightly increased. In Spain the employment rate rose slightly for males in this time span (less than 10 percentage points), while rose considerably for females (13 percentage points). In Italy the rates fell, especially hurting females who already had lower employment rates in comparison to Spain and the European average.

Table 36. Unemployment rate (%) by age

	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15				
15-24	21,2	16,1	16,6	15,4
25-54	9,3	7,3	7,2	6,2
55-64	8,2	7,6	6,3	5,2
SP				
15-24	41,9	25,3	19,7	24,6
25-54	19,9	12,3	8	10,2
55-64	12,3	9,8	6,1	7,3
IT				
15-24	33,5	31,5	24	21,3
25-54	8,8	8,8	6,7	6
55-64	4,2	4,7	3,5	3,1

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

In the European average, 15-24 year-olds have the highest unemployment rate in comparison to the other age groups, especially the 55-64 year old people. However, a slight decrease can be detected in 2008. In Spain the unemployment rates were reduced considerably of more than 20 percentage points between 1995 and 2005, from 41.9% to 19.7%, but rose from 2005-2008 back to 24.6%. The other age groups in Spain followed the same pattern. Italy's unemployment rate decreased from

33.5% in 2000 to 21.3% in 2008. This rate did not jump as much as the Spanish unemployment decreases, but did steadily lower in the time span considered here, much like the trend of the European unemployment rate. In Italy, the unemployment rate lowered for all age groups from 1995-2008. In general terms, young people are more likely to experience unemployment than older ones, so that the high unemployment rate decreases with the increase of the age. Older people in Italy hold the lowest levels of unemployment in comparison to Spain and the European average, reaching 3,1% in 2008.

Table 37. Unemployment rate (%) by gender and age (15-24 years old)

MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15	20	15,1	16,4	15,6	EU-15	22,5	17,2	16,8	15,1
SP	36,4	19,6	16,7	23,7	SP	48,2	32,1	23,4	25,8
IT	29,8	28,4	21,5	18,9	IT	38,2	35,3	27,4	24,7

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

The male unemployment rate decreased of nearly 4% from 1995, while the female rate decreased of more than 7% in this time span. The unemployment rate for both males and females in Europe in 2008 were very close, with females at a slightly lower rate of 15.1% in comparison to the male unemployment rate of 15.6%. In Spain and Italy the female unemployment rate is higher than that of the males. In 2008, unemployment rate among females was 25.8% in Spain and 24.7% in Italy compared to 23.7% and 18.9% respectively. Both the male and female unemployment rates are lower in Italy than in Spain. In Spain the unemployment rate for both men and women dropped remarkably from 1995 until 2005, quite drastically for women. However, from 2005 to 2008 the unemployment rates began to rise again for both groups. In Italy the unemployment rates for males and females decreased continuously and significantly during the whole period considered here, especially for women. In 1995 the differences between the male and female unemployment rates were wide in EU-15, Italy and Spain; however by 2008 they were much closer to each other, with Italy having the widest gap between men and women.

Table 38. Long-term unemployment rate (%) by age

	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15				
15-24	37,3	31,7	25,2	21
25-49	49,8	46,8	43,2	36,9
50-64	59,4	59,7	60,5	54,8
SP				
15-24	45,9	30,1	13,5	10,4
25-49	57,9	44,8	24,7	16,8
50-64	62,8	56,5	46,4	35,2
IT				
15-24	52,2	58,2	45,7	38,2
25-49	55,9	63	50,7	47,3
50-64	53,5	60,8	55,9	51,7

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

From 1995 to 2008 the trend of long-term unemployment rates showed a decrease in EU-15 and in both Spain and Italy. The Spanish long-term unemployment rate was below the European rate for all the period under analysis, while the Italian one remained above it. In Spain the percentage of long-term unemployment of young people considerably lowered compared to other countries, dropping from 45.9% in 1995 to 10.4% in 2008. Thus, in 2008 the rate was 4 times lower than it was in 1995. Although the long-term unemployment rate of older age groups in Spain decreased consistently, it did not achieve the rate of young people. Italy's long-term unemployment also decreased for 15-24 year old people from 1995-2008 from 52.2% to 38.2%. The Italian rate is not close to that of Spain, only decreasing 14 points compared to Spain's 35 points. Moreover, the decrease of long-term unemployment in the 50-64 year old aged group is around 2%, similarly to the European average but in sharp contrast with the 27% of Spain. Across Europe the percentage for long-term unemployment for 15-24 year-olds is lower than it is for older age groups.

Table 39. Long-term unemployment (%) by gender and age (15-24 years old)

MALES	1995	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15	35,9	30,3	25,8	22,2	EU-15	38,8	33,1	24,5	19,6
SP	40,9	27,3	12	10	SP	50,3	32,2	14,8	10,8
IT	51,7	58	45,1	38,2	IT	52,7	58,4	46,4	38,3

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

From 1995 to 2008, long-term unemployment rates for males are quite close to those for females in Spain, Italy and the European average. In both Italy and Spain the male and female trends decreased considerably in this time span, even if in Spain the reduction is 40 percentage points in the case of females in contrast with all the other groups. However, the overall rates in Italy are much higher than the long-term unemployment rates in Spain, the former being higher than the European rates and the latter lower, except in 1995.

Table 40. Temporary rate (%) by age

	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15				
15-24	32,3	39,4	41,4	41,6
25-49	9,2	11	12	12,4
50-64	5,1	6	6,1	6,3
SP				
15-24	76,5	68,9	66,5	59,4
25-49	31,2	29,3	32,1	29
50-64	15,1	14,1	15,6	14,2
IT				
15-24	18,7	26,2	37	43,3
25-49	6,1	9,1	11,1	12,4
50-64	3,9	5,5	5,9	5,9

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

The distribution of temporary employment according to age groups underlined a slow increase in the use of fixed-term contracts in Italy and EU-15 and a slight decrease in Spain. In fact, Spain witnessed a decrease in the overall number of temporary workers over the years, even if the number of Spanish temporary employees aged 15-24 are much more likely employed in temporary jobs than their European counterparts. Another interesting consideration to make is that the number of Italian young workers employed in a temporary job nearly doubled in 2005 since 1995, when they accounted to the lowest percentage in comparison to EU-15 and Spain. People aged 15-24 in Spain and Italy as well as Europe had a higher percentage of temporary contracts than other age groups. Spain in 2008 showed the highest percentage at 59.4%, compared to Italy's 43.3%. In 1995 Spain's percentage of temporary contracts was more than 4 times Italy's percentage. Spain reduced the rate of temporary contracts from 1995 to 2008, but this rate increased in Italy from 1995-2008. Finally, Italy is also the country which recorded the greatest changes in the 2000s in terms of the incidence

of temporary jobs. Still, in Spain the use of these contracts was much more widespread, even in comparison with EU average. For the age groups 25-49 and 50-64, just like for the younger cohort, the differences between Italy and the rest of Europe were far less marked than those between Spain and the other European countries. Furthermore, a much powerful system of temporary employment emerged in Spain for both cohorts; as regards the former, Spain accounted in 2008 to 29 percentage points as compared to an average of 12.4 in Italy and the rest of Europe. This gap shortened for the older cohort (50-64), even though Spanish workers enrolled in temporary employment still accounted to 14.2 percentage points, that is, more than twice as much as compared to the European average. Also, Italy had the lowest data recorded (5.9), which were also closer to European standards than was the case for Spain.

Table 41. Main reason of temporary contracts (%) by age: couldn't find a permanent job

	1995	2000	2005	2008
SP				
15-24	88,7	87	85,8	73,4
25-49	97,6	96,3	95,3	90,6
50-64	99,6	97,2	97	93,9
IT				
15-24	38,2	25	28,9	35,3
25-49	73,2	61,5	70,7	72,6
50-64	79,2	74	71,6	82,4

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey).

While Spain shows much higher percentages than Italy for ages 15-24 for each year, both groups report a decreased percentage from 1995 to 2008. Italy decreases nearly 3% while Spain decreases roughly 15%, still reporting a percentage of 73.4% versus Italy's 35.3% in 2008. At higher age groups, the percentage of temporary employees that could not find permanent jobs was greater and showed increase in Italy and decrease in Spain from 1995 to 2008, although Spain still reports >90% percentage in 2008 and even 97% in 1995. In general, Italy consistently reports lower percentages than Spain, but the difference between the two countries narrows to roughly 15-20% in older age groups and 35-50% in the 15-24 year old group. As shown in Chapter V, this statistical data are especially relevant in the approach of capabilities since the reason people report for justifying their own situation hints their possibilities to enjoy the life they value.

Table 42. Part-time rate (%) by age

	1995	2000	2005	2008
EU-15				
15-24	18,9	22,7	26,8	29,3
25-54	14,6	16,2	18,2	18,5
55-64	17,4	18,8	20,9	21,8
SP				
15-24	12,2	13,5	21	22,9
25-54	6,5	7,4	11,4	10,9
55-64	6,2	6,3	10,1	10,2
IT				
15-24	8,2	11,4	16	20,7
25-54	6,2	8,9	13,2	14,5
55-64	6	6,9	9,6	11

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

The youngest age cohort (15-24) recorded the greatest changes in terms of increasing trends in comparison to the other age groups in the period under analysis, with a peak in part-time employment in 2008. This is true for EU-15 and both Spain and Italy, with Italy exhibiting the greatest increase from 1995. Nevertheless, it still presents the lowest percentages of part-time rates. The group of 15-24 year-olds in the European average were employed part-time more than any other age group in Spain and Italy. From 1995-2008 the number of youths working part-time increased, so that in 2008 22.9% of 15-24 year old people in Spain and 20.7% in Italy were working part-time. These numbers were lower than the European rate, which amount at 29.3%. Finally, even if there were more young people employed part-time in Spain than in Italy, this did not concern the part-time rate of the other age groups which show higher rate in Italy than in Spain. Moreover, both Italy and Spain show lower levels in comparison to the European average for the oldest group, in particular the 50-64 year old aged cohort. Changes were clearly less remarkable as the age of workers increase in all the countries.

Table 43. Main reason for part-time rate (%) by age: Could not find a full-time job

	1995	2000	2005	2008
SP				
15-24	29,9	26,5	31,3	32,9
25-49	22,9	25,7	33,9	36,8
50-64	10,3	11,3	26,5	33,1
IT				
15-24	56,9	51,8	52,1	52,6
25-49	37,7	37,4	40	41,6
50-64	23,1	31	32,2	34,9

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey).

Italy consistently reports higher percentages in each age group and for each year, with the widest differences being in the 15-24 year old age group which is always at least roughly 20% higher than Spain. Both countries show increasing percentages over the period under analysis for each category except 15-24 year-olds in Italy, in which the percentage reported drops from 56.9% in 1995 to 52.6% in 2008. Another noticeable trend is in Spain's 55-64 year old age group, in which percentages increased from 10.3% in 1995 to 33.1% in 2008. This is the largest increase observable in the table with regard to the main reason for which people report to be in part-time work.

8.3.2 Youth and education

Youth unemployment situation in a country needs to be contextualized in terms of educational systems and patterns of participation to education and training. Levels of employment among young people are influenced by the educational system that effectively reduces the rate of youth unemployment, and consequently their vulnerability. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that the link between education and employment is dependent on broader patterns of labour demand. Indeed, the low competitive Spanish and Italian productive systems – see Chapter V – have a fundamental influence on the educational system, so that the request for low-skills workers contrasts often with “over-educated” young people, which is particularly evident within the Spanish labour market. In fact, the jobs that were once covered with medium-grade graduates over the time have started to be occupied by university students (Carabaña, 2000). The high participation in education and the general increase in the level of education comparing to the past have fostered a widespread devaluation of qualifications, with a consequent increase of duality between a majority

of middle-class young, who spend its resources on a low valued education and a select group of peers who can afford expensive graduate courses in the third cycle (Baizán, 2001). In Italy the education system does not guarantee employability for young people and, as Bianchi states (2005), the links between education and labour market are very poor. The mismatch between education and employment is very high in Italy. The same occurs in Spain, where the connection between education and the labour market is weak. After graduating young people do not have those skills that are applicable to productive tasks and an adequate correlation between obtained qualifications and occupational profiles still lacks (Gentile and Mayer, 2009). Hence, young people with lower qualifications result to be more vulnerable than those with higher qualification, on one hand; but, on the other hand, high qualifications do not guarantee entrance in the labour market, which is especially true in Southern Europe (Walther et al., 2002). However, in this situation of general rather high qualification, the phenomenon of early school leavers – defined by Eurostat as the population aged 18-24 having attained at most lower secondary education (ISCED 0,1,2 or 3c short) and not being involved in further education or training – is even more significant (Tab.).

Table 44. Early leavers from education and training (18-24) by gender

SP	1995	2000	2005	2008	IT	1995	2000	2005	2008
Total	33,8	29,1	30,8	31,9	Total	32,8	25,1	22,0	19,7
Males	38,4	35,0	36,6	38,0	Males	35,5	28,5	25,8	22,6
Females	29,2	23,2	24,9	25,7	Females	30,2	21,7	18,2	16,7

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

In general, each country presents a decrease in percentages of early school leavers among males and females, with Italy showing a greater decrease than Spain. In fact, the percentages decline of nearly 13 point in the case of Italy for the group of males and females, whereas in the case of Spain the decrease is only 3,5 points for the group of females and less than 1 point for the group pf males. Also Spain reports a fluctuation over the observation period with a slight increase from 2000 and 2005, while the percentages in 2008 are lower than in 1995. Females generally show a lower early leaving rate than males but a slight greater decrease from 1995 to 2008. By 2008, Italy exhibits nearly 10% lower leaving rate for the group of females and almost 15% for the group of males than Spain and a 19.7% overall rate, as compared to 31.9% overall rate in Spain.

We will now move to observe the participation of young people in education and training, taking into account the variables of gender and age.

Table 45. Participation rate in education and training (%) by age

	1995	2000	2005	2008
SP				
15-24	-	60,1	58,4	59,2
25-34	10,2	10,3	17,4	16,5
35-44	3,1	3,1	9,9	10
45-54	0,9	1,4	7,2	7,8
55-64	0,4	0,7	4,3	4,8
IT				
15-24	-	56,1	60,8	62,9
25-34	9,3	11,7	12,3	12,8
35-44	2,5	3,1	4,9	5,6
45-54	1,5	2,1	3,7	4,4
55-64	0,6	0,7	1,6	2,2

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Highest participation rates in education are seen among 15-24-year-old age group; both Spain and Italy reach values of roughly 60% by 2008, representing a slight increase in percentage for Italy and a decrease for Spain. In higher age groups, education rates are considerably lower but show increases in each country from 1995 to 2008. In most cases, especially for age groups 35 and up, percentage increases do not exceed 5%, but it does seem that Spain reports higher percentages and greater increases over the observation period than Italy for most categories, with a drastic rise between 2000 and 2005. It is especially interesting to observe the 25-34 years old group that show the broadest increase in Spain, which does not appear in the Italian case.

Table 46. Participation rate in education and training (%) by age and type of education

Formal or non-formal education and training			
2007	25-34	35-54	55-64
IT	30,5	30,8	11,8
SP	39,7	23	17
Formal education and training			
2007	25-34	35-54	55-64
IT	12,5	2,6	0,7
SP	11,8	4,1	1,8
Non-formal education and training			
2007	25-34	35-54	55-64
IT	24,1	22,1	11,6
SP	32,5	28,3	15,7

Source: Eurostat. Adult Education Survey (AES, 2006 – reference period: 12 months)

Generally speaking, in 2007 more Spanish people are involved and/or interested in both forms of training in comparison to Italian ones, with the sole exception of the age cohort 35-54. A more detailed look at the two different forms of training show that Italian younger people (25-34) account for higher percentages of formal training than their Spanish counterparts, whereas it is the opposite for the older age cohorts. Furthermore, Spain is characterised by overall higher percentages as regards non-formal training, which is in fact less developed in Italy. As far as formal education is concerned, the gap between the two countries is less wide for the age cohort 25-34, but the other age groups present greater differences between each other. The opposite is true for the case of non-formal as well as overall education and training, for which the 25-34 age cohort presents marked differences in the two countries.

8.3.3 The young and the labour market policies

As we have seen before, labour market policies have a pivotal role in shaping individual possibilities; therefore, it is crucial to analyse them for better comprehend the situation of the youth in Italy and Spain. As the previous chapters show, in Southern European countries informal networks of family and friends are the main method of job search for young people (Caroleo and Pastore, 2007) as well as the most relevant shock absorber. It is important to bear in mind that youth policies are built on these bases. Unemployment benefits, which are based on national insurance system, require individuals to make a certain level of contribution before they become eligible to benefits; thus, young people are disadvantaged in this regard. Moreover, although they are eligible,

they will be entitled to low benefits and only for a short time. Therefore, households remain the main support for youth unemployment. For these conditions, Spain and Italy are embedded in the sub-protective welfare regimes, where young people have no individual access to social security, but can only rely on their family of origin. In this sense, youth has no recognized status (Walther et al., 2002).

In this section, the situation of young people receiving State provisions will be examined. Some data are missing, which makes the comparison between the Spanish and Italian situation difficult to carry out.

Table 47. Number of participants in total active labour policies (stock) (less than 25 years)

	2000	2005	2008
SP	497.788	n.a.	n.a.
IT	670.536	585.937	523.676

Source: Eurostat

In 2000, Spain has roughly 500.000 young people in total active labour policies, but data regarding how this changed by 2008 are unavailable. For Italy, we only see a slight decrease from roughly 585.000 to 523.000 from 2005 to 2008, while data from 2000 are unavailable. It is difficult to notice any trends based on these statistics, but we assume that Spanish young people participating in active labour market policies are less than their Italian counterpart.

Table 48. Number of participants in total active labour policies by gender (stock) (less than 25 years)

MALES	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	2000	2005	2008
SP	283.299	n.a.	n.a.	SP	196.485	n.a.	n.a.
IT	380.329	342.670	311.758	IT	290.207	243.267	211.918

Source: Eurostat

Again, observing this partial picture provided by the data, we can assume that Italy have consistently greater number of participants than Spain for both males and females, although the value reported in 2005 decreases by roughly 30.000 participant by 2008. Also, for both Spain and Italy, males report about 100.000 more participants in each case. We do not have data for Spain's number of participants after 2000, nor do we know Italy's starting number in 2000.

Table 49. Number of participants in total passive labour policies (stock) (less than 25 years)

	2000	2005	2008
SP	86.564	86.800	136.645
IT	28.894	30.268	31.651

Source: Eurostat

Throughout the eight year observation period, Spain consistently reports at least roughly three times more participants than Italy, although both countries demonstrate an increase from 2000 to 2008. By 2008, Italy has increased to roughly 33.000 participants, while Spain is at roughly 137.000, creating a larger gap between the two countries than in previous years. Spain shows a broad increase from 2005 to 2008, in which reported participants jumped from roughly 87.000 to roughly 137.000, whereas the growth in Italy is around 8.000 participants with the greatest change occurring between 2000 and 2005; this represents the widest increase in the data.

Table 50. Number of participants in total passive labour policies by gender (stock) (less than 25 years)

MALES	2000	2005	2008	FEMALES	2000	2005	2008
SP	41.359	44.279	80.682	SP	45.205	42.521	55.963
IT	14.804	19.397	21.397	IT	11.792	12.218	11.503

Source: Eurostat

Each group report an increase from 2000 to 2008, excluding females in Italy which shows a slightly (<1%) decrease from 2000 to 2008. This overall increase is most evident for males in Spain, who nearly doubled its number of participants, ending with roughly 80.000 in 2008. Females in Spain, comparatively, only increased by roughly 10.000, with a little fluctuation in 2005. Italy presents very slight changes among males, increasing from roughly 14.000 to 21.000 by 2008, whereas the number of female participants in Italy remains almost constant over the time around 11.000.

As shown in the previous tables, both in Italy and Spain a high number of young people participate in active policies in comparison to passive ones, which goes in line with the results of Chapter VI according to which passive policies are quite reduced and active employment measures are fostered.

In the next paragraphs, we will deepen the analysis on youth policies and programs within the Spanish and Italian contexts.

8.4 Youth policies and programs in Spain and Italy

The difficulties experienced by young people in the process of integration into the labour market and the transition from school to work have led to a rising awareness within the European Union. The concern for the situation of the youth have affected all European countries, leading to stress the youth problem within the European social policy agenda and to look for common solutions and interventions. The beginning of European coordination in the field of youth policies took place during the nineties, culminating with the approval of the White Paper on Youth in 2001 by the European Commission. The cooperation was established through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) and promoted youth programs in the context of a complementary set of social policies, such as education and lifelong learning, employability, social inclusion and mobility. The European Employment guidelines have been determinant in favouring the convergence of such programs across the countries in the European Union and their development at a national level in order to tackle the question of youth unemployment. Employability was the main solution provided by the European institutions against unemployment, which entailed a strong focus on the supply side. In fact, the focus was oriented to enhance personal and professional skills of young people by means of training and activation. In 2005, within the Lisbon Strategy relaunch, the European Youth Pact was elaborated. It established goals regarding youth employment rates and promotion of training programmes. Later on, in 2007, the Youth in Action Programme was implemented for the period 2007-2013, with the aim of fostering mobility within Europe and beyond (Martín Martín, 2012). However, according to some authors, these policies were not oriented to empowering young people, creating possibilities of choice, rather they offered only poor options and were mainly directed to meet employers' needs (Crespo and Serrano, 2004).

The major attention on the problems faced by young people led to the development of youth programs. As we have seen previously in this dissertation, policies and programs play a pivotal role in shaping possibilities for people. Youth policies can be considered as “a system of public actions and interventions with the overall aim of providing young people with opportunities and resources to face [...] the transition to adulthood” (Campagnoli, 2010: 119). Youth policies are also defined as “the infrastructure within which all this happens, the container in which everything is thinkable and where opportunities and rights, as well as the paths to make them achievable, are visible and known” (Campagnoli, 2010: 119). Indeed, youth programs play a central role in defining the opportunities for autonomy and independence for young people, easing the promotion of individual projects, or rather fostering the social vulnerability. Nevertheless, in the past, in Italy, most of the public policies for youth have been directed to promote leisure and recreation; only later, the focus

have been shifted towards structural problems (education, employment and housing) related to the dependence and the emancipation of the youth. The opposite situation has been detected in Spain, where since the '90s an adult-perspective focused on the concept of youth as a transitional phase towards the adulthood was predominant. Accordingly with this view, policies aimed to favour the transition of young people and their economic, labour and social integration. Nevertheless, the view hampered the increase of capabilities and opportunities as well as the possibility of delineating life projects for the achievement of the emancipation according to personal values and preferences. This concept was recently replaced by a youth-perspective, focused on the concept of youth as an independent phase of the human life (Gentile and Mayer, 2009). The Southern policy model with regard to youth programs has been defined to be education-and-training-oriented, in the attempt to overcome the lack of status of young people, who have not access to social security autonomously and miss proper education and training (Walther et al., 2002). As far as programs for young people in the field of employment in Southern Europe are concerned, wage subsidies for employers was particularly overspread in Italy and Spain as well as assistance to self-employment that was especially relevant in Italy.

Looking at the Spanish case, after a brief interruption in the promotion of youth-oriented actions by the central government from 1997-2000, a new program model was adopted in 2000-2003: the Global Action Plan for Youth (*Plan de Acción Global en Materia de Juventud*), which tried to foster the coordination of all the policies in the youth sector. A clear effort to conciliate different focuses on youth issues in the design and application of these policies was evident. Moreover, several ideas were proposed in the fields of lifelong learning, rental housing market, leisure and volunteering. This agenda had an innovative character, since it tried to cover transversally the questions affecting young people and integrate different youth programs, leaving behind the heritage of the 1980s when the programs suffered of inefficient institutional coordination and initiatives for leisure activities were limited (Gentile and Mayer, 2009). In particular, two novel aspects of the new plan can be underlined, namely the broad leeway for regional and local institutions and the focus on young people up to 34 years old. Indeed, the old programs targeted 15 to 29-year-olds, but left out those over 30 who were still not emancipated. Subsequently, new priorities were identified in the Interministerial Plan for Youth (*Plan Interministerial de Juventud*) (2005/2008), which focused on six areas: 1. emancipation, which includes access to housing; 2. participation; 3. coexistence and diversity; 4. healthy living habits and environment; 5. recreation, free time and culture; and 6. training. In particular, the “training” area focuses mainly on the improvement of employee training and the creation of new jobs on the one hand, and on the development of the education system and the promotion of equal opportunities on the other hand. In contrast to the Global Action Plan for

Youth, the Interministerial Plan for Youth does not only invest more resources, but also fosters the participation of young people in the political, social and economical field. The Interministerial Plan created two fundamental challenges: the social integration of youth through associations and the creation of new types of services and instruments to provide young people with personalized methods for the accomplishment of their individual biographies (Gentile and Mayer, 2009).

Other innovative initiatives were proposed in 2006 in the Program for the Emancipation of the Youth (*Programa de Emancipación Joven*) by the Institute for Youth (*Instituto de la Juventud*, INJUVE), which executes and evaluate policies through general programs and comprehensive plans, acting as a fundamental body of mediation in the relationship between government, local partnerships and youths' representatives. A network of services was created in all of the Autonomous Communities. Their function was to provide specific information for young people on vocational training, labour rights, temporary work, mobility and health. The application of concrete measures in the field of youth was thus encouraged at the central level, like the State support in rental that started in 2007. The general effort was integrating different programs which would cover various aspects and problems of youth situations, involving local partners closer to the recipients of such programs (Gentile and Mayer, 2009).

Observing now the Italian case, a structural feature of youth policies is that, up until 2004-6, there was neither a national coordination system nor a representative body that sought to promote issues for the young. Different Ministries (Ministry of Employment and Social Security, Education, Foreign Affairs, Health and Equal opportunities) were in charge to administer the few policies undertaken, which did not led to act according to a systemic view. Local entities and associations also had an important role. However, there was no legislation focusing specifically on youths, no specific agencies for the development of policies, no national coordination system (with the sole exception of some youth offices, the *Informagiovani*) or any network of organisations dealing with these issues. The Prodi government (2006) did a major attempt to improve the state of things by setting up a Minister (POGAS), whose function was to monitor youth programmes and policies. The introduction of the Minister of Youth Policies and Sports (POGAS) in 2006 paved the way for cooperation with several partners, in particular the Regions, which were given a major role for the definition of measures and policies in the field. Furthermore, a number of funding measures were introduced, including a Fund for Youth Policy, co-financed by the Regions, a National Youth Plan (*Piano Nazionale Giovani*, PNG), the Framework Programme Agreements (*Accordi di Programma Quadro*, APQ), taken by the Ministry and Regions (see later on in this chapter). Also a National Youth Agency and Informagiovani were instituted (Campagnoli, 2010). The introduction of

POGAS marked a watershed moment, even if its activity was interrupted with the change of government two years later (Campagnoli, 2010).

The POGAS was renamed as Minister of the Youth after the fall of the Prodi government in 2008. In 2008, under the second Berlusconi government, the Ministry of Youth was established partly as a result of the measures, financing and structures already planned by the former Prodi government. The Ministry of Youth worked for the promotion and coordination of the policies for young people in all areas, including the economic, fiscal, labour, human and social development, as well as culture and education. It also worked for the coordination of programs funded by the EU. The Ministry also envisaged a National Youth Committee with which to discuss plans and ideas for the future of youth policies. The National Fund for Youth Policies was arguably the Ministry's major instrument to develop professional training, facilitate the entrance into the labour market as well set up adequate life standards for young people (home, services as well as credit and financial systems). Finally, and just like other sectors of the Italian system, youth policies in Italy were strongly influenced by geographical differences between the North and the South.

To sum up, two main differences can be detected between the Spanish and the Italian case. The first difference concerns the representation of the youth that partly emerges from the analysis of the policies. In fact, in the Italian case, the idea of the young as a worker seems to develop slowly over the time, which is visible from the emphasis given to programs on leisure. Questions related to employment, education and housing were treated in a later phase. By contrast, in the Spanish case, policies seem focused on education, training and employment, with a minor emphasis on the provision of recreational facilities. In this way, they seem to assume a view of young people that takes into account their needs of independence in terms of working and social security, which remains neglected in the Italian case. Still, no attention to the improvement of capabilities and opportunities according to what young people value is paid.

The second difference concerns the organization of services and the design of comprehensive programs. As it also emerged in the previous chapter on legislation, in Spain the development of reforms and programs in matters of unemployment occurred earlier in comparison to Italy. This testifies the public concern addressed to young people. Besides, an effort of implementing measures in different fields (education, housing, employment) is carried out, even if a proper coordination may be missing. In the Italian case, the attempt of proposing multiple interventions seems to be barely present and the implementation of services and programs seems to be affected by the North/South divide.

8.6 Concluding remarks

The overview of the situation of the youth shows a deep lack of opportunities and conditions that can enable them to carry on their personal trajectories and develop their life projects. Insecurity and uncertainty make individual trajectories more frail and vulnerable and the social system does not guarantee effective protection or security. By contrary, it is often assumed that young people have to recur to parents' support, from who they are economically dependent. There is indeed a strong expectation by society and a strong sense of responsibility by parents to provide extended support to their children until they need it, even in very old age. In this regard, young people are considered by some authors to miss an autonomous status within society, emphasising this interpretation of youth in comparison to others. The point is that youth policies are built on this assumption, especially in Southern European countries. Nevertheless, public policies often fail to address young people transition to adulthood.

The analysis of the role played by age within the labour market, the study of the situation of young people in relation to education and training, and the examination of the support granted by passive and active policies to youth considered in this chapter tells us that the young belong to an extremely vulnerable category. Looking at the profile of vulnerability of the youth in Spain and Italy, the first element that emerges from the analysis is the low level of activity rate in the Italian case in comparison to the Spanish counterpart and the European average. Moreover, it shows a clear decrease over the time, reaching 30% in 2008, which contrasts with the growth of activity rate in the other two cases. The increase is especially marked in the Spanish case, where the rates reach 47,7% in 2008, and it is even more noticeable for males. Similarly, in the Italian case the decrease is more evident for females. As far as employment rates are concerned, the percentages in both Italy and Spain are relatively low in comparison to the European average. Moreover, they remain steady in the period 2000-2008 in the Italian and European case, whereas a relevant raise is evident in the Spanish case. Such raise is even more evident for females, in that employment rates are nearly 13 percentage points higher than in 1995. In comparison to the European average, unemployment rates are especially high among Spanish and Italian young workers, who encounter great difficulties in sorting out this situation. However, observing the variation over time, rates halve in the Spanish case, decreasing from more than 40% to 24%. This decline is slighter in Italy, but unemployment rates come to be lower than in Spain in 2008. The decrease is especially evident for females in all the countries under consideration, even if it is more appreciable in the Spanish case. Still, female unemployment rates are higher than male unemployment rates in each case. Moreover, several young people experience long-term unemployment, even if in lower extent of the other workers'

categories. Long-term unemployment rates are noteworthy in Italy, where they hold the highest punctuations over the time. The percentages mainly decrease, but Spain exhibits the most prominent drop from 46% in 1995 to 10% in 2008 for males and from 50% to 11% for females. No gender gap is evident as regards long-term unemployment rates in the Italian case. Furthermore, young people are usually employed much more often in either temporary or part-time jobs than the older generations, and, especially in Spain, temporary contracts are often the only way for young people to enter the labour market. Temporary rates are extremely high in Spain all over the period under consideration, in spite of notable decrease. By contrast, they arise of more than 20% in Italy, overcoming the European average in 2008. Part-time rates are much lower than temporary rate in all the country under analysis and increase until achieving nearly 21% in 2008 in Italy and Spain and 30% in the EU-15. The study carried out in the chapter clearly shows that young people are not going in the direction of pursuing what they value, especially the Spanish group who strongly report to stay in a situation of temporary work since the option they chased was not available. The same can be said for part-time employment. In this case, a wide part of Italian young people report they could not find a full-time job as a reason for being employed with a part-time arrangement. The profiles of vulnerability that emerge from these data are in line with those delineated for older workers. Thus, in the Italian case, high inactivity and long-term unemployment rates result to be dominant, whereas temporary work constitutes one of the most salient aspects of the Spanish case. Nevertheless, two important differences between the group of the young and the other age groups relies on the fact that the former seems the most affected by unemployment. Besides, it experience the most temporary work, while pursuing other kinds of contractual arrangements. In this sense, the 15-24 year old group represent the weakest and vulnerable age cohort in Italy and Spain. Also, the gender dimension represents an important factor in defining the configuration of the labour markets and social vulnerability in Spain and Italy, insofar as young women are still those who suffer the most unemployment.

As far as education is concerned, participation in lifelong learning programs decreases according to the increase of workers' age, and this is true for both countries object of the present analysis. In fact, according to some authors, education and training represent the device Spanish and Italian policies use to allow young people to acquire autonomy. However, it is also important to consider the phenomenon of early leavers, which is more conspicuous in Spain and remain constant until 2008 with little fluctuations. By contrast, it decreases in the Italian case, even if percentages remain high for males in comparison to females. The same is true in the Spanish case. Participants in active labour market policies decrease over the time, especially in Italy (data available are insufficient for having a clear situation of participants in Spain). This occurs for males and females, in spite of the

fact that the number of females is much lower, which seems to be valid also in the Spanish case. Participants in passive policies are present in minor measure than participants in active policies, although the number is much higher in Spain than in Italy. It also increases over the time, despite the unemployment rates decrease. A gender gap at expenses of women is noticeable over the period under analysis.

In the above described situation, youth programs are determinant in facilitating the entrance into the labour market of such vulnerable category. Nevertheless, they started to develop only recently, especially in Italy, where, after a period of general carelessness toward this category, ministries have begun to deliver attention to young population. From the analysis, two relevant differences emerge between Spain and Italy as regards youth policies. Firstly, the concept of “young” in the Italian case seems to be disconnected from an idea of “the worker”, so that policies are mainly oriented to provide recreational facilities. Only later, the attention on economic emancipation and personal empowerment seems to grow. By contrast, in the Spanish case the youth is viewed as a transitional phase towards the adulthood. Consequently, policies are mainly oriented to foster education, training and employment. Still, they seem to neglect the aim of enhancing capabilities and allowing the young to pursue a life project according to what they value. Then, this view was replaced by a concept of “youth” as an independent phase, with a major focus on the young, instead that on the adult. Secondly, youth policies develop earlier in Spain than in Italy and attempt to integrate different fields (education, employment, housing) in relation to the young according to a comprehensive view. This view seems to be barely present in the Italian case. Hence, youth policies appear to be scarcely oriented to the capabilities approach in the Spanish case. They also result to be characterized by a scanty attention to young people and poor attempts to provide them adequate tools or opportunities in the Italian case. Therefore, the analysis of the policies directed to the youth leads us to acknowledge again the inability of Italian and Spanish programs, services and resources to act as effective conversion factors. The achievement of the independence of the young is actually a crucial unsolved problem in both countries. In this picture, the development of capabilities and the achieving of freedoms seem mostly like a dream in the two countries under analysis. Since the youth represents one of the most vulnerable groups in Italy and Spain, the analysis of their situation within the labour market and of the policies addressed to them allow us to have a wider view of the policy orientation in each country.

PART III. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS – MEANINGS AND PRACTICES OF FLEXICURITY POLICIES

This last part of the study will investigate the cognitive and normative premises of Spanish and Italian flexicurity policies from the standpoint of capabilities. Such premises play a pivotal role in determining the orientation of policies, insofar as ideas about how reality is and should be address them in one direction or another. In terms of the capabilities approach, more or less emancipatory or restrictive policy informational bases derive from different cognitive, interpretative and normative frameworks. These premises, which also represent the conceptual basis of employment policies, are assessed in the Spanish and Italian case on the basis of their orientation to put people “in the condition of” achieving *agency* and opportunities. The assessment has been carried out using three macro-indicators or categories coming from the capabilities approach that has been used in a normative sense: market versus social oriented policies; restrictive view of opportunity as productive work versus valuable job; technocratic and centralized versus situated action (decentralization and social dialogue). These categories stem from the theoretical proposal of Bonvin (2006), who is one of the most prominent researchers in the field of the capabilities approach applied to employment policies. The categories have been operationalized here in a major number of capabilities-indicators that derive from the analysis of the interpretations of the interviewees: general directions of employment policies, specific orientations, underlying assumptions of the cognitive framework, temporal dimension and overview (market versus social orientated policies); availability of job opportunities in the labour market, quality of job opportunities, access to job opportunities (restrictive view of opportunity as productive work versus valuable job); closeness of policies to individuals, individualised tailor-made policies, type of evaluation of policies (technocratic and centralized versus situated action – decentralization); meaning of social dialogue and actors involved in the construction of employment policies, kind of participation and drawbacks and effectiveness of social dialogue (technocratic and centralized versus situated action – social dialogue). In order to achieve the purpose of the assessment, 45 (23 Italian and 22 Spanish) key actors involved in the design and implementation of the policies have been interviewed.

The interviews⁴⁶, which have been carried out at national, regional and provincial level, have been analyzed through a qualitative methodology. Four regions have been chosen as case studies: the Spanish Autonomous Communities of Valencia and Andalucía and the Italian Regions of Tuscany and Sicily. Our overall attempt is to study the meanings behind the policy construction, taking into consideration in which terms the actors that we have interviewed formulate key issues

⁴⁶ In the next chapters, all the extracts of the interviews will be reported in the original language in the footnotes.

(i.e. concept of unemployment, youth unemployment, and opportunities, mission of employment services, goals that employment policies have to pursue) and provide solutions. The interest for these actors is linked to the influence they have in defining, reinforcing and transforming the way to conceive problems and interventions, insofar as their cognitive and interpretative frameworks determine the design and orientation of programs for vulnerable people. Moreover, as exponents of different social groups, the actors express diverse way of thinking social vulnerability and policy interventions. Besides, as key informants, they can describe the evolution of policies during the period under analysis. The investigation will be carried out according to two levels of analysis. The first level will focus on the actors' representations, observing if their descriptions depict capability-enabler policies. The second level will focus on the actors' concepts, ideas and values that contribute to constitute the informational basis of employment policies for evaluating if their cognitive and normative frameworks – to which meanings and practices are connected – are consistent with the capabilities approach. Since the interviewees belong to different social groups (trade unions at national and regional level, provincial associations at national and regional level, regional governance, associations of employment agencies and ONGs), different constructions will emerge according to their specific positions. Our aim is to analyse whether these constructions and interpretations are oriented towards the informational basis of the capabilities. This constitutes the original contribution of the dissertation, since the assessment of policies against the capability approach usually concerns an evaluation of resources available more than concepts and discourses used for defining problems and providing solutions.

The first chapter of this part III, Chapter IX, traces trends and objectives of employment policies in the effort of identifying the prevalent orientation of policies over the last 15 years, which can be market or social oriented. It will be taken into account that the European Union's directives and guidelines have powerfully influenced not only the goals but also the cognitive categories at the basis of national policies, pushing them towards a general convergence, although countries have preserved specific characteristics. The underlying assumptions of the cognitive framework concerning the meaning of key concepts like "employee" and "work", the role of the state and the shared choice of a society about what is acceptable and what is not will be explored. Special attention will be dedicated to the assumptions on the responsibility of unemployed' situation. The idea of the collective responsibility opposed to that of individual responsibility sharply contrasts with the capability approach, according to which only a proper combination of individual efforts and socio-economic context may result in the conciliation of social cohesion and economic efficiency as well as in the enhancement of capabilities. In Chapter X, the meaning of opportunity as productive work or as a valuable job will be observed. In this sense, the way certain topics are

constructed, namely the creation of employment and the causes of unemployment, the work quality and the provision of tools to get a job (among them, public employment services, social protection and lifelong learning) will be carefully analysed. This chapter deals with the capability for work that is centred on the idea that the objective of public action should be to create the conditions for the individual to choose the job one has reason to value (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a). Chapter XI and Chapter XII focus on the modes of governance in order to evaluate if local agency and a situated and reflexive public action are considered by the interviewees to be promoted and if are promoted in practice in their view. In this regard, the study of the meanings of the process of decentralization is crucial. The possibility of choice offered by employment services to individuals and the delivery of tailor-made user programs are fundamental factors for the evaluation of policies, whose efficacy cannot be measured only in terms of increase of employment rates according to the capabilities approach; rather, it should be considered in terms of a raise of the individuals' possibilities to achieve what they value. A key role is also played by social dialogue, through which individuals and their representatives may claim rights and demands. The basin of the stakeholders involved and the type of participation granted to them define the substantial effectiveness of their presence, which has the purpose of linking policies to people's actual needs. Chapter XI and XII try to analyse if the interviewees are oriented to promote the capability for voice, such as the individuals' capability to negotiate, as much as possible, the content and conditions of their integration into the labour market (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a). The actors' opinion about the actual implementation of the conditions that allow the capability for voice will be also studied.

The observation of all these elements will allow defining whether the constructions around employment policies create the necessary ideological and cognitive conditions for individuals – and young people in particular – for moving away from the state of social vulnerability within which they can be easily trapped. This means attempting to understand if the interpretations of employment policies of the actors that participate in their cognitive construction are oriented towards the capabilities approach or whether an altogether different logic and interpretative framework prevail.

Chapter IX.

Market versus social oriented policies

9.1 Introduction

The macro-indicator “*Market versus social oriented policies*” aims to analyse the actors’ interpretations of employment policies in Spain and Italy, the overall objectives to which they are oriented and the underlying meanings and concepts on the basis of which policies are articulated. The purpose of this chapter is indeed to provide answers to the following questions: which cognitive framework does inform Spanish and Italian employment policies? Are they employability-oriented activation policies attempting to increase the individual marketability or capabilities-oriented policies trying to make individuals develop their capabilities? Do they endorse the informational basis of employability, which emphasizes the individuals’ accountability of adapting to the labour market, or the informational basis of capabilities, according to which capabilities stem from the combination of both individuals and society’s responsibility? Do they focus on supply-side programs directed to upgrading human capital in favour of labour market needs or also include demand-side programs promoting the enhancement of real freedoms for the individuals? Thus, the distinction between market and social oriented policies forces us to understand whether, in the view of the actors, policies aim towards individuals’ well-being and their empowerment in situations of vulnerability, or instead, merely serve the interests of the market or narrow power elites.

9.2 General directions of employment policies

Before looking at how Italian and Spanish interviewees construct the policy orientation, we will consider their perception of the orientation of the European Social Model and the European Employment Strategy as well as the construction of the European influence at the country-level. With regard to the ESM, firstly we will observe what emerges in the literature on this topic. Several authors (Prieto et al., 2009; Goetschy, 2006; Scharpf, 2002) deem that a market orientation has characterized European Union policies since the Treaty of Rome in 1951 and at the origins of the European Economic Community (EEC). According to the authors, the European Union born with a strong focus to the market with the aim of encouraging the process of economic integration among

the Member States. This created a situation of disparity between policies fostering market efficiency and policies favouring social protection and equality (Scharpf, 2002). The focus to the market resurfaced in the '90s when it became the solution to the 'Eurosclerosis' and when the relaunch of the EU internal market for the movement of goods, capital, services and people, partly developed by the EEC, became a priority. Despite the fact that the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 embedded both the economic and the social dimensions, the authors claim that social objectives were in function of the constitution of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). However, the dramatic increase of the unemployment rates caught the attention of the European Union also on social issues (Goetschy, 2006), leading to the delivery of the White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment in 1993 (Prieto, 2004; Prieto et al., 2009). In 1997, the Treaty of Amsterdam included a chapter on social policy and employment under the Title VI that finally set the objective of a "coordinated strategy for employment and particularly for promoting a skilled, training and adaptable workforce and labour markets responsive to economic change" (Treaty of Amsterdam, Art. 1, Chapter 3, Section II). The treaty was the basis for the European Employment Strategy (EES) elaborated in 1997 during the Luxembourg European Council, which confirmed employment policies as a matter of the Member States. Nevertheless, some authors (Prieto et al., 2009) consider that the EES was an instrument created for favouring economic interests. The elaboration of the EES during the Luxembourg European Council was flanked by the creation of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), with the scope of pushing Member States to acquire at the national level cognitive categories, assumptions and indicators set by the European institutions. For this reason, some authors describes the OMC in terms of "cognitive regulation" (Jepsen and Serrano, 2006: 10). As we saw in the first chapter of this dissertation, the negotiation of the European influence by nations was possible because of the use of the soft governance of the OMC. Indeed, the lack of directives made the recommendations embedded in the EES and addressed by the European institutions more suitable to the internal national interests, while at the same time functioning as a referential framework for member states. An assessment of the EES against the capabilities approach carried out by Bonvin (2006) reveals that the EES sharply contrasts with the capabilities approach, since "what ultimately matters in the EES is not the individuals' real freedom, but their ability to process capital in order to generate further capital. As such, the rhetoric around the ESM features as a capitalistic discourse, in which the concern for the enhancement of human freedom has a subordinate position" (2006: 220). In the view of the author, the European institutions are disseminating a new rhetoric, according to which social protection generates dependency, improving opportunities means increasing individuals' marketability and the goal of producing outcomes through the human capital approach and active policies overcomes the goal of developing

capabilities. Following this rhetoric, the assumption that a bad job is better than no job at all starts to become hegemonic. Bonvin and Farvaque consider that the change of rhetoric led by the introduction of the paradigm of activation can be represented “as the move from decommodification to recommodification, where social policies are subordinated to labour market objectives” (2007: 46). In this regard, Deakin deems that the influence of neoliberal activation policies has hampered the diffusion of a conceptualization of activation tied to social rights and freedom of choice in relation to labour market participation (2005). Also, the OMC represents an importation of managerialistic principles in the view of some authors (Clarke and Newman, 1997; Bonvin, 2006). In fact, the OMC contributes through indicators, best practices, targets, monitoring and evaluation to establish a technocratic governance, leading, according to Bonvin (2006), to the disconnection between the European and the national/regional levels. Furthermore, the concept of flexicurity is considered to fail of taking into account citizens’ needs and, consequently, the trade-off between flexibility-security it embeds is highly criticized (Bonvin and Vielle, 2009; Deakin, 2005). All these aspects will be dealt in more detail in the next chapters.

Observing now the comments of the interviewees and analysing to which extent the actors uncritically assume the European discourse or distance themselves from that, we can notice that a strong agreement on the acceptance to the European demands emerges among some Italian respondents. This partly reveals the efficacy of the cognitive regulation exerted by the European institutions. Some national and regional representatives also highlight the efforts of regions to adapt their internal organization for satisfying the European requests. This is evident in the words of the national representative of Italia Lavoro⁴⁷, the representative of the Tuscany Region and the representative of CGIL⁴⁸ Sicily. In the case of Sicily, the degree of acceptance and adaptation seems extremely high. Indeed, the representative of CGIL Sicily constructs the European system as more effective, fair and transparent than the regional one, to such an extent that, in his opinion, the region decided to refer mainly to the former over the latter. Furthermore, the EES seems unquestioned by all the three Italian representatives. A case apart is that of the representative of CGIL Tuscany, who considers that the European objectives were mainly in the direction of a lower State involvement in favour of a greater liberalization. In his view, European policies showed a strong market-orientation. The national representative of CGIL states a similar opinion of his regional colleague of Tuscany, firmly stating that, in his view, what the European institutions have been pretending was that they were giving labour markets the scalp of the European Social Model. It is interesting to notice that both actors use a language related to the war (Cuvardic, 2004) for referring to the

⁴⁷ Italia Lavoro acts by law as the agency of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to promote and manage actions on labour policies, social inclusion and employment.

⁴⁸ Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (Italian trade union).

European Union. While the regional representative talks about the “triumph” of the European theories, the national representative adopts the metaphor of the “scalp”. In this sense, the European Social Model is the ‘victim’, markets are the ‘enemies’ and the ‘scalp’ is the macabre symbol of the victory. In addition, the national representative utilizes the metaphor of “mantra” and the adjective “underground”, suggesting that the European institutions and national government are acting in a cryptic dark way, behind the official facade.

“From an organizational point of view, surely, the region [of Sicily⁴⁹] has complied with the standards required by the Employment strategy (...)”⁵⁰. It can be said that the region has undoubtedly met the demands coming from Europe”⁵¹ (Representative of Italia Lavoro).

“In the recent past, the acceptance of the European Employment Strategy was total”⁵² (Representative of Tuscany Region).

“This region has made the choice to give the Sicilian training programs to the training system of the European Social Fund (...). We agree with this passage. Indeed, this region shows high rates [of unemployment]. Moreover, it is in the hands of political patronage and clientelism, while politicians do not have the strength to impose rules (...). The rules of the European Social Fund instead provide guarantees for the workers”⁵³ (Representative of CGIL Sicily).

“It is the triumph of the failed European theories. Despite what they have caused, they still pursue less state, more market, less benefits and less state intervention”⁵⁴ (Representative of CGIL Tuscany).

“The message that came from Europe (...) was basically to not say (...) that the real scalp that had to be given to markets was the European Social Model. Let’s say that this was the underground

⁴⁹ The words or expressions in brackets are added by me in order to make better understand the whole discourse of the interviewees.

⁵⁰ The parentheses refer to a passage that has been cut off in order to reduce the length of the discourse, preserving the meaning set by the interviewees.

⁵¹ “Da un punto di vista organizzativo, sicuramente, la regione [Sicilia] si è adeguata agli standard richiesti per poter rispondere alle esigenze definite nella Strategia per l'occupazione. (...) Si può affermare che la regione si è messa al passo con le richieste che provengono dall'Europa; questo lo possiamo sicuramente affermare” (Italia Lavoro).

⁵² “Nel recente passato, l’adesione alla Strategia europea per l’occupazione è stata totale” (Tuscany Region).

⁵³ “Questa regione ha fatto la scelta di passare la formazione siciliana al sistema della formazione del Fondo Sociale Europeo (...). Questo [è un] passaggio che noi abbiamo condiviso perché in un sistema che ha questi numeri, in un sistema che è clientelare in mano alla politica, [con] regole che la politica non ha la forza di imporre (...), le regole del Fondo Sociale Europeo sono delle regole che vanno a garanzia dei lavoratori” (CGIL Sicily).

⁵⁴ “E’ il trionfo delle teorie fallite europee. Nonostante abbiano provocato quello che hanno provocato, ci si ripropone ancora meno stato, più mercato, meno sussidi e meno intervento pubblico” (CGIL Tuscany).

*mantra of the documents of the European Commission and of most of the governments, including our government*⁵⁵ (Representative of CGIL at national level).

In the Spanish case, the situation is depicted quite similarly as in the Italian case. In fact, the representatives of SAE⁵⁶ and Caritas describe a process of adaptation to the European standards. In particular, the representative of Caritas delineates positively the influence of the European Union, even if he states that no substantial modifications took place within the country. The little effect of the EES on policy design and implementation is also underlined by Bertelheimer et al. (2012). The two representatives seem to not question the European requests; by contrast, the Spanish expert strongly criticizes these as well as the change of the European position occurring in 2005, reporting a similar view by trade unions. According to the expert, the European orientation changed in 2005 in the direction of making the pillar of economic competition prevailing over the environmental and social pillars, of which all the three were initially considered the primary goal of the 2000's European Lisbon strategy. As mentioned in the official document, such a goal was "to make Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (Presidency Conclusions, point 5; Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000). Nonetheless, in the view of the expert, the whole Lisbon Strategy and the EES were a failure:

*"I understand that [the region] is setting the standards according to how Europe wants that the whole procedure of the European Social Fund programs is carried out"*⁵⁷ (Representative of SAE).

*"The State was forced somehow to design much more comprehensive employment policies than before, for the European Union requirements. This was evident. It was evident in a good way. There have been more activities. However, in the early years of the Action Plans for Employment, we have realized that the Plans were meeting Europe's requests only in a formal way; but here in Spain, internal dynamics remained the same"*⁵⁸ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

⁵⁵ "Il messaggio che viene dall'Europa (...) è stato sostanzialmente quello di non dire (...) [che] il vero scalpo che bisogna dare ai mercati è il Modello Sociale Europeo e diciamo così questo è il mantra sotterraneo che leggi nei documenti negli atti dell'Unione Europea della Commissione e di gran parte dei governi, il nostro compreso, il nostro attuale compreso" (CGIL at national level).

⁵⁶ Servicio Andaluz de Empleo.

⁵⁷ "Yo entiendo que [la Comunidad Autónoma está] un poco marcando las pautas según cómo quiere Europa que se lleve todo el procedimiento de los programas comunitarios del Fondo Social Europeo" (SAE).

⁵⁸ "El Estado se vio obligado de alguna forma, a ..a diseñar unas políticas de empleo mucho más integrales que lo que venía haciendo, por exigencias de la Unión Europea. Eso se ha notado. Se ha notado para bien. Ha habido más actividades; sin embargo, también es cierto que los primeros años, los primeros tiempos de estos planes de Acción por

*“You know that in 2005, when the Strategy was reviewed, there was a change. The pillar of competitiveness began to prevail over the other pillars. (...) My evaluation of the Lisbon Strategy and the European Euro-employment Strategy of the last ten years is that they were a failure. And this is also how the unions conceive them”*⁵⁹ (Spanish expert).

Observing the notion of flexicurity, spread by the European institutions since 2007, we can see that Spanish and Italian interviewees describe it in a similar way, as we can read in the following extracts. There are two common elements: 1. the focus on the origins of the concept and the limits of its exportation in different contexts 2. the final drift of the twofold-nature flexicurity that is supposed to spouse flexibility and security. In this regard, it is interesting to know that the concept of flexicurity has been strongly questioned in Southern European countries and that here trade unions have often looked at it as a Trojan horse designed with the scope of undermining traditional job protection (Jørgensen and Madsen, 2007; Jørgensen, 2010). In particular, the introduction of flexibility has encountered a strong resistance at national level, probably due to the fact that employment is considered the only means to achieve security in countries where unemployment benefits are scarce. Therefore, the societal effect (Maurice et al., 1987) stemmed from the institutional, economic, legislative context has been considered more powerful than the inductive effect exerted by the European institutions through the EES (Leonardi et al., 2011).

Italian respondents at national and regional level belonging to the UIL⁶⁰ trade union and to the UPI⁶¹ strongly agree on the fact that the notion coming from Denmark and the Netherlands, born in context that are completely different in terms of welfare states and social expenditures from Italy. This perception makes the notion to appear like a “myth”, “perfect” or just like “words”, remaining without application. Thus, the exportation to Italy and the whole debate on “flexicurity” are considered very speculative and very ideological by the national representative of UIL. Also, the Italian representatives of Caritas, CGIL and CISL⁶² at the national level agree that “flexicurity” has become a synonym of vulnerability for the individual, due to the emphasis of the “flexi” connotation of the concept, whereas the “security” connotation has been ignored in its practical applications. Thus, the European proposal appears to have been partly absorbed, in spite of being

el Empleo han sido tiempo en los.. que nos hemos dado cuenta de cumplir de cara a Europa; pero aquí, internamente en España las dinámicas siguen siendo las mismas” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

⁵⁹ “Sabes que a partir del año 2005, que es cuando se revisa la Estrategia, lo que hay es un cambio, donde digamos, el pilar de la competitividad empieza a primar sobre otros pilares (...). La valoración, así a diez años, vista de lo que fue toda la estrategia de Lisboa donde se cuadra la estrategia de euroempleo, digamos que puede ser, en cierto modo, y así lo conciben las organizaciones sindicales, un cierto fracaso” (Spanish expert).

⁶⁰ Unione Italiana del Lavoro (Italian trade union).

⁶¹ Unione delle Province d'Italia.

⁶² Confederazione Italiana Sindacato Lavoratori (Italian trade union).

highly criticized at a practical level. Indeed, the interviewees belonging to different social groups strongly agree that the conceptualization of flexicurity has to be considered inadequate in relation to the Italian context. Hence, the European proposal seems to function as a positive referential at an abstract and ideal level, whereas the support by the actors with regard to specific concrete measures seems to be much more reduced. The acceptance of such a proposal seems to have encountered several impediments, in that some actors believe that it has acquired the meaning of flexibility over security. This view is highlighted also by some authors (Keune and Jepsen, 2007; Tangian, 2007), who underline that flexicurity privileges flexibility at the expense of security: “The Commission’s flexicurity position also confirms its emphasis on economic instead of social goals and its reconceptualisation of security from protection against risk to the capacity to adapt to change, and of solidarity from redistributive solidarity to competitive solidarity”(Keune and Jepsen, 2007: 16).

*“The welfare of the Northern countries has become a myth (...). Of course, these countries are managing completely different ‘numbers’: in Denmark there are five million inhabitants and they invest considerable resources in the discourse of the welfare state”*⁶³ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

*“Flexicurity is not the right model for our country, because it refers to the Danish, the Norwegian and the Swedish model”*⁶⁴ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

*“Words. There is a controversy on flexicurity, in the sense that it looks like a very theoretical debate and it is instrumentally used in one way or another. This is due to the fact that flexicurity is perfect and makes sense: less rigidity in firing, or, at least, a little more easiness in dismissing, even if it is true that you cannot fire at any time because the motivation has to be plausible. But, shall we remember, it concerns models of countries, like Denmark and the Netherlands”*⁶⁵ (Representative of UIL at national level).

⁶³ “Il welfare dei Paesi del Nord è ormai un mito (...). Ovviamente lì si parla di numeri completamente diversi in Danimarca sono cinque milioni di abitanti quindi e ci investono delle risorse cospicue rispetto al discorso del welfare” (UPI Tuscany).

⁶⁴ “La flexicurity che viene portata non è il modello adatto al nostro paese perché stiamo parlando di modelli come il modello danese, il modello norvegese, il modello svedese” (UPI Tuscany).

⁶⁵ “Chiacchiere. E' una polemica sulla flexicurity, nel senso che sembra un dibattito molto teorico usato un po' strumentalmente in un senso o nell'altro, perché la flexicurity è perfetta, ha una sua razionalità: meno rigidità in uscita, o comunque un po' più facile licenziare, anche se poi non è che puoi licenziare in qualunque momento, la motivazione deve essere plausibile; però, ricordiamo, sempre sono modelli di paesi come Danimarca e Olanda” (UIL at national level).

*“[In Italy policies were oriented] mostly towards the status quo and the attempt of avoiding to take decisions (...). So, only the flexibility remained instead of the flexicurity: a lot of flexibility and no security at all”*⁶⁶ (Representative of CGIL at national level).

*“We realized very late the change that has occurred in Europe. In Italy, the concept of flexicurity still finds consensus, but also many dissent because it is somehow understood not in the connotation (...) of activation, but it is understood as insecurity and as flexibility without security”*⁶⁷ (Representative of CISL at national level).

*“This debate on flexicurity has become very ideological in the Italian context, where essential levels of assistance for the most disadvantaged and to projects for people or families in need are lacking”*⁶⁸ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Italy).

A certain agreement among some Italian representatives can be detected on the construction of the concept of ‘flexibility’. The representatives of UPI Tuscany and CISL Tuscany share the view that flexibility means lack of stability. However, the representative of CISL Sicily points out that flexibility does not necessarily correspond to “insecurity”, but it may become so if it stems from economic advantages for the company rather than from organizational choices of serious active employment policies. In this case, even if the representative disagrees that flexibility means the same as insecurity, it is evident that he is tracing a connection between the two, which hints the political cognitive framework of the actor. Moreover, the representative of CISL Tuscany admits, and partly seems to justify, the choice of employers of using flexibility for their own interests, at the expense of people and the youth in particular. In the representative’s statement, a clear political representation that makes evident the power relations and the conflict between young unemployed and employers emerges, insofar as deprivation and damage for the former come to be an advantage for the latter. Thus, the representation that is evoked turns visible the inequality of positions and the asymmetry of power of employers and unemployed, which contrasts with the concept of flexicurity

⁶⁶ “[In Italia le politiche erano dirette] prevalentemente verso il governo dell’esistente; possiamo dire, cioè, [verso il tentativo di] non scegliere (...). Ed è rimasta così tutta la flessibilità per usare sempre la flexicurity: di flessibilità a gogò, di sicurezza un accidente” (CGIL at national level).

⁶⁷ “Noi abbiamo capito molto tardivamente il cambiamento che è avvenuto in Europa; la stessa flexicurity è ancora in Italia un concetto, per esempio, che trova consensi ma trova anche tanti dissensi perché in qualche modo intesa non nella parte (...) di attivazione, ma è intesa come precarietà, cioè è intesa non sul versante della sicurezza, ma sul versante della flessibilità senza sicurezza” (CISL at national level).

⁶⁸ “Questo tema della flexicurity in un contesto italiano in cui, come le è ben noto, mancano sostanzialmente i livelli essenziali di assistenza per le persone più svantaggiate, quindi mancano questi presupposti connessi a progetti individualizzati per persone in difficoltà, o anche le famiglie, ha reso molto ideologico il dibattito” (Caritas at national level, Italy).

that instead makes it invisible. Indeed, according to the concept promoted by the European institutions flexibility and security can favour both parties.

*“Young people cannot find work, do not have stability and the market is more flexible. Flexibility is less expensive than a safe long-term job; as a consequence, rightly employers from their point of view abuse of cheaper contracts”*⁶⁹ (Representative of CISL Tuscany).

*“I believe that nowadays the issue of flexibility represents only the element of insecurity, rather than being structured by the legislation that turns it into true flexibility”*⁷⁰ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

*“I think it is an old debate. Flexibility does not mean insecurity (...), but [flexibility] must be an organizational decision not an economic advantage”*⁷¹ (Representative of CISL Sicily).

According to the Spanish expert, trade unions strongly criticised the model of flexicurity, which indicates that the interpretative frameworks of the Spanish trade union distance themselves from the flexicurity model. On the one hand, the expert states that the model is considered applicable mainly in the Northern European countries, where it has already been successfully employed, due to the peculiar demographic, cultural, social, institutional and productive bases. On the other hand, the side of flexibility is again described to prevail on that of security, delineating an asymmetrical relation between the two. In particular, according to the expert, any attempt to combine flexibility and security disappeared around 2008, when the concept of flexicurity started to be mostly used for the advantage of the employers. He remarks this through the use of irony that acts in the direction of taking a distance from the concept. By doing so, the expert seems to desacralize the “myth” of flexicurity, as an Italian actor named it previously. The expert’s view is shared by some authors (Keune and Jepsen, 2007; Tangian, 2007), who, as told before, underline that “instead of creating a win-win situation, [flexicurity] favours flexibility over security and employers’ interests over workers’ interests” (Keune and Jepsen, 2007: 16).

⁶⁹ “...dove i giovani non trovano lavoro, dove i giovani non hanno stabilità e il mercato è sempre più flessibile ma la flessibilità costa meno del posto sicuro quindi giustamente il datore di lavoro dal loro punto di vista abusano dei contratti che costano meno (CISL Tuscany).

⁷⁰ “Credo che il tema della flessibilità oggi rappresenti solo l’elemento della precarietà e non sia invece strutturato dentro una normativa che consenta una flessibilità vera” (UPI Tuscany).

⁷¹ “Secondo me è un vecchio dibattito, flessibilità non vuol dire precarietà; deve essere una scelta organizzativa non una convenienza economica” (CISL Sicily).

“The discourse on flexicurity (...) has received considerable criticism by trade unions, including Spanish trade unions. Why? Firstly, it is a model (...) that is exported mainly from Denmark and it is not even longer useful in Denmark. Indeed, sometimes the European Commission exports models regardless of the institutional, productive, cultural and social features of the labor market in each country. Secondly, here the more radical criticism comes: it is a model that has been more on the side of the flexibility than of security (...). This discourse has turned more radical in the side of flexibility, vulnerability and risk for the individual when the crisis erupted (...). Therefore, nowadays nobody talks any more about flexisecurity. Flexisecurity now sounds as a joke”⁷² (Spanish expert).

The introduction of flexicurity and the paradigm of activation may be interpreted differently in the two countries under analysis. Therefore, we will now observe how Spanish and Italian representatives construct the change produced by the introduction of the new paradigm. In Spain, the European discourse is told by the Spanish expert to have entered employment policies, even if slowly and more theoretically than practically. This view is also shared by Bertelheimer et al., who affirm that “in real terms, the main characteristics of the structure that was laid down during the 1980s remain unchanged” (2012, 36). The national representative of CCOO⁷³ deems that the main changes fundamentally affected the organizational structure of institutions, rather than the content of policies. In particular, the national representative of CCOO defines the poorness of the change at the level of contents as a limit (“*the biggest problem*”), wishing instead a greater innovation in this regard. Therefore, the change is mainly constructed in terms of opposition between contents of programs and organization of services as well as between theoretical discourse and policy practice:

“The European strategy deeply entered Spain. The foundations of the European discourse slowly trickled. However, the discourse did not have a strong impact in practice policy, given the situation of job creation, dynamism and the disconnection of policies”⁷⁴ (Spanish expert).

⁷² “El discurso de la flexiseguridad es un discurso (...) que ha recibido bastantes críticas por parte de los go.. de las organizaciones sindicales, incluidas las españolas. ¿Por qué? Primero es un modelo (...) que se exporta fundamentalmente desde Dinamarca y que ya no sirve ni en Dinamarca. Con lo cual..eh.. primero, tienen el.. esta capacidad que tiene a veces la Comisión Europea del exportar modelos sin tener en cuenta las características institucionales, del mercado de trabajo, productivas, culturales, sociales de cada país, ¿no? En segundo lugar, la crítica más radical: que es un modelo que ha estado más del lado de la flexibilidad que de la seguridad (...). Todo ese discurso se ha radicalizado ahora, ante el lado más.. digamos, del lado de la flexibilidad, de la vulnerabilidad, del riesgo para el individuo cuando estalla con la crisis (...). Por eso ahora ya nadie habla de *flexisecurity*. Lo de la *flexisecurity* ahora suena a chiste” (Spanish expert).

⁷³ Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras (Spanish trade union).

⁷⁴ “Toda esa estrategia europea prendió en España ; se sentaron las bases de ese discurso que poco a poco fue calando, que al final no tuvo mucha incidencia práctica, en la política práctica, por la situación que se da de creación de empleo, de dinamismo y de que las políticas no tienen mucho que ver” (Spanish expert).

*“The biggest problem is this: actually, if you notice, there have been many organizational changes at the level of management, but there have been fewer changes at the level of content of programs”*⁷⁵ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

In the Italian case, the EU logic seems to have influenced the national cognitive framework, not only because the actors state this, but also because some of them actively recognize, legitimate and re-propose the European rhetoric. Indeed, the national representative of CISL describes the concept of ‘workfare’ as the new name and the new way of thinking on ‘work’, which is depicted to be inevitable for responding to the new situation in the labour market and production system as well as for facing the issue that the Euro centric perspective is disappearing. In fact, the actor constructs as necessary and/or bounded (see note 25) the shift from a focus on unemployment benefits to active policies. By adopting the language of geometry and algebra, the national representative of CISL presents the future challenges of balancing work, development and social guarantees as a mathematical problem to be solved. As far as the ‘object’ of the change is concerned, the national representatives of UPI and Assolavoro⁷⁶ agree that the paradigmatic change did not concern any ideology; rather the representative of Assolavoro describes it as a transformation of labour markets, productive systems and labour law. Also the Italian expert deems that the change was expressed mainly by legislation and regulatory applications, whereas the national representatives of Italia Lavoro and UPI view it as a re-organization of services. However, at the regional level, the representatives of UPI Tuscany and UIL Tuscany downsize this change at a practical level, focusing more on the limits of its implementation. Indeed, for the representative of UPI Tuscany, it took long for active policies and the idea of their connection with unemployment benefits to enter the cognitive framework, and still this process cannot be considered fully developed. Also in the view of the representative of UPI Sicily, the change turns into a greater sensitivity towards the problems of the unemployed and the worker in comparison to the past, at least theoretically; but, on a practical level – that is, in terms of policies that are targeted more to individual needs – a few significant changes have occurred. Therefore, similarly to the Spanish case, the Italian interviewees construct the change mainly in terms of opposition conceptual transformation/implementation as well as policy contents modification/re-organization of services:

⁷⁵ “El mayor problema es este, que en realidad, si te das cuenta, se han producido muchos cambios..eh.. organizativos, en la gestión e igual se han producido menos cambios respecto al contenido de los programas” (CCOO at national level).

⁷⁶ Assolavoro is the national association of Italian employment agencies.

“The center of gravity has changed. We, the Western countries, Europe and Italy, are no longer the center of gravity. Thus, the change of the center of gravity is the first big problem. Development is no longer here, the ‘engine’ is no longer here. (...) I think the next few years will tell us more. A kind of equation will be at stake, though it is hard to predict how many variables will be involved: how it is possible to create jobs and to protect social rights within the context of small economic growth? (...) Passive policies become necessarily⁷⁷ active. Hence, the English expression ‘workfare’ become the new name of work”⁷⁸ (Representative of CISL at national level).

“There was a change on services, rather than on policies (...) The change was not so much ideological”⁷⁹ (Representative of UPI at national level).

“A real change of ideology did not occur in my view. There was a change in the regulatory framework of labour law, but I would not say it was ideological (...). There was a radical change in the economy and in production systems”⁸⁰ (Representative of Assolavoro).

“Interventions [in Italy] are generally legislative”⁸¹ (Italian expert).

“Obviously, [the change of paradigm and the modernization of the Public Employment Services] have had a tremendous impact on reality and on the organization of public services. Therefore, the organization took place”⁸² (Representative of Italia Lavoro).

“The message [of connecting active policies and unemployment benefits] took time and still does. Indeed, it definitely has not been received yet”⁸³ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

⁷⁷ In the Italian language, the expression “per forza” has a twofold meanings. The first meaning can be translated as “necessarily”, which is impersonal; the second meaning can be translated as “by force”, referring to an external force that obligate to do something. In both case, it is a constrain, even if the cause of it changes according to the meaning.

⁷⁸ “Il baricentro è cambiato, non siamo più il baricentro noi, l'Occidente, l'Europa, l'Italia. Primo grande problema, quindi: il cambiamento del baricentro. Lo sviluppo non è più, qui il motore non è più qui (...). A mio avviso (...), lo vedremo ancor meglio negli anni prossimi; noi avremo sostanzialmente una sorta di equazione, non so con quante incognite, da risolvere: cioè, come creare il lavoro e tutelare anche i diritti sociali in contesti di bassa crescita (...)? Il rapporto da passivo diventa per forza attivo, quindi questa espressione inglese ‘workfare’ è proprio l'espressione, il nome nuovo del lavoro” (CISL at national level).

⁷⁹ “C'è stato un cambiamento sui servizi più che sulle politiche (...), non è tanto ideologico” (UPI at national level).

⁸⁰ “Il cambiamento ideologico vero e proprio, se di ideologia si può parlare, secondo me, non c'è stato. C'è stato un cambiamento di impianto normativo sul lavoro, nel diritto del lavoro, nel mercato del lavoro, ma ideologico direi proprio no (...). C'è un percorso di cambiamento epocale nell'economia, nei sistemi produttivi” (Assolavoro).

⁸¹ “L'intervento è normativo” (Italian expert).

⁸² “Ovviamente, questo ha avuto un impatto fortissimo nella realtà e nell'organizzazione dei servizi pubblici, e si sono organizzati” (Italia Lavoro).

⁸³ “Ci volle un po' di tempo e ce ne vuole ancora perché questo messaggio [di collegare politiche attive e politiche passive] non è assolutamente passato” (UPI Tuscany).

*“This is a conceptual change that has been pretty well understood by institutional and representative entities. However, at the level of practical implementation, very little has changed”*⁸⁴ (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

*“In fact in the last decade, there is greater attention to the problems of the unemployed. Policies have become a little more targeted to the needs and to the actual status of individual workers or unemployed. However, this alone does not mean that an actual change has taken place. I am doing a specific reference to the Sicilian Region: probably the transformation of active labour market policies has not been fully completed. The first steps were initiated, but the transformation of the labour market is not completed. Even if the starting point is a different centrality of the unemployed’s needs, the actual effects are still modest”*⁸⁵ (Representative of UPI Sicily).

We will now analyse how the interviewees describe the main directions towards which employment policies were directed over the period from 1995 to 2008 and their position in this regard. This represents the first indicator of the category ‘Market versus social oriented policies’ we use in this study for assessing actors’ meanings, discourses and representations in the light of the capabilities approach. In particular, we will observe how the actors depict the general trend of employment policies, focusing on the prevalence of active or passive policies. Indeed, the shift from a welfare based on paying cash compensation to a welfare oriented to restoring individual acting capacity – above all, work and productive capacity – constitutes the core of the change of paradigm (Bonvin, 2006). It is worth bearing in mind that in a capabilities approach both kind of policies are considered appreciable, since, as Salais remarks (2003) unemployment benefits perform with the scope of protecting people from risks and guaranteeing them a decent standard of living conditions (“freedom from want”) and active policies act in the direction of providing people with capabilities (“freedom to be and to do”).

As for the Italian case, the respondent belonging to the UIL trade union carries out a distinction with regard to the changes occurred in the national context. The labour market and the whole economic system are described as having enhanced a greater flexibility, but employment policies

⁸⁴ “Ma, in effetti, questo cambiamento, che è un cambiamento concettuale, direi, [è stato] compreso abbastanza bene dai soggetti istituzionali e da quelli rappresentativi, però dal punto di vista concreto dell'attuazione si è modificato poco” (UIL Tuscany).

⁸⁵ “In effetti, nell'ultimo decennio, vi è un'attenzione maggiore ai problemi del lavoratore non occupato e disoccupato, e le politiche sono diventate un po' più mirate ai bisogni e allo stato effettivo dei singoli lavoratori o ex-lavoratori. Questo però, da solo, non significa che si sia determinato un effettivo cambiamento; anzi, qui faccio un riferimento specifico alla Regione siciliana: probabilmente la trasformazione delle politiche attive del lavoro non è stata totalmente completata, cioè si sono avviati i primi passi però non si è completata la trasformazione del mercato del lavoro. Quindi, fermo restando che si parte dall'affermazione di una diversa centralità del bisogno del lavoratore disoccupato, gli effetti reali sono però ancora modesti” (UPI Sicilia).

have not flanked this process. Thus, the change of paradigm has been perceived in terms of transformation of the market, rather than in terms of transformation of policies that foster the function of decommodification of welfare and increase individuals' possibility to develop their capabilities. It is interesting to see that the national representative of UIL describes the transformation of the productive system through the metaphor of the "genetic mutation" that may embody the idea of a radical frightening change. The representative of UPI Tuscany described the changes occurred looking at companies, that in his view have started to suffer from lack of support. The representative devotes a scarce attention to individuals, whereas the discourse on possibilities and development of potential seems to refer mainly to firms and their vital need of "oxygen". The representative of CISL Tuscany stresses the primacy of the market and remarks that the worker has to follow continuously adaptive preferences⁸⁶ according to external pressures. The representative focuses on the hardship of the youth, and ties this to the fact that policies did not conform with the changes of the labour market. His first phrase and the way he constructs the sentence, as shown in the extract, makes clear the assumption that the labour market has a dominant role in determining the situation, so that changes in the market should produce a process of adaptation by all the other spheres. Failing to do this causes problems to society. Moreover, the use of the word "reconverted", often used in the religious language, hints the image that the worker has to be helped for coming back to the right path, that of the market. Therefore, the three actors (belonging to trade unions and public bodies at national and regional level) acknowledge both implicitly and explicitly a preeminent position to the market in the process of transformation.

*"Surely, the genetic mutation of our production and economic system (...) was neither accompanied by social protection policies, nor by active policies"*⁸⁷ (Representative of UIL at national level).

*"Let's not forget another important element: before the crisis there was a strong support by banks to firms. Today the situation of banks is steady and firms will no longer receive oxygen"*⁸⁸ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

⁸⁶ Adaptive preferences can be defined as preferences stemming from restricted options (Bussi and Dahmen, 2012).

⁸⁷ "Certamente la mutazione genetica del nostro sistema produttivo ed economico (...) non è stato accompagnato da politiche di protezione sociale, da una parte, e da politiche attive, dall'altra" (UIL at national level).

⁸⁸ "Non dimentichiamoci un altro elemento fondamentale: che prima della crisi c'era un forte sostegno alle imprese dal mondo del credito, oggi la situazione delle banche è una situazione di stallo, anzi alle imprese non viene più dato ossigeno" (UPI Tuscany).

*“The situation has changed because the market has changed. Logically, Italy has not adjusted to this change. Consequently, everybody suffer of this, especially the youth (...). It is always in the view that workers must adapt themselves to the labour market demands. Logically, the worker must be reconverted to find work where it is”*⁸⁹ (Representative of CISL Tuscany).

The lack of a substantial change in employment policies reported by the trade unions, as shown previously, in comparison to the transformations of the labour market is attributed to a number of reasons. For the representatives of CISL Tuscany and UIL Tuscany, the change was arrested because of internal political dissent or resistance on the part of society, politics and other stakeholders, including trade unions. In this sense, the representatives of CISL Tuscany and of Caritas state that the debate on the change seems to have been ideological and cultural-political more than concrete, aimed at the strong defence of traditional forms of employment and welfarism without triggering significant drives towards any transformation. Other respondents report different reasons that hampered the change, namely the absence of a real employment strategy in the view of the representative of Italia Lavoro and the presence of a cultural formalism with no substantial implications, according to the Italian expert. Moreover, the representative of CISL Sicily stresses that a radical change no doubt was envisaged and that it was perceived with fear and resistance. This is said to be linked to the fact that the Italian system is oriented towards the “protection of the existing”, since all the weigh of the history of the last century is based on the old instrument of the unemployment benefits. Also the strength of the trade unions is said to be based on this. Hence, the Sicilian representative of CISL concentrates on a present and past perspective and on the meaning that the attempt of introducing new ideas in the Sicilian cognitive frameworks has had for society and trade unions. It is interesting to notice the metaphor of movement used by the representatives of CISL and UIL Tuscany, who describe policies as “stationary” and “blocked”. They seem to refer to an ideology of progress (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Lizano, 2003), according to which failing of adapting to the changing environment means in a darwinian sense putting at risk the survival of individuals and systems. Thus, the absence of movement is depreciated by trade unions, in that the lack of change is acknowledged as “our problem” by the representative of UIL Tuscany.

“The market has followed the European trend, whereas policies have remained stationary. This occurred because of an ideological resistance of a part of the union and because the politics did not

⁸⁹ “La situazione è cambiata perché il mercato è cambiato. Logicamente non si è adattata la realtà italiana, non si è adattata a questo cambio e quindi si soffre di tutti questi problemi che ci sono stati specialmente nel mondo giovanile (...). E' sempre nell'ottica che il lavoratore si deve adattare alla domanda. Logicamente il lavoratore deve essere riconvertito per ritrovare il lavoro dove c'è” (CISL Tuscany).

want to do anything. Also this was due to a resistance by our society. Indeed, as I said before, nowadays people are still looking for a job⁹⁰, not for employment⁹¹ (Representative of CISL Tuscany).

“Our problem, first of all, is the following: we keep things blocked for many contrasts between left-wing and right-wing”⁹² (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

“The debate (...) also took ideological dimensions with regard to forms of exasperated welfare (...). Hence, from the perspective of the weak segment of the labour market in our country, in reality, this debate has been often more cultural-political-oriented rather than operational-oriented. Therefore, it has not had consequences on vulnerable people”⁹³ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Italy).

“It is not easy for me commenting the problem of the policies in Sicily because, unfortunately, I could tell you that we have not done anything. It is true that there has not been a real strategy for employment, but it is also true that the region has focused on innovative topics and that has been reorganized with respect to these”⁹⁴ (Representative of Italia Lavoro).

“Interventions [in Italy] are generally legislative. Unfortunately, this is the cultural imprinting of the Italian formalism. Therefore, once a law is made, everybody feel comfortable and think that problems are solved, but this is not true. In fact, the law does not produce changes, while the

⁹⁰ In this case, I have translated the words employed by the representative of CISL Tuscany “posto di lavoro” (job place) as “job” referring to the literature on this topic that distinguishes between ‘employment security’ and ‘job security’. Job security refers to the certainty of retaining the same occupation with the same employer, whereas employment security refers to the certainty of remaining in work but not necessarily with the same employer (Wilthagen and Tros, 2004).

⁹¹ “Quindi il mercato ha seguito la tendenza europea, mentre le politiche sono rimaste ferme. Le politiche sono rimaste ferme sia per una resistenza ideologica di una parte del sindacato, sia perchè la politica non ci ha voluto mettere le mani, sia per le resistenze che ci sono nella società per quello che dicevo prima, che ancora oggi la gente cerca il posto di lavoro e non il lavoro” (CISL Tuscany).

⁹² “Il nostro problema, prima di tutto, è questo: cioè il fatto di essere, di tenere bloccate tante cose per contrasti, che poi, sinistra, destra e tutto” (UIL Tuscany).

⁹³ “Nel nostro Paese c’è stato un dibattito (...) a dimensioni, diciamo così, di tipo, e qui continuo a ripetere, di tipo ideologico di fronte a presunte forme di assistenzialismo esasperato (...). Quindi, vista così dal segmento fragile per il mercato del lavoro nel nostro Paese, in realtà questa discussione è stata una discussione molto spesso più cultural-politica piuttosto che operativa e ha inciso in maniera molto molto marginale rispetto agli effetti su questa fascia che abbiamo definito fragile” (Caritas at national level, Italy).

⁹⁴ “Il problema delle politiche in Sicilia, purtroppo, già, non è molto facile per me poter commentare questo, perché potrei dirle qui non abbiamo fatto nulla (...). Se è vero che non c’è stata una vera e propria strategia per l’occupazione, è anche vero d’altro canto che un’attenzione rispetto ai temi innovativi la regione l’ha avuta, tant’è che s’è riorganizzata rispetto a questo” (Italia Lavoro).

organization of work, the rhythms of work, the training and the general approach need to change”⁹⁵ (Italian expert).

*“[The entrance of the concept of active policies] was lived with fear because the whole history of the last century [was based on] instruments of passive policies and on the protection of the what was already existing. These instruments were also the strength of the union and of the Italian system”*⁹⁶ (Representative of CISL Sicily).

In the Italian case, the trend of employment policies is described by the most of the interviewees to be oriented towards compensatory passive policies more than towards active policies. It is interesting to underline how the distinction between the notions of ‘active’ and ‘passive’ policies is clearly widespread within the cognitive framework of the respondents, leading not only to the idea of new means of facing unemployment but also to new values. Indeed, following the logic promoted by the European institutions, the notion of ‘active policies’ seems to be elected as the keystone of this change, with unemployment benefits disqualified as ‘passive policies’, as underlined by the Italian expert in the following quotation. Such distinction will be maintained here, assuming the language of our interviewees, who contribute to disseminating the hegemonic and dominant discourses on policies. The disqualification of passive policies is also evident in the words of the representative of CISL at national level, who utilizes the metaphor “flattened” for indicating the orientation of the Italian society towards such policies. Furthermore, the representative remarks that active policies are “not yet” in the position of being trustworthy, as trade union and society were delayed in relation to the direction to follow. Despite this, unemployment benefits are described to be “powerful” in opposition to unreliable active policies. Among some of the Italians interviewees, the trend towards passive policies is considered particularly established, whereas active policies are still considered weak. In the view of the representative of CISL Sicily, the first attempts for promoting active policies were made with the introduction of the Biagi Law and of the Treu Law, which were left to decay. Moreover, they are seen in contradiction with the passivity of discouraged people, which, as show in Chapter V, reach a high percentage in the Italian case. The idea of a prevalent orientation towards social security benefits is shared by the most of the

⁹⁵ “L'intervento è normativo; questo purtroppo è l'imprinting culturale del formalismo all'italiana, per cui fatta la legge tutti sono tranquilli tanto poi il problema o lo scandalo risuccede perché non è la legge che cambia; quello che deve cambiare è, poniamo, l'organizzazione del lavoro, i ritmi del lavoro, la formazione degli operatori, l'approccio che viene fatto” (Italian expert).

⁹⁶ “[L'entrata del concetto di politiche attive] è stata vissuta con paura perché tutta la storia del secolo scorso, che ha fatto anche la forza del sindacato e dei sistemi, [era basata su] strumenti delle politiche passive, cioè una tutela dell'esistente” (CISL Sicily).

respondents, included the national representative of the association of employment agencies Assolavoro. The representative of the Sicily Region reckons that the lack of a proper acknowledgement of active policies was one of the reasons why the transition to a logic of activation took place slowly. In particular, the representative uses the metaphor of the flight for describing the delay of the active policies to “take off”. She also underlines the bad functioning of active policies within the region:

*“I believe Europe has affected Italy a lot. Europe with the European strategy has strongly promoted active policies. This has led to emphasize active policies and almost to feel ashamed of making passive policies”*⁹⁷ (Italian expert).

*“The first experiences with the first legislative attempts on active labour market policies have been in the early 2000s with the Biagi Law and in 96-97 with the Treu Law. Few changes emerged in the effort to shift from protecting the workers and his/her job place, to using active measures. In this regard, the country has done very little, also because the ideological debate delayed it”*⁹⁸ (Representative of CISL Sicily).

*“The only thing that I can say concerns the trend of the country to be flattened on passive policies (...). We have never been able to reform the concept of unemployment benefit (...). We are not yet in the position of trusting active policies. By contrary, we are still in the position of needing powerful passive policies”*⁹⁹ (Representative of CISL at national level).

*“This region has developed very bad active policies”*¹⁰⁰ (Representative of CGIL Sicily).

“From my point of view, it is also a psychological problem, not just a concrete real problem; so it is even worse because when one totally loses confidence in doing things, then remains really [in a

⁹⁷ “Secondo me, l'Europa ha inciso molto, l'Europa con la Strategia Europea ha fortemente promosso le politiche attive e questo ha giocato in quello strano mix che dicevo prima a enfatizzare le politiche attive, quasi vergognandosi di fare qualche politica passiva” (Italian expert).

⁹⁸ “Le prime esperienze, i primi tentativi legislativi e anche sulle politiche attive del lavoro sono state diciamo con la Biagi nei primi anni 2000, un po' la Treu nel 96-97, ma poche emergevano; cioè, il tentativo di tutelare non solamente il lavoratore, cioè come singolo, vedere di passare dalla tutela del posto agli strumenti di accompagnamento; ma su questo il paese ha fatto molto poco, non c'è molto, ha fatto molto poco perché ti dicevo prima, un po' il dibattito ideologico lo ritardava un po'” (CISL Sicily).

⁹⁹ “L'unica cosa che noi possiamo portare rispetto al panorama che le facevo prima [è] di una tendenza del paese ad essere appiattito sugli ammortizzatori passivi (...). Il concetto per esempio degli ammortizzatori sociali non si è mai riusciti a riformarlo (...), siamo ancora nelle condizioni di non fidarci delle politiche attive e avere bisogno di potenti politiche passive” (CISL at national level).

¹⁰⁰ “Le politiche attive (...) questa regione le ha sviluppate molto male” (CGIL Sicilia).

*passive position] instead of becoming active; it is a passive activity, so [thinking of] active employment policies is a strong contradiction in relation to the passivity of the people*¹⁰¹ (UIL Tuscany).

“Active labor market policies were not substantially acknowledged; consequently, it took them time to take off, despite their legislative acknowledgement. We, civil servants, certainly were convinced of a different centrality of the individual and that we had to place the worker at the center of our policies. However, the active policies did not work”¹⁰² (Representative of Sicily Region).

“[There have been] always a prevalence of passive policies in Italy. Even in our sector, the concept of active policy is not spread out, although the idea was already included in the Treu law”¹⁰³ (Representative of Assolavoro).

The main interest within the Italian context, according to the interviewees belonging to trade unions, was to focus the attention on social safety nets, precisely because the economic, political and social life was based on the concept of security. Indeed, for the representative of UIL at national level, the notion of stability is a peculiar characteristic of the Italian context and is intended in terms of protection and collective power. In spite of the fact that the representative describes the Italian social model as *“an anomaly”*, he underlines the relevant function it has had in the history of the country. A more negative connotation is delineated by the representative of CISL at national level, as it is evident by the adjectives he employs for describing the attitude of society¹⁰⁴. In fact, the adjective *“old”* referred to welfare benefits and the verb *“cling”* create the image of an unstable society that has its own roots in an unsteady declining ground. The use of metaphors of movement, as also shown previously, contributes to generating a negative attribution of policies (*“stopped”*) (*“preferred to keep”*).

¹⁰¹ “Dal mio punto di vista è un problema anche psicologico, non soltanto un problema concreto reale, quindi è anche peggio, perché quando uno perde totalmente la fiducia nel fare le cose, poi si mette davvero [in una posizione passiva] anziché attivarsi; è proprio un'attività passiva, per cui [pensare alle] politiche attive del lavoro di fronte alla passività delle persone è una contraddizione forte” (UIL Tuscany).

¹⁰² “Non ha avuto un effettivo recepimento nella sostanza, per cui le politiche attive del lavoro hanno tardato a decollare; quindi, nonostante da un punto di vista normativo, noi sicuramente eravamo convinti, gli operatori erano convinti, di questa diversa centralità che adesso era del soggetto e quindi noi dovevamo mettere il lavoratore al centro delle nostre politiche e quant'altro, pur tuttavia, nella sostanza, la politica attiva non ha avuto un decollo” (Sicily Region).

¹⁰³ “[C’è stata] sempre una prevalenza delle politiche passive in Italia, sì, le politiche attive sono un concetto nel quale anche nel nostro settore se ne parla relativamente da poco, nonostante l’idea sia già all’interno del pacchetto Treu” (Assolavoro).

¹⁰⁴ Impersonal form in the extract; we assume the representative refers to society.

*“It was preferred to keep a Linus’s blanket and to cling to age-old welfare benefits that still provide security (...); the policy was literally stopped at that”*¹⁰⁵ (Representative of CISL at national level).

*“Historically, our model of worker protection has been built as an anomaly as compared to other European countries. This model can be controversial and debatable, but it nonetheless has a history and proved effectiveness. It was mainly focused and directed towards maximum security and maintaining employment, both in terms of resources and culture of industrial relations”*¹⁰⁶ (Representative of UIL at national level).

This Italian orientation for passive policies is not only reflected in the massive use of CIG (Cassa Integrazione Guadagni – Wage Guarantee Fund) in comparison to active policies, as shown in Chapter VI, but also in the ways in which processes of restructuring and expulsion from the labour market are conceived and handled. According to the national representative of UIL, such processes aimed to keep the worker linked to his/her company for as long as possible, at times even recurring to shorter or longer suspension of the work activity, until she/he could be fully reintegrated into the production system. In some cases, the benefits lasted the time necessary to cover the years that were missing to the worker’s retirement. Sometimes this early retirement has allowed a generational change to take place and a growth of job placement opportunities for young people. However, a decrease in public expenditures and a raise in retirement age have gradually arrested the possibilities initially envisaged as regards to this change, in the representative’s view. Consequently, young people’s entrance into the labour market has slowly become more complex also due to the overwhelming choice to sacrifice young workers in favour of old workers, as the latter were thought to have more cogent family responsibilities – an opinion also shared by trade unions, as shown in the following extract. This way of thinking reveals the familistic basis on which the Italian social model relies. Also, it is interesting to notice how the problem is mainly constructed in terms of generational opposition between young and old people, which hides the more complex fact that the deregulation of the labour market affects mainly to vulnerable people, and among these the youth:

¹⁰⁵ “Si preferì restare, diciamo così, con la coperta di Linus, abbarbicati su vecchi ammortizzatori sociali che comunque danno sicurezza (...); quindi la politica si è fermata lì” (CISL at national level).

¹⁰⁶ “Storicamente, il nostro modello di protezione verso il lavoratore si è costruito come un’anomalia rispetto agli altri paesi europei. Questo principale intervento può essere discutibile e opinabile, però ha avuto una sua storia e una sua efficacia; si è focalizzato e indirizzato, sia in termini di risorse che di vera e propria cultura, diciamo, delle relazioni industriali, nel massimo della protezione in costanza del rapporto di lavoro” (UIL at national level).

“Until yesterday we were working to make [the workers] retire, in such a way to save young people or even hire some of them. There have been cases in which 200 [workers] retired and 100 were hired, so [old workers] had benefits and then retired; otherwise young people would never enter the labour market. So, this has allowed a generational change. But, nowadays, in these conditions and without real active policies, young people do not enter the labour market any more because (...), honestly, I tell you: it is not easy to fire a fifty-year-old: you are not just leaving one person penniless, you are actually leaving his wife, his daughter on penniless, especially in some areas of the country...or you are leaving her husband penniless, if the worker is a woman. This may be wrong from a socially minded point of view, yet understandable. So, for instance, what are you supposed to do with a single worker with a single-income family, are you supposed to leave him jobless? But then again, it’s full of really young unemployed workers... I know, it is really such a sad story; it is a dramatic choice. Consequently, the youth is the most vulnerable because it is not covered”¹⁰⁷ (Representative of UIL at national level).

The situation in Spain is depicted in a slight different way from that in Italy. To begin with, the European discourse on flexicurity seemed to have found some space at a conceptual and rhetorical level. According to the Spanish expert, policies were originally oriented to research the combination of flexibility and social protection and to facilitate the integration of vulnerable groups in the labour market (youth, women, and immigrants). Sensitivity towards vulnerable groups still managed to bloom and the attempt to reconcile flexibility and security was taken into account. The expert states that this initial theoretical direction of the policies was maintained throughout the period of expansion, but on a practical level the attempt of combining flexibility and social protection failed. Besides, the expert underlines a marked deviation from the initial direction of policies after 2008, when flexicurity disappeared from political discussions with the crisis. At that point, also the idea of opportunities for individuals ceased. Thus, in the Spanish expert’s view, policies were aimed to implement a supply-side policy, rather than a demand-side policy, which means that policies were oriented to promote the adaptation of the individual in terms of training and retraining to the needs of companies. It is important to highlight that activation policies with an informational basis of

¹⁰⁷ “Fino a ieri anche noi operavamo per far uscire [i lavoratori dal mondo del lavoro] in modo tale da salvare i giovani o addirittura assumerne qualcuno. Ci sono stati casi in cui ne sono usciti 200 [di lavoratori] e ne sono entrati 100; quello [anziano] aveva un sussidio e andava poi in pensione, mentre il ragazzo [altrimenti] non sarebbe mai entrato. Quindi, questo ha permesso un ricambio generazionale. Ma se le condizioni sono queste e non c’è una politica attiva vera, i giovani non entrano più perché (...) onestamente, mettere in mezzo alla strada un cinquantenne è complicato, perché non metti per strada lui, metti per strada lui e in alcune aree del paese la moglie, la figlia, ecc.. o il marito se è una donna; il che dal punto di vista sociale sarà sbagliato, ma è comprensibile. Quello è monoreddito, che faccio lo mando a casa? Dice: però i giovani non lavorano. Lo so, è triste; è una scelta drammatica. In questo senso, il giovane è più vulnerabile perché è coperto meno” (UIL at national level).

employability focus mainly on supply-side interventions, whereas the informational basis of the capability approach also entails demand-side interventions, according to the view that capabilities stem from the combination of both individuals and society's responsibility. In fact, social conditions and employment policies are necessary for fostering employability, in that an individual-moral connotation of activation is not sufficient enough (Zimmermann, 2014). However, even if the role of collective responsibility in making individuals enhancing employability is recognised, also in the case of the EES, what matters is the final aim that can be oriented to enhance individuals' capabilities or to favour labour market's interests. This twofold logic prevalently is remarked in the literature on capabilities applied to employment policies: "on the one hand, in a social perspective, fairness and equity require taking into account individual circumstances by public institutions and policies; on the other hand, on the efficiency side, such a supply-driven intervention aims at giving incentives to quick professional reintegration" (Bonvin and Farvaque 2007: 48). Therefore, in Bonvin and Orton's words, "employability policies such as the ones developed in human capital approaches, need to be completed by adequate employment policies if activation strategies are to be turned into so-called 'capacitation' policies that aim at enhancing their recipients' capabilities" (2009: 568). Zimmermann (2014) also underlines the component of responsibility held by firms in the employees' professional development. Indeed, she considers that this component is often neglected in the flexicurity debate, but that, in a capability approach, firms' governance and employees' involvement in this governance have to be taken into account.

"In the past it was assumed that we had to provide companies with more flexibility, but at the same time, we had to give some protection and employment policies to the worker, that in theory...(...). I think it was a discourse very oriented to try, at least in theory, to facilitate certain groups with greater difficulties in accessing the labour market. They stated: 'Well, we must have more flexicurity in order to make young people, older women and immigrants having access to employment (...). [Nowadays] the element of security has completely disappeared (...). The same can be said of the whole issue of the flexisecurity. In other words, it was a system that was, supposedly, flexible for the employer and safe for the worker, but in practice the system is transforming into flexibility for the employer and security for enterprises'"¹⁰⁸ (Spanish expert).

¹⁰⁸ "Antes se planteaba.. en..todo este periodo, que bueno, efectivamente, hay que darle mayor flexibilidad a las empresas, pero a la par, hay que darle una cierta protección al trabajador, políticas de empleo, eso en teoría.. (...). Y aparte, yo creo que era un discurso muy orientado a intentar, al menos en teoría, facilitar el empleo de determinados grupos de población que tenían mayores dificultades de acceder al mercado de trabajo. Se decía "bueno, hay que tener más *flexiseguridad* para que los jóvenes accedan, para que las mujeres mayores accedan, para que los inmigrantes accedan al empleo" (...). [Hoy en día] el elemento de seguridad ha desaparecido completamente (...). Todo el tema de la flexisecurity. O sea, que era un sistema que era, se supone, flexibilidad para el empresario y seguridad para el

For the Spanish expert, after an attempt to take into account vulnerable groups, the focus on firms became stronger over the time (see the previous extract). Therefore, both the Spanish expert and the national representative of Caritas identify some efforts by firms and society to take care of the social component. In this regard, the national representative of Caritas believes that a slight increase of firms' sensitivity and attention to vulnerable people occurred. Still, according to the Spanish expert, the European discourse on active policies has introduced in Spain also other concepts such as employability, individualization of risk and entrepreneurship more oriented to the advantage of firms. However, it is noticeable that the two actors problematize the relevance of combining the interests of companies with social issues:

*“There is another element of the discourse of active employment policies promoted by Europe that entered Spain. Indeed, along with the employability and the individualization of risk, there is entrepreneurship; in other words, everything is oriented towards the theoretical needs of firms. Obviously, companies are important, but I think we should have a more social orientation”*¹⁰⁹ (Spanish expert).

*“As regards the enterprises... Well yes, there are some attempts, some efforts on the part of employers' association to implement a corporate social responsibility in some companies. The efforts are oriented to make it easier for some companies to hire people coming from pathways for labour integration carried out by social entities (...). A change of orientation is required. This is occurring, but – in our opinion – way too slowly ... yet, it is still taking place”*¹¹⁰ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

More specifically, observing how Spanish respondents construct the general orientation of employment policies, it is remarkable to note a strong agreement between the national representative of CCOO and the Spanish expert. They state that employment policies were oriented towards passive policies and that the activation of the individuals came to nothing. This view is in

trabajador, y en la práctica se va convirtiendo en flexibilidad para el empresario y seguridad para las empresas” (Spanish expert).

¹⁰⁹ “Porque ese es otro elemento del discurso de las políticas activas de empleo que entró con todo el ámbito europeo. Que junto a la empleabilidad y junto a la individualización del riesgo, está la.. empresarialidad, o sea..o por decirlo de otro ma.. de otro modo, de que todo está orientado a las teóricas necesidades de las empresas. Evidentemente está bien, las empresas son importantes, pero claro... yo creo que habría que tener un.. un elemento más social” (Spanish expert).

¹¹⁰ “Y.. que el empresariado.. pues sí, hay algunos conatos, esfuerzos por parte del empresariado de aplicar una responsabilidad social corporativa a algunas empresas que facilitan la contratación de..de personas que provienen de itinerarios de inserción de entidad sociales (...). Ahí también tiene que haber.. tiene que haber un cambio de mentalidad..eh.. todavía...que se está produciendo, a nuestro gusto, demasiado lentamente pero.. pero se está produciendo” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

line with the study of Bartelheimer et al. (2012), which highlights a scarce emphasis on activation policies and a strong interest in the traditional unemployment support. By contrast, the regional representatives of SAE and SERVEF¹¹¹ describe a picture of full endorsement in the new paradigm. They consider not only that employment services are strongly oriented towards active policies, but also that public services are already functioning in this direction. According to these representatives, active policies have achieved to overcome passive policies and are oriented to prepare the unemployed for moving autonomously within the labour market, thanks to the individualisation of public services:

*“I believe that even there is not activation of individuals. I wish there was. There is not activation of individuals, there is activation of entities”*¹¹² (Representative of CCOO at national level).

*“Public employment services are mainly focused on passive policies, that is employment benefits”*¹¹³ (Spanish expert).

*“Yet before the transfer of competences (decentralization), the Autonomous Community of Andalusia was oriented to active policies. The network Andalusia Orienta that belongs to the Department of Labor was created for this reason”*¹¹⁴ (Representative of SAE).

*“The increase of the prevalence of active employment policies on passive policies, from the point of view of our partners, has been a success and has become the basis of all employment policy. The preparation of the unemployed in order to know how to move inside the market is unquestionable. Employment plans are individualized to the user”*¹¹⁵ (Representative of SERVEF).

As far as the efficacy of employment policies is concerned, we can note that the previous statement of the representative of SERVEF, according to whom active employment policies have

¹¹¹ Servei Valencià d'Ocupació i Formació (Servef).

¹¹² “Yo creo que ni siquiera hay activación del individuo. Ojalá que hubiera activación del individuo. Es que tampoco hay activación del individuo. Hay activación de las entidades” (CCOO at national level).

¹¹³ “Los servicios públicos de empleo, fundamentalmente están centrados en políticas pasivas. O sea, que es la recepción de prestaciones y demás” (Spanish expert).

¹¹⁴ “En la Comunidad Autónoma de Andalucía antes de las transferencias, sin competencias, ya apostaba por las políticas activas. No en vano se creó una red, Andalucía Orienta, propia de la Consejería de Empleo de Trabajo” (SAE).

¹¹⁵ “El aumento del peso de las políticas activas de empleo sobre las pasivas (...) ha supuesto un acierto y se constituye en la base de toda política de empleo; la preparación del desempleado para poder desenvolverse en el mercado de forma autosuficiente es incuestionable. En los planes de empleo se individualiza al usuario” (SERVEF).

been a success, is in contradiction with the opinion of the national representative of INEM¹¹⁶ and the Spanish expert. Thus, the national actor and the expert disagree with the idea of efficacy of the regional representative. Indeed, the national representative of INEM describes active policies to be obsolete, while the Spanish expert denounces a lack of connection and coordination with other policies and programs, which led to a limited impact of policies. The view of the two representatives hint the failure of these policies to meet people's needs adequately, along with the disinterest in addressing this issue:

*"We find active policies obsolete (...). No decision has been taken to address this issue"*¹¹⁷ (Representative of INEM).

*"There is another problem, such as the territorial state. You know that active employment policies are decentralized at local level. Hence, there are problems of coordination"*¹¹⁸ (Spanish expert).

To sum up what we have seen in this paragraph, as stated by the Spanish and Italian interviewees, the two member states have attempted over time to meet in a certain extent the European requirements. Italian national and regional representatives belonging to public bodies especially highlight the efforts of regions to adapt their internal organization for satisfying the European requests. Among these representatives, and in the case of Sicily in particular, the degree of acceptance of the frame of activation and adaptation seems extremely high, showing scarce criticism about the European demands. A different position is taken by the Italian national and regional representatives of trade unions, who strongly criticize the European ideas. The same occurs among the Spanish actors, with actors belonging to public bodies at regional level and Caritas at national level. Spanish and Italian representatives also converge in the description of the notion of 'flexicurity model' promoted by the EU. The representatives agree on two points. First, Spain and Italy exhibit national features that are inadequate to the application of the model exported by European Northern countries. Second, the application of the model in the two countries has been oriented to make space to flexibility more than to flexicurity. However, this drift is depicted to be more nuanced in the Spanish case, where some efforts for the combination of flexibility and security are told to have been made. Moreover, the Italian actors seem to present a trend of

¹¹⁶ Instituto Nacional de Empleo.

¹¹⁷ "Nos encontramos con unas políticas activas obsoletas (...). No se ha tomado ninguna decisión para abordar este tema" (INEM).

¹¹⁸ "Aquí tenemos otro problema que es el del estado territorial ¿no? Sabes que las políticas de empleo, las activas, están descentralizadas a nivel territorial y había problemas de coordinación..." (Spanish expert).

constructing “flexibility” as it was strictly cognitively connected to the concept of “insecurity”. The European logic seems to have slowly entered the cognitive framework of the two countries under analysis and, even if critically or skeptically, the interviewees acknowledge, legitimate and repeat the European frames (i.e. the distinction active/passive policies) as well as its way of defining future challenges. In both the Spanish and Italian case, the European discourse is described to have taken the form of an organizational and institutional change, instead of the introduction of new contents or new ideologies. More specifically, in the Italian case, the change is described in terms of re-organization of services as well as transformation of labour market, productive systems and labour law by national representatives. Regional representatives belonging to trade unions and public bodies focus mostly on the gap between theoretical ideas and their implementation. With regard to a broader overview of the policy orientation, the focus amongst the Italians interviewees seems to be the market. This emerges not only as it is explicitly stated by some of the actors, but also as it is implicitly evident by the construction of their discourses. Implicitly, some interviewees focus more on firms and on the necessity that workers, and especially the youth, adapt to the labour market. Explicitly, in Italy the flexibilization of the market was not flanked by a change of policies in the direction of the activation. The actors attribute the causes of this failure in the change of policies to the lack of an employment strategy and to a form of cultural formalism. Yet, above all, the Italian respondents belonging to trade unions attribute it to manifestations of resistance and fear to change on the part of society, politicians and also trade unions. Moreover, regional representatives of trade unions seem to discredit the lack of change in policies. Also in the view of the Spanish respondents, the general orientation of policies in Spain focused mainly on the labour market and firms more than on individuals, according to the idea that the people have to adapt to the labour market demands, even if some efforts were carried out in order to combine employees and employers’ needs. Nonetheless, in the expert’s view, the introduction of the concepts ‘employability’, ‘individualization of risk’, ‘accountability of the unemployed’ and ‘entrepreneurship’ were aimed to implement a supply-side policy, rather than a demand-side policy, which strongly diverges from the capabilities view. Spanish and Italian interviewees indicate that both Italy and Spain tended towards passive policies. The agreement among the Italian respondents is particularly strong on this point and is justified by the powerful role passive policies have played in the Italian history. Indeed, passive policies are depicted as having been the basis not only of the Italian system, but also of the trade unions’ strength. Still, some representatives of trade union devalue them in comparison to active policies. Passive policies are also described to have been useful for increasing early retirements with the consequent entrance of young people into the labour market. Their weakening is told to have led to the choice of sacrificing young people in favour of old workers. This reveals

the construction of the issue in terms of opposition between generations, hiding thus the tendency of the system to affect mainly vulnerable people in contrast with the capabilities approach. This also recalls the familistic framework that favours the protection of male adults at the expenses of the youth. The situation seems to be ambivalent in the Spanish case, insofar as various representatives at national level highlight the prevalence of passive policies and the inefficacy of active policies, whereas the regional representatives of employment policies strongly consider that active policies are already working and overcoming passive policies. Furthermore, it is evident the presence of the idea of co-presence of active and passive policies, which is not only part of the flexicurity formula, but also at the basis of the overall view of the capability approach. In conclusion, the two levels of analysis seem to lead to different results. Indeed, focusing on how the actors construct the evolution of policies, Italian respondents belonging to different social groups converge in hinting at a situation that seems partly blocked to the old institutions and frameworks in relation to the labour market, which increases the vulnerability of individuals, especially of young people. Nonetheless, the cognitive framework and the informational basis emerging from the interviews seem to depict an orientation that is only partly far from the capabilities approach. Indeed, the assumption that active policies have to develop seems to be widespread among actors, constituting the major critique of the dominant policy orientation. Still, the essential idea that policies should aim to enhance the possibility for people of developing their capabilities is not present in the actors' representations. In the Spanish case, the constructions of the development of policies result to be partly divergent among different actors, insofar as some of the respondents highlight attempts of conciliating employers' and employees' interests. Also in the Spanish case, no attention is paid to the fact that policies should put individuals in conditions of searching what they have reason to value. After observing the general orientation towards which employment policies are oriented, we now move to detect more precisely their ultimate goal, which represents the second indicator of the category 'Market versus social oriented policies'.

9.3 Specific orientations

It is interesting to see which are the main orientations and objectives of the employment policies in the period under analysis reported by the interviewees. Indeed, in the Salais' words, "While, in the case of a firm, it is fairly easy to agree on objectives (profit, growth, cost reduction, share value, productivity and so on), on how they are to be quantified and on some of their interrelationships, this is much more difficult for public policies, the purposes of which are extremely varied and, in some cases, mutually contradictory" (2006: 189-190). The orientations, logic and goals that are

reported by the actors sometimes hamper the proper implementation of policies and, in certain case, even replace the objective of supporting unemployed and job-seekers in their integration into the labour market.

One of the main orientations that some Spanish actors emphasize is related to meeting labour market demands, making policies losing sight of the individual. In particular, the Spanish expert remarks that the focus was for a while both on the employers and on the worker until 2007 when it started to be directed mainly in meeting companies' needs. According to the expert, the idea that the fight against unemployment could be pursued by combining the interests of employers and workers was replaced by the consideration that flexibility for firms and adaptability of job-seekers was the solution. It is noticeable how the representative of SERVEF expresses this orientation, using the metaphor of the 'sell of product' to describe the work of the employment services with unemployed. The word he uses belongs to the specific domain of companies, revealing that he is assuming the managerialist language and referring to a mercantilist framework. In this way, the relationship between employment services and the unemployed is not depicted in terms of provision of a service to a user, nor in terms of the construction of a path that enable the individual to develop his/her capabilities and lead the life he/she values. In this case, the representative clearly considers that the goal of employment policies is to satisfy the interests of firms, adjusting the unemployed to the wishes of the employers in an employability-perspective. The national representative of FEMP¹¹⁹ also mentions this point. Nonetheless, the representative of SAE and the representative of Caritas propose a different view. The representative of SAE considers that policies are and have to be oriented towards people. In the quotation, she expresses her own opinion on how policies should be (normative dimension), but she also refers to how in her view the Region of Andalusia works in the field of unemployment (cognitive dimension). The national representative of Caritas states the same opinion with regard to the activities of the NGO. In addition, the representative of Caritas restores the conceptualization of the old paradigm whereby the individual is a citizen and the work is a right that the Constitution should guarantee. It is worth remembering that the new paradigm has strongly criticized this view, as shown in Chapter I.

“What I am saying is that during the period that you are analysing, which is the period of the expansion, until 2007, the effort was – at least in theory – trying to combine flexibility and

¹¹⁹ Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias.

*security...Then this changed completely and it was openly said that companies needed all the flexibility as was possible*¹²⁰ (Spanish expert).

*“The current regulatory framework of active employment policies is very far from the needs of people”*¹²¹ (Representative of FEMP).

*“We cannot forget ideally that we should suit the demand of the employer; we should know that demand in advance and then ‘sell the product’, that is our unemployed”*¹²² (Representative of SERVEF).

*“Policies are for people”*¹²³ (Representative of SAE).

*“What we advocate at Caritas is that the centre is the person and all the services available in an area have to serve that person, so as to help her to find a job ¿um? (...). Public administration must guarantee the right to work as established by the Constitution”*¹²⁴ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

The responses provided by those previously interviewees converge on the idea of the individual at the centre of policies, but the idea hides an ambivalent connotation. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the expression ‘centrality of the individual’, as this statement may be misleading. At a first glance, the meaning seems to refer to the position that the individual occupies within employment policies, considering that he/she is the ultimate goal toward which programs and services are oriented. Nevertheless, a second meaning seems to emerge from an analysis of the responses given by the interviewees: the idea that the unemployed has to be responsible of his/her own occupational trajectory. According to this idea, the individual will take upon herself/himself the whole weight of policies, adapting to the market, retraining whenever the market determines

¹²⁰ “Yo lo que te estoy planteando es, efectivamente, que durante la época en la que tú te estás centrando, que es la época antes.. me refiero a la época de expansión, por decirlo así un poco..que es cuando entra todo esto.. hasta el 2007, se intentaba, al menos en teoría, buscar ese binomio, de flexibilidad/seguridad...Ahora cambia completamente. Directamente. Ya se dice abiertamente que las empresas tienen que tener toda la flexibilidad del mundo” (Spanish expert).

¹²¹ “El actual marco de regulación de las políticas activas de empleo está muy desfasado con respecto a las necesidades de la gente” (FEMP).

¹²² “No podemos olvidar que lo ideal sería adecuarse a la demanda del empleador, conocerla de antemano y luego ‘vender el producto’, nuestros desempleados” (SERVEF).

¹²³ “Si las políticas son para las personas” (SAE).

¹²⁴ “Es un poco lo que defendemos desde Cáritas, el centro es la persona, y todos los servicios que hay en un territorio están al servicio de que esa persona encuentre un empleo ¿um? (...). La Administración Pública tiene que garantizar el derecho al trabajo que fija la..la Constitución” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

that his/her knowledge is obsolete or useless. It is evident that the most of the respondents do not consider the possibility of encouraging demand-side policies, that is policies that are distant from the effort of adapting the unemployed to the labour market and increasing their employability. It is important to bear in mind that individualised interventions can be useful also for the enhancement of capabilities, but supply-oriented action only is not sufficient. Indeed, the capabilities approach focuses mainly on the importance of a capabilities-enabler context, which embeds demand-side interventions and provision of social structures for achieving the goal of real freedom (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007). Demand-side policies, that in the definition of the Spanish expert are oriented towards fostering the creation of public works and job quality as well as to stimulate the growth of social services, are not seriously taken into account as a possible alternative:

*“There were no demand-side employment policies, which means, for example, stimulating the whole issue of social services or promoting public employment in these areas, and so forth”*¹²⁵ (Spanish expert).

Other Spanish actors deem instead that another orientation of employment policies is favouring political interests, which indicates the predominance of an instrumentalist short-term perspective over the capabilities approach. In the following extracts, this orientation is manifested in two ways. Firstly, the representative of SAE considers that the general trend in employment policies is adapting active policies to the requests of politics who have to accomplish the promises of their electoral program. Politics are described to address training courses in the direction of carrying out works for the good of the city, according to a short-term perspective. The representative instead problematizes that the individuals themselves should be the goal of policies and, consequently, that training courses should be addressed in the direction of a long-term perspective for the individual and the development of his/her abilities. The discourse of the representative seems to be in line with the capabilities approach. Secondly, the representative of FEMP Valencia and the representative of SAE make evident an ‘informal’ political goal, that is linked to corruption and clientelism. Even if with heavier connotations, Italian respondents also report this aspect, as we will see later on:

“I know, but you have to marry the two things: political interests with technical issues and market needs. In all the Autonomous Communities, mayors want the electoral program to include active labour market policies. It is necessary to fix the streets, to repair the municipality ... It is

¹²⁵ “No había políticas de empleo de demanda. Por ejemplo, estimular todo el tema de los servicios sociales o fomentar el empleo público en esos ámbitos..etcétera, etcétera” (Spanish expert).

phenomenal if the churches are restored, and I think it's great, it's a goal. But our goal is neither restoring the church nor fixing the street. Students are the goal"¹²⁶ (Representative of SAE).

*"It is also true that there may be corruption, practice of favouring friends and things like this. I understand"*¹²⁷ (Representative of FEMP Valencia).

*"But it is all very flawed, this is what I want to say. There is wire pulling in all sectors"*¹²⁸ (Representative of SAE).

Observing now which orientations the Italian actors identify as those set out by employment policies during the period under analysis, we can notice a great variety. The Italian expert suggests, particularly with regard to the long-term government of the centre-right wing, that a process of liberalization of the labour market was promoted, which worked in the direction of hindering the empowerment of vulnerable groups. In her view, it reproduced asymmetrical relations, thereby increasing the power of the employers. According to the expert, this was a sort of "wild liberalization", far from the model of flexicurity:

*"The goal was the liberalization of the labour market in the old way. This means that it was not in the direction of flexicurity. Rather, in the end, it was a wild liberalization of the labour market that leads to unequal power relations within the labour market. It is obvious that unequal power relations exist, it is not a scandal, but, let's say, they lead to the dominance by the part of the employers on the part of the workers"*¹²⁹ (Italian expert).

In the view of the representative of CGIL Sicily, the orientation of policies was primarily meeting the needs of companies, according to which active policies have to be adjusted. This orientation stems from the conception that a functioning market means coping with unemployment and social vulnerability. In fact, this can be viewed as a means to make people enter the labour market, in that

¹²⁶ "Y entonces, yo sé, soy consciente, pero hay que casar las dos cosas: lo político con lo técnico y las necesidades del mercado. En todas las comunidades autónomas, todos los alcaldes quieren el programa electoral con las políticas activas de empleo: arreglar la calle, arreglar el municipio.. Si se arreglan las iglesias, fenomenal y me parece estupendo, es un objetivo. Pero el objetivo no es la iglesia ni arreglar la calle. El objetivo es el alumno" (SAE).

¹²⁷ "También es verdad que puede haber corruptela y puede haber amiguismo y cosas. Eso lo entiendo" (FEMP Valencia).

¹²⁸ "Pero es que está todo muy viciado, es lo que te quiero decir. Y estamos con el enchufismo en todos los sectores" (SAE).

¹²⁹ "L'obiettivo era la liberalizzazione vecchia maniera del mercato del lavoro, ma vecchia maniera, quindi non la flexicurity, ma la liberalizzazione, per cui sostanzialmente poi alla fine... una liberalizzazione selvaggia del mercato del lavoro che porta dei rapporti di forza diseguali sul mercato del lavoro; è ovvio che vi siano, non fa scandalo, ma porta ad uno strapotere della parte, diciamo così, della parte datoriale rispetto alla parte dei lavoratori" (Italian expert).

satisfying firms' requests means facilitating unemployed to enter the labour market. Also the representative of the Sicily Region and the representative of UIL Tuscany seem to indicate that the policy orientation was the integration of people into the labour market. Occupability and employability represent the aims of policies in the view of the representatives, revealing that such orientation is in line with the EES. However, the interest for making people achieve what they value remains in the background. In the following extract of the representative of Sicily Region, similarly to the Spanish case, we can note the ambivalent expression "the subject at the center of policies" as well as the emphasis on the employability perspective oriented to the idea of "work first" without considering the recipient's enhancement of capabilities. Again, the supply-side employment policies orientation prevails:

*"It would be important to start from the needs of companies and try to meet them through more appropriate training strategies"*¹³⁰ (Representative of CGIL Sicily).

*"The goal was definitely to make these subjects to emerge from their unemployment status and place them in the labour market (...). The goal was to put the subject at the center of all policies, it was to deliver active policies"*¹³¹ (Representative of Sicily Region).

*"We have appreciated the evolution of this strategy aimed at increasing employment and people's employability"*¹³² (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

Another orientation that is outlined with regard to the period under analysis – or at least for part of it – refers to the technical objective of tuning the new employment policies. Indeed, as stated by the national representative of UPI, the first phase following the introduction of the concept of active policies was dedicated to experiment the instruments and networking of integrated services. The representative justifies this phase, since the aim was to teach officials who operated in the labour market how to manage active policies to. According to him, it was only later on that employment integration of the unemployed into the labour market became the new objective:

¹³⁰ "Sarebbe importante partire dai bisogni di quelle aziende e cercare di rispondere ai bisogni dell'azienda con una formazione più adeguata" (CGIL Sicily).

¹³¹ "L'obiettivo era quello sicuramente di fare emergere questi soggetti dallo stato di disoccupazione e di collocarli (...), poi era quello di mettere il soggetto al centro di tutte le politiche, era quello di erogare la politica attiva" (Sicily Region).

¹³² "Abbiamo, come posso dire, apprezzato l'evoluzione di questa strategia finalizzata alla crescita occupazionale, al raggiungimento di obiettivi di occupabilità delle persone" (UIL Tuscany).

*“Increasing employment rates was not always a priority (...); in this initial phase, it was necessary to organize the ‘machine’ as well as assessing the effectiveness of the instruments employed. This phase was then replaced by another one, during which there were few interventions that nonetheless were more target-oriented”*¹³³ (Representative of UPI at national level).

It is also noticeable the statement of the national representative of CGIL, who deems that the orientation of policy results unclear due to the absence of a guiding logic. In his view, this had as effect a considerable wasting of resources and inefficiency. As in the Spanish case, it is evident a short-term perspective that leads policies to comply with partial interests:

*“The Italian system of incentives is totally devoid of rationality, because it is the product of an overlap without criteria of measures over the years; so, lots of money are spent, millions, but with no criterion, or purpose; therefore, often this also give way to allocative inefficiencies and even to political clientelism, or embezzlement, as stressed by economists”*¹³⁴ (Representative of CGIL at national level).

Some Italian respondents reckon that employment policies had other orientations. These orientations were neither explicit nor explainable, but everybody was aware of them, as they related to clientelism and personal interests. This aspect emerges with particular intensity in the Italian interviews, and especially among the Sicilian trade union respondents. This aspect is reported with a higher accentuation in comparison to the Spanish actors. In more detail, the representative of CGIL Sicily states that the *“clientelistic machine”*¹³⁵ (Representative of CGIL Sicily) has been placed at the centre of the political objectives. Thus, policies seem to have not taken any direction pertinent to the needs of the individual; rather, they seem to have responded to *ad hoc* requests with clientelistic connotation and disconnected from the needs of the unemployed:

¹³³ “Non sempre l’obiettivo dell’occupazione (...) era al primo posto; in questa fase bisognava organizzare la macchina e verificare anche la correttezza o meno degli strumenti poi che venivano utilizzati. Questa fase si è andata poi a sostituire con una fase successiva, in cui gli interventi si sono specializzati di più sono stati magari meno vari ma un po’ più finalizzati” (UPI at national level).

¹³⁴ “Il sistema italiano degli incentivi è totalmente privo di razionalità, perché è il prodotto di un sovrapporsi senza criterio di misure nel corso degli anni; per cui si spendono un sacco di soldi, si spendono milioni di euro, senza però un criterio, senza un indirizzo e pertanto spesso queste sono anche fonti - dicono gli economisti - di inefficienze allocative e anche di clientela e di malversazione” (CGIL at national level).

¹³⁵ “macchina clientelare” (CGIL Sicily).

*“Social partners have barely been listened, favouring the logic of a deteriorate clientelistic political control”*¹³⁶ (Representative of CISL Sicily).

*“[This is] a clientelistic system in the hands of politicians (...). In this region, clientelistic and electoral interests have been put at the centre. Training is not oriented towards people’s actual needs, because if the training centre is also where a certain deputy establishes her/his own political secretariat, then clearly the needs of the centre are going to be altogether different”*¹³⁷ (Representative of CGIL Sicily).

*“The trouble is that the labour market is not working, so we have no clue about where we should direct people; the labour market has been overloaded with courses that are often detached from actual labour demands and which are useful only for the agency promoting them or for politicians”*¹³⁸ (Representative of CISL Tuscany).

In addition, the representative of Italia Lavoro highlights another orientation with regard to the Sicilian situation. The question that the representative problematizes is that policies are not oriented towards workers, nor firms, but towards those who implement the policies themselves. This situation concerns in particular the case of Sicily, where the whole training system is depicted to be oriented to the survival of the professionals more than to the advantage of the users. This could affect the practical implementation of actions, since it could be primarily aimed at proving its effectiveness in terms of quantity in the short run, without really tackling the enduring difficulties of vulnerable individuals. In fact, achieving certain quantitative goals set by the ESF or the national/regional government can at times replace the objective of the improvement of individuals’ well-being, especially that of the weakest cohorts:

“If you analysed the Sicilian training offer, you would not see a training offer that takes into account the production system; you would not see trainers who deal with courses for designers, plumbers, welders and accountants. (...) This is due to the fact that, unfortunately, training is an

¹³⁶ “Hanno ascoltato poco le parti sociali, hanno più favorito la logica del controllo politico deteriore clientelare” (CISL Sicily).

¹³⁷ “Un sistema che è clientelare in mano alla politica (...). Questa è una regione che ha messo al centro interessi clientelari e elettorali; la formazione professionale non è orientata ai bisogni reali perchè se nell’ente di formazione c’è la segreteria politica del deputato X è chiaro che i bisogni saranno di tutt’altro genere” (CGIL Sicily).

¹³⁸ “Perchè non c’è un mercato del lavoro che funzioni e quindi non sappiamo dove indirizzare le persone; viene massificato con dei corsi che molte volte sono svincolate dalla richiesta vera, ma servono all’agenzia che fa il lavoro o al politico di turno” (CISL Tuscany).

end in itself. It is not [determined] (...) by the needs of the market (...), but by the needs of survival of the structures delivering it”¹³⁹ (Representative of Italia Lavoro).

In synthesis, the Spanish interviews focus their attention on two main orientations that employment policies have been pursuing, in their view. The main orientation that Spanish interviews belonging to public bodies identify is related to meeting labour market demands, which makes evident the conception that it constitutes a solution for tackling unemployment and social vulnerability. Nonetheless, with regard to the period under analysis, the respondents highlight the attempt of considering individuals’ need for security as well as the effort for taking care of the most vulnerable people. However, the focus on companies makes the expression ‘centrality of the individual’ that the actors often state ambivalent. Indeed, such an expression includes two opposite meanings. On the one hand, it refers to the consideration of the individual as the ultimate end of all policies, but on the other hand it refers to making the individual adapt to the continuous and changing labour market demands, according to a strong employability perspective. This perspective is in opposition to the capability approach that considers that the labour market and the individual have to converge in the same direction and that people cannot bring the weight of the entire employment strategy. The same ambiguity of the expression can be detected also among Italian actors. Another orientation that the Spanish interviewees individuate is favouring political interests, with a slight emphasis to the clientelistic institutional relations. Such instrumentalist and short-term orientation strongly contrasts with the assumptions of the capabilities approach. Italian interviewees report a greater variety of goals that in their view employment policies have been following in comparison to the Spanish respondents. One of the orientation carried out by the long-term government of the centre-right wing in the period under analysis is the liberalization of the labour market. Another orientation is meeting the needs of companies that can be interpreted as a way to pursue occupability and employability. The emphasis of the interviewees on the employability perspective recalls the European influence of the EES. Italian respondents also outline technical objectives of tuning the new employment policies and even a general lack of a guiding logic, with an unclear or absent plan to follow. Besides, some of the respondents refer to hidden orientations related to the issue of clientelism and personal interests. Sicilian respondents especially denounce this aspect. Finally, again regarding the Sicilian situation, another orientation of employment policies is reported to be the survival of those workers who are committed to implementing policies,

¹³⁹ “Si potrebbe proprio analizzare l’offerta formativa siciliana, lei non vedrà un’offerta formativa che guarda al sistema produttivo, lei non vedrà formatori che si occupano di progettisti o corsi, che so, di idraulici, di saldatori, di ragionieri, (...) perché purtroppo la formazione è fine a sé stessa, cioè non [determinata] (...) dall’esigenza del mercato ma (...) direttamente dalle esigenze di sopravvivenza delle strutture che la erogano” (Italia Lavoro).

which reveals a different logic. Thus, the delivery of policies is no longer an instrument and an aid – a conversion factor, in Sen’s view – for the recipients, rather an end in itself. Observing the extracts of the Spanish and Italian respondents, we can see the actors’ representations of policy orientations. Some of these orientations are in a way connected to the logic of growth of possibilities for individuals, probably linked to the assumption that meeting the requests of the labour market also means providing opportunities to all the employed and unemployed, and not only to employers. Other orientations are simply directed to create advantages for small groups of people. For the Italian case, the variety of orientations underlined seems also to take the form of an absence of policy direction, since each stakeholder seems to follow, thanks to employment policies, his/her own objectives. No capabilities orientation is connected with such short-term policies lacking of a specific occupational plan that emerges from the representations of the interviewees.

9.4 Underlying assumptions of the cognitive and normative framework

To better understand the Spanish and Italian employment policies, it is necessary to analyse also the underlying assumptions of the cognitive framework, namely the systems of ideas and socially shared representations set on the basis of policies. Indeed, the definition of what constitutes the ‘unemployed’, the ‘work’, the ‘worker’ and the role of the State contributes to identifying the informational basis of the public policies, which allows us to comprehend if such definitions can be considered close to a capability approach. The very question is proposed by Bonvin and Farvaque (2005b): which kind of information (needs, lack of income, merit, motivation, past behaviour, and so on) is explicitly or implicitly considered as relevant when designing active labour market programmes and assessing job-seekers’ circumstances? Furthermore, we have to bear in mind that the definition of the concepts have undergone relevant changes over time, partly as a result of the paradigmatic shift that has occurred in Europe during the last twenty years.

As far as the conceptualization of the ‘*unemployed*’ is concerned, the Spanish representative of CCOO at national level clearly describes the change occurred in Spain, depicting the new profile of the unemployed. While the unemployed in the past were mainly old male people with family responsibilities that had gained the right for benefits, the unemployed now are young people, women and immigrants with no access to unemployment compensation:

“Our system of unemployment benefits is designed for the crisis of the ‘80s and early ‘90s when people spent the whole lifetime in the labour market and generated a total compensation. Moreover, they were old. In fact, our unemployment benefits are designed for over-45 with family

*responsibilities and over-52 people who already have a permanent subsidy to be engaged with retirement (...). Now there is a new type of unemployed people. Indeed, many of these new unemployed people are women who have joined in recent years the labour market, immigrants and young people. These people hardly engage with a subsidy for over-45 or over-52. Therefore, we do believe that the system should be reviewed*¹⁴⁰ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

The Italian representative of the employment agencies association Assolavoro at national level highlights a rethinking of the concept, according to which the unemployed is no longer someone awaiting for a job, rather is an active subject who has to be helped in his/her process of activation:

*“[It is developing] the idea of a social program oriented not only to the unemployed as we intended them until ten or fifteen years ago, that is those who remained out of work because their company were in crisis. The social program has to be also oriented to the concept of unemployed, defined as a worker with a transitional professional path and with a lot of employers. In this way, the [new] unemployed can somehow be protected in times when they are not working and cannot have access to the traditional protection”*¹⁴¹ (Representative of Assolavoro at national level).

The new conceptualization of the unemployed as an active actor has important consequences in the case an unemployed is not available to be activated, insofar as an inactivable unemployed in theory would not deserve to receive social protection and unemployment benefits. The representative brings this logic to the extreme, which entails that if the unemployed is available to be active then “exist” and “receive benefits”. The national representative of UPI seems to support this assumption of the new paradigm, as we read in the successive quotation. Nonetheless, the capabilities approach “insists on the universal provision of basic social benefits that cannot be made conditional upon the recipient’s behaviours and willingness to collaborate” (Orton, 2011: 357). This issue will be better explored in chapter XI.

¹⁴⁰ “Nuestro sistema de prestaciones por desempleo está más pensado para la crisis de los años ‘80 y primeros ‘90, que eran gente que llevaban toda la vida en el mercado de trabajo, que habían generado prestación contributiva total, eran gente..eh.. con más años. De hecho nuestros subsidios de desempleo están muy pensados para la gente.. para los mayores de 45 años con responsabilidades familiares, mayores de 52 años, que ya tienen un subsidio permanente hasta que enganchan con la jubilación (...). Ahora es otro tipo de gente desempleada. Son muchas mujeres que se han incorporado en los últimos años al mercado de trabajo, mucha población inmigrante, gente joven, tanto mujeres como inmigrantes son gente más joven que difícilmente engancha con un subsidio de mayores de 45 años o de mayores de 52 años, y por tanto, nosotros, sí que creemos que se debe revisar el sistema” (CCOO at national level).

¹⁴¹ “[Si sta sviluppando] l’idea di un percorso sociale che possa non soltanto andare incontro al disoccupato come lo avevamo concepito noi fino a dieci quindici anni fa, cioè chi restava senza lavoro perché la sua azienda nella quale lavorava da anni era andata in crisi, ma al concetto di disoccupato, inteso come lavoratore all’interno di un percorso di vita professionale mobile e con più datori di lavoro, che possa in qualche modo essere tutelato nei momenti nei quali non presta la propria attività e si trova scoperto dalle classiche tutele” (Assolavoro at national level).

*“If [a proposal for active programs] is rejected, then apparently I am called to consider the subject refusing it as not really unemployed, or, in any case as somebody who is not worthy of public protection offered by active policies. This is a key principle of the [new] welfare system: you exist, you are cared for [by the welfare system], you receive benefits exclusively on condition that you are willing to be active. This is the concept of flexicurity of the last ten years”*¹⁴² (Representative of UPI at national level).

Following the logic of the active policies, Spanish and Italian representatives at regional level agree that the unemployed is in the way to become a professional job-seeker. In particular, the Italian representative of the Tuscany Region uses words that may recall a sporting language (Cuvardic, 2004), distinguishing between the “amateur” and the “professional” unemployed. This language hints thus at a competitive world, as it is the labour market. As the following quotes illustrates, the representatives have assumed the cognitive basis of the paradigm of activation:

*“The employee is also encouraged to not just sit at home waiting for someone who calls him/her, but to be actually active. This is a substantial change in the mind-set, whereby the unemployed person must be a professional. No one can be an amateur unemployed. Being unemployed requires some level of professionalization”*¹⁴³ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

*“Look at this expression: ‘his working life as unemployed’”*¹⁴⁴ (Representative of SAE).

One of the most relevant aspects to observe for a better comprehension of the conceptualization of the unemployed is if respondents are oriented to identifying the unemployed as the only responsible ones for their own situation. Indeed, the unemployed can be defined as those who are facing the difficulties set by a complex labour markets or, conversely, as those who are not willing to work and are lacking in personal and professional skills. In the first case, the attribution of responsibility is mainly external. In this case, the general idea is that the unemployed should be helped and protected with the support of employment policies. In the second case, the attribution of

¹⁴² “Nel momento in cui [la proposta di politica attiva] viene rifiutata, mi determina il fatto che io dovrei cancellare o non considerare realmente disoccupato, o comunque non soggetto a tutela pubblica attraverso le politiche attive, colui che le rifiuta. E’ un principio di base del sistema di welfare per il lavoro: cioè tu esisti, sei tutelato, ricevi gli ammortizzatori, se sei disponibile ad essere attivo. Questa è la concezione della flexicurity degli ultimi dieci anni” (UPI at national level).

¹⁴³ “Il lavoratore viene anche appunto stimolato a non stare a casa ad aspettare che qualcuno lo chiami, ma ad essere effettivamente attivo; sarebbe un supporto notevole al cambio di mentalità (...), per cui ormai un disoccupato deve essere un professionista. Non si fa un disoccupato dilettante, fare il disoccupato va fatto con professionalità” (Tuscany Region).

¹⁴⁴ “Fíjate, su vida laboral como desempleado..” (SAE).

responsibility is mainly internal and the individual is considered 'accountable' of his/her situation. We will now look at which of these two tendencies prevail among Spanish and Italian interviewees, although the change of paradigm has exacerbated the second much more than the first. In fact, the new paradigm focuses on the restoration of the individual capacity to work taking into account personal characteristics. This entails the shift from a welfare centered on paying cash compensation provided on the basis of citizenship or of previous payment record to a welfare in which the benefit payment is conditional upon the adequate behaviour of individuals and their attempts to quickly re-enter the labour market. As Bonvin and Farvaque highlight (2007), reporting Handler's thought (2003), the new paradigm of the activation is centred on principles of contractualisation and conditionality that focus on behavioural requirement, compromising the sense of social citizenship. However, as Bonvin and Farvaque state, "the development of capabilities is not only an individual responsibility, but also and more prominently an issue of building adequate social structures" (2007: 55). In fact, social structures act as social conversion factors, allowing individuals to convert resources in valuable opportunities for their professional integration.

Looking at how the Italian actors construct the unemployed and the causes of his/her situation, we observe that the Italian interviewees disagree on this point. In this regard, also the Italian expert supports two points of view. She believes that society has not performed its duty and that individuals have been denied the right of work and she attributes this conception to the European Social Model and the EES. Concurrently, she seems to resize this belief in the light of the European policies, stating that individuals must not only seek a new job, but they have also to construct their own active identity:

"In my opinion, the European Employment Strategy, and the European vision more generally, reflects what has been defined – and unfortunately has not been applied – the European Social Model, in which there are rights; the unemployed is seen as a person who is denied a right, and must therefore be protected. Here active policies come (...). There is a feeling that if one is unemployed, [this means that] the society has not done well its duties, identifying employment opportunities, training people (...). It is not the fault of the person, but the person must understand that she/he must activate his/herself. European policies have brought forward the concept that there is a right of individuals that the society has to accomplish. But also, the individuals must activate themselves (...), must be aware... Indeed, also in the vocational guidance there is great attention to

*extra-curricula skills, self-confidence and the construction of an active identity by subjects*¹⁴⁵ (Italian expert).

It is extremely interesting to observe the position of trade unions in this regard. Indeed, the representative of CISL at national level believes that persons seldom prefer to wait instead of looking for a job, given that, according to his expression, they act as “normal persons”. Consequently, he contributes to the definition of the normative framework in terms of activation. By contrast, the representative of the CISL at regional level seems to conceive the unemployed diversely. In his view, the stationary situation of the unemployed has to be attributed mainly to their indisposition to looking for a job. The national representative of UIL assumes an intermediate position, whereas the national representative of CGIL problematizes the fact that the general idea spread in society is that the individual is the only one who has to be blamed for her/his condition as unemployed. The representative also considers that this opinion has been strengthened over time:

*“I think no normal person can really feel happy receiving unemployment benefits (...), with the exception of very few people who perhaps are willing to stay home and do nothing at all (...). But people do try out one way or another to find a job, in order to exercise the right or the necessity or the choice to do things”*¹⁴⁶ (Representative of CISL at national level).

*“Yes, there are many unemployed people who do not want to go to work, but [this] is only partially true”*¹⁴⁷ (Representative of UIL at national level).

*“An unemployed who wants to find a job slams and seeks a job on his own with the usual system of the family network; and there are those who just take a rest”*¹⁴⁸ (Representative of CISL Tuscany).

¹⁴⁵ “Qui, secondo me, nella Strategia Europea per l’Occupazione, e più in generale nella visione europea, si riflette quello che è stato definito, e purtroppo non è mai stato realizzato, il Modello Sociale Europeo, in cui ci sono dei diritti; il disoccupato è visto come un soggetto a cui è stato negato un diritto e quindi va tutelato; ed ecco le politiche attive per l’occupazione (...). C’è la sensazione che se uno è disoccupato, [significa che] c’è una società che non ha svolto bene i suoi compiti, identificando le possibilità di impiego, formando le persone con le competenze ecco...(...): non è colpa della persona, ma la persona deve capire che si deve attivare. Le politiche europee hanno portato avanti questo concetto che c’è un diritto soggettivo a cui la società deve rispondere, ma che il soggetto deve attivarsi (...), deve prendere coscienza..Tanto è vero che anche nell’orientamento al lavoro, c’è molta attenzione alle competenze anche fuori del lavoro che uno ha, alla self-confidence, alla costruzione di una identità attiva da parte dei soggetti” (Italian expert).

¹⁴⁶ “Io penso che ogni persona normale non sia contenta di stare in cassa integrazione (...), quindi, salvo pochi a cui gli va bene anche stare a casa a far niente, pochi, pochissimi (...); però la gente cerca di fare delle cose per trovarsi un lavoro, quindi esercitare quel diritto o quella necessità anche di scelta di dover fare delle cose” (CISL at national level).

¹⁴⁷ “Sì, ci sono disoccupati che molti non vogliono andare a lavorare, ma [questo] in parte è vero in parte no” (UIL at national level).

*“Although this ideology is never made explicit, it is well alive in people’s mind that the unemployed is responsible for his/her own condition; therefore, it is the duty of society to ensure that the control over this swindler is absolutely compelling”*¹⁴⁹ (Representative of CGIL at national level).

The national representative of Caritas Italy considers that this individual-focused view is even stronger in the case of minorities or immigrants, to such an extent that it is not only a matter of skills and ability, but also of morality and subjectivity:

*“For such people, it becomes a kind of moral discourse, not only related to their skills but also to their abilities and their desire to enter the labour market, and so on...”*¹⁵⁰ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Italy).

Looking at how the Spanish actors construct the unemployed and the causes of his/her situation, the national representative of UGT¹⁵¹ points out that an overly liberal philosophy introduced in Europe by the new paradigm of activation has led to grow the responsibility on the part of the unemployed. The representative problematizes the assumption that this increase of responsibility entails that the unemployed have to be shamed of their condition. This construction has strong consequences on how individuals receiving unemployment benefits are perceived and the ratio according to which the social protection has to be provided. Indeed, if the fault of the condition of unemployment has to be attributed to the individual and on his/her competences and attitudes, then he/she has to be controlled and has to accept any job offers, ending the receipt of social protection. In the opinion of the representative of UGT, public employment services have especially assumed this view, as we will see again later on in this paragraph. According to the Spanish expert, the idea that unemployment benefits would discourage the search of jobs, despite the small amount of benefits provided, is part of a conservative position. The expert also believes that this idea falls within an individualizing European discourse that focuses the attention and the intervention on the person and his/her actions. The idea is strongly linked to the concept of employability promoted by

¹⁴⁸ “Il disoccupato che ha voglia di trovare un lavoro si sbatte e cerca lavoro per conto suo con il solito sistema familiare della rete amicale; e c’è chi si adagia. E questo penso sia non solo in Italia, ma un po’ in tutte le parti” (CISL Tuscany).

¹⁴⁹ “Un’ideologia non esplicitata, ma assolutamente presente che la responsabilità della condizione di disoccupato sta nel disoccupato stesso; e quindi è dovere della collettività fare sì che il controllo su questo lestofante sia assolutamente stringente” (CGIL at national level).

¹⁵⁰ “...diventando anche un discorso morale o moralistico rispetto a queste persone, non soltanto rispetto alle competenze ma anche alla capacità, volontà di entrare nel mercato del lavoro o quant’altro” (Caritas at national level, Italy).

¹⁵¹ Unión General de Trabajadores (Spanish trade union).

the activation paradigm. Also, the Spanish expert points out that recently individual accountability with regard to the state of unemployment and the attribution of guilt to the unemployed in relation to the perception of subsidies has heightened. The fact that both the Spanish expert and the national representative of UGT problematize the assumption of blaming the individual hints their position in considering “unemployment” a social responsibility. López-Andreu et al. (2010) also state this view, according to which unemployment is a collective risk that has to be socially faced.

“These are issues that have arisen especially in recent times. It is an excessively liberal philosophy coming from Europe, according to which somehow the unemployed has to be blamed. That is, if you have no job, you’ve done something. So, the way of looking people who are receiving unemployment benefits and all policies that have been taking place so far is focused on the idea of ‘control’: do this activity, either it suits perfectly to your abilities and knowledge or not, otherwise unemployment benefits will be taken away from you. As you are receiving unemployment benefits, you have to seek a job. You cannot be receiving benefits for 12 months. If you are not working, it is your fault. Public employment services have been assuming – I do not know whether consciously or unconsciously – that the unemployed is to be held responsible for her/his situation”¹⁵² (Representative of UGT at national level).

“Keep in mind the context where this discourse develops. Indeed, all these practices are implemented in a context of strong job creation. Therefore, there was not much blame (...). [It is] a typical conservative discourse, according to which unemployment benefits make people not seeking employment (...), although its roots are in the European elements of flexibility, activation, etc., etc.. We can say that this discourse was more or less dormant until suddenly has exploded (...). Now there is a real blaming of the unemployed as well as of the employee (...). It is an ideological discourse on employability because, if you notice, is a very individualizing discourse that is strongly focused on the individual. This does not mean of course that training people is not important, but that alone is not enough (...). [The discourse was that] the risk of being unemployed is the individual’s fault. It is neither because of the productive structure, nor for the role of the

¹⁵² “Son temas que han venido sobre todo en los últimos tiempos, un poco una filosofía procedente de Europa, excesivamente liberal... donde de alguna manera se trata de.. de culpabilizar al desempleado de que no tiene trabajo. Es decir, si tú no tienes trabajo algo habrás hecho. Entonces, esa manera de enfocar la gente que está cobrando prestaciones por desempleo, de alguna manera todas las políticas o todas las ideas que se han venido dando hasta ahora es la de control, control, eh... hacer esa actividad porque si no le quitan el desempleo, se adapte o no se adapte perfectamente a sus... capacidades y a sus conocimientos, pero, como está cobrando el desempleo, usted se tiene que colocar y buscar empleo. Es decir...usted no puede estar 12 meses cobrando la prestación porque si no encuentra trabajo el culpable es usted (...). Pues que por parte de los servicios públicos de empleo, han ido asumiendo, no sé si de manera consciente o inconsciente, han ido asumiendo que la responsabilidad última en la búsqueda de empleo es del desempleado” (UGT at national level).

*State, nor for companies' responsibility (...). It was a way to blame [the unemployed receiving benefits] and to say 'Hey, people who are receiving unemployment benefits are lazy and unwilling to work; and they are living thanks to [these benefits]'*¹⁵³ (Spanish expert).

Observing the position of trade unions, we notice a strong agreement at national and regional level. It is thought that the unemployed would rather not stay in his/her own condition for too long and that he/she is actually willing to work. Also the regional representative of SAE agrees, stating that the public service he represents assume this vision as unquestionable. Nonetheless, his position seems to be more infirm than that of the trade union representatives, since he suggests that in the end the behaviour of individuals demonstrates the disposition to work, to be active and to look for a job. In this sense, he confirms the discourse of the national representative of UGT we saw in the previous extract, which stated that the individual-moralistic view has enhanced to be absorbed by the public employment services:

*"Nobody wants to be unemployed. Okay, you may have some exceptions, that is, people who do not care or feel comfortable about receiving welfare benefits, then reenter the labour market for a while and go back to receiving benefits again. Still, this is unusual..."*¹⁵⁴ (Representative of UGT Valencia).

*"People want to work. That's a principle. We must start from this basis: people want to work"*¹⁵⁵ (Representative of UGT at national level).

¹⁵³ "Insisto, ten en cuenta el contexto de que todo este discurso.. eh.. se implementa... todas estas prácticas se implementan en un contexto de fuerte creación de empleo. De mucha creación de empleo. Con lo cual, digamos, no había tanta culpabilización (...). [Es] un discurso típico del ámbito conservador, de que las prestaciones por desempleo sirven para que la gente no busque empleo (...), aunque tenía sus raíces en todos esos elementos.. europeos de flexibilidad, de activación, etcétera, etcétera. Digamos que se mantenía más o menos latente hasta que de repente ha estallado (...). Ahora sí que hay una verdadera culpabilización del desempleado por.. y también de los empleados (...). Pero vamos, fundamentalmente es un discurso muy ideológico el de la empleabilidad porque, si te fijas, es un discurso muy.. individualizante. Muy de centrarlo en el individuo. Esto no quiere decir, evidentemente, que formar a las personas no sea importante, pero no basta solo con eso (...). [El discurso es que] el riesgo de no tener empleo es culpa de.. es del individuo. No es ni de la estructura productiva, no es el papel que pueda tener el Estado, no es responsabilidad de las empresas.. (...). Era un modo de culpabilizar. De decir, "Oye, es que la gente que cobra las prestaciones por desempleo son unos vagos que no quieren trabajar y que están viviendo de.. [esas]" (Spanish expert).

¹⁵⁴ "Nadie quiere estar desempleado. Vale, entre comillas, puede ser que haya algún caso excepcional, que le dé igual o que está fenomenal cobrando la prestación, trabajando tres meses, vuelve a cobrar.. pero es lo menos" (UGT Valencia).

¹⁵⁵ "La gente quiere trabajar. Ese es un principio. Hay que partir de esa base. La gente quiere trabajar" (UGT at national level).

*“We take for granted the fact that everyone is good. Everyone wants to work, but, of course, the actions carried out throughout the working life as unemployed indicate us whether the person wants to work or does not”*¹⁵⁶ (Representative of SAE).

The national representative of Caritas Spain believes that the shift from passive to active policies stresses individual attitudes and personal characteristics, emphasizing the idea of the individual accountability for one’s own condition:

*“The emphasis is more on attitudinal changes and on the idea that it is necessary to overcome a series of personal shortcomings in order to be incorporated into the labour market ... Do you see what I mean?”*¹⁵⁷ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

The rise of the crisis in both Spain and Italy seems to have enforced the problem of unemployment and poverty at a systemic level, related to industrial and economic policies and not tied solely to personal attitudes. In the view of the Italian representative of Caritas at a national level, this has led to the weakening of some stereotypes related to the issue of work in Italy, like the assumption that immigrants “steal” jobs of citizens. The same cannot be said of Spain, where, on the contrary, fears surrounding possible xenophobic reactions due to the current economic crisis have grown, in the view of the Spanish representative of Caritas at national level:

*“If you think about it, the communicative force of the theme of the immigrant “stealing” (in double inverted commas) someone’s job was much stronger in the last few years than it is today”*¹⁵⁸ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Italy).

“In consequence of the shift from passive to active policies, during the economic boom, people who had more difficult in accessing employment were blamed; in times of crisis, we fear that these

¹⁵⁶ “Pensamos que todo el mundo es bueno ¿eh?...de entrada, que todo el mundo quiere trabajar, pero claro, las acciones que va haciendo a lo largo de su vida laboral, como desempleado (...) eh..subirlo a nuestro sistema..eh.. pues nos dicen que sí que quiere o no quiere..” (SAE).

¹⁵⁷ “Se incide más en cambios actitudinales, en que hay que subsanar una serie de carencias personales que tiene para que se incorpore al mercado laboral... A ver si me explico yo” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

¹⁵⁸ “Se ci fa caso, sul piano della comunicazione il tema dell’immigrato che virgolette virgolette “ruba il lavoro”, era paradossalmente più forte alcuni anni fa che adesso” (Caritas at national level, Italy).

persons not only are blamed, but even persecuted”¹⁵⁹ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

The representation of the unemployed is closely linked to the definition of the *role of the State*. As shown in Chapter I and in Chapter II, the paradigmatic shift produced relevant transformations in the relationship between the individual and the State by promoting the emphasis on individual responsibility and, by consequence, the implicit reduction of the State’s responsibility. The following section will analyse if such transformations are present in the actors’ discourses and how the interviewees construct the relationship between State and individuals.

According to the Spanish expert, the main transformation concerned the conceptualization of rights and duties. Indeed, in his view, the introduction of the logic of active policies has shifted the attention to individual obligations. Social protection is no longer seen as a right, but as a compromise between the unemployed and the State. The national representative of Caritas states that the right to work should be guaranteed by the State, as it is foreseen in the Constitution and as it was before the paradigmatic shift. The representative of the regional public services in Valencia points out that the State has become the provider of active instruments that have to support the unemployed, helping them in the dynamic search of employment. Still, he stresses that the responsibility of finding a new job relies on the individual. The fact that representatives at the regional level assume this point of view emerges often in this paragraph. As shown in the following extracts, there is not a full agreement on the new conceptualization of the role of the State:

*“The shift was from a situation of rights to a situation of rights and obligations, increasingly oriented to the side of obligations...This is the activation discourse...”*¹⁶⁰ (Spanish expert).

*“The Constitution clearly defines who is responsible for employment in our country, which is the State”*¹⁶¹ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

*“They are meant to give a little boost, but it is the individual who is supposed to go out and find her/his job...”*¹⁶² (Representative of SAE).

¹⁵⁹ “Si de las políticas pasivas se pasó a las políticas activas, en las activas, con la bonanza económica se ha llegado a culpabilizar a las personas que más difícil acceso tienen al empleo; nos podemos encontrar ahora, en tiempos de crisis, con el gran peligro de que no solo se las culpabilice, sino que encima se las persiga” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

¹⁶⁰ “Eh..digamos a pasar de una situación de pleno derecho, a derecho más obligaciones..Y cada vez más orientado al lado de las obligaciones ¿no?...que es el discurso, un poco, de la activación..” (Spanish expert).

¹⁶¹ “Es decir, la Constitución fija claramente quien tiene la responsabilidad en materia de empleo en nuestro país, que es el Estado” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

According to the new paradigm, the individual has the obligation and the responsibility to participate in the actions of active policies and, above all, to accept a job offer in order to relieve public expenditures. However, the capabilities approach is not concerned with ‘welfare dependency’, since reducing material well-being cannot be conducive to the enhancement of capabilities (Bonvin and Orton, 2009; Orton, 2011). This does not mean that the individual can refuse all job offers, since the capabilities approach does not require the removal of the constraints. Rather, according to Bonvin and Farvaque (2006) the approach “advocates a fair and negotiated construction of this constrain” (Orton, 2011: 357). It is precisely in this passage that the greater conflict between the two parties – the State and the individual – takes place. Three elements converge in the relationship: 1. The feeling of guilt for depending on the State, stimulated by civil officials; 2. Individual needs and desires; 3. Appropriateness of the job offers, especially whenever the definition of ‘appropriateness’ does not match individual’s requests. The Spanish expert well describes this passage in his quotation. But, as stressed by the UGT representative at the national level, the perception that the actions planned by active policies are a duty should move to the perception that they constitute a right:

*“The individual must be employed. The responsibility lies on the individual, the risk lies on the individual...you have to accept a suitable employment, which means that your benefits are tied to fact that you have to accept whatever job there may be...”*¹⁶³ (Spanish expert).

*“Our effort is converting some feelings that people have. That is, the access to the actions has to be a worker’s right, not an obligation”*¹⁶⁴ (Representative of UGT at the national level).

The national representative of UGT problematizes the point of the trust towards the unemployed. In fact, he states that the change of paradigm have moved in the direction of an increasing State control and that the unemployed clearly perceive this attitude of the State. Moreover, he disagrees with the attitude and pushes to act in a different direction. Nonetheless, the Spanish expert specifies that the change is still awaiting a practical application:

¹⁶² “Más que nada es un poquito darte un empujoncito, pero que la persona es la que tiene que irse un poco buscándolo..” (SAE).

¹⁶³ “El individuo tiene que em.. emplearse, la responsabilidad es individual, el riesgo es individual..eh.. ; tienes que aceptar la colocación adecuada, tu prestación está ligada a que aceptes lo que sea..” (Spanish expert).

¹⁶⁴ “Lo que tratamos es de ir reconvirtiendo un poco la sensación que tiene la gente. Es decir, es el acceso a las acciones, queremos que sea un derecho del trabajador, no una obligación que le imponen al trabajador” (UGT at national level).

*“The ideal would be that the worker felt that the civil servant of the employment service is understanding her/him, while talking together, that the servant knew how the market works and what she/he has to say. The ideal would be that there was a general confidence in the unemployed. And this nowadays, unfortunately, does not exist. It does not exist. The 80% of the time the unemployed, who is sent to carry out a specific activity, feels controlled. He feels it as a control, instead of an aid to enter the labour market”*¹⁶⁵ (Representative of UGT at national level).

*“In a way, the relationship was supposed to changed. But this occurred only in theory”*¹⁶⁶ (Spanish expert).

The Italian representative of UPI Tuscany emphasizes a transformation of the relation between State and individual that has led to consider unemployment benefits as a huge cost of the State. Thus, interrupting the period of unemployment is considered urgent. According to the representative, before the introduction of the active policies, the relationship between the unemployed and the State was radically different, since the discourse around dependency was not so marked, also due to the availability of jobs in the labour market. Therefore, the State legitimized and tolerated the risk of laziness in the search for employment assumed by those who received benefits:

*“In Italy there was this conception: ‘I take six-month allowance; it is good if I find a job in the meantime, otherwise I will worry once the allowance is ceased’. If a person had this idea, he really managed to find a job at the end of the six months”*¹⁶⁷ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

The transformation consisted thus in the passage from a compensatory view of the State to more supportive policies pushing the unemployed into the search of a job. The Italian representative of UIL Sicily points out that the State has acquired the role of sustaining the unemployed during the search through the delivery of active instruments. The representative affirms the essential presence of employment policies, while moving them in a secondary position:

¹⁶⁵ “Pero que realmente el trabajador, cuando está hablando con un gestor de empleo, sepa que le están entendiendo, que sabe cómo está el mercado, que sabe lo que tiene que decir; que haya una confianza general, confianza en el desempleado. Y eso hoy, lamentablemente... no existe. No existe. El 80% de las veces el desempleado, cuando le mandan hacer una acción se siente controlado, como algo exime de control, y no como una ayuda para situarse en el mercado de trabajo” (UGT at national level).

¹⁶⁶ “En cierto modo, sí que cambiaba la relación. En teoría” (Spanish expert).

¹⁶⁷ “In Italia c’era questa concezione: ‘intanto mi prendo questi sei mesi di indennità, nel frattempo se trovo qualcosa bene altrimenti me ne preoccuperò quando è cessata’; e se una persona aveva questa idea, al termine dei sei mesi comunque il lavoro lo trovava” (UPI Tuscany).

*“Active policies are a support tool, but you cannot do without them”*¹⁶⁸ (Representative of UIL Sicily).

Differently from the Spanish case, the transformation is not perceived as an increase of the control exerted by the State on the unemployed, which is considered as lacking in the view of the national representative of CISL. This remarks the moralizing perspective of the CISL trade union, according to which individuals are responsible of their situation and therefore a form of control is needed. According to the representative of the CGIL Tuscany, as it was before for the Spanish case, the role of the State of supporting the unemployed is viewed to be only at a theoretical level:

*“Unless this mechanism [of active and passive policies] is not unified, I will never be able to say ‘be careful, my friend, you are receiving welfare benefits every month’; then, just like in the English and Danish movies, whenever you come and pick the unemployment check, I see if you really went to those three interviews or if you did the retraining I recommended you”*¹⁶⁹ (Representative of CISL at national level).

*“On a formal level there was a theoretical effort to (...) provide more support to the unemployed; on a substantial level, I would say there was nothing, zero”*¹⁷⁰ (Representative of CGIL Tuscany).

The concept of ‘work’ is another relevant factor to take into account. It is worth remembering that in the capabilities approach work can be defined as a valuable functioning, where the adjective ‘valuable’ involves also the balance between professional and personal life and not only the monetary aspect. In fact, work is first of all a form of agency (Salais, 2003). The transformation on the representation of ‘work’ is here considered for an understanding of the new Italian and Spanish cognitive framework. Firstly, the concept of work as a ‘solid’ right enshrined and established by the Constitution has shifted to the idea that work is a ‘dynamic’ right to be constructed and gained. The implications of this passage seem to be underestimated by the national representative of CISL. Indeed, he considers this passage as natural (“obviously”), failing to grasp its possible dangerous consequences:

¹⁶⁸ “La politica del lavoro è uno strumento a supporto, ma ci deve essere” (UIL Sicily).

¹⁶⁹ “Se non si unifica questo meccanismo [di politiche attive e politiche passive] io non potrò mai dire: ‘stai attento amico mio, tu tiri tutti i mesi a prenderti l’assegno di ammortizzatori sociali’; quando tu vieni a prendere l’assegno – come nei film inglesi e danesi – io approfitto per vedere se hai fatto la riqualificazione e se sei andato a quei tre colloqui dove ti avevo mandato” (CISL at national level).

¹⁷⁰ “Sul piano formale c’è stato uno sforzo puramente su base di impianto teorico per (...) garantire una maggiore assistenza; sul piano sostanziale direi zero” (CGIL Tuscany).

*“Obviously, the right to work is not given or automatic. It is an objective one should strive for, which is, indeed, rightly part of the foundations of our Constitution and should thus be supported by relevant policies (...). So, in this sense, it is a dynamic right that should be built and should indeed function as a compass orienting institutions, the labour force and enterprises”*¹⁷¹ (Representative of CISL at national level).

By contrast, the Spanish expert seems to be aware of the implications of the passage. As he points out, the passage is even more insidious, as nowadays the right to work has become a “*privilege*”, and this has important consequences in terms of individual costs. In fact, the need to be hired leads to renounce to job quality, accepting all work conditions imposed to the worker. As Fernández Rodríguez et al. state, “Consequently, precariousness is going to become standard, but it is also associated connotatively with a ‘necessary evil’ compared with a worse one (unemployment)” (2012: 163). However, according to a capabilities approach, the choice cannot be between poverty level welfare benefits and low-wage employment, since this does not provide the individuals the possibility to have a flourishing life (Orton, 2009):

*“In fact, as a political leader said: ‘You are privileged if you have a job’. And if having employment is not a right but a privilege, it means that you have to assume all work conditions, even if this entails a deterioration of your job situation. On the other side, the unemployed has to accept whatever is required of him [in the job place]”*¹⁷² (Spanish expert).

The change that took place as regards the notion of ‘work’ was not solely related to its definition, but also to its extrinsic characteristics. The disappearance of the idea of keeping the same job for an entire life span faced a strong opposition, especially in Italy, where a deep stable culture of permanent employment is noticeable in the political classes, trade unions, and the population. In the following quotation, the Italian representative of Assolavoro at national level highlights this aspect in such a way that he seems to underline the weight and the resistance of society respect to a different culture and a different ideology of the work. It is interesting to observe the use of the adverb “by now”, which in the Italian language is often tied to a negative connotation indicating a

¹⁷¹ “E naturalmente il diritto al lavoro non è dato una volta per tutte, non è automatico; è un obiettivo a cui tendere, che fa parte giustamente dei fondamenti della nostra Costituzione e ha bisogno di politiche che ne creino la fattibilità (...). Quindi, in questo senso, è un diritto dinamico che va costruito e che deve essere in qualche modo una bussola che orienta il comportamento delle istituzioni, delle forze del lavoro delle forze delle imprese” (CISL at national level).

¹⁷² “De hecho, como dijo un responsable político ‘Tener empleo es un privilegio’. Y si el tener empleo no es un derecho, sino un privilegio, significa que te tienes que.. asumir todas las.. las condiciones que te marquen, aunque impliquen un deterioro de tus condiciones de trabajo. Y por otra parte, del lado del desempleado, tienen que aceptar lo te manden, ¿no?” (Spanish expert).

sense of resignation in front of a situation that is considered inevitable or irreparable (Garzanti linguistica). By contrast, the Spanish representative of AGETT¹⁷³ at national level seems to proceed in a different direction, trying to push and legitimate the paradigm of activation in order to favour the employment agencies' interests. According to her, work cannot longer be considered solely as a source of security and stability, but has to be interpreted as an opportunity for personal enrichment and professional growth, so that people have not to be afraid of changing:

*“We used to have only one possible option, which was having a job for our whole life. A permanent job was a reference point in our culture, and that job had to last forever (...). By now, though, this is no longer the case; however, our culture and our ideology as well as the Italian interpretation of employment and job relationships are not yet adequate enough [to the change]”*¹⁷⁴ (Representative of Assolavoro).

*“Many times, people are afraid of losing their job. That is not good, because in reality changing jobs is always rewarding. It is supposed to be rewarding and allow them to evolve. What we cannot do is to stay stuck where we are because this means to protect the segment of the population that remains in its job and did not want to change, since is afraid of losing their jobs (...). All policies should be directed towards lessening people's fear to lose their job, or change job. This is it. The matter here is not just remaining in employment, but evolving professionally”*¹⁷⁵ (Representative of AGETT).

The transformations in the concept of ‘work’ bring with them changes in the concept of ‘worker’. The Italian representative of Assolavoro understands the worker as a dynamic and flexible person, who is able to move within the labour market and to meet the needs of the productive system. Even the figure of the ‘factory worker’ is no longer the same. In the opinion of the representative, the figure of the worker as someone with no roots nor clearly-defined identity and with no employers whenever she/he is hired by an agency has become established. Thus the

¹⁷³ AGETT is the national association of Spanish employment agencies.

¹⁷⁴ “Per noi esiste un percorso unico, esiste, esisteva proprio come riferimento culturale il posto fisso, esisteva il lavoro per sempre (...). Ma ormai non è più così, non è più così, però la nostra cultura la nostra ideologia sul lavoro e l'interpretazione italiana del lavoro, del rapporto di lavoro non è ancora adeguata” (Assolavoro at national level).

¹⁷⁵ “Muchas veces, la gente tiene miedo a perder el trabajo, y eso no es bueno, porque en realidad el cambio de trabajo es siempre algo enriquece.., se supone que debe ser algo enriquecedor y algo que te permita evolucionar. Lo que no podemos hacer es quedarnos todos estancados donde estamos porque entonces, lo que hacemos es que se protege un segmento de la población que se queda en su puesto de trabajo y no se quiere mover, porque también tiene miedo a perder su empleo (...). Entonces, claro, hay que, yo creo que las.. todas las políticas deben ir dirigidas a que el trabajador pierda el miedo a perder su empleo. A cambiar de empleo. Simplemente. A cambiar. Porque eso es.. o sea.. no se trata solo de permanecer en el empleo, se trata de poder evolucionar tu carrera profesional” (AGETT at national level).

representative of Assolavoro hints a growing vulnerability of the individual, due to the progressive disappearance of external reference points. It is interesting to note that the representative problematizes the negative consequence of the spread of temporary work and employment agencies, in spite of the fact that he is supposed to promote a vision that is consistent with the interests of the employment agency association. Nonetheless, as told before, the conception of ‘one life, one job’ is so deep embedded in the Italian culture that perhaps also the representative of the association of employment agencies seem to share it in a certain measure:

“The modern factory worker is a young graduate who works in call centres; nobody works in the factory any more, if not a residual minority of people (...). Workers are employed for three months in one particular company, then they spend four months in another company, then another five in yet another company, which is why there is certainly no chance that they may find their identity within the labour market. Now, I think the main problem lies in the fact that the new generations are lacking an identity – if you think of these young generations entering the labour market and having to find their own identity as a worker; who are they, really?”¹⁷⁶ (Representative of Assolavoro).

Italian actors also offer a representation of the ‘employers’. The national representative of UIL provides an image of employers, stressing their lack of transparency and morality. Indeed, in his opinion, employers tend to look for alternative solutions to the official, public, institutional and legal ones, in order to pursue their own interests:

“[This is a country] where the first thought of the employers when they wake up in the morning is scrubbing the state (...). Our employers are not saints”¹⁷⁷ (Representative of UIL at national level).

In conclusion, the new paradigm of activation has led to a re-definition of key concepts. In the Spanish case, according to one of the trade unions, the profile of the unemployed has shift from the referential category of old males with family responsibilities and the right to unemployment

¹⁷⁶ “L’operaio moderno è un ragazzo laureato che lavora nel call center, non c’entra più nessuno in fabbrica o son pochi e son residuali (...). Poi andrà a lavorare presso l’utilizzatrice alfa tre mesi, quattro mesi presso l’utilizzatore beta, cinque mesi presso l’utilizzatore gamma, per cui c’è proprio una difficoltà anche di identificarsi all’interno di un mercato del lavoro. Il problema fondamentale, secondo me, adesso è quello di una identificazione delle nuove generazioni, cioè del flusso di coloro che entrano nel mercato del lavoro, di identificarsi come lavoratore; cos’è che sono?” (Assolavoro at national level).

¹⁷⁷ “[In un paese] in cui la prima regola è quando [gli imprenditori] si svegliano la mattina è fregare lo stato (...). I nostri imprenditori mediamente non sono dei santi” (UIL at national level).

benefits to the category of the young, woman and immigrants with no access to compensatory programs. In the Italian case, the new category of unemployed is depicted in the light of his/her active identity. This category is widespread among different actors, namely the employment agency association, national and regional representative of public bodies as well as the Italian expert. This new conceptualization of the unemployed is intrinsically linked to the idea that the unemployed has to be available to be active; otherwise, his/her status as unemployed is compromised. Re-proposing the discourse of the activation, Spanish and Italian representatives at regional level agree that the unemployed has to become a professional job-seeker. Observing how the Italian actors construct the causes of the situation of the unemployed, we note a disagreement on this point, included among trade unions and even between the national and the regional level of the same trade union. According to some of the trade union respondents, the unemployed is not satisfied of his/her status and actively tries to change his/her situation, whereas other trade union respondents show a moralistic-individual view, according to which the situation of the unemployed has to be attributed mainly to his/her indisposition to look for a new job. This second position moves away from the capabilities approach that supports the co-responsibility of the individual and the society in determining the situation of people. Studying the position of Spanish national and regional trade unions, we observe instead a strong convergence with the idea that the unemployed would rather not remain in their condition and that they are actually willing to work. By contrast, Spanish representatives of the public employment services seem to be more oriented to reproduce the individual-moralistic view. Both the national representatives of Caritas Italy and Spain problematize the issue that the shift from passive to active policies stresses the individual-focused view, emphasizing the idea of the personal accountability for one's own condition. They also consider that such view is especially strong in the case of minorities and immigrants. The emphasis on individual responsibility is connected to the implicit reduction of the State's responsibility, producing relevant transformations in the relationship between the individual and the State. According to the Spanish respondents, the main transformation concerned the conceptualization of rights and duties, stressing the attention to individual obligations and, consequently, on the control exerted on him/her by the State. Both the Spanish expert and the national representative of UGT problematize the issue of the individual obligations as well as the control of the State, whereas the regional representative of SAE resized the role of the public action emphasizing individual responsibility. The representative of Caritas Spain claims for a major responsibility of the State. By contrast, according to the Italian interviewees, the transition from a compensatory view of the State to more proactive policies pushing the unemployed into the search of a job has not been flanked by the perception of an increase of the State's control. In addition, some trade union representatives

demand for a greater State control, assuming the postulate of individual responsibility. Moreover, they seem to accept that the concept of work has become a right to gain with a proper behaviour and is no longer a right defended by the Constitution. This aspect is underevaluated among Italian actors, whereas it is vigorously questioned. It is also evident in the view of Spanish and Italian respondents that the concept of work has been transformed, since the idea of keeping the same job for an entire life span is in the way of being abandoned. However, the Italian representatives, even the representative of the employment agency association, seem to defend the old idea of the permanent job, which is perceived as part of the Italian culture and system. Spanish actors do not seem to defend a vision of the world based on permanent jobs as much as the Italian actors and the representative of the employment agency association seems to welcome the transformation, pointing out the enriching value of changing jobs. It is worth remembering that according to the capability approach, the reduction of vulnerability and the promotion of individual well-being are a consequence of the fact that both possibilities, namely having a transitional work career and keeping a long-life employment, are possible. Speaking in terms of capabilities and functioning means assuming that both possibilities must be available and that people should choose the possibility most suitable to their own needs and abilities. Indeed, whenever only one of the options is available, no matter how embellished the Spanish representative of employment agency association makes it, then it is certainly going to fail to meet the actual needs of all people and the complexity of the reality. However, the informational basis of the capabilities approach seems to be partly present in Spanish and Italian interviews. In the Spanish case, this is remarkable in the refusal of attributing to the individual the responsibility of his/her condition as unemployed. This is especially evident among the trade unions who problematize the issue, whereas it is slightly less pronounced among the actors belonging to public bodies. In the Italian case, this appears to be more controversial among the actors, even between different trade unions. Also, Spanish actors seem more aware and critical in this regard than the Italian counterpart. Yet, in the view of Spanish and Italian respondents, the paradigm of activation seems to lead a new concept of worker, understood as a more dynamic and flexible person, who is able to move within the labour market and to meet the needs of the productive system. In this regard, even the Italian representative of Assolavoro states that the transitional career has important effects on people, above all on the youth, since it contributes to blur and weaken their identity as workers. Therefore, workers' certainties can only rely on their own background as they advance into the labour market, which often requires that they adapt to changing contexts. Clearly, not everyone is ready or in the position to face the challenge of actively and ceaselessly constructing his/her own identity. Indeed, the capability approach considers that the process of adaptation and change can be considered desirable if it stems from individual

choices, instead of being the only way to move forward in terms of employment. But Spanish and Italian respondents seem to not hint this precise discourse. Indeed, they do not focalize on the possibility of choice by workers to actively and continuously construct their own careers or keep a stable employment following a preference for employment stability. This interpretative framework seems to be inexistent, even at an ideal level.

9.5 Temporal dimension and overview

When using a capabilities approach, the temporal dimension is an important aspect to take into account, since “a long-term perspective is needed for the development of capabilities which cannot accommodate short-termist horizons (...). If time is considered as a resource (that is, looking forward) rather than a constraint, the job-seekers’ evaluation follows a different logic, much more respectful of the individual circumstances and conducive step-by-step social integration” (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007: 61). Nonetheless, a lack of a long-term perspective emerges from the interviews with Spanish and Italian actors.

The Italian expert denounces a way to make policies according to a short-term view. In her view, the concern of politicians to show the activities they carried out during their mandate precedes the consideration for improvements in people’s lives. Indeed, governments, which have a limited length, need to highlight their achievements in order to stand out from their predecessors for purposes of political legitimation. Instead, substantial changes, particularly those involving the cultural level, often require long-term strategies:

*“Here, we need people who understand that they have to make medium-long term policies (...). We have to make a long-term policy, which is exactly the opposite of what we are doing nowadays (...). The fault of the politicians is that they have no idea that it is necessary to make several little steps all in the same direction, since their idea is “A giant leap is going to make me famous”. The policy of one little step at a time is rejected by a great majority of them”*¹⁷⁸ (Italian expert).

Also in the Spanish case, as shown in the following extract, the national representative of CCOO acknowledges the value of long-term policies, even if he underlines that they are not regarded as a priority. One of the reasons reported is the need of the actors operating in the labour market to bring

¹⁷⁸ “Qui ci vuole gente che capisce che bisogna far politica di medio lungo raggio (...), noi dobbiamo fare una politica che è esattamente l’opposto di quella che stiamo facendo oggi (...). Questo è il difetto dei politici, che non lo sanno che devi fare tanti piccoli passi tutti in una direzione, siccome l’idea è: faccio un grande salto che si vede e mi fa bello. La politica dei piccoli passi cumulativamente in una direzione non la fa nessuno” (Italian expert).

concrete and immediate results, something that can be realized only through short-term policies. In the view of the representative, this focus, often flanked by a great attention on quantitative aspects, seems to prevail on a long-term planning that allows people to change actually and substantially their vulnerable situation. For instance, training is a tool whose benefits are especially evident over the time and that requires expensive means. Therefore, in opinion of the representative, cheap and short-term training solutions are often provided. Another reason why long-term policies are not considered a priority, as representative of the SAE reports, is linked to the general belief that the labour market is changing rapidly, which would hinder the possibility of making policy plans. However, the representative criticizes this position that, according to him, is primarily a justification. In his view, it suggests the primacy of the labour market and the will of the politicians to adapt policies to its transformations, instead of the opposite:

*“For example, all that kind of workshops for making bike, becoming cooks, or wood turners, or milling (...) are a very expensive form of training, much more expensive than setting a computer lab (...). We should develop a medium-term thinking, not only to meet ... eh ... the most urgent and immediate needs, but also to see where it is that we are going to train people ... But this orientation does not exist”*¹⁷⁹ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

*“But... do changes occur so quickly that we have not even time to make plans? No, they do not. That’s an excuse; we have to see beyond this... (...): ‘Gentlemen, we must see a little further on and to broaden our view of where everything is leading towards’”*¹⁸⁰ (Representative of SAE).

If one considers that the growth of the individual, the development of his/her potentialities, and the effort of keeping social vulnerability at distance require time and forward-looking tools, we can see how far the policies depicted by the Spanish and Italian interviewees are from a perspective of capabilities, even if the interviewees identify the short-term perspective as a limit to overcome. For the Italian expert, the policy goal so far has been *“continuing to subsist”*¹⁸¹ (Italian expert). In the view of the national representative of UGT, preventive measures have been left in the background,

¹⁷⁹ “Por ejemplo, hacer esa..ese tipo de actividad de taller de motos o de.. o de..por ejemplo cocineros, o de..torneros, fresadores.. (...) esa es una formación muy cara. Mucho más cara que poner un aula de ordenadores (...). [Tendríamos que pensar] a medio plazo, no solamente para atender ..eh.. lo más perentorio y lo inmediato, sino también para ver sobre que queremos formar a la población... Entonces, ese es el.. esa dirección tampoco existe” (CCOO at national level).

¹⁸⁰ “Pero.. ¿tan rápidamente cambia que no nos da tiempo ni si quiera de planificar? Eso no... Eso son excusas, tenemos que ver más allá (...): “Señores, tenemos que ver un poquito más allá y con un campo de visión más amplio de por dónde van las cosas” (SAE).

¹⁸¹ “...continuare a vivacchiare” (Italian expert).

producing poor results: *“There have been [short-term] plans.... (...). We’ll see the result, but that’s bread for today and hunger for tomorrow. They will not have any effect”*¹⁸² (Representative of UGT at national level). Also, short-term policies are associated with scarce possibility for facing critical situations, which is the case, according to the Spanish expert and the Italian representative of the Sicily Region, for the current financial crisis:

*“Surely, some [systems] were more prepared [to face the crisis] since they had better conditions and more possibilities; here it has been devastating, because of us and the territory. Certainly, it has been also due to the sins of the past”*¹⁸³ (Representative of Sicily Region).

*“It was a very successful model in the short term, but with very weak foundations, right? (...). If [politicians] had done a longer-term policy, probably [negative consequences] would have been less...”*¹⁸⁴ (Spanish expert).

Investing in a culture of prevention seems to be a luxury, since normally caring for the future means not having the resources to cope with the present. For this reason, the Spanish and Italian experts emphasize the need to develop a mix of short-term and long-term plans as well as of preventive measures and policies facing current social questions:

*“We should do a thoughtful plan; we should make a good mix between active and passive policies, including prevention policies and future aid”*¹⁸⁵ (Italian expert).

*“We contend that it would be important to combine short- and long-term plans”*¹⁸⁶ (Spanish expert).

Another important aspect that emerges from the analysis of some interviews to Spanish and Italian actors seems to indicate the lack of a broad and systemic view of employment policies. The expression “systemic view” refers to two main aspects. The first aspect concerns the connection

¹⁸² “Aquí ha habido planes [a corto plazo] que luego vente a mirar (...); veremos a ver el resultado, pero eso es pan pa hoy y hambre pa mañana. No van a tener ninguna incidencia” (UGT at national level).

¹⁸³ “Sicuramente ci sono dei tessuti che erano più preparati o avevano maggiori condizioni, maggiori possibilità, mentre qui è devastante anche per colpa nostra e del territorio; sicuramente anche per le colpe del passato” (Sicily Region).

¹⁸⁴ “Era un modelo muy exitoso en el corto plazo, pero con bases muy frágiles ¿no? (...). Si hubieses hecho unas políticas más a largo plazo probablemente habrías tenido menos. [efectos negativos]” (Spanish expert).

¹⁸⁵ “Bisogna fare un piano ragionato, bisogna fare un buon mix tra politiche attive e passive, tra politiche di prevenzione e aiuto successivo” (Italian expert).

¹⁸⁶ “Nosotros planteamos que deberían de combinar planes a corto y largo plazo” (Spanish expert).

between policies in different fields that proceed in the same direction, as this will avoid the creation of limited intervention and the application of single measures. The Spanish expert, the regional representative of SAE and the Italian representative of the Sicily Region agree on affirming the relevance of this view, while claiming for its lack:

*“But, of course, for that you should have carried out policies in different areas, such as education or industrial policy... and employment policy as well”*¹⁸⁷ (Spanish expert).

*“Do you know what is happening? We need to make plans. Planning is essential in all cases, and even more for the case of active policies, you know? We should make plans to make things work..”*¹⁸⁸ (Representative of SAE).

*“The Department of Economic Development should tell me which investments and development are foreseen, in the sector A rather than in sector B. Training should be organized accordingly, but this is still missing. This is what I mean when I say that there is no a system”*¹⁸⁹ (Representative of Sicily Region).

The second aspect is related to the networking of employment services that serves to better meet users' needs. Nevertheless, a comprehensive plan seems to be absent, for which the services appear to move independently without effective coordination. In fact, the Italian representative of Italia Lavoro at the national level and the representative of the Sicily Region as well as the Spanish expert and the representatives of the Andalusia Region denounce the lack of a strategy as well as of organized and articulated programs within the field of employment policies. This is especially evident in the Italian context in the case of the Sicily Region, since the Italian actors particularly agree on the importance of this point and on its lack at a practical level. Spanish actors also converge in stating the importance of planning and of the creation of a system, whereas some discordance can be detected with regard to the opinions on the state of application at the practical level, especially for the case of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia:

¹⁸⁷ “Pero claro, para eso tendrías que haber hecho unas política en diferentes ámbitos. En el ámbito educativo, en el ámbito de la política industrial... y en el ámbito de las políticas de empleo también” (Spanish expert).

¹⁸⁸ “¿Sabes lo que pasa? Que hay que planificar. Es fundamental planificar. En todo. Y más en esto de las políticas activas ¿sabes? Hay que hacer un planning y una planificación previa para que después las cosas funcionen..” (SAE).

¹⁸⁹ “L’assessorato dello sviluppo economico mi dice che si presume un investimento e quindi uno sviluppo nel settore A piuttosto che il settore B; la formazione si deve organizzare in coerenza, ma questo manca; questo voglio dire quando dico che manca un sistema” (Sicily Region).

*“Things move independently; so there is no system, we lack a network”*¹⁹⁰ (Representative of Sicily Region).

*“We have this kind of trouble: our region is late in programming and strategies (...) and activates programs in a simple, fragmented and disorganized way without having a precise strategy”*¹⁹¹ (Representative of Italia Lavoro).

*“We had all already worked when [the decentralization] was done; we already had a system. What we did then was to integrate all the competences. This now require our responsibility for coordinating the sector of the vocational guidance, but we have already planned it”*¹⁹² (Representative of SAE).

*“...without any planning”*¹⁹³ (Spanish expert).

In conclusions, both Spanish and Italian actors identify as a problem the lack of a long-term perspective of employment policies that would allow them to be respectful of the time individuals need to develop opportunities and create chances for getting out from situations of social vulnerability. Spanish and Italian actors report different justifications for this lack. The Italian expert focuses mainly on political issues and on the politicians' wish to stand out from their predecessors looking at the following elections. The idea is that politicians' interests prevail on the will to carry out substantial changes, which often require longer time than a political mandate. The Spanish expert focuses mainly on the need of those implementing employment policies to provide cheap and immediate solutions. This may produce a trend of exhibiting evident and quantitative results. Actors belonging to different organizations and public bodies highlight that the general drift is applying short-term plans, with no intentions or possibility of investing in preventive measures in order to enable individuals to tackling bad circumstances and protect them in the future. Also, some of the interviewees problematize and denounce the lack of a systemic view in terms of connection between different policies as well as between different services. Hence, the discourses of the interviewees on the lack of a long-term perspective and of a systemic view hint for an informational

¹⁹⁰ “Le cose si muovono autonomamente, perfettamente; quindi manca un sistema, ci manca una rete” (Sicily Region).

¹⁹¹ “Noi abbiamo questo tipo di difficoltà, abbiamo la difficoltà di una regione che è in ritardo di programmazione e di strategie (...) e attiva le cose in maniera semplice, disorganica e disorganizzata, senza avere appunto una strategia” (Italia Lavoro).

¹⁹² “Pero teníamos todo ya muy trabajado cuando nos ha llegado eso, teníamos ya un sistema. Lo único que hemos hecho es integrar toda esa competencia que ahora requiere una responsabilidad nuestra de tener todo el mundo de orientación; ya es que lo teníamos planteado” (SAE).

¹⁹³ “...sin ningún tipo de planificación” (Spanish expert).

basis that comes close to that of the capabilities approach, according to which individuals should be thought of as a totality within their broader context for better understanding how to make them to develop their potentialities over time. Still, according to the actors, both the long-term perspective and the systemic view have not found any application. Here, the two levels of analysis are clearly in opposition. Indeed, on the one hand, the logic of integration in the labour market proposed by the interviewees seems to be very close to the capabilities approach, while, on the other hand, the representations of the actors show that the idea remains in the speculative sphere and far from the assumptions of Sen's approach.

9.5 Concluding remarks

As we have seen in this chapter, in the view of the interviewees, both Italy and Spain have adapted their internal organization in order to accomplish the European requests. Moreover, the European Employment Strategy set by the European institutions seems to have affected the cognitive framework of the two countries under analysis. This is not only remarkable for a few respondents reporting it, but also because they seem to acknowledge, legitimate and repeat the European discourse (i.e. the distinction active/passive policies) as well as the way to define future challenges. The acceptance of the European discourse seems to be particularly widespread among Spanish and Italian representatives belonging to public bodies, whereas a strong critique comes from the Italian representatives of trade unions and from the Spanish expert who also reports that trade unions hold the same position. As far as the notion of 'flexicurity model' is concerned, Spanish and Italian representatives describe it in a similar way. They claim the inadequacy of the model for the Southern countries, since it was conceived for a different socio-demographic-economic context and also agree that the application has resulted in a strong flexibilization of the labour market without properly caring for the security of the individuals. Although, a few Spanish interviewees underline a certain attention for the worker in the period under analysis and some efforts to combine flexibility for firms and security for employees.

As far as policy orientation is concerned, Italian interviewees indicate explicitly (as reported by the actors) and implicitly (as the actors construct their discourses) that the focus is mostly the market. Moreover, in their view, the transformation of the market was not accompanied by a change in public policies in the direction of activation. The lack of this change was depreciated by the regional representatives of trade unions. Also in the view of the Spanish respondents, a supply-side policy, mainly oriented to labour market and based on the idea that individuals have to adapt to firms' demands, is prevalent. It is relevant to remember that the informational basis of

employability is centred mostly on supply-side interventions; by contrast, the informational basis of the capabilities approach instead embeds also demand-side interventions, since capabilities derive from the combination of both individuals and collective responsibility. Therefore, the evidence is that the focus is far from being capabilities-oriented.

Italian respondents strongly agree in depicting employment policies to be mainly oriented towards passive policies. In particular, in the Italian case, the respondents problematize the negative attitude of society towards the paradigm of activation. Indeed, they highlight a strong resistance and fear to shift towards active policies on the part of society, politics and also trade unions. According to the interviewees, this is due to the fact that the whole Italian system and trade unions' strength have been based on compensatory benefits for decades. This system, along with trade unions, has supported older workers, which also means to protect their families and different generations living together in the same household, even if this idea has led to the political choice of sacrificing the Italian youth. The support of older workers recalls the familistic framework that protect male adults at the expense of young people. Still, the attempt to devalue passive policies in the paradigm of activation is detectable among trade unions. The use by the interviewees of the distinction between passive and active policies reveals the influence of the European discourse. In the Spanish case, the situation results less defined, since a divergent view is evident between the interviewees. In fact, various representatives at national level highlight the prevalence of passive policies and the inefficacy of active policies, whereas regional representatives deem that active policies are already functioning and overcoming passive policies. It is worth remembering that the capabilities approach promotes both unemployment benefits and active policies, with the latter negotiated with recipients and oriented to empower individuals according to what they value, instead that on the basis of labour market's demands. Nevertheless, this coordination between active and passive policies seems to be missing in the Spanish and Italian case. Rarely their connection is viewed as a future challenge by the interviewees.

Observing how the respondents define to be the orientations of employment policies, we can see a broad variety of answers by the Italian actors and more focused replies by the Spanish actors. Indeed, Spanish actors belonging to public bodies identify the satisfaction of the labour market demands as one of the main orientation pursued, which indicates the presence of a logic according to which meeting the requests of the market by adapting the labour force is the solution for coping with unemployment and social vulnerability. In this regard, the expression 'centrality of the individual' they claim is ambivalent. In fact, it embeds the idea that employment policies are oriented to favour individuals' well-being, in a capability perspective, as well as the idea that individuals have to adapt to the labour market requests in a perspective of employability-oriented

active policies. Italian actors report the same expression. Another policy orientation that Spanish actors highlight refers to political interests. By contrast, Italian interviewees report several orientations, namely the enhancement of a greater liberalization of the labour market, the satisfaction of political and clientelistic interests, the meeting of firms' requests, occupability and employability, technical objectives of tuning the new employment policies and the survival of the bodies that execute employment policies. They even claim the lack of a specific guiding logic, underlining an unclear or absent political agenda. Neither in the Spanish nor in the Italian case, employment policies are depicted to be proper conversion factors aiming at empowering individuals.

Analysing some of the key assumptions that underlie the Spanish and Italian cognitive framework, the interviewees report that these have undergone a change over the last decades. In the Spanish case, according to one of the trade unions, the profile of the newly unemployed is that of a woman, a young person or an immigrant, whereas in the Italian case, interviewees belonging to the employment agency association, national and regional representative of public bodies and the national expert focus mainly on the move towards a new active identity. Both Spanish and Italian actors belonging to public bodies at regional level agree that the unemployed has to become a professional job-seeker. With regard to the crucial aspect of the attribution of responsibility of the situation of unemployment, Italian interviewees exhibit divergent opinions, included among trade unions. Some of the trade union respondents emphasize the role of the unemployed in producing and preserving the circumstances of their own status of unemployment, according to a moralistic-individual view, whereas others disagree on this point. The first position is not in line with the capabilities approach that supports the co-responsibility of the individual and the society in determining the situation of people. By contrast, Spanish national and regional trade unions show a great agreement in recognizing the unemployed as willing to work and not responsible for its own situation, even if regional representatives of the public employment services are slightly oriented to accept the opposite view.

With regard to the definition of the relationship between State and individual, in the view of Spanish actors, the paradigm of activation has led to a new dis/equilibrium between duties and rights, according to which the focus is on individuals' obligations and, consequently, on the control exerted on them by the State. This point is subject to reflection among the Spanish actors, whereas perception of an increase of the State's control has not been highlighted by Italian interviewees. By contrast, some trade union representatives demand a greater State control, assuming the postulate of individual responsibility. Besides, the same trade union representatives seem to normalize the fact that the change of paradigm has also turned the concept of 'work as a right settled by the

Constitution' into the idea that 'work is a dynamic right to gain'. The implications of this passage seems to be underestimated by the Italian representatives. By contrast, the passage from 'work as a right' to 'work as a privilege' is vigorously questioned by the Spanish expert. Italian actors, included the representative of the association of employment agencies, focus the attention on the transformation of the work from a life-long job to short-term employment. The respondents strongly agree on defending the old idea of work, deemed as a pillar of the Italian culture, whereas Spanish interviewees seem to have partly accepted the transformation of the labour market and the growth of temporary employment more than the Italian counterpart, which is probably tied to that fact that the strong process of flexibilization of the labour market have turned permanent job a 'utopia'. Furthermore, the Spanish representative of the employment agency association seems strongly oriented towards fostering the transformation. It is important to recall that according to the capabilities approach both options – a transitional work career and keeping a long-life employment – have to be available, in that the preeminence of one over the other stems from individual freedom of choice.

With regard to the concept of worker, they all define it as a dynamic and flexible person, who has to be capable of moving within a changing labour market. It is interesting to observe that Spanish actors show a coherent view of the work, the worker and the labour market. Indeed, the final image is that of dynamic individuals moving within a changing labour market by means of short-term employment and transitional phases. By contrast, Italian actors reveal an incongruous view, where the worker has become a flexible person moving within the labour market, but the ideal of work has remained that of permanent employment belonging to the old paradigm. These concepts that compose the cognitive framework and the conceptual basis of employment policies seem to be far from the informational basis of the capabilities approach, since the interest for what the individual values in his/her life is missing.

Finally, Italian and Spanish interviewees report the lack of a long-term perspective and of a systemic view of employment policies, which are fundamental for making individuals develop new opportunities in a way that respects the time they require for growing as well as the complexity of their personal conditions. They criticize the fact that there is no intention or possibility of investing in preventive measures and no effort to have a broad overview of the individual, which would require a strong connection between different policies and services. Hence, the cognitive framework and the conceptual basis emerging from the interviews seem to be oriented towards the capabilities approach because they support the idea of a long-term planning that does not act only as a urgent measure. Even if the interviewees share this opinion, they also strongly agree on the presence of short-term policies. Thus, the respondents' discourses hint at a situation that seems to be oriented to

increase the vulnerability of individuals, while reducing the possibility for them to search for what they have reason to value and developing their capabilities. In the next chapter, we will observe in more detail how the interviewees construct some of the aspects that play a crucial role in the capability approach, such as the availability of job opportunities and their value. We will also observe how the respondents define the conceptual basis of the modernization of public employment services in order to comprehend if and which actors construct these as proper conversion factors.

Chapter X.

Restrictive view of opportunity as productive work versus valuable job

10.1 Introduction

The macro-indicator '*restrictive view of opportunity as productive work versus valuable job*' plays a key role in the assessment of the conceptual basis of employment policies according to the capability approach. In particular, the category focuses on the concepts of 'availability of job opportunities' (i.e. job places) and of 'value of the opportunities available' (i.e. job quality) for defining the orientation to the capabilities approach, according to which "the opportunity set must be as inclusive and as attractive as possible" (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2006: 127). The opportunity set is crucial in determining the capability for work, such as the possibility of choosing the job one has reason to value. It is important to bear in mind that work may acquire different meanings other than pure utility, since it may be a source of recognition, identity, self-fulfilment or income (Zimmermann, 2012). Nevertheless, we will not focus on the availability of (valuable) job opportunities, but on how the interviewees interpret this issue. The category also focuses on the meanings of the possibilities and services offered to individuals in order to observe if they are interpreted as conversion factors that have to facilitate the access for everyone to decent job opportunities. In the field of employment policies, conversion factors can be identified with education and trainings, employment services and social protection as well as with the level of coordination and integration existing among them. They represent the public facilities that in Sen's view (1999) determine the growth of people's capabilities, according to the idea that opportunities stem only by a strict relation between individuals and social context. In fact, social responsibility is considered to be a pre-condition for individual responsibility, insofar as the possibility of exercising it is tied to the existence of viable options (Zimmermann, 2012). The analysis carried out in this chapter will deepen each of these issues, with the attempt to promote a deep view of the issue on individuals' possibilities of choice that stems from the discourse of the interviewees.

10.2 Availability of job opportunities in the labour market

The existence of job opportunities in the labour market – to be understood here as paid employment – is the first requirement for the development of capability for work and the achievement of substantial freedom: “capability for work cannot be reduced to a restricted view of employment policy (aimed at improving all job-seekers’ employability), but also implies to shape the social context in order to make it more professionally and socially inclusive. In other words, employability without employment does not make sense in a capabilities perspective” (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2006: 127). As a first indicator, we will now observe how the Spanish and Italian actors construct this issue.

In this regard, both the Spanish expert and the national representative of UGT as well as the Italian representatives of UPI Tuscany and UIL Sicily highlight the paradox embedded in this issue. In fact, employment policies do not treat the aspect of the availability of job opportunities. By contrast, only macroeconomic and local development policies aim at “raising the number of available jobs addressing problems connected with environmental conversion factors” (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2006: 129). As shown in the following extracts, the actors aforementioned highlight this point:

*“However, you should keep this in mind. We always pose as a starting point the following paradox: employment policies alone do not create jobs”*¹⁹⁴ (Spanish expert).

*“Public employment services do not create jobs (...). Employment is based on investment, economic policies and infrastructure”*¹⁹⁵ (Representative of UGT at national level).

*“A local development policy (...) that maybe provides funding for innovation technology, research, development of the territory is required so as to create jobs. These aspects (...) do not relate to employment policies”*¹⁹⁶ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

¹⁹⁴ “De todas formas ten en cuenta, bueno, nosotros como punto previo siempre planteamos una paradoja: que las políticas de empleo, por si solas no crean empleo” (Spanish expert).

¹⁹⁵ “Los servicios públicos de empleo no crean empleo. El empleo se crea a base de inversiones, de políticas económicas y de infraestructuras” (UGT at national level).

¹⁹⁶ “Creare posti di lavoro significa fare una politica di sviluppo (...) in cui magari vengono dati dei finanziamenti all’innovazione tecnologica, alla ricerca, allo sviluppo del territorio; quindi questi sono aspetti che (...) non attengono alla parte delle politiche del lavoro” (UPI Tuscany).

*“[Employment] policies ‘take off’ when you create proper conditions (...); policy intervenes on pre-existing dynamics, but it fails to generate them”*¹⁹⁷ (Representative of UIL Sicily).

Employment policies and economic or local development policies are regarded by the interviewees as complementary. This point calls into question the importance of an intense coordination and of an on-going dialogue among policies pertaining to different spheres. Despite the fact that Spanish and Italian interviewees claim for a strong connection between employment and macroeconomic policies, the general drift indicated by the actors in the successive extracts seems to indicate an imbalanced relationship between these, with employment policies trying to adjust to the macroeconomic policies. This discourse partly mirrors the European vision embedded in the EES, which is envisaged to support the EMU, as shown in the previous chapter. By contrast, the capability approach states that both employment and macroeconomic policies have to combine supply and demand for the enhancement of the individual well-being. Therefore, no supply-intervention should be promoted in a prevalent way in a capability informational basis, which is instead clearly encompassed by the employability-informed perspective. In this regard, the position of Spanish respondents and Italian respondents seem to diverge, whereas the discourses of the Tuscan and Sicilian institutional representatives (UPI Tuscany and Sicily Region) for the case of Italy on the one hand and of the national and regional unions representatives (UGT at national level and CCOO Andalucia) for the case of Spain on the other hand seem to show an internal consistence. In particular, the Italian institutional representatives at regional level seem to advocate the idea that training courses and employment services have to adapt to the type of economic development a nation or a region pursues. The Spanish representatives of trade unions at national and regional level seem to be aware of the risk of submission of employment policies to macroeconomic policies. In fact, the representative of CCOO Andalucia illustrates the efforts of the trade union he represents to negotiate issues of macroeconomic policies that are linked to employment policies:

*“The survey on the demands for job gives us information on job vacancies as well as on the key areas in training”*¹⁹⁸ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

¹⁹⁷ “Le politiche decollano laddove si crea una condizione (...); la politica interviene sulla dinamica, ma non è in grado di generarla” (UIL Sicily).

¹⁹⁸ “L’indagine sui fabbisogni occupazionali ci dà delle indicazioni su quali sono i posti di lavoro vacanti, in quale è necessario formare le persone per trovare un’occupazione” (UPI Tuscany).

*“Legislative Decree 181 and the 29 were not enough. A plan of work was required in the territory (...), so that a connection would ensue between the notion of development envisaged and the idea of training to reorganize”*¹⁹⁹ (Representative of Sicily Region).

*“I did not know how to organize the training plan because I did not know the idea that my colleague had on the economic development; therefore, practically (...), each of these sectors had no link to the others”*²⁰⁰ (Representative of Sicily Region).

*“[Employment policies and economic developmental policies] have to be connected to each other, so that public employment services know where jobs are going to be generated”*²⁰¹ (Representative of UGT at national level).

*“[CCOO] addressed not only active employment policies as programs, but also some areas of economic policy (...), which are related to active labour market policies (...). [Our aim was to] link employment policies with policies for innovation and growth in production”*²⁰² (Representative of CCOO Andalucía).

The promotion of development policies is strongly supported by different Italian and Spanish actors, as we will observe in the following extracts. The concept of ‘development’ plays a key role for the idea of opportunity in the capabilities approach, since in Sen’s view ‘development’ does not mean simply increasing incomes, but it refers to those mechanisms that enable the enhancement of a broad range of freedoms and the “expansion of the ‘capabilities’ of people to lead the kind of lives they value – and have reason to value” (Sen, 1999: 18). In Zimmermann’s words “freedom is not simply a means towards, but a purpose of, development” (2012: 21). However, it is interesting to notice that the use of the notion ‘development’ varies among the actors. As it is evident from the point of view of the Italian trade union representative at national level, the idea of development

¹⁹⁹ “Non bastava semplicemente il decreto legislativo 181 e il 297, ma era necessario che il territorio (...) facesse un piano del lavoro, che ci fosse a monte un raccordo con l’idea dello sviluppo che si voleva perseguire e l’idea della formazione che bisognava riorganizzare” (Sicily Region).

²⁰⁰ “Io non sapevo come organizzare la formazione perchè non sapevo il mio collega quale sviluppo economico vedeva e quindi (...) ognuno di questi settori si generava da sé, ma mancava di raccordo; quindi la formazione campava da sola però non era raccordata” (Sicily Region).

²⁰¹ “Tiene(n) que estar vinculado(s) para que el servicio público de empleo conozca por donde va a generarse empleo” (UGT at national level).

²⁰² “[CCOO] no sólo ha abordado políticas activas de empleo como programas, sino también, algunas parcelas de la política económica (...), que tienen que ver con las políticas activas de empleo (...). [Nuestro objetivo es] ligar las políticas de empleo con las políticas de innovación, de crecimiento del tejido productivo” (CCOO Andalucía).

corresponds to growth and availability of work, whereas for the regional trade union representative it coincides with territorial identity and greater chances:

“We always used to make connections between work and high economic growth, based on the idea that development would automatically have produced more jobs”²⁰³ (Representative of CISL at national level).

“This Region has never had its own actual developmental identity (...). The lack of a clearly defined notion of development centred on all we own [in our region] (...) has meant giving up on getting a chance”²⁰⁴ (Representative of CGIL Sicily).

As shown in the previous extracts, the national representative of CISL focuses on macroeconomic structures whereas the regional representative of CGIL looks more at the local development. Although apparently in both cases the concept of development is not limited to strengthening the economy, as in Sens’ view, it seems that job opportunities are understood exclusively or prevalently as the result of production activities. This is also evident in the following interviews of the Spanish representative of UGT Andalucia and the Italian representative of UPI Tuscany:

“Apart of the sector of construction, there is very little industry. 95% are PYMES²⁰⁵, so there is little movement of work (...); we hope to get new markets”²⁰⁶ (Representative of UGT Andalucia).

“If we do not start [responding demands of] enterprises, there will be no work, there will be no production, there will be no upturn. Companies do not really need a policy of recruitment incentives. They need policies oriented to tax relief and a national strategy focused on strategic sectors”²⁰⁷ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

Some Spanish and Italian actors refer to the macroeconomic situation of lack of job opportunities in the country over the last few years to explain the failure of employment policies. As shown in

²⁰³ “Noi abbiamo sempre associato il lavoro ad un’alta crescita, cioè l’idea che lo sviluppo creava il lavoro in modo quasi automatico” (CISL at national level).

²⁰⁴ “Questa regione una identità di sviluppo vera non ce l’ha mai avuto (...) Non avere avuto un’idea di sviluppo che avesse al centro (...) quello che abbiamo significa aver rinunciato ad una opportunità” (CGIL Sicily).

²⁰⁵ PYME: pequeña y mediana empresa.

²⁰⁶ “Aparte de la construcción hay muy poca industria; el 95% son pymes, así que hay poco movimiento de trabajo (...), (hay) la esperanza de conseguir abrir nuevos mercados” (UGT Andalucia).

²⁰⁷ “Se non ripartiamo dalle imprese non c’è lavoro, non c’è produzione, non c’è ripresa, perché alle imprese non serve molto una politica di incentivazione all’assunzione, servono politiche di defiscalizzazione e soprattutto una strategia a livello nazionale su settori strategici” (UPI Tuscany).

Chapter V, over the last few years in Italy, and especially in Sicily, the lack of opportunities has been connected to a general and long-term static situation of the labour market. In Spain, a different pattern of the job opportunities growth occurred: an initial phase of abundance of precarious employment took place from the mid-1990s through to 2007, which accounted for a massive immigration wave. The following second phase was marked by the absence of job opportunities. Focusing on this second phase, the Spanish situation of job scarcity resembles the Italian one, even if in different proportions. According to the capability approach, the scarcity of jobs influences directly livelihood and indirectly the opportunities for mobility, choice, and change, causing a radical departure from the possibility of enhancing capabilities. In such a situation, employment policies cannot fully develop their potential, which is also the perspective of the flexicurity model. Indeed, the ‘golden triangle’ of flexicurity, which envisages the combination of lifelong learning, flexible arrangements and social protection (see Chapter II), cannot run in absence of employment. This assumption is strongly supported by the Spanish representative of Caritas at national level and the Italian representative of UIL Sicily. Indeed, they claim that the context of widespread unemployment makes it difficult to appreciate active policies, since no unemployed can be activated if job offers are missing. The lack of job opportunities in their view nullifies all employment policies, as it is not possible to direct them anywhere if there are no new jobs available. In particular, the national representative of Caritas reports training to be the measure among active policies that is most severely compromised by the lack of jobs, due to the fact that no combination between the two is possible:

*“The adaptation of training programs to current jobs and, especially, future jobs is failing. The problem now is that there are no jobs. So, in which direction should we go to train in order to allow people get access to employment?”*²⁰⁸ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

*“We had a fairly static labour market in Sicily; little new employment was created in the productive sectors, and we had a vocational training system that employed 12,000 people in Sicily. [Thus, it remains difficult] to define it as a system that carried out active policies, since policies were unfit for their purpose”*²⁰⁹ (Representative of UIL Sicily).

²⁰⁸ “Falla la adaptación de las formaciones al empleo actual y sobre todo al empleo de futuro. Y el problema que nos encontramos actualmente es que no hay empleo. Entonces, hacia dónde vamos a formar o en qué podemos formar para que las personas..eh..accedan a un empleo?” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

²⁰⁹ “Abbiamo avuto un mercato del lavoro abbastanza statico in Sicilia: si è creata poca nuova occupazione nei settori produttivi, e hai un sistema di formazione professionale che impiega in Sicilia 12.000 persone; [resta quindi difficile] definirlo un sistema che fa politiche attive del lavoro, nel senso che una parte delle politiche poi non trovano collocazione” (UIL Sicily).

A special example is offered by Sicily. Provided as operative measures of active policies, training services become themselves a job opportunity. The value of employment services is constructed by the actors not in terms of what they offer to unemployed, but for being themselves places of employment, as the national representative of Italia Lavoro reports:

“[Training programs are not dictated] from market needs, but (...) directly from the survival needs of the structures that deliver them. Indeed, we have engaged in the Sicilian training system around 10,000 employees, and these 10,000 employees have to live on the projects [financed by the system]”²¹⁰ (Representative of Italia Lavoro).

Both from the capabilities approach and from the perspective of the activation policies, the availability of job opportunities is the starting point, without which any other action is meaningless. However, it is important to clarify the meaning and the outline of the concept ‘availability’. Indeed, the lack of job opportunities gives rise to different interpretations and therefore has not to be understood in absolute terms. Firstly, it mainly concerns specific categories (the youth, women, the elderly, unskilled workers) and affects mostly vulnerable people, thus broadening the gap between them and other social cohorts, as the Italian representative of UPI Tuscany and the Spanish representative of SAE report: *“There is youth and female unemployment, but a third category has been added, that is, the unemployment of people between 45 and 55 who are expelled by the production process”²¹¹* (UPI Tuscany); *“In the current state of the labour market, I have nothing to offer to people without training! Absolutely... Absolutely nothing!”²¹²* (SAE). The representatives seem to emphasize mostly the role of the production process and the labour market in determining the situation of the vulnerable people and their possibilities of integration.

Secondly, the availability of job opportunities may be the result of individuals’ perceptions, as stressed by the representatives of CISL who suggest a different definition of the problem. What the representative of the CISL Tuscany describes as ‘lack of work opportunities’ does not necessarily mean the absolute absence of employment, but it might be linked to a more or less intentional denial by society in considering certain jobs as opportunities. The representative highlights that the scarce consideration towards certain jobs (i.e. positions in the social care sectors as well as craft, manual or

²¹⁰ “[La formazione è dettata] non (...) dall’esigenza del mercato ma (...) direttamente dalle esigenze di sopravvivenza delle strutture che la erogano, perché noi abbiamo impegnati nel sistema della formazione siciliana qualcosa come 10000 addetti, e sono 10000 addetti che devono vivere di questi progetti”²¹⁰ (Italia Lavoro).

²¹¹ “Sono la disoccupazione giovanile e la disoccupazione femminile, ma si è aggiunto un terzo elemento che sono le persone tra i 45 e i 55 anni che sono espulsi dai processi produttivi” (UPI Tuscany).

²¹² “Pero si tal y como está hoy en día el mercado de trabajo, para las personas sin formación ¡no tengo nada! ¡No tengo absolutamente.. no tengo absolutamente nada!” (SAE).

unskilled work) can make it difficult to recognize them as opportunities. Such scarce consideration seems not to be tied to low wages nor to poor working conditions, rather to a cultural issue. It is interesting to observe the particular position of the representative of CISL, who holds a moralizing representation of the meaning of unemployment. He suggests that the causes of unemployment are especially linked to the attitude of the unemployed, who is accountable of his/her own situation. Thus, in this case, the cultural discourse appears to overcome the socio-economic discourse for explaining the inexistence of job opportunities. In this regard, the national representative of CISL proposes the solution of ‘rediscovering’ the jobs that are not socially accepted, which means intervening on the perceptions of people and on the representations of the unemployed of what a ‘good job’ or a ‘bad job’ is. He proposes a new attitude towards such jobs, so as to give them altogether new cultural connotations and turn them into real chances. Thus, “*employment mines*”²¹³ (CISL at national level) may eventually unfold. The representatives of CISL refer to a cultural change and a re-evaluation of certain types of jobs that are not usually taken into account by Italian workers and the youth in particular, but which are nonetheless available for immigrants:

*“It would be useful to let the youth understand that every job has its own dignity as work, if done properly; no matter if it is a craft work, manual work or intellectual work. So, (...) it is important for people to know that they are free to choose any work they prefer. Many times this possibility of choice is not available because of the Italian culture, in which manual labour has almost completely lost its value, whereas in countries like Germany, for instance, people who have a manual job are regarded exactly the same as graduates (...). The youth are no longer willing to do manual work. Manual jobs have been totally devalued. In Italy, a terrible message has been spread, whereby the youth would rather find a job in a call centre than do any kind of job in a factory”*²¹⁴ (Representative of CISL Tuscany).

The assumption of the Spanish and Italian interviewees that the lack of job opportunities must be addressed by the creation of employment is also fostered at the European level through the idea of “more and better jobs” with the scope of achieving full employment and greater productivity (Presidency Conclusion. Lisbon European Council, 2000). However, the meaning of “more jobs”

²¹³ “*miniere occupazionali*” (CISL at national level).

²¹⁴ “*Servirebbe molto far capire ai giovani che il lavoro ha una propria dignità come qualunque tipo di lavoro se fatto bene, sia un lavoro artigianale sia un lavoro manuale sia un lavoro intellettuale, e poi se uno sa questo, conosce le varie possibilità, dargli la possibilità di scegliere; molte volte questa possibilità di scegliere non ce l’ha perchè è passata una cultura in Italia che ha disfatto completamente il valore del lavoro manuale, a differenza della Germania dove chi svolge un lavoro manuale ha pari dignità sociale di uno che si laurea (...). I giovani non vogliono fare più l’operaio; c’è stata una svalutazione del lavoro manuale, completamente; in Italia è passato questo messaggio terribile, però è passato, i giovani preferiscono andare al call-center che andare a fare l’operaio*” (CISL Tuscany).

needs further elucidation, as it has undergone an important transformation since the EES proposed it in 1997. The transformation has occurred by means of a shift from the focus on reducing unemployment rates to that of increasing employment rates. The goal of reaching the 70% of total employment rate and 60% of female employment rates indicates that the expression ‘full employment’ refers mainly to full occupation and activation of population (Prieto et al., 2009). Hence, the focus still is prevalently quantitative (see the following paragraph for a deepening on the qualitative aspect), but the concept of “more jobs” has been enlarged. Nonetheless, all the interviewees widely agree that employment opportunities have been barely promoted politically and that poor results have been reached so far. Despite this, job creation remains a key objective, even though the way to achieve this goal is a major concern for debate. For instance, the creation of work by public investment is partly supported and partly criticized by the Spanish and Italian representatives of trade unions at regional level, who mainly focus on the issue of the typology and the length of contractual arrangements. Indeed, public intervention is seen to act through short-term solutions that do not provide effective work opportunities.

*“Substantially, job creation was the constitution of an army of temporary workers somehow related to public funding”*²¹⁵ (Representative of UIL Sicily).

*“Both the national and the autonomous plans to create jobs are based on the construction of municipal public buildings, with little value in many cases; building a social centre or a nursing home for the elderly, which would give another meaning to job creation, is not frequent (...). These plans usually do not live for a long time. The solution is a large scale public investment to improve infrastructure, including rail services, social services, etc... This would create longer-term employment and guarantees of further territorial development”*²¹⁶ (Representative of CCOO Andalucía).

“Job creation programs (...) initially pursued the creation of infrastructure and municipal services, which would have had to generate employment ultimately. But then, they have been

²¹⁵ “La creazione di occupazione sostanzialmente è stata la formazione di un esercito di precari legati in qualche modo ai finanziamenti della pubblica amministrazione” (UIL Sicily).

²¹⁶ “Los dos planes estelares para crear empleo, tanto el estatal como el autonómico, se basan en la construcción, concretados en el fomento de obra pública municipal, con escaso valor en muchos casos, no abunda la construcción de un centro social o una residencia de ancianos, que daría otro significado a la creación de empleo. Estos programas (...) no pueden permanecer durante mucho tiempo, la solución pasa por una inversión pública a mayor escala que incluya mejora de infraestructuras viarias, de ferrocarril, sociales, etc. lo que crearía empleo a más largo plazo y garantías de mayor desarrollo para el territorio” (CCOO Andalucía).

*distorting in works that petered out, so that people returned to unemployment in short-term*²¹⁷ (Representative of CCOO Valencia).

The lack of job opportunities may also be addressed by means of measures for self-employment and recruitment incentives. Looking at the first of these measures, in recent decades in Italy the theme of self-employment has received great attention. Nonetheless, such attention can be also considered as a signal of the lack in the country of a solid industrial and agricultural structure, which was not able to receive labour force. Centres that support self-employment were fostered at the national as well as at the local level with the mission of providing help to self-employed, especially young people and women. The youth were also given the opportunity to take advantage of guarantees granted by regional authorities and associations, since otherwise they would not have been able to obtain any. The opinion of the Italian expert is that this measure failed in most cases. In order to explain this failure, the expert provides economic and cultural reasons, related to the distribution of available resources in society, describing an outdated philosophy of “very old atavistic” politics. Her idea is that society should prefer financing few firms that exhibit some opportunity of success more than providing funds to every vulnerable entity:

*“The birth-death of companies was violent (...). In fact, if you promote self-employment without financing it, only small fragile realities will arise (...). Here in Italy there has always been a very old atavistic policy, whereby many receive very little. In my view, it is better to concentrate resources on few people and increasing selection, because the selected firms that enhance to go on living for three years then pull economy. Thus, they become a successful example to follow. By contrast, those firms that struggle for life live better with a few more money, but then die or carry on trying to survive. They are never going to pull anything with it”*²¹⁸ (Italian expert).

As in the Italian case, also in the Spanish case the effectiveness of self-employment measures in terms of job opportunities and actual possibilities to exit one’s own condition of vulnerability is highly questioned, as the representative of UGT Andalucia expresses here:

²¹⁷ “Respecto a los programas de fomento del empleo, (...) en un inicio perseguían la creación de infraestructuras y servicios municipales, lo que en último término debía generar, pero se han ido desvirtuando en obras que se agotan en sí mismas y la gente vuelve al paro a corto plazo” (CCOO Valencia).

²¹⁸ “La nati-mortalità delle imprese era violenta (...); se tu sostieni l’auto-imprenditorialità senza una fonte di finanziamento di questa iniziativa, quello che può nascere sono piccole fragili realtà (...). Qui c’è sempre un po’ questa politica vecchissima atavica in Italia nel dare un pochino a tanti, quando io sono dell’avviso, e lo sono sempre stata, che meglio concentrare le risorse su pochi ma facendo una dura selezione, perchè poi il poco che va avanti e non muore nel giro di tre anni si tira dietro un indotto, si tira dietro un pezzo di economia, fornisce un esempio; invece, il piccolo che vivacchia respira un po’ meglio con quattro lire e poi dopo muore, o comunque continua a vivacchiare, non si tira dietro niente” (Italian expert).

*“In a time of crisis, [policies] still bet (...) for self-employment [initiatives], which in many cases fail in the short-term”*²¹⁹ (Representative of UGT Andalucía).

Recruitment incentives is the second measure available for fostering employment. It is often combined with tax relief in order to favour the inclusion or stabilization of specific target groups, in particular the youth, women and other disadvantaged categories. The Spanish expert and the representative of the Sicily Region broadly agree about the insufficiency of recruitment incentives unless they are accompanied by a more extensive long-term project of economic development, as this would prevent the ensuing of structural weakness of for companies:

*“So... incentives to companies [were given] in order to make permanent contracts as well as temporary contracts. In practice this did not work. The only incentives that produced some results were those directed to convert temporary contracts into permanent contracts, because they had a dead-weight effect. Otherwise, companies received incentives and then, once incentives were removed, companies stopped hiring”*²²⁰ (Spanish expert).

*“The issue of employment is important, but if it is not accompanied by or inserted in a global discourse on development, clearly it does not work (...). And this labour of coordination with economic development policies has never been made (...). So, active policies have reeled a little (...). We can say that incentives partly work, but the hiring of unemployed people beyond incentives does not take off”*²²¹ (Representative of Sicily Region).

In conclusion, there is a certain agreement among the different actors on the topic of the availability of job opportunities. In their view, macroeconomic and local development policies should be strongly connected to employment policies in order to make activation policies work, which is in line with the capability approach. Indeed, the capability for work and the possibility for people of increasing their own employability cannot be enhanced in absence of job opportunities.

²¹⁹ “En un momento de crisis, se sig(ue) apostando (...) por el empleo por cuenta propia, que fracasa en muchos casos, a corto plazo” (UGT Andalucía).

²²⁰ “Entonces... subvenciones a empresas para hacer contratos indefinidos. Subvenciones a empresas para hacer contrato temporal. Los resultados fueron que en la práctica eso no funciona. Que las únicas subvenciones que nos funcionaron era para convertir de contratos temporales a indefinidos porque tenían mucho efecto peso muerto. Porque las empresas recibían la subvención y cuando se les quitaba, dejaban de contratar” (Spanish expert).

²²¹ “Il lavoro in sé è fondamentale, ma se non è accompagnato, se non è inserito, in un discorso globale di sviluppo, è chiaro che da solo stenta a camminare; (...) quindi è mancata questa opera di concertazione con lo sviluppo economico (...), per cui le politiche attive diciamo un po' hanno annaspato (...); diciamo che un poco riusciamo a tirare come ricollocazione però insomma con misure di sostegno cioè soltanto con delle misure che incentivano le aziende ad assumerle però diciamo la ricerca del soggetto in quanto soggetto al di là di quello che è il vantaggio che io datore di lavoro posso avere è un poco difficile a decollare” (Sicily Region).

Although these policies are considered to be complementary, Italian interviews indicate a major trend in thinking that employment policies should adjust to the economic policies. This view seems to have been implicitly or explicitly accepted by Italian representatives of regional institutions, whereas Spanish trade unions are more cautious in assuming the predominant neoliberal discourse, albeit they also claim the importance of connecting macroeconomic and employment policies. However, all these actors seem to share the assumption that job opportunities stem prevalently from production activities. Despite the emphasis given to productivity, the Spanish and Italian economic situations have been characterised for short and long periods of time by limited availability of job opportunities. Indeed, availability of temporary jobs arose notably in Spain in the period from the '90s until 2007, when a great decrease took place. In Italy a situation of low and almost static availability persisted for a long time, even if Spain has always presented the highest rates of unemployment. The scant quantity of opportunities hinders the development of the capability for work, insofar as a professional and inclusive social context constitutes one of the pre-conditions for moving away from a situation of social vulnerability. The discourse of the scarce presence of job opportunities has been used by Spanish and Italian actors for explaining the fact that employment policies have not been implemented properly, especially training programs. Spanish and Italian actors belonging to public bodies seem to emphasize mostly the role of the production process and the market in producing the lack of job opportunities for the most vulnerable groups of people. Indeed, some Spanish and Italian actors emphasize the fact that the problem of job availability prevalently concerns vulnerable people, such as young or old people, women and unskilled workers. Nonetheless, it is interesting to notice that the Italian representatives of one of the trade unions have in a way relativized the limited availability of jobs, suggesting a moralizing definition of the issue. In fact, in their view, the lack of job opportunities is also linked to individuals' representations of 'good job' and 'bad job'. Therefore, the solution they provide is intervening in individuals' perceptions and attitudes. This view sharply contrasts with the capabilities approach, according to which the individual cannot be assumed accountable of his/her circumstances that stem instead from the combination of the individual factors and the environmental conversion factors. According to Spanish and Italian interviewees, job creation has been poorly promoted and achieved so far in both countries, despite the provision of measures for self-employment and recruitment incentives. They all agree on the low efficacy of the public action directed to increase the number of job opportunities. The focus on the concept of the availability of job opportunities and work quantity bring us to deepen the value of such opportunities and their quality, which will be treated in the next paragraph.

10.3 Quality of job opportunities

The capabilities approach attributes great importance to the concept of ‘valuable work’ for the enhancement of human fulfilment. Valuable job opportunities can be identified in the broadest sense with the concept of quality of work, even if, according to the capability approach, this concept should be more subjectively defined starting from the desires and needs of individuals. ‘Quality of work’ contributes to expanding on the meaning of the term “job”, whereby employment is not solely seen as a remunerated activity, but also as one of the several ways individuals use for expressing themselves and flourishing. Indeed, working allows individuals to develop their skills, to meet their personal and professional aspirations as well as to accomplish expectations crucial for their well-being. Since the capabilities approach emphasizes the issue of worker’s well-being, it is very important to consider the aspect of job quality in the widest sense (Zimmermann, 2012).

The concept of ‘quality’ has acquired importance within the European Union and the social and political agenda of nations since the mid 1990s. Its official origin can be traced to 2000 with the Lisbon Strategy, when the idea of ‘more and better jobs’ was introduced into the EES. Nonetheless, according to some authors (Guillén and Dahl, 2009; Prieto et al., 2009), the concepts of ‘quality’ and ‘quantity’ never stood on the same place, due to a subjection of the former to the latter. Yet the European Employment strategy emphasized quantified objectives and employment rate, adjusting social standards to economic performance (Salais, 2009). It is not a case that in 2004 Kok’s report was entitled “Jobs, jobs, jobs”, so as to declare the primacy of quantity over quality (Davoine and Erhel, 2006; Guillén and Dahl, 2009; Prieto et al., 2009). The concept of ‘quality’ proposed by the European institutions contrasted with the concept of ‘decent work’ promoted by the ILO in 1999, since this was embedded in a different cognitive framework of meaning. Indeed, while the former appeared to be oriented towards economic goals, the latter referred mostly to social rights: “La calidad del empleo (como la de cualquier producto) se recomienda, la decencia en el trabajo (como la de cualquier otro derecho social) se exige. Distinta matriz, distintos actores, distinta historia, distinto contenido, distintas configuraciones societales (...), distintas evoluciones... No pueden ni deben confundirse como realidades sociales ni como objeto de investigación” (Prieto et al, 2009: pg. 211).

The cognitive and analytical category of ‘quality’ has been characterized since its origin by an ample multidimensionality and an intentionally pronounced ambiguity, insofar as it stemmed from the negotiation among social and political agents in the Laeken Council in 2001 (Prieto et al., 2009). Consequently, several other definitions born at national level within Europe, even if they do not turn into explicit objects of consideration by governments. These origins produced the imprecise

and relative nature of the concept, with its meaning depending on the position of the agents and institutions furnishing the definition. In this section, we will look at the answers provided by the interviewees in order to identify the terms in which the concept of “quality of work” is constructed by those who contribute to generating ideas and assumptions that are embedded in employment policies. Moreover, we will analyse how the interviewees hierarchically construct the concept of ‘valuable work’ and ‘job quality’ in comparison to that of ‘job quantity’.

Firstly, the concept of quality of work seems to be principally defined by the type of contractual arrangement and the idea of worker’s stability by several Spanish and Italian actors. Nonetheless, this aspect is especially emphasized in the Spanish case, where the labour market is characterized by high contractual flexibility. As we have seen in Chapter V of this dissertation, Spain exhibits a significant rate of temporary employment, which probably contributes to the polarization of the discourse on job quality on this aspect overclouding the others or embodying them. In particular, as shown in the following quotation, the representative of UGT Andalucía refers to stable job with the term “utopia”, which indicates that the excessive precarization of the labour market made the concept of permanent job being perceived as unfeasible:

“UGT has always defended the creation of stable jobs and quality jobs, with no discrimination for any type of worker; but at this time, this is utopia: firstly, there are no jobs, and stable employment even less”²²² (Representative of UGT Andalucía).

In the previous extract, the representative of UGT Andalucía refers to the effort by the trade union to defend not only job quality, but also employment stability. The dimension of the ‘stability’ that is usually assumed to be one of the indicators of job quality seems in this case to appear so relevant that it comes to be a sort of indicator in itself or even a synonym. This assumption may be linked to the specific evolution of the Spanish labour market, insofar as the legal acceptance of temporal contracts since the early 1990s led to a general degradation of work conditions. This is due to the fact that the workers’ instability has contributed to increasing the employers’ authority in determining and worsening the conditions of work (Prieto, 2014). Indeed, in the author’s view, instability represents more broadly a corporate strategy that aims to provide firms with control over their workforce. Therefore, the issue of stability in a sense embraces all the other connotations of job quality. Moreover, in the extract, stability and quality are identified as a “utopia”, revealing the difficulties and the impotence of trade unions in defending them from the neoliberal framework.

²²² “Desde UGT siempre han defendido la creación de empleo estable, de calidad, dónde no tenga cabida ningún tipo de discriminación para cualquier tipo de trabajador, pero en este momento, esto es una utopía; en primer lugar no hay empleo, y empleo estable todavía menos” (UGT Andalucía).

Indeed, the weakening of the role of trade unions in society and their effort to adjust their claims to reality is especially evident in the issue of job quality.

Focusing on the position of Spanish trade unions, as shown in the following extracts, we notice that they seem to have mostly refused the discourse of protecting full employment at the expense of better employment, thus contrasting the European institutions' view. According to the European view, full employment is identified with the increase of employment rate, leaving a part quality of employment and social standards. The refusal by trade unions of this discourse contributes to holding the idea of "decent work" – based on social rights – and departing from the idea of "quality job" – based on economic performance. However, in the following interviewees it is clear that the concept of 'stability' in the Spanish case has been resized and narrowed down, as well as, consequently, that of 'job quality'. Indeed, it is conceived not solely in terms of job stability (i.e. having an open-ended employment), but also in terms of employment stability (i.e. avoiding too many temporary job contracts). The definition of "stability" remains ambiguous, also because the Spanish representatives of trade unions seems to have completely accepted the idea of job transitions during the individual life course. This is probably tied to the fact that the wide process of flexibilization has turned the concept of stability in terms of permanent contract into a utopia. In this regard, the representative of CCOO Andalucía normalizes the idea of the labour market as a room where people "enter" and "exit" depicting the image of a dynamic life space:

*"It is not the same hiring four people for 10 months and having to hire 8 people for five months since suddenly then plan has been shorted. I do not entirely agree that hiring 8 instead of 4 is better. I prefer four stable people for 10 months, instead of 8 people for four or five months. Maybe, it is a populist measure for the mayor, okay? But from the trade union's perspective, I prefer stability at work and that the work is of good quality"*²²³ (Representative of UGT Valencia).

*"We have no problem to confirm that people enter and exit the labour market, that is not the problem; the problem is when people leave the labour market and cannot re-enter or take long to re-enter (...) or when people enter in very precarious conditions"*²²⁴ (Representative of CCOO Andalucía).

²²³ "No es lo mismo haber hecho un plan para contratar cuatro personas durante 10 meses, que de repente te lo acorten y te digan "no es que son 5 meses lo que tienes" porque entonces ya tienes que contratar a 8 personas. Y.. yo no estoy del todo de acuerdo de que.. pues mira, contratamos a 8 en vez de 4, yo prefiero 4 estables durante 10 meses y bien, que no 8 cuatro meses o cinco. A lo mejor para el alcalde es una medida más populista, ¿vale? Pues hemos contratado a 8, pero a nivel sindical, yo prefiero estabilidad en el trabajo y que sea un trabajo de calidad" (UGT Valencia).

²²⁴ "Desde CCOO no tenemos mayor problema en comprobar que la gente entra y sale del mercado de trabajo, ese no es el problema; lo es que salga y no vuelva a entrar o tarde mucho en volver a entrar (...). Que entre en condiciones muy precarias" (CCOO Andalucía).

The discourse on stability is differently shaped by the Spanish representative of the association of employment agencies. Indeed, the discourse acquires the fictitious form of the orientation towards individual needs and desires, so that the assumption ‘greater the stability of the worker, the higher the quality of work’ is questioned by the representative of AGETT. In fact, the actor emphasizes that often fixed-term more than permanent contracts meet people’s actual needs, and this is the case for employers as much as for workers, and for the youth in particular. In this case, we see more than a simple acceptance of the idea of ‘instability’; the effort of the representative seems to be that of achieving a full legitimization of such idea, which would also lead to a major acknowledgement of the position of employment agencies among the stakeholders implementing employment policies:

*“So short-term contracts are (...) justified. In other words, when the employer comes to me and wants to hire temporarily a worker, it means that he really needs this (...). This is true not only for employers, but also for workers. (...). And this need on the part of worker is seldom taken into account, when indeed it is a reality. Above all, the youth need to accumulate several different experiences and they need more money; they need to learn how the world and the labour market work today, so that they may have greater rewards in terms of career advancement”*²²⁵ (Representative of AGETT).

Another aspect used by some Spanish actors for constructing the concept of ‘quality’ is the level of qualification required to perform a specific job. Therefore, quality is understood as a relationship between individual knowledge and work requirements. Skilled employment is one of the conditions for defining “good jobs”, producing thus an effect of discredit of manual work. This assumption partly recalls the European discourse on fostering better policies for “preparing the transition to a knowledge-based economy and society”, stated in the Lisbon Strategy (Presidency Conclusions. Lisbon European Council, 2000). Nonetheless, the national representative of CCOO seems to agree that policies have been more oriented to increasing unskilled jobs, rather than skilled employment. In the view of the representative, this was also due to the wave of migration that hit Spain over the

²²⁵ “O sea.. mi temporalidad es (...) justificada. O sea, el empresario cuando viene a mí y quiere contratar a un trabajador temporal es porque realmente lo necesita. (...) Pero no solo por las empresas, ¿eh? Lo digo también por los trabajadores. A nosotros nos vienen de estudiantes y no quieren un contrato indefinido, quieren trabajar en vacaciones, para sacarse un dinero extra. Y esta necesidad de trabajador, muchas.. que aquí no está... parece que no se tiene en cuenta.. existe. Y sobre todo existe una población joven, que necesita acumular experiencias y necesita ganar su dinerillo extra, y saber cuál es el mundo de hoy y el mercado laboral para luego tener una trayectoria laboral mucho más enriquecedora” (AGETT).

last decades, and from 2000 onwards in particular, which has produced a sort of dual market, where good jobs were not accessible to everybody:

*“Skilled employment, that I understand as jobs requiring a degree and that are good jobs. It means that there is no manual labour and that knowledge is needed. It means that you do not work outdoors and your work is not doing a ditch... (...). Skilled employment has increased a lot. What happens is that unskilled employment has increased all the more. Anyway, 4,000,000 immigrants who have entered our labour market during the last 6-7 years have covered unskilled employment. We should not forget this...(…). Immigrants have occupied a very important part of the bad occupations. Otherwise, where would they have been employed?”*²²⁶ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

The national representative of CCOO underlines the social question of immigration and the fact that the creation of more jobs served the aim of absorbing immigrants in the labour market. The representative depicts the fact that providing jobs for a great number of immigrants was considered an urgent measure and a priority in comparison to other goals, and that it was accomplished successfully. According to the representative, the political mainstream seems to have left the issue of “good jobs” in a secondary position in a period of scarce job availability, since emphasizing the quantitative dimension and promoting job opportunities result more opportune. In Bonvin’s words, “this goes along with a focus on quick labour market reintegration, on the explicit ground that a bad job is better than no job at all, since it may, it is claimed, open up higher professional prospects. This postulate concerning the superiority of low-quality jobs vis-à-vis all forms of non-work tend to undermine concerns connected with the regulation of the labour market” (2006: 220).

It is necessary to consider a peculiarity of the Spanish productive system, such as that it is characterized by sectors with low levels of competition and qualification and by highly labour-intensive activities, such as the sectors of tourism, construction and catering (Prieto, 2014). As shown in Chapter V, the short duration of jobs, typical of these sectors, requires a high flexibility on the part of workers, instead of a high degree of training. In addition, the prevailing production structure is based on a competition for cost reduction and it relies neither on product quality nor on

²²⁶ “El empleo cualificado, entiendo empleo que requiere una titulación, empleos que son buenos empleos, en el sentido de que no son mano de obra directa, que se necesita un conocimiento, eh.. que no trabajas al aire libre, que no trabajas haciendo una zanja.. (...). El empleo cualificado ha aumentado mucho también, lo que pasa es que ha aumentado más el empleo no cualificado. De todas maneras es que el empleo no cualificado, aquí lo han ocupado 4.000.000 de inmigrantes ¿eh? que nos han venido en 6 años o en 7 a nuestro mercado de trabajo ¿eh? A ver si no olvidamos esto...(…) Y una parte muy importante de las malas ocupaciones las han ocupado los inmigrantes. ¡Si no donde se han ocupado los inmigrantes!” (CCOO at national level).

innovation. Consequently, workers qualification and job quality occupies a marginal position, as the Spanish expert states. Nevertheless, the expert remarks the importance of these elements:

“Then... If I work in a company that competes on prices, that has chance of having very high levels of temporary contracts, that does not invest in innovation and does not make quality products, why should this company invest in training? Therefore, [training] is the other leg we left off”²²⁷ (Spanish expert).

The previous extract suggests a reflection on the relation between three elements – worker qualification, job quality and product quality – and on the fact that such relation can be managed according to actors’ interests. It is the case of entrepreneurs who place job quality in function of worker’s qualification, charging thus employees with the responsibility of employment quality (Prieto et al., 2009: 213), instead of considering quality as tied to working conditions.

Despite the fact that the Spanish expert considers skilled work an indicator of job quality, he also deems that this kind of work has been missing in the Spanish labour market, due to the features of the productive system as well as to the appreciation by people for a quick integration into the labour market. In the view of the expert, two opposite situations and related problems ensue from this. Firstly, the productive system led to serious implications on school drop out rates of the Spanish youth, who were attracted by the readily available short-term job opportunities. Secondly, over-qualification of young people created problems as regards to the availability of high-level jobs:

“Of course, what is the problem? That for a long time you did not need to be very skilled for getting a job... For example, in Spain we had the great problem of early school leaving. It is the highest in the European Union. Why? Because at the time of the boom, the youth, especially male young people, left [education] and went to work”²²⁸ (Spanish expert).

²²⁷ “Entonces.. si estoy en una empresa, que compite en precios, que tiene todas las posibilidades de tener unos niveles de temporalidad altísimos y.. realmente no invierte en innovación.. no.. no.. no hace productos de calidad, ¿para que va a invertir en formación? Con lo cual, esa es la otra pata que dejábamos fuera” (Spanish expert).

²²⁸ “Claro, ¿cuál era el problema de esto? Que durante mucho tiempo para estar ocupado no necesitaba estar muy capacitado.. por ejemplo, en España tenemos el gran problema de abandono escolar prematuro. También el más alto de toda la Unión Europea. ¿Por qué? Porque en la época del bum, los jóvenes, sobre todo varones.. dejaron [la educación] para irse a trabajar” (Spanish expert).

“I do not like to call it ‘overqualification’, I think it is underemployment. So, it is the problem of highly educated people occupying jobs requiring low skill levels. That’s the big problem we have”²²⁹ (Spanish expert).

Another aspect that a few Spanish actors have in mind when defining the quality of work is wages, even if it often remains overshadowed by the job-seeker’s need to be hired. Such low attention for this issue is also evident at the European level, inasmuch the Laeken indicators of job quality include ‘wage’ in the broader category of intrinsic quality of work without its own autonomy as an indicator. The representative of SERVEF and the Spanish expert underline the fact that the social emphasis on entering the labour market or in keeping inside risks to move the attention on salaries towards the background. This appears to be true especially in the case of the youth, who sometimes are even required to work for free. However, the Spanish expert seems to problematize the issue, claiming that entrepreneurs feel comfortable enough for advancing demands of free work:

“At least we face the issue of unemployment and then we will look at the issue of wage. Then it will come: “hey, what about the salary?” since the employers says: “Oh, look at me..you are plumber, but you are going to sign the contract as an unskilled labourer for me” (...). I think that is an aberration, but we can easily say that at least the unemployed has been hired, at least the unemployed stopped being unemployed”²³⁰ (Representative of SERVEF).

“In fact, for example, to give you an idea.. there have been proposals for the youth..A representative of the employer's association of catering suggested that young people could work for free for 6 months. Free. And that then the employer could decide to hire or dismiss them”²³¹ (Spanish expert).

²²⁹ “Yo no me gusta llamarlo sobrecualificación, creo que es subocupación. O sea, es el problema de gente muy formada ocupando puestos de trabajo con bajos niveles de cualificación. Ese es el gran problema que hemos tenido” (Spanish expert).

²³⁰ “Por lo menos cara a la contratación. Después vendrá: “oiga, ¿y el salario qué?” Ahí está otra vez.. “ay, mire yo..usted es fontanero pero me va a firmar el contrato de peón” (...) Aparte de que yo piense que eso es una aberración, pero por lo menos si ese, con una forma de decirlo fácil, por lo menos está contratado de peón, por lo menos ha dejado de estar desempleado” (SERVEF).

²³¹ “De hecho aquí ha habido, por ejemplo, para que te hagas una idea, propuestas para que los jóvenes..Un representante de la patronal, de la organización empresarial de hostelería, planteó que los jóvenes trabajasen gratis durante 6 meses. Gratis. Directamente. Y luego, el empresario se lo podía quedar o no se lo podía quedar” (Spanish expert).

Among the Italian actors, the concept of job stability remains very popular and, in comparison to the Spanish situation, little space is left to the idea of employment stability²³². Employment stability is at the basis of the logic of flexicurity and the paradigm of activation. Indeed, here the discourses on flexibility and the abandonment of permanent contracts seem to have been scarcely accepted. As shown in the following quotations, there is great agreement among the regional representatives of Tuscany and the representative of UPI Tuscany on the assumption that job quality has to be fully identified with open-ended contracts. In their view, temporary contracts mean precariousness, and hence “bad jobs”. This does not correspond with the position of European institutions that promote flexibility and claim for facilities during job transitions more than for employment stability (Prieto et al., 2009). Since current labour market opportunities are often represented by atypical or temporary jobs, permanent contracts are depicted as a “myth” that has been demolished:

*“Especially in recent years (...) the myth of the permanent contract has been overly questioned; companies tend to make atypical co.co.co, co.co.pro. or fixed-term contracts just because the uncertainty pushes them not to make permanent contracts. They live ‘hand to mouth’”*²³³ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

*“The quality of work includes the possibility of having a durable employment”*²³⁴ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

*“[The objective is] promoting the creation of skilled jobs and reducing precariousness”*²³⁵ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

The metaphor of the “myth” of the representative of the Tuscany Region clarifies the weight of the change of paradigm within the Italian context. Indeed, the myth can be considered a sort of false collective belief that is used to justify a social institution, or according to the Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia as a popular belief or tradition that has grown up around something or someone, embodying the ideals and institutions of a society or segment of society. The Treccani Encyclopedia

²³² Job security refers to the certainty of retaining the same occupation with the same employer, whereas employment security refers to the certainty of remaining in work but not necessarily with the same employer (Wilthagen and Tros, 2004).

²³³ “Soprattutto negli ultimi anni (...) il mito del contratto a tempo indeterminato è stato oltremodo messo in discussione e cioè le aziende tendono a fare contratti o atipici co.co.co, co.co.pro. oppure contratti a tempo determinato proprio perché la situazione di incertezza le spinge a non fare contratti a tempo indeterminato perché vivono un po’ alla giornata” (Tuscany Region).

²³⁴ “La qualità del lavoro significa la possibilità di avere una durata in termini di lavoro” (UPI Tuscany).

²³⁵ “[L’obiettivo è] promuovere la creazione di lavoro qualificato e ridurre la precarietà” (Regione Toscana).

also reports the value of the generational transmission in the definition of the “myth” and its pertinence with relevant issues for society. Consequently, the problem of the open-ended contracts does not seem simply to be linked to a question of economic security, but to a broader concept of lifestyle and world-view. Looking at the last quotation, we can notice that job quality is associated to skilled work and reduced precariousness.

Also in the Italian case as it was in Spanish one, the level of qualification required to perform a specific job constitutes an aspect hinting the quality of work. As detected by the national representatives of UPI and CILS and by the representative of the Tuscany Region, in Italy the market for high profiles jobs has been replaced by low or intermediate qualifications. Besides, policies related to highly specialized labour skills have never been realized:

*“If we stay within the framework of the European and national situation, we believe you should take note of the substantial failure of the Lisbon Strategy with regard on the fundamental quantitative (...) but also qualitative objectives, because in most countries the boost for the growth of jobs with high knowledge content has been blocked”*²³⁶ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

*“Let’s speak clear. The jobs that have been created in Italy in the last few years are mainly low qualifications jobs”*²³⁷ (Representative of UPI at national level).

*“In Italy, there is a tendency to crush down the labour market onto low or intermediate qualifications (...). Unfortunately, high or medium-high qualifications are neglected”*²³⁸ (Representative of CISL at national level).

The discourse on qualification seems ambiguous, since trade unions at both regional and national levels – as shown in the following extracts – seem to have assumed the point of view of the employers and attributed or almost delegated to them the possibility of a change in the direction of job quality. Moreover, the interpretations of ‘job quality’ seem to not be linked to good work conditions for employees, but more to a connotation of the job itself or of the product. One of the solutions proposed by the national representative of CISL is to transform low-level jobs into

²³⁶ “Se restiamo nell’ambito della realtà europea e nazionale, crediamo si debba prendere atto del sostanziale fallimento della strategia di Lisbona rispetto agli obiettivi fondamentali quantitativi (...) ma anche qualitativi perché nella maggior parte dei Paesi si è bloccato l’impulso alla crescita di posti di lavoro ad elevato contenuto di conoscenza” (Regione Toscana).

²³⁷ “Intanto parliamoci chiaro, il lavoro in Italia che in questi anni si è creato purtroppo riguarda soprattutto le fasce basse” (UPI at national level).

²³⁸ “In Italia c’è una tendenza a schiacciare un po’ il mercato del lavoro sulle qualifiche basse o intermedie (...); sulle qualifiche alte purtroppo o medio alte siamo molto indietro” (CISL at national level).

specialized jobs that may be accessible only through specific qualification (for example, the case of the care of elderly people, so far entrusted to foreign labour or other unskilled jobs). Therefore, in view of the representative, elevating the entry requirements and having qualified people would contribute to make better jobs, so that quality is shift from ‘being for workers’ to ‘being made by workers’:

*“[The issue of quality of work] is a topic that has not being addressed at the policy level. Companies need high level skills, they demand this. However, a specific policy on job qualifications of high specialization has never emerged”*²³⁹ (Representative of UIL Sicily).

*“Professional quality is required. This can only come from employers’ awareness of workers’ conditions and from their reliance on the system”*²⁴⁰ (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

*“Of course, I would establish a constraint of minimum quality of professional qualification; that is, it is necessary to qualify jobs, even if they are apparently simple and trivial. Even bartenders should have knowledge about substances, they should also know the taste of the country where they work, they should have the ability to do sandwiches in a [certain] way”*²⁴¹ (Representative of CISL at national level).

Quality of work is also depicted to be linked to the sector of production. The quality of work is defined as white-collar employment in the public sector. This assumption is particularly evident among the Italian interviews. Public employment in fact guarantees not only temporal stability, but also the appreciation of the type of tasks that the worker is required to perform. This aspect seems to gather the evergreen conception at the basis of the Southern model and the Italian system, according to which the only way to be part of the elected and narrowed group of the ‘insiders’ was to enter the ‘cittadella del garantismo’. As shown in the Chapter VI, only employees in big companies and the public sector could entirely enjoy the guarantees and benefits offered by the Italian welfare state. Nonetheless, also cultural assumptions seem to intervene in this construction

²³⁹ “[Il tema della qualità del lavoro] è un argomento che non viene affrontato a livello di politiche generali. Poi a livello di aziende hanno bisogno anche di specializzazioni alte, c’è una richiesta da questo punto di vista, però una politica specifica sulle qualifiche lavorative di alta specializzazione non è mai emersa” (UIL Sicily).

²⁴⁰ “C’è bisogno della qualità professionale, ecco sta nella mentalità dell’imprenditore che guarda all’uomo, che crede in un sistema” (UIL Tuscany).

²⁴¹ “E poi metterei naturalmente un vincolo di qualità minimo di qualificazione professionale, cioè nei lavori, anche se sono apparentemente semplici e banali, in realtà va fatto un lavoro di qualificazione. Anche chi fa il barista deve conoscere sostanze, perchè deve conoscere anche [i gusti nazionali], perchè deve avere la capacità di fare i panini in un [certo] modo” (CISL at national level).

of job quality, insofar as ‘civil servant work’ results to be socially more attractive than other kinds of employment, as the representative of UIL Tuscany states here. This aspect also emerged in the previous paragraph of this chapter regarding the availability of job opportunities in the words of the representative of CISL Tuscany who emphasizes the moralizing view of unemployment, linking it to the depreciation of some type of employment by job-seekers:

*“It is clear that there are few people willing to attend a welding training course because maybe they strive for a different type of job, like clerical work; their underlying objective is getting a job in the public sector. Indeed, it is very desirable (...) because these are things that attract more people: it is a stable place and you don’t have to dirty your hands”*²⁴² (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

An additional criterion for defining job quality used by one of the interviewees is the proximity of the job place to one’s home and family. The representative of UIL Tuscany emphasizes the aspect of family attachment and long-life closeness to it, which mirrors the traditional features of the Southern social model. The great value of the closeness may be partly linked to the relational and informal support network that family provides. The sensibility to the aspect of social relationships is very much in line with the capability approach, since it meets the need of social relations individuals value in their job and life. The value of the proximity of the job place to one’s family and home may also be connected to the conception of home-ownership and its crucial role in establishing individuals’ sense of stability as well as to the characteristics of the Italian housing market. In fact, Italy is one of the countries with at least two thirds of households being owner-occupiers, due to a strong increase in the relative incidence of owner-occupation during the period 1980-2003 (Palvarini and Pavolini, 2010):

*“We are the people who need to have their son close by, we are people who love the idea of living “next door” (...). Someone else tries to enter the labour market in the following other way: they move to somewhere else to find a job, strengthening their professional skills. However, most people are still tied to the idea of getting a job close to their homes. This is it. But those people that feel well living at home and in their own country have to adjust to the chances around them, whereas instead if they want more than that...”*²⁴³ (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

²⁴² “E’ chiaro che troviamo poche persone che sono disponibili a frequentare il corso di formazione per saldatori perché magari aspirano ad un lavoro di tipo diverso, o di carattere impiegatizio; l’obiettivo di fondo è quello del pubblico impiego e quant’altro, lì c’è una grossa appetibilità, (...) perché queste sono cose che attraggono di più le persone, un posto sicuro, non c’è da sporcarsi le mani” (UIL Tuscany).

²⁴³ “Noi siamo quelli del figliolo averlo accanto eh; siamo sempre quelli della porta accanto; (...) , qualcuno lo fa e cerca di inserirsi in questo modo, si sposta per lavorare, acquisisce professionalità, però la gran parte delle persone

The point of the proximity of the job place to one's house is hinted also by the Spanish representatives of AGETT, who remarks in a critical way that cultural specificities hamper geographical mobility, even if this phenomenon seems to vary greatly according to the age of workers and their origins: *"Geographical mobility in Spain is very tough, not only because of the public employment service, but because of the very demands of workers, that is, because of the culture we have here"*²⁴⁴ (AGETT). The role of the family and the home-ownership trend highlighted for the Italian situation can be extended also to the Spanish context.

Health and safety in the job place is another aspect that characterizes the concept of 'job quality', according to the Italian expert and the representative of UPI Tuscany. The topic of safety and health at work has increasingly acquired relevance, following the Framework Agreement on work-related stress in 8/10/2004 signed by the EU labour market organisations (UNICE, UEAPME, CEEP and the ETUC). The purpose of the agreement was providing a definition of work-related stress that could be useful for its evaluation and for the prevention of its hurtful effects on employers and employees. Nonetheless, in the view of the Italian expert, the value of this topic seems to have been misunderstood and considered a constrain to accomplish:

*"This is another relevant aspect, for quality of jobs above all relates to job safety (...). As you probably know, the area where I live is renowned for the tragic history of the marble caves, a sector for which we really cannot speak in terms of an established safety culture. This is why, in my opinion, a high quality job is a safe job"*²⁴⁵ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

"Quality has had a great impact on a dramatic reality, that of security. We are in a bad situation. We have the best law in the world, such as the 'Testo Unico' law. It is rather unique and fantastic, it is very good, but it is not observed. Among other things, according to the imposition of the European Union, (...) there is not only physical health to take into account, but also the topic of stress (...). Unfortunately, there is no way: firms believe that it is an additional constraint. The

cercano un posto di lavoro vicino all'uscio di casa insomma; e questo è. Poi uno che sta meglio perché sta a casa, perché sta nel suo paese, però si deve accontentare di quello che c'è; se uno vuole di più..." (UIL Tuscany).

²⁴⁴ "Entonces, siempre se le ofrece esa posibilidad, aunque ya digo que lo de la movilidad geográfica en España es muy difícil ¿eh?. no solo por el servicio público de empleo, sino por las propias exigencias de los trabajadores que.. por todo.. o sea, por la cultura que hay aquí" (AGETT).

²⁴⁵ "Anche questo è un tema fondamentale perché la qualità del lavoro significa soprattutto lavoro sicuro; (...) io vivo in un territorio che come sa il tema del marmo è un tema che purtroppo ha segnato delle tragedie perché ancora una cultura della sicurezza sul mondo delle cave non è ancora definito al cento per cento; quindi per me un lavoro di qualità è un lavoro sicuro" (UPI Tuscany).

*professional associations try to avoid it, but also in public sector [the situation is similar]*²⁴⁶
(Italian expert).

A further aspect important to define job quality is related to an adequate work/life balance as well as to general support for people's needs. Such aspect was completely neglected by the Italian trade unions and regional representatives during the interview. By contrast, the national representative of the Italian association of employment agencies shows the measures the agencies offer to their workers. It is interesting to observe that the representative attempts to depict the world of employment agencies with positive connotations, in opposition to public employment policies:

*“Maternity allowance: if the female worker is denied the job before she can get in and if she has not a career path that can ensure her access to mandatory services as provided by the National Health Service, then the agency provides a cheque for motherhood. The availability allowance: you know that employment agencies can hire people with permanent contracts. In the period during which the worker who holds a permanent contract with the agency is in a position of inactivity and does not go on a mission, he/she receives an allowance of availability (...). Health protection: temporary workers have access to a health protection reimbursement for them and even for their family members, only after a few days of work (...). A small allowance for childcare: if a mother with a child (...) receives a job offer for a few months, then she is also entitled to receive a check for the nursery (...). Access to credit: I think we first started giving temporary workers the opportunity to apply for a loan without any kind of warranty, upon the grounds they are employed by an agency and have at least one month of mission; they may require up to €10,000 loan, without having to submit relevant documentation of guarantee, but solely on the grounds that he/she is trusted”*²⁴⁷
(Representative of Assolavoro).

²⁴⁶ “Parlando di qualità, questa ha inciso su una drammatica realtà che è quella della sicurezza. Noi siamo messi male. Abbiamo la legge migliore del mondo, piuttosto unica e fantastica, buonissima, ma non viene rispettata: il testo unico. Fra l'altro, sempre di nuovo secondo l'imposizione europea, (...) non c'è solo la salute fisica, ma c'è anche lo stress (...), però non c'è verso: le imprese ritengono sia un ulteriore vincolo. Le associazioni di categoria cercano di evitarlo, ma anche nel pubblico [è così]” (Italian expert).

²⁴⁷ “Un assegno per la maternità: qualora la lavoratrice perda il lavoro prima di poter entrare e non abbia un percorso lavorativo sufficiente per poterle garantire l'accesso alle prestazioni obbligatorie previste dal servizio sanitario nazionale, allora il sistema interviene con un assegno per la maternità. L'indennità di disponibilità: lei sa che le agenzie per il lavoro possono assumere un lavoratore a tempo indeterminato; nei periodi in cui questo lavoratore è assunto a tempo indeterminato dall'agenzia, però non presta la sua attività lavorativa, cioè non va in missione, questo lavoratore riceve un'indennità di disponibilità (...). Le prestazioni di tutela sanitaria: i lavoratori interinali basta abbiano pochissimi, pochi giorni di lavoro, che hanno accesso ad una tutela sanitaria di rimborso di ticket per loro e per i propri familiari (...). Un piccolo assegno per l'asilo nido: se una persona (...) riceve un'offerta di lavoro per qualche mese, ed è una mamma con un bambino, ha la possibilità di poter ricevere anche un assegno per l'asilo nido (...). L'accesso al credito: noi siamo stati, credo i primi, ad impostare, a dare ai lavoratori interinali la possibilità di poter chiedere un prestito senza nessun tipo di garanzia, semplicemente perché loro sono dipendenti di un'agenzia e abbiano un periodo di

Finally, after observing how Spanish and Italian actors construct the concept of ‘work quality’, we will focus on how they construct the national interest for promoting it. The Spanish expert reckons that the concept of job quality has undergone a major change in trend. Accordingly, after an initial phase during which the government seemed to show concern for this issue, the interest decreased over time and the discourse on flexibility and security promoted by the European Commission in 2007 took place. It is interesting to note the influence of the concept of flexicurity spread out by the European Union on the Spanish national discourses, which does not seem so evident in the Italian case. In Spain, the discourse on flexicurity, which was used mainly by enterprises, developed at the expense of the trade union’s discourse on social rights (Prieto et al., 2009). Consequently, having a job was no longer a right, but came to be a privilege (as shown in a previous extract of the Spanish expert in Chapter IX). In this picture where holding any job is considered more appreciable than no having job at all, the concern for quality disappears.

*“It is odd, yet also significant that the concept of quality of work has by now disappeared, whereas instead it used to be very popular in the early 2000s. From then onwards, the new concepts of flexibility and security have literally taken the scene, do you see what I mean?”*²⁴⁸ (Spanish expert).

*“Any job is better than no job (...). What does this mean? Forget the quality of jobs”*²⁴⁹ (Spanish expert).

With regard to the Italian case, the Italian expert, the representative of CISL Sicily and the representative of UIL Tuscany consider that the concept of quality has never been fully included in the political agenda or developed in concrete terms, especially in Sicily. By contrast, the general interest seems to have focused on facing numerical questions. The Italian expert depicts quantity and quality as two opposite concepts, where the attention to the former excludes the concern for the latter. Ultimately, the discourse on quality is told to be a bureaucratic accomplishment and is traced as a confused plan of action or is complete missing:

missione di almeno un mese; possono richiedere fino a 10.000 euro di prestito, senza dover presentare nessun documento di garanzia, sulla fiducia” (Assolavoro).

²⁴⁸ “Es muy curioso, o muy significativo, mejor dicho, que a partir de esa época, así como los primeros años del 2000/2004 el concepto de calidad del empleo estaba bastante presente, a partir de ese año desaparece. Empiezan a plantearse estos otros conceptos de la flexibilidad y la seguridad, ¿no?” (Spanish expert).

²⁴⁹ “Más vale cualquier empleo..que ningún..empleo. (...) Esto que quiere decir. Olvidémonos de la calidad del empleo..” (Spanish expert).

*“In my opinion, we have hardly experimented with the issue of quality of work. I am very critical of it, because ‘numbers’ for us have always been a problem of major concern, so we have paid attention to quantity, not quality. The experiments we did were pretty good, but also the issue of the certification of quality was lived in Italy in a very bureaucratic way”*²⁵⁰ (Italian expert).

*“[With regard to job creation and job quality], in Sicily there is nothing”*²⁵¹ (Representative of CISL Sicily).

*“In the world that I know – that of business associations and trade unions –, the consciousness that we have to raise the quality is clear. It does not miss, absolutely not. The problem is what to do”*²⁵² (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

In conclusion, according to the Spanish and Italian experts, the overall focus in their countries seems to neglect the issue of the quality of work, which is considered less relevant if compared to the need of achieving any paid job. However, Italian and Spanish actors belonging to different social groups problematize the issue of job quality. Among Spanish actors the concept of quality is mainly constructed in terms of job stability and qualification, while many other aspects seem to remain marginal or almost completely ignored. Nevertheless, the strong emphasis given by the actors to the issue of stability may be linked to the fact that, according to them, all the other aspects of job quality stem from stability, since, according to some authors (Prieto, 2014), the issue of stability has often been used by employers for reducing the quality of work conditions. Spanish trade unions seem to have refused the European discourse of prioritizing full employment and increasing employment rate at the expense of job quality. Still, they seem to have accepted more than the Italian counterpart the resizing and narrowing the concept of stability, probably due to the strong flexibilization of the labour market that partially have facilitated the predominance of the idea of job stability over that of employment stability. By contrast, Italian actors provide a more varied, plural and multidimensional definition of the concept, embracing different aspects (health and safety at work, work/life balance, type of work, proximity to family). Some of these, such as the

²⁵⁰ “Sul tema della qualità, secondo me, si sono fatti pochi esperimenti; io sono abbastanza critica sul tema della qualità perché siccome abbiamo sempre avuto problemi di numero, ci siamo sempre preoccupati della quantità e pochissimo della qualità. Sono stati fatti degli esperimenti abbastanza buoni e anche la certificazione della qualità è vissuta in Italia in maniera molto burocratica” (Italian expert).

²⁵¹ “[In merito alla creazione di lavoro e qualità del lavoro] in Sicilia non c'è niente” (CISL Sicily).

²⁵² “La coscienza nel mondo che conosco io, quello delle associazioni d'impresa, nel mondo sindacale, che bisogna elevare il livello qualitativo c'è, non manca questa cosa, assolutamente no. Il problema è che cosa fare” (UIL Tuscany).

long-life closeness to the household and the family of origin or the work/life balance, are very in line with the capability approach conception that the person has to find a job she/he values according to his/her needs and preferences. Nonetheless, the aspect of stability seems to play a central role not only in defining job quality, but also in forming a dimension of the world-view. Italian trade unions and even the representative of the employment agencies association seem averse or cautious in abandoning the traditional model. In both the Spanish and Italian cases, in the view of the interviewees, quality appears in practice as inconsistency, deterioration, depreciation and vulnerability. Furthermore, it comes to be an additional attribution to work that can result superfluous in periods of scarcity of employment opportunities. However, a form of awareness and sensitivity to the quality of work, which is crucial when considered from a capabilities approach, is overspread among the actors. After observing the actors' constructions of the quantity and quality issues of job opportunities, we move now to analyse the interpretations of the meaning of employment services and their role in favouring the access to opportunities in the next paragraph.

10.4 Access to job opportunities

10.4.1 Modernization of public services and new governance tools

In addition to the availability of valuable opportunities, it is necessary to take into account their accessibility to people. This point is another key aspect in the capabilities approach, since employment policies act as a fundamental conversion factor for an equal distribution of the opportunities within the labour market. In fact, public action plays a pivotal role in fostering capabilities (Clark, 2006). In this section, we will explore such question, analysing the actors' constructions of the meanings of the new services provided by job centers. These meanings are influenced by the new cognitive and normative framework that develops with the introduction of active policies, promoting the modernization of employment services. The process of modernization of the Public Employment Service started in Europe in the early 1980s (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007) and took on different forms in the European countries.

In Italy the change, which took place at the end of the '90s with the introduction of the first Bassanini Law (Law 59/1997, implemented with the legislative decree 469/1997), resulted in the passage from the old model of 'employment offices' to the new model of the 'employment services'. Then, the Bassanini Reform on decentralisation attributed to Regions and Provinces the competences related to employment, with the State holding only the function of tracing guidelines, coordinating and supervising the work of decentralized bodies. Among the interviewees, criticism

to the old model of employment offices is unanimous, due to their predominantly bureaucratic nature. This nature of employment services is also confirmed by the literature on Italian PES (Paci, 1997). Indeed, these offices served for the registration in lists, according to a seniority order, of job-seekers waiting to receive job offers. The offers were directed to the top of the list, regardless of skills and the level of professionalization of the unemployed. This extremely rigid model that discouraged companies from turning to employment offices has been considered senseless by several Italian actors. We report here only the discourses of the representative of the Tuscany Region and of the representative of Assolavoro, whose interviews result particularly interesting:

“[This activity was] totally inadequate to what the labour market had become in the meantime; hence, the need for a transformation was inevitable. [The old employment centers] become meaningless substantially with regard to placement”²⁵³ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

“When I was young, people went to the employment office and enrolled in lists; a person stayed in a queue and when she entered the office, if a job offer was available, the civil servant asked ‘is that okay for you?’. [The reply could be] ‘Yes’ or ‘No, thank you and goodbye’, but in this latter case the person lost the top position in the list, so she had to wait of going back on the top of the list. [This system was] absurd (...); the public system was exactly like this, as it is known, nothing new”²⁵⁴ (Representative of Assolavoro).

In the previous extract, the regional representative of Tuscany depicts the old system as unable to face the new challenges and constructs the change as inevitable for a major adaptation to the current demands of the labour market. The representative of the Italian association of employment agencies Assolavoro uses the description of the old employment offices for remarking the worthlessness of the public system, normalizing and extending the idea of its inefficiency.

With the introduction of employment centres, a transition took place from a very rigid to a more varied and flexible structure. Companies became then free to decide the person they wanted to hire, as they no longer had to conform to the limitations provided by the lists of the unemployed provided by the employment offices. Although some bureaucratic activity has been maintained

²⁵³ “[L’attività svolta era] appunto totalmente inadeguata a quella che nel frattempo era diventato il mercato del lavoro; quindi l’esigenza di una trasformazione era inevitabile. [I vecchi centri per l’impiego] non stavano più a far niente sostanzialmente rispetto al collocamento” (UPI Toscana, Lucca).

²⁵⁴ “Quando ero io piccolo si andava all’ufficio di collocamento e c’erano le liste e si andava a occupare (...) [queste] liste, cioè una persona in fila entrava in quel momento e c’era disponibile questa attività lavorativa, va bene? Sì, no va bene, grazie e arrivederci, questo era, se perdevo la graduatoria quindi dovevo ritornare in graduatoria, un sistema assurdo, quindi questo era il sistema pubblico, come è noto, non è che si scopra [nulla di nuovo]” (Assolavoro).

(movements, hiring, firing, mobility lists), it has been accompanied by innovative services representing active policies, which underlined the cognitive and normative nature of this major change. However, some trade union representatives believe that the administrative function has remained prevalent as it used to be before the change:

*“It is mainly a bureaucratic activity. There are few people who go to the job centre to say ‘I am unemployed, find me a job’, because people choose other channels, probably due to the fact that going to the job centre (...) does not lead to straightforward answers”*²⁵⁵ (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

*“[The staff of the employment centres] spends much time doing paperwork; we are very good at filling out forms”*²⁵⁶ (Representative of CGIL Tuscany).

The representatives of the Tuscany trade unions confirm the devaluation of the public system stated previously by the representative of the Italian association of the employment agencies. The general trend is presenting this discourse as it was already taken for granted and shared among the different stakeholders to employment policies. The representative of the CGIL Tuscany even extend such devaluation to trade unions themselves, embedded in the pronoun “we”, through the use of an ironic expression. This indicates that the representative constructs the trade union to which he belongs as old and obsolete. However, this attitude to devaluating could contribute explicitly or implicitly to the failure of public services.

The modernization of employment services has led to the shift from a centralized to a decentralized structure. The centralized structure consisted of the Ministry of Labour operating at the state level and the provincial employment offices at the local level; by contrast, the decentralized structure is now composed by peripheral bodies – the employment centres – monitored by the Provinces or agencies in direct contact with the Region, with the aim of implementing active policies. The concept of “active” hints the very change of the modernization process, but its meaning varies among the actors as shown in the following extracts:

*“[The aim was] putting territories, programming and the active role of employment services at the centre”*²⁵⁷ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

²⁵⁵ “E’ un’attività prevalentemente burocratica, cioè sono poche le persone che vanno al centro per l’impiego a dire ‘io sono disoccupato, trovatemi un lavoro’; perché le persone scelgono altri canali, probabilmente perché il fatto di andare al centro del lavoro (...) non trova risposta” (UIL Tuscany).

²⁵⁶ “[I lavoratori del servizio per l’impiego] passano il tempo a riempire scartoffie; noi siamo molto bravi a riempire moduli” (CGIL Tuscany).

*“Before employment centres were introduced in 2000, there were national employment offices. These offices represented the periphery of a national structure organized mainly around the lawful bureaucratic management of subscription in lists and of movements [in and out of the labour market]; that is, they were just keeping records. If you were older than 15, you could just go there and tell them you were fine and could work, in return for which you were given a ‘pink card’ that meant you were officially unemployed. Then you, Bonechi Francesca, had to let them know if somebody hired you, so they could take you off the list... but there really was no activation [of the unemployed] at all...”*²⁵⁸ (Representative of CGIL at national level).

As expressed by the representative of UPI Tuscany, the goal of the modernization of employment services has been twofold: 1. making to converge the development of employment policies towards the local level, increasing the involvement of territories. 2. designating employment centres as the cornerstone of employment policies emphasizing their new position as active actors. However, the actors use the notion “active” in a different way and for referring to diverse objects. Indeed, the representative of the UPI Tuscany attributes it to employment centres, whereas the national representative of the CGIL assumes it in reference to the unemployed. In this regard, as Bonvin and Farvaque state (2007), the concept of ‘activation’ was originally referred to the typology of policies to promote and to the shift of the emphasis from passive to active expensive. Then the concept was extended to the activation of persons, in line with the idea of an active society. Thus, the institution of employment centres introduces the idea of an active and continuous job search by the unemployed, according to the new paradigm of activation. People have to abandon the idea of keeping the same employment throughout their lives and to adopt a different view of their work path. Training and lifelong learning become functional to the change of job along one’s own career. All these measures focus on the prevalent role of the individual in changing his/her own professional situation. The national representative of UIL seems to assume this perspective:

²⁵⁷ “[L’obiettivo era] mettere al centro i territori, la programmazione, il ruolo attivo dei centri per l’impiego” (UPI Tuscany).

²⁵⁸ “Fino al 2000 i Centri per l’impiego non esistevano; c’erano gli Uffici di collocamento nazionali, erano diramazioni di una funzione nazionale che era sostanzialmente limitata alla correttezza burocratica delle iscrizioni e dei movimenti, nel senso appunto che registravano; tu andavi lì, dai quindici anni in su, a dire ‘sono abile al lavoro e sono in condizioni di’; ricevevi quello che allora si chiamava il tesserino rosa che era la tua condizione di disoccupato e poi registravi che Francesca Bonechi era stata assunta dall’azienda di... e quindi non era più nella tua lista; però non c’era attivazione [del disoccupato]” (CGIL at national level).

*“This shift from a such bureaucratic rigid system (...) to a free system has made the search of jobs essentially an individual matter, which is a weakness of the employment services system”*²⁵⁹ (Representative of UIL at national level).

The last extract provides an interesting view on the considerations around the modernization process. The national representative of UIL describes the change as a passage from a rigid bureaucratic system to a free system; nevertheless, the representative highlights that the job search has become an individual matter. This increase of the individual responsibility is exactly the aim of the activation policies discourse oriented towards an employability perspective, but the representative of the Italian trade union seems to refuse this vision and depicts it as a weakness of the public employment system. This recalls the informational basis of the capabilities approach, according to which individual and social responsibilities have to combine for progressing in the fight against unemployment.

The new paradigm entails being active, using the public services provided by employment centres and/or the private services provided by the employment agencies, such as orientation, counselling, training, and crossing supply and demand. These services constitute a circuit where the unemployed are protagonist of the employment system's offer. Both the national representative of Italia Lavoro and the national representative of Assolavoro share this view. It is interesting to observe the expressions used by the representative of Italia Lavoro, who distinguishes between “strong” and “weak” workers, emphasizing the individual and moral dimension. Furthermore, the representative of Italia Lavoro considers that, in a country like Italy, in which personal network is one of the main device for finding work, employment centres may also function as an alternative social and relational support for finding opportunities:

*“The idea is that employment centres become a sort of network for a person who does not have its own, [especially if we consider that] there are strong workers, there are weaker workers, there are better prepared, and worse prepared. We are talking about a multiplicity of cultures, ethnic groups; we are talking about migrant workers, disabled workers; we are talking about the whole population living in a territory, so the job centre becomes a point of reference”*²⁶⁰ (Representative of Italia Lavoro).

²⁵⁹ “Questo passaggio da un sistema così burocraticamente rigido (...) al sistema libero ha come dire comportato che la ricerca del lavoro fosse di natura sostanzialmente individuale, e cioè una debolezza del sistema dei servizi per l'impiego” (UIL at national level).

²⁶⁰ “L'idea è quella di un centro per l'impiego che diventa una sorta di rete per un lavoratore che non ha una rete propria, [soprattutto se si considera che] c'è il lavoratore forte, c'è quello meno forte, c'è quello preparato, c'è quello meno preparato; stiamo parlando di una molteplicità di culture anche, di etnie, di lavoratori immigrati, di lavoratori

*“The goal is to make workers feel part of a system, a protective system, and to make them feel within a labour market that is not exclusive but inclusive, (...) that does not make the individual vulnerable, but defend her. The goal is just to shake off the idea of insecurity. [Therefore, the agencies] try to act as a buffer, as an air space, as an individual shock absorber, rather than as a social shock absorber”*²⁶¹ (Representative of Assolavoro).

It is interesting to observe the different positions of the national representative of Italia Lavoro and the national representative of Assolavoro, which in a way mirror the divergent views between public and private sectors. It is worth remembering that Italia Lavoro acts by law as the agency of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to promote and manage actions on labour policies, social inclusion and employment. Instead, Assolavoro is the national association of Italian employment agencies. In the first extract, the representative of Italia Lavoro highlights the role played by employment centers as a “point of reference” for more or less vulnerable people outside the labour market; by contrast, the position of the representative of Assolavoro is that employment agencies favour the change of connotation of labour market, inasmuch they turn it into a ‘good’ labour market in opposition to a ‘bad’ labour market. Furthermore, the representative of Assolavoro utilizes the notion “shock absorber”, which is generally used for describing the public function of the welfare state that intends to protect vulnerable people. In this quotation, the representative not only adopts such notion, but emphasizes that employment agencies are able to work as individual shock absorber. In this way, the representative attempts to make employment agencies gain a major role within the broad landscape of stakeholders working in the field of employment.

The transition from the employment offices to employment centres also affected the relationship between public officials and users, according to the representative of the Sicily Region. This is an emblematic point, since as Bonvin and Farvaque state, “the will to render public policies more ‘active’ entails a new way of thinking about the tasks of local agents and opens a space for individualised practices” (2007: 48). In the view of the representative of Sicily Region, employment centers are now involved in an interactive and emotional relationship with the user, who has been settled at the centre of labour market policies:

disabili, cioè stiamo parlando di tutta la platea della popolazione di un territorio, per cui diciamo il centro per l’impiego diventa un punto di riferimento” (Italia Lavoro).

²⁶¹ “L’obiettivo è quello di far sentire i lavoratori all’interno di un sistema, di un sistema protetto, di un mercato del lavoro che non è esclusivo ma è inclusivo, (...) che è tutelante e non precarizzante; l’obiettivo è proprio questo, l’obiettivo è scrollarsi di dosso l’idea di precarizzazione; quindi, le agenzie “cercano di fare da cuscinetto, da intercapedine, da ammortizzatore non sociale, ma da ammortizzatore individuale sì” (Assolavoro).

*“The bulletproof glass door is a case in point; we have moved from this model to a relational and emotional involvement between users and the staff at the employment centre. Users were to be seen as persons, as individuals, which certainly would be a major change of direction”*²⁶² (Representative of Sicily Region).

In Spain, the old centralized model was headed by the INEM (National Employment Institute – Instituto Nacional de Empleo), that is a national authority in charge of implementing labour market policies and managing the provision of unemployment benefits. Over the period from the beginning of the 1990s to 1997, a process of decentralization of active policies to the Autonomous Communities took place. In 2003 the INEM disappeared and was substituted by the SEPE (the National Public Employment Service – Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal) that, in collaboration with the Public Employment Services of the Autonomous Communities, composed the SNE (National Employment System – Sistema Nacional de Empleo). The change was formalized with the introduction of the Law 56/2003. With the decline of the INEM, the national system lost its monopoly and favoured the entry of not-for-profit employment agencies as well as collaborative entities. The participation of collaborative organizations enriching the panorama of active policies is especially developed in the Spanish case, in comparison to the Italian situation.

Some changes occurred after this phase of modernization, the significance of which is often opaque even to the interviewees. Nevertheless, as in the Italian case, the paperwork is still emerging as one of the main activities of the employment centres, although the use and dissemination of new technologies has enabled employment services to facilitate the management of active policies and the access to them for both employers and unemployed. However, employment services no longer deal solely with paperwork and administering unemployment benefits, but also qualify the unemployed and offer them possibilities of integration in the labour market. Nonetheless, the representative of SERVEF complains about the fact that the unemployment benefits have for a long time represented the main and most immediate measure, at the expense of other actions aimed at promoting employability. It is noticeable that the representative refers to this as a “stigma”, attributing thus a negative connotation to unemployment benefits in comparison to active policies. In his view, it is not surprising that also at a linguistic level, employment services have always been thought by the users as ‘offices for unemployment’, neglecting the active component of labour market policies:

²⁶² “Lo sportello con il vetro antiproiettile è significativo; si doveva passare da questo modello a un modello diretto di coinvolgimento anche di tipo emotivo tra il soggetto, che va a chiedere un’informazione, e l’operatore; il soggetto viene concepito come persona, come individuo: quindi, un grande cambiamento” (Sicily Region).

*“This is one of the stigmas suffered by employment offices. Indeed, also at a colloquial level, employment offices have always been ‘the unemployment services’; they have never been employment services, as we like to denominate them. For the job-seeker, always they have been the unemployment offices”*²⁶³ (Representative of SERVEF).

In the word of the representative of SERVEF, the construction of the users do not correspond to the construction of the civil servants who would wish to emphasize the orientation of the service toward employment, more than to the reception of the subsidies for unemployment. Therefore, from a practical point of view, the unemployed are expected to turn to employment centres and require active measures, or, as in the Andalusian case, develop a complete itinerary. The person is then addressed to the closest collaborative entity that provides the service she/he requires. Her/his curriculum vitae is updated insofar as the person carries out training actions or orientation, while waiting for a relatively adequate job offer.

With regard to the mission of employment services, it is interesting to note that the respondents tend to focus on different aspects. The national representative of UGT gives greater weight to the demands of the productive structure and the need for individuals to comply with them. In this sense, employment centres are assumed to make the unemployed formally prepared to meet the demands of production systems and companies’ requests. Consequently, the individual is required to adapt to a changing and precarious labour market. But, as problematized by one of the representative of SAE, the result is that the individual remains in the background as compared to economic and political interests. Moreover, the other representative of SAE tends to emphasize the importance that employment centres became a real reference point for the unemployed. In this view, individuals should become the true recipients of the advantages produced by employment policies. Still, the use of the term “profitability” recalls an entrepreneurial language.

*“What the public employment service must have is the ability (...), once detected labour market’s needs, to provide labour; let’s go to prepare the unemployed to be employed for those jobs. That is the responsibility of public service”*²⁶⁴ (Representative of UGT at national level).

²⁶³ “Eso es uno de los estigmas que acarreamos.. las oficinas igual que a nivel coloquial las oficinas siempre han sido las oficinas del paro, nunca las oficinas de empleo, como a nosotros siempre nos gusta llamar, siempre empleo.. para el demandante siempre ha sido el paro” (SERVEF).

²⁶⁴ “El servicio público de empleo lo que debe de tener es la capacidad (...), una vez detectadas necesidades que tiene el mercado, de cubrir mano de obra; pues coño, vamos a preparar a los desempleados para esa capacidad de cubrir esos puestos. Esa es la responsabilidad del servicio público” (UGT at national level).

*“Because, most of the time, the goal is not the student. The main objective is fixing the streets. It is repairing the church (...). It is not thinking of students, which is what we should think of”*²⁶⁵ (Representative of SAE).

*“Yes, but the idea, the philosophy is ... Profitability, especially for the person”*²⁶⁶ (Representative of SAE).

Reading the previous extracts, it is very interesting to note the statements of the national representative of UGT and the regional representatives of SAE. Indeed, the trade union representative at the national level seem to re-propose the logic according to which meeting the demands of the labour market also means providing job opportunities to unemployed. The representative attributes to employment services the responsibility of preparing the unemployed on the basis of the requests of the market. The representatives of SAE, who operate at the regional level, show a kind of sensitiveness for the individual. Both the influence of the contexts and the level of closeness to the citizens may influence the development of such sensitiveness. The representatives of the Andalusian regional body seem to hint the informational basis of the capabilities, looking at the individuals' well-being and at the expansion of their capacity to act. Indeed, according to the capabilities approach, a public action strictly concentrating on a market-orientation basis of information as well as aiming at increasing placement and employment rates, negates individual freedoms. As already shown in the previous chapter, activation policies focus on supply-side interventions, whereas the capabilities approach also entails demand-side interventions.

Using Sen's terms, employment services should act as conversion factors, helping people to recover from their vulnerable situation. For some of the actors interviewees, employment services potentially could also play a preventive function, in order to restrain precarious workers from ending up unemployed. However, in the opinion of the representative of SAE, this function clashes with the economic difficulties of the public service, so not all employment centres may be able to treat this further type of users:

“[Employment services should be] addressed not only to the unemployed, but also to workers who want to improve or keep their employability (...). We should stop thinking solely of the

²⁶⁵ “Porque el objetivo, la mayor parte de las veces, no es alumno. El objetivo fundamental es hacer la.. arreglar la calle. Es la iglesia. (...) ni pensando en los alumnos, que es el lo que deberíamos de pensar.. No” (SAE).

²⁶⁶ “Sí, pero la idea, la filosofía es.. la rentabilidad, sobre todo para la persona” (SAE).

*unemployed, and start thinking of those who do have a job but who can lose it too*²⁶⁷ (Representative of UGT Valencia).

*“If we could meet those people who are about to leave the labour market...maybe we could get to the point when they do not even incur into unemployment (...). But we cannot work on prevention, due to budgetary problems”*²⁶⁸ (Representative of SAE).

After this brief overview of the interpretations of modernization process and of the transformation of employment services, we now move to observe the meanings of the specific actions public services carry out according to the interviewees. Moreover, the attention will be addressed to the discourses developed around key topics, such as the continuity of the attendance and the continuity of programs, the coordination among different measures, the equity of employment policies as well as the interest reserved for young people.

10.4.2 New meanings, actions and demands for individuals

Employment centres are crucial in the new pattern of public policies. They execute three main functions for the implementation of active policies: 1) the analysis of workers' educational career and work experience; 2) the reinforcement of skills through vocational training; 3) the promotion of contact established with the company through internships or temporary contracts. Although entering the labour market requires the successful completion of all three different steps, each of them can acquire its own centrality in relation to the individual's needs and the socio-economic context; for example, matching supply and demand with the goal of inclusion can be viewed as a priority over other actions in times of crisis. The actions implemented by employment centres can be distinguished into different types: guidance services aimed at helping the unemployed to understand the labour market and know which skills are required to re-enter it; counselling; providing information about channels for job search and training opportunities; balance of competences; reading curriculum to make job-seekers aware of the appeal of their application and teaching them how to behave during a job interview; matching supply with demand. There are also a number of European, national and regional programs, as well as public-private collaborations, alongside the actions of employment agencies.

²⁶⁷ “No solo a desempleados, sino a trabajadores que quieran mejorar su ocupabilidad o mantenerla, (...) pues.. ya no solo tienes que pensar en los que no tienen trabajo, sino en los que tienen y lo pueden perder” (UGT Valencia).

²⁶⁸ “Si pudiéramos atender..no a todas, pero a personas ocupadas que están a punto de.. de.. de abandonar el mercado de trabajo, pues.. igual conseguimos que ni si quiera llegaran a estar desempleados. (...) Pero preventivo no podemos trabajar. Por problemas presupuestarios, vamos” (SAE).

We will now look at these actions in more detail, considering how the interviewees interpret them and which are the meanings and cognitive elements upon which the actions are constructed. The analysis of the meanings is useful for comprehending the informational basis of judgment that inspires Spanish and Italian employment policies.

A. Career guidance

Starting from the analysis of the job-seeker specific situation (i.e. young unemployed with low/high level of qualification or young/adult), career guidance allows: 1) the articulation of a career path for the unemployed through the balance of competence; 2) the definition of the other actions of active policy with greater awareness, starting from the knowledge of the productive system of the territory and evolution of the context.

Career guidance is considered a key action of employment policies in the respondents' view. The Spanish representative of SAE defines it, in an emblematic mode, as “...*the gateway to the active policies*”²⁶⁹ (SAE). One of the Spanish trade unions seems to describe career guidance as a genuine attempt to create a space in which the unemployed, and workers in general, can discover and address their individual potential. Nevertheless, the national representative of CCOO underlines the discontinuous and heterogeneous delivery to users of career guidance activities:

*“We are now doing a process of career guidance for active people (...). There are people who are interested in receiving a session of orientation, because it serves to discover their potential as a worker (...). That person may discover other facets, but she/he must be accompanied along an enabling path of training, job search, editing and presentation of curriculum; it is necessary to help her/him to open the doors to other possibilities. The other phase that is about to start is guidance for unemployed”*²⁷⁰ (Representative of CCOO Valencia).

“In many cases there really may be a lot of unemployed who completely ignore their possibilities, either for retraining or for being accompanied in the search of a job; by contrast, many others can be bombarded by entities that offer the same [activities] so that the unemployed

²⁶⁹ “...la puerta de entrada a las políticas activas” (SAE).

²⁷⁰ “Ahora estamos haciendo un proceso de orientación laboral para personas en activo, (...) hay gente que se interesa en recibir una dinámica de orientación porque sirve para descubrir tus potencialidades como trabajador (...) A esa persona se le pueden descubrir otras facetas, pero tiene que ir acompañado, digamos, por un itinerario de formación, de capacitación y de búsqueda de trabajo, saber hacer un currículum, presentarlo y abrirle las puertas a otras posibilidades. La otra fase que va a empezar en muy poco es la orientación a los parados” (CCOO Valencia).

*lack criteria upon which assessing if a job really suits them*²⁷¹ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

Italian representative of UPI Tuscany and the representative of the Tuscany Region describe career guidance as a form of support for developing life projects, aiming at increasing individuals' capacity to address conscientiously their own existence and to manage transitional phases, which is linked to the new active paradigm. However, the representative of UPI Tuscany points out that the culture of career guidance is not so developed among people, who are not used to shape their own professional project. In this way, the representative seems to focus mainly on the lack of the mental disposition by people in adopting the tools offered by the new paradigm of activation:

*"The guidance is towards preparing individuals to make their own choices, through the provision of tools useful to support them in the transitional phases of their lives. It stimulates individual's capacity to proceed with a progressive clarification of one's own project in life"*²⁷² (Representative of Tuscany Region).

*"There is not yet a culture of the career guidance, a culture of understanding, of setting up and programming a professional project or professional development for continuing learning. We should work a lot on this"*²⁷³ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

Both the Spanish representative of CCOO Valencia and the Italian representative of the Tuscany Region highlight the issue of the difficulty for users to understand the meaning and the value of career guidance. In the view of the Italian representative of the Tuscany Region, this is especially the case for old workers who look at it with suspicion and do not fully comprehend the profound changes that the labour market has undergone over the last twenty years:

*"People begin to ask for guidance, which is something that both workers and the unemployed previously used to ignore"*²⁷⁴ (Representative of CCOO Valencia).

²⁷¹ "En muchos casos puede haber muchos, muchas personas desempleadas que desconozcan por completo cuales son las posibilidades que tienen, o bien de recualificarse o bien de.. de ser acompañados en la búsqueda de empleo; y otros muchos que pueden estar bombardeados por entidades que le ofrecen lo mismo y..y esa persona desempleada no tiene ninguna.. ningún criterio, nadie le orienta respecto a.. a que es lo que le conviene" (CCOO at national level).

²⁷² "L'orientamento si configura come un'attività di preparazione alle scelte, attraverso l'offerta di strumenti utili ad accompagnare le persone nelle fasi di transizione della vita; si esplica come stimolo alla capacità di ciascun individuo di procedere ad una progressiva chiarificazione del proprio progetto personale di vita" (Tuscany Region).

²⁷³ "Ancora non c'è una cultura dell'orientamento, una cultura di capire, di impostare, programmare un proprio progetto professionale o di aggiornamento professionale di formazione continua; su questo dovremmo lavorare molto" (UPI Tuscany).

*“We offer services of this kind. This is hard to be seen as a useful and necessary service. In the case of young people, the orientation [to attend career guidance] is already present, but it is a revolution that is hard to establish in the case of adult workers. However, services were used and evaluated with a certain diffidence at the beginning; then people realize that actually...”*²⁷⁵
(Representative of Tuscany Region)

Finally, both the Spanish and Italian representatives state that career guidance is having a progressive diffusion, insofar as people have started to adopt this kind of service and to appreciate its efficacy.

B. Vocational training and retraining

Special emphasis has been given to vocational training and retraining by the European Employment Strategy, and it also constitutes one of the main pillar of the flexicurity model. Also the capabilities approach remarks the role of the acquisition of skills. Still, the approach strongly underlines that training makes sense only if it is flanked by a labour market that allows skills to turn into outcomes (Goerne, 2010). The Spanish expert and the representative of Italia Lavoro deem that vocational training is the most common action undertaken by employment services, to such an extent that it has been often identified with active policies themselves:

*“Where were employment policies oriented? Fundamentally, they reproduced the same parameters of those at EU level. In the sense, they were all about training”*²⁷⁶ (Spanish expert).

*“[Vocational training] was the only measure really developed in this region, due to the fact that there were funds”*²⁷⁷ (Representative of Italia Lavoro).

The Spanish expert recognizes a key role to the European Union that, while allowing the development of the programme, require the alignment to specific parameters, as the word

²⁷⁴ “Ya empieza a pedirnos gente orientación, que era un concepto que un parado o una persona que está trabajando desconocía” (CCOO Valencia).

²⁷⁵ “Offriamo servizi di questo tipo (...); questo stenta ad essere concepito come un servizio utile e necessario. Per le fasce più giovani c'è già un po' questa formazione, quindi è una rivoluzione che riguarda una fascia di lavoratori adulti e che stenta un po' più ad affermarsi. Comunque i servizi vengono utilizzati, vengono apprezzati all'inizio magari con una certa diffidenza, poi ci si rende conto che effettivamente...” (Tuscany Region).

²⁷⁶ “¿Hacia dónde iban las políticas de empleo? Fundamentalmente reproducían los mismos parámetros que en el ámbito a nivel europeo. En el sentido de.. bueno.. formación, fundamentalmente formación” (Spanish expert).

²⁷⁷ “[La formazione] è stato l'unico processo veramente attivato in questa regione, grazie al fatto che c'erano i fondi” (Italia Lavoro).

“reproduced” indicates. Indeed, the access to the fund is strictly connected to the satisfaction of specific criteria that in a way mark the strategies of employment.

In the Italy, a case in point is Sicily, where the inversion of fund for training has reached impressive proportions. In this regard, we observe how the representative of CGIL Sicily and the representative of Italia Lavoro interpret this action and its effects:

*“The vocational training system (...) is colossal”*²⁷⁸ (Representative of CGIL Sicily).

*“You will find out that Sicilian workers, students or anyone leaving university or school are highly qualified and have certificates of every kind”*²⁷⁹ (Representative of Italia Lavoro).

*“The system eventually broke down because training are not required by nobody. There are so many people doing training courses that nonetheless are totally disconnected from enterprises’ needs”*²⁸⁰ (Representative of UIL Sicily).

Actors’ opinions about the Sicilian situation are strongly convergent in stating the massive presence of a training system, which, however, has been completely disconnected from the productive structure. The delivery of courses has become a mode of survival of the entities or public institutions responsible for promoting them: *“Training is designed more as a tool to justify the survival of the service; it is not linked to the production system”*²⁸¹ (Representative of Italia Lavoro).

The connection between training and the needs of the productive system is often identified as one of the main reasons for establishing the failure or success of the training action. In this regard, a major criticism among the Italian trade unions concerns the fact that training is disconnected at all from the world of work. They complain that training has been sometimes offered to users in a generic way, that is, regardless of their job profile:

*“The most of [training] is delivered ‘as rain’, and so it is not geared at preparing professionals to acquire competences that are lacking in Italy”*²⁸² (Representative of CISL Tuscany).

²⁷⁸ “Il sistema della formazione professionale (...) è un sistema mastodontico” (CGIL Sicily).

²⁷⁹ “Lei troverà i lavoratori siciliani, gli studenti o chi esce dall’università o chi esce dalla scuola eccetera, sono pluridecorati, hanno attestati di ogni tipo” (Italia Lavoro).

²⁸⁰ “In realtà è un sistema che è andato in corto circuito perchè queste politiche poi non le richiede nessuno; persone che si iscrivono a fare le formazioni sono tante ma questo è tutto slegato dalle esigenze delle imprese” (UIL Sicily).

²⁸¹ “Diciamo la formazione viene pensata più come uno strumento per giustificare la sopravvivenza di quel settore, non è legata al sistema produttivo” (Italia Lavoro).

²⁸² “Molto è fatto a pioggia e quindi non è molto finalizzato alle professionalità che mancano in Italia” (CISL Tuscany).

*“It happened that almost everyone did courses in English and information technology, which does no wrong”*²⁸³ (Representative of CGIL at national level).

*“However, we have never had a specific policy targeted on professional qualifications of high specialization. The only laudable attempts have occurred in the construction industry. For example a few years ago (...), it was decided to qualify some trades that had disappeared; for example, in Palermo, the possibility to build or renovate [buildings] in the center was linked to the ability to [use] construction techniques that reproduced the same style. So, there was the need of training those people who could use these 50-100 year old construction techniques, since these competences were almost gone. There was a good investment in this area for which these skills, that had almost disappeared, were re-created thanks to older people. So, it was possible to intervene on the buildings of the old town and restore them according to the features and techniques of the past. This is an important factor but quite limited, because it is a type of construction industry of high costs and high degrees of specialization”*²⁸⁴ (Representative of UIL Sicily).

Also the Spanish actors complain about the use and the delivery of training. The Spanish expert deems that sometimes courses are accomplished by imitation, that is, they repeat the same pattern, regardless of regional differences. The representative of FEMP Valencia reckons that, in some other cases, the connection with the territory has been transformed into identification with the needs of the municipal hall – which finances training courses – without really reflecting on the meaning of what is really formative for the unemployed and may open up opportunities in the long run:

*“Training courses were mimetic... hairdressing, information technology (...), regardless of whether the Basque Country needed engineers or Andalusia required farmers”*²⁸⁵ (Spanish expert).

²⁸³ “E’ successo che quasi tutti hanno fatto corsi di inglese e di informatica, che male non fanno” (CGIL at national level).

²⁸⁴ “Però una politica specifica sulle qualifiche lavorative di alta specializzazione non è mai emersa; gli unici lodevoli tentativi sono stati nel settore edile; per esempio qualche anno fa (...) si è pensato di andare a qualificare alcuni mestieri che erano scomparsi, perché, per esempio a Palermo, la possibilità di costruire o ristrutturare in centro era legata alla possibilità di [usare] tecniche costruttive che riproducevano le stesse modalità di lavorazione. Per cui c’era la necessità di andare a formare quelli che potevano utilizzare tecniche costruttive di 50 o 100 anni fa - che erano delle professionalità quasi sparite - e su questo c’è stato un buon investimento in questo settore per cui si sono ricreati a partire dagli anziani queste professionalità che erano quasi scomparse si è potuto intervenire sugli edifici del centro storico, ripristinandoli secondo le caratteristiche e le tecniche di un tempo. Però questo è un fattore importante ma abbastanza limitato perché si tratta di una tipologia di edilizia ad alti costi e a grande specializzazione” (UIL Sicily).

²⁸⁵ “Se daban cursos de formación miméticos... peluquería, informática.. sin tener en cuenta.. (...) Con independencia de que en el País Vasco se necesitasen ingenieros y en Andalusia se necesitasen agricultores” (Spanish expert).

*“No, I am going to set up a painting workshop with the scope of making my town painted; rather, I will train painters whenever there is demand of painters. I mean, I knew a mayor who wanted us to do a school of stone, because he lived in an old town (...) and he wanted the streets of the town made of cobblestone...and therefore he said ‘let’s prepare stonemasons’ and I said ... ‘But why do we prepare stonemasons? Where will they be employed afterwards?’”*²⁸⁶ (Representative of FEMP Valencia).

In the view of regional and trade unions’ representatives, collaborative entities responsible for carrying out formative courses often do not conceive of training as an active policy aimed at increasing the chances available to individuals. By contrast, they consider training as a way to obtain grants through the delivery of courses that issue certificates of qualification with no actual connection to any other action provided by employment services, as the representative of CCOO Andalucía and the representatives of SERVEF state:

*“And it has become increasingly easier to issue the Certificate of Professionalism”*²⁸⁷ (Representative of SERVEF).

*“One drawback is that very small entities still exist in the fields of training and guidance, especially in field of training. Small schools do very specific courses, which have no relation at all to guidance or related measures”*²⁸⁸ (Representative of CCOO Andalucía).

*“Academies still carry on without considering the issue of vocational training, without acknowledging vocational training as a policy... as a part of active employment policies. If they do, (...), in my opinion, it is mostly a way to get funds, rather than to fight unemployment and retrain workers so as to allow them to reach a better qualification”*²⁸⁹ (Representative of SERVEF).

²⁸⁶ “No.. yo voy a montar un taller de empleo de pintura porque con eso me pinto el pueblo”, sino “voy a formar pintores porque hay demanda de pintores”. O sea, yo tuve el caso de un alcalde que quería que hiciéramos una escuela de cantería porque quería.. quería.. es un pueblo antiguo (...) quería las calles del pueblo quería hacerlas de.. de adoquín.. también decía “pues hacemos canteros” y yo decía.. “¿pero por qué hacemos canteros? ¿dónde van a encontrar después trabajo estos canteros?” (FEMP Valencia).

²⁸⁷ “Ya está siendo cada vez más más fácil de dar el Certificado de Profesionalidad” (SERVEF).

²⁸⁸ “Como inconveniente se apunta a que tanto en el campo de la formación como en el de la orientación existen aún entidades muy pequeñas, especialmente en formación, dónde pequeñas academias hacen cursos muy concretos, pero su acción se agota ahí, sin ninguna relación con orientación u otras medidas” (CCOO Andalucía).

²⁸⁹ “Las academias siguen sin ver el tema de la Formación Profesional como una política.. como integrante de una política activa de empleo. Si ellos van a la formación profesional, (...) más lo veo como una forma de conseguir una subvención que como una forma de luchar contra el paro y de recualificar al posible trabajador para obtener una mejor cualificación” (SERVEF).

A different discourse emerges between the regional representative of SERVEF and the representative of Caritas Spain. As shown in the following interviews, the goal of active policies according to the regional representative is that training and retraining make unemployed more suitable for the demands of the labour market. The national representative of Caritas highlights other functions that training holds in developing individual capacities. Indeed, training can be used for the improvement not only of professional skills, but also of relational, psychological, social and behavioural competences. In his view, this is useful for particular vulnerable groups of people who need courses tailored to their needs both in terms of organization and contents:

*“They should (...) think about what they offer... and maybe they should not think of students, but of the entrepreneurial system”*²⁹⁰ (Representative of SERVEF).

*“It is necessary to offer training tailored to persons, to the persons’ reality. It is a basic pedagogic principle. When I was studying pedagogy, what professors told me the first day was that ‘pedagogy is gathering the person wherever she is’ (...). And this has to be funded. We and other social entities are working on this”*²⁹¹ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

The effectiveness of training is seriously questioned by the Italian expert and the Spanish representative of CCOO Valencia. This is mainly due to the fact that, by the time a training course has been thoroughly planned, the labour market has already changed dramatically and the professional profile for which the training is supposed to form is very likely to have become obsolete. Therefore, the Italian expert underlines the need for greater flexibility of training, since an excessive rigidity that is irresponsible to react quickly to the demands of the labour market prevents the unemployed to retrain for their reintegration:

*“I have serious doubts on the amount of training that has been effective, because it should be a slender mechanism”*²⁹² (Italian expert).

²⁹⁰ “Deberían, vamos, deberían (...) hacer un mínimo de prospección de lo que ellos ofrecen va a.. digamos, ya no pensando a lo mejor en el alumno, sino pensando en el tejido empresarial” (SERVEF).

²⁹¹ “Se puede ofrecer formación.. adaptada a las personas. Adaptada a la realidad de las personas. Qué es un principio pedagógico básico. Yo cuando estudié pedagogía, lo primero que me dijeron el primer día es “la pedagogía es recoger a la persona donde está” (...). Y eso hay que financiarlo. Y ahí estamos las entidades sociales” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

²⁹² “Quanto la formazione professionale sia stata poi incisiva io ho seri dubbi perchè deve essere un meccanismo snello” (Italian expert).

“It is useless that you convert unemployed with a qualification into other unemployed with a different qualification (...); it does not make sense”²⁹³ (Representative of CCOO Valencia).

As shown in the previous extracts, the prominent assumption is that training has to accomplish labour market demands. Nevertheless, for the Spanish expert and for the representative of UPI Sicily an abrupt change of orientation is required, whereby employment services should be able to participate actively in the definition of training plans instead of following firms’ directions:

“Adapting training to companies’ request is not enough. We also contend that public employment services should take a more active role and guide training themselves”²⁹⁴ (Spanish expert).

“Today there is no real job offer determined by the guidelines arising from employment centres; the offer of jobs depends very much on the needs of companies and its structures; a full connection of companies and employment centres is not yet formed”²⁹⁵ (Representative of UPI Sicily).

The awareness that training plans do not have to be necessarily developed only according to the labour market request is not yet spread out. As we have seen, few interviewees focus on this, stressing instead the aspect of the effectiveness and readiness of employment services in adapting to labour market changes, according to the EES. For this same reason, a capability approach cannot be said to have yet been formed.

C. Traineeships, apprenticeships and internships

Traineeships, apprenticeships, and internships²⁹⁶ are considered important active policies for young people and generally arouse great interest among companies. In particular, apprenticeship merges ‘training’ and ‘employment’ in a regulated mode and guarantees income, which is not the

²⁹³ “A mí no me sirve que usted me cambie a un parado o una parada que tiene una cualificación, por otra cualificación (...); no tiene sentido” (CCOO Valencia).

²⁹⁴ “Pero no solo hay que adecuar la formación a lo que demandan las empresas. Nosotros planteamos que los servicios públicos de empleo deberían tener un papel más activo y orientar la formación” (Spanish expert).

²⁹⁵ “Oggi non vi è una vera offerta di lavoro determinata dagli orientamenti che nascono dai centri per l’impiego; oggi ancora l’offerta di lavoro parte dalle esigenze del mondo delle imprese così come è strutturato; il collegamento tra il mondo delle imprese e i centri di orientamento ancora non è compiuto” (UPI Sicily).

²⁹⁶ Since the terms ‘traineeships’, ‘apprenticeships’ and ‘internships’ open to a broad interpretation, we clarify here how we translate them. According to our translation, the term ‘traineeship’ corresponds to the Italian word ‘tirocinio’ and the Spanish word ‘formación’; the term ‘apprenticeship’ corresponds to the Italian word ‘apprendistato’ and the Spanish word ‘aprendizaje’; the term ‘internship’ corresponds to the Italian word ‘stage’ and the Spanish word ‘práctica’.

case for traineeships and internships. Apprenticeships, internships and traineeships can become actual possibilities for the youth to enter the labour market or rather reduce their opportunities of obtaining proper contractual arrangements.

In the Spanish case, according to the representative of SERVEF, public employment services frequently use these actions to allow the young to be integrated into the labour market. Although, there is no commitment of hiring by the company, which makes ambivalent the work carried out by the employment services. Indeed, because of the impossibility to influence the companies' will of hiring or not hiring, employment services can only create occasions for firms and young people to meet.

“What we are looking for is that, without any real commitment towards inclusion in the labour market, the company can meet and assess a student [during his/her internship] and just say: “Hey, get back to us once you have finished your course (...), and I will offer you a job”²⁹⁷ (Representative of SERVEF).

A particularly good example is provided by the Autonomous Community of Andalusia. The representatives of SAE try to make evident the great attention their region pays to internships as employment policies. Here, collaborative entities are required to seek companies where the unemployed can carry out internships (prácticas). The representative of SAE explains that in Andalusia internships are regulated in the number of hours, the possibility to receive a refund and the number of tutorial meetings. These criteria are compelling in order to promote a substantial learning, and to avoid making the internship a form of job replacement. There are not obligations for the company to hire people doing internships, but the indices of inclusion are very high. This is due to the fact that there is a strong agreement between the needs of the company and the professional profile of the trainee who has previously developed a path thanks to the help of his/her counsellor of the employment service. Furthermore, it is the counsellor that informs the unemployed of the internship. These are the elements that the representative of SAE reports for highlighting the effectiveness of the internships in the Autonomous Community:

“Results are very good because the internship is consistent with the professional development [of the unemployed]. Then, [the process] is clear, since there are objective criteria. Consequently, a

²⁹⁷ “La práctica. Al revés, lo que nosotros buscamos, a lo mejor es que, sin compromiso de inserción por parte de la empresa, la empresa esa pueda conocer al alumno, verlo, valorarlo y decir: “Oye, cuando tú acabes tu curso completo, incluidas las prácticas que estás haciendo aquí, pues yo te contrato” (SERVEF).

trainee is the person entitled for a specific internship. There is not subjectivity”²⁹⁸ (Representative of SAE).

In the Italian case, according to some interviewees, apprenticeships, internships and traineeships have encountered many bureaucratic obstacles, discouraging their dissemination and people’s appreciation. In the view of the national representative of CISL, their scope is facilitating the occupational integration of the youth, but they are not suitable for all kinds of occupations. In fact, according to him, they are not applicable to all young graduates because degrees relating to courses in the humanities or communications do not have immediate usability in the labour market:

*“The problem is about wrong degrees and, unfortunately, there are many of these degrees that are not expendable”*²⁹⁹ (Representative of CISL at national level).

It is interesting to note here that the label “right” or “wrong” used by the national representative of CISL is related to the marketability of the degree (“are not expendable”) in the world of work. In his view, marketability seems to be an indicator of the individual career.

However, sometimes internships can also be very ambiguous and dangerous according to the different meanings and usages attributed to them, as the trade unions denounce. Indeed, they may contribute to cutting down employment opportunities to the youth, thus further reducing the development of capabilities, when it is instead more urgent and necessary to increase them. For this reason, the value of the youth is at stake, especially whenever they are seen as free or low-cost workers to carry out activities, as the representative of UIL Tuscany states. Moreover, the national representative of CISL highlights that certain professions require the completion of a compulsory free or almost-free training period, which is indented to enable young people to gain experience in the profession, but which often turns into a form of exploitation:

“Internships allow young people to have a little experience in a company or professional studio. I would say their work is mostly free of charge. It should be a formative activity during which one

²⁹⁸ “Los resultados son muy buenos porque es acorde completamente con el desarrollo profesional [del desempleado]. Luego [el proceso] es transparente porque son unos criterios objetivos que el sistema valora. Sale quién tiene que salir, vamos. Que no es nada que quepa la subjetividad” (SAE).

²⁹⁹ “Il problema è sulle lauree sbagliate e ce ne sono tante purtroppo, cioè lauree che non hanno spendibilità” (CISL at national level).

can establish contact with the world of jobs. In many places, however, it concerns only the simplest tasks, in order to reduce the cost of labour”³⁰⁰ (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

“You surely know that traineeships run in some sectors; the general idea is that you work somewhere, you do not know the working conditions but you still should be grateful, because employers are giving you a chance to work”³⁰¹ (Representative of CISL at national level).

With regard to this point, the Italian expert proposes the introduction of a high-level apprenticeship for intellectual professions, which favours the gradual entry of the youth into the world of work accompanied by a high-level training (specialization or doctorate) that allows using the knowledge and skills acquired and to adjust them on the basis of the requirement of the job.

To sum up, apprenticeships, internships and traineeships are considered by both Spanish and Italian actors as useful actions in enabling the youth to enter the labour market; nonetheless, they underline the risk that such forms of learning become offers of free-work, nullifying the opportunity for the young to develop their capabilities.

D. The matching process and the management of the meeting of supply and demand

This action is outlined as the final step of the path of the labour market integration that has been carried out by the unemployed, although sometimes the term “matching” is used to identify the whole process of inclusion into the labour market. There are two different ways by employment services to facilitate the match of supply and demand of labour in both Italy and Spain. The first one is to disseminate and publicize job offers for workers, so that those who are interested can establish contacts themselves with companies. The second one implies a greater commitment on the part of employment services that carry out a pre-selection of professional profiles. This is a free service for the unemployed, who receive a tailored advice for the job application, as well as for the company, which receives a personalized management of the match between supply and offer. However, most Spanish and Italian interviewees believe that these services are still barely used by companies and job-seekers, since the general assumption is that public services carry out their work unsuccessfully.

³⁰⁰ “Gli stage servono alle persone per andare a farsi una piccola esperienza in azienda, o presso uno studio professionale; il loro lavoro è prevalentemente, direi, gratuito; dovrebbe essere un’attività di contatto col lavoro e di carattere formativo; in tanti luoghi, invece, avviene soltanto per, come posso dire, per le mansioni più semplici, per ridurre il costo del lavoro” (UIL Tuscany).

³⁰¹ “Tu saprai sicuramente che esiste in qualche settore la pratica del praticantato; tu lavori lì, non si sa quali siano le condizioni lavorative ed ‘è già tanto che ti do la possibilità di imparare un lavoro” (CISL at national level).

The matching of supply and demand is depicted as the weakest point of the whole integration process promoted by public employment services by means of active policies.

In the Italian case, the discussion around the matching process develops around two points: 1. the necessity of its presence among the activities carried out by the employment centers, and 2. the concern on its effectiveness. Regarding the first aspect, the respondents' opinions on the ultimate function of the employment centres are conflicting. In fact, the representative of the Tuscany Region and the Sicily Region believe that they should never cross the demand-supply, whereas the representative of UPI Tuscany treats this action as a chance for making the work of employment services effective:

*“I do not think our main mission is to cross demand and supply of labour”*³⁰² (Representative of Tuscany Region).

*“Inclusion is not the goal of this process, although in some cases it takes place”*³⁰³ (Representative of Sicily Region).

*“Employment centres have been given the chance to make the demand-supply matching”*³⁰⁴ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

Even if the interviewees do not agree that the goal of employment centres is to intersect demand and supply, all they converge on the idea that the centers have to deliver all the other services for the implementation of active policies that have to be useful for the integration of the unemployed in the labour market.

The second aspect is related to the effectiveness of the matching. Also in this case the interviewees reveal different opinions. These differences seem to be influenced by geographical disparities. Indeed, while the representative of UPI Tuscany depicts positively the results of the employment services, the representative of Italia Lavoro in part accuses employment centres in Sicily or believes they are responsible for failing to achieve a successful role as mediators between workers and firms:

³⁰² “Secondo me, non è la nostra missione principale quella di incrocio domanda-offerta di lavoro” (Tuscany Region).

³⁰³ “L’inserimento non è l’obiettivo di questo percorso, anche se in alcuni casi avviene” (Sicily Region).

³⁰⁴ “[E’ stato] consegnato al centro per l’impiego la possibilità di fare l’incontro domanda-offerta” (UPI Tuscany).

*“The employment centre used to be just a territorial point of matching between demand and supply, a place where employers and employees could meet. I have to say that this system has proved successful at least until 2008”*³⁰⁵ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

*“It is now clear that this system is suffering, because matching supply and demand is only possible if there are demand and offer; nowadays, we have much offer, but little demand”*³⁰⁶ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

*“This region created these places – the employment centers – where you go and find colourful rooms, posters, banners, things; on the first level, you find a door with the label ‘training policies’, ‘consultation of newspapers’, ‘counselling area’ or ‘vocational guidance’, then on the second level, you find a space where supply and demand are made to intersect. But, when you enter, you realize that nothing is really going on in there because these place are not visited by companies: these centres are full of people who are looking for a job”*³⁰⁷ (Representative of Italia Lavoro).

Among the Spanish actors, the focus of discourses is entirely on the effectiveness of the services in matching supply and demand. The Spanish expert claims the scarce success of employment services in doing intermediation.

*“The level of intermediation in Spain is very low in comparison with other European countries”*³⁰⁸ (Spanish expert).

The representative of SERVEF identifies as one of the reason of such inefficacy the heritage of the traditional orientation towards unemployment benefits that hampers the implementation of measures of active policy. Another reason of the inefficacy of employment services in matching supply and demand is reported to be a disconnection between the implementation of policies and the production systems. Indeed, the national representative of CCOO reckons that the connection is

³⁰⁵ “Il centro per l’impiego era solo il punto di snodo territoriale nell’incrocio domanda e offerta e quindi fare incontrare il lavoratore con le imprese; e devo dire che fino al 2008 questo è un sistema che ha prodotto risultati significativi” (UPI Tuscany).

³⁰⁶ “Ora è chiaro che è un sistema che soffre, ma perché l’incrocio domanda-offerta si fa se c’è la domanda e se c’è l’offerta; oggi abbiamo tanta domanda di lavoro, ma offerta poca” (UPI Tuscany).

³⁰⁷ “Questa regione ha creato questi luoghi, dove lei entra ci sono le stanze colorate, i manifesti, i banner, le cose, entra trova lo sportello ‘politiche formative’, trova lo sportello on the job, formazione, consultazione delle gazzette, trova l’area counseling, trova l’area dove fanno l’orientamento professionale di primo livello, poi quello di secondo livello, trova l’area dove fanno l’incontro domanda-offerta; poi però le trova, ma dentro non c’è nulla, perché ripeto non è un luogo frequentato dall’impresa, è un luogo frequentato da chi sta cercando lavoro” (Italia Lavoro).

³⁰⁸ “El nivel de intermediación en España es bajísimo en comparación con otros países europeos” (Spanish expert).

often missing because the first goal of employment services – that is, urgent inclusion in order to reduce the reliance of unemployed on state benefits – diverges from that of companies:

*“It is something that has already dragged on forever. The office, the former offices of employment, INEM, eh... have always given priority to managing unemployment benefits, because it was the most urgent aspect... Which were the consequences of this? Well, the priority has always been the detriment of other actions, especially employment”*³⁰⁹ (Representative of SERVEF).

*“No matter if one has been unemployed for over three years or is receiving benefits, I have nothing to offer [to that particular company] unless the unemployed person fulfills the requirements of the profile...”*³¹⁰ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

The trade union representative problematizes the conflict between companies’ interests and the administrative or social logic. In fact, firms are not engaged in hiring persons simply because they are ‘problematic’ or long-term unemployed, but because the job-seeker’s profile matches the requirements of a successful candidate. It is important to remark here that according to the capability approach, according to which the goal of an urgent inclusion of the unemployed, especially with problems, and their release from public dependency pursued by employment services is not useful neither for firms nor – above all – for people. In the view of Dean (2003), the search for economic efficiency in welfare-to-work policies directed at people with multiple problems and needs reduces their possibilities of choice. For this reason, focusing on the situation of the person as well as on his/her effective condition of job-readiness and not only of the companies is so crucial. Thus, the concept of “matching” is understood by the national representative of UGT not only as the adaptation of supply to the labour market, but also as a new centrality for workers, according to which policies should adapt:

“So, what is the idea? On one side, public employment services have to be provided with staff and sufficient means to make them adapted to the actual circumstances of the labour market. And

³⁰⁹ “Es una cosa que ya se arrastra desde siempre. La oficina, las antiguas oficinas de empleo, del INEM, eh.. siempre han tenido como prioridad la gestión de las prestaciones de desempleo, porque era lo más inmediato..lo más urgente. ¿Y eso que ha hecho? Pues que la prioridad siempre ha sido esa en detrimento de otras actuaciones, sobre todo el empleo” (SERVEF).

³¹⁰ “No le puedo llevar al parado porque lo tengo aquí tres años ya si no se ajusta al perfil, o porque está cobrando prestación y quiero que se salga en seguida” (CCOO at national level).

then, on the other side, employment policies should accommodate themselves to the real needs of workers”³¹¹ (Representative of UGT at national level).

It is relevant to observe that the meaning of the centrality of the person remains ambiguous, as also seen in the previous chapter. Indeed, on the one hand it is believed that the public officials play an essential role in the implementation of active policies in relation to the needs of the recipients considered as persons; but, on the other hand, they have to support the enhancement of employability and adaptability of these. Therefore, the individual is at the same time the vulnerable person that has to be welcomed, but on the other who has to adapt to the evolution of the labour market in order to enter it. The approach to the person by employment centers is a key point for comprehending the orientation of employment policies with regard the capabilities view. In relation to this, there is a broad debate on the literature of capabilities about the behaviours of public officials and local agents trying to meet performance targets while respecting individual liberties of the unemployed. Indeed, local agents are required to combine wishes and needs of the unemployed with the national recommendations to activate job-seekers, even if the capabilities approach focuses on the individual freedoms as relevant information basis (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007). The very point is that if individualised actions on beneficiaries are simply responding to the tasks of selection and administration of resources or are oriented to help vulnerable people. A public action that imposes any kind of job to the unemployed will be negating the possibility of choosing the work they have reason to value (capability for work) as well as the possibility for recipients to take part actively in the process of their own reintegration (capability for voice): “in such a perspective, if recipients are adequately empowered, but are not free to use their capacity to act in the way they choose to, the objective of enhancing capabilities is missed to a large extent” (Bonvin and Orton, 2009: 568). Nonetheless, this issue does not seem to be applicable for both the Spanish and Italian cases, insofar as the interviewees claim for a scarce possibility of providing job offers and carry out quick reintegration into the labour market.

Cultural differences should also be considered when attempting to understand the actors’ constructions of the idea of effectiveness of employment centres. Both in Italy and Spain the prevailing trend for the unemployed who are seeking jobs and employers who are seeking workers is by using social capital and informal channels, like word of mouth or referring to the circle of friends, relatives and acquaintance. This is true in the public sector, which is however partly regulated by competitive selections, but it is also true in the private sector where implications of

³¹¹ “Entonces.. ¿Cuál es la idea? Incidir primero en dotar al servicio público, tanto del personal como de los medios suficientes para adaptarse a las circunstancias reales del mercado de trabajo. Eso por un lado. Y luego, unas políticas de empleo que se acomoden a las necesidades reales de los trabajadores” (UGT at national level).

personal connections are even stronger. The Spanish representative of SERVEF and the Italian representative of UPI at national level consider this cultural aspect as a cause of the significant reduction of the activity of public employment services:

*“The reality is that over 60% of the supply is not channeled in any particular direction outside of the circle of acquaintances (...). So, acting effectively as intermediaries in a particular area really means not exceeding a mere 15%”*³¹² (Representative of SERVEF).

“The matching between supply and demand occurs through personal relations; until 2007-2008 public and private systems mediated no more than 15 % [of the number of the unemployed]” (Representative of UPI at national level).

As regards to the effectiveness of the matching process, the Spanish representative of SAE, the Italian representative of CISL Tuscany and the Italian representative of Assolavoro report a further limitation, namely the lack of dynamism of employment centres in comparison to employment agencies or online platforms that are dedicated exclusively to matching supply and demand. According to the Spanish representative such limitations are tied to administrative reasons:

*“Infojobs and Infoempleo have a dynamism that we cannot afford because we are regulated by a law with administrative procedure, including conditions and restrictions that other entities acting as mediators either in the market or on-line [do not have]”*³¹³ (Representative of SAE).

*“[Employment centres] failed completely, they failed to make people getting in touch. They did not work, they did not put the company in contact with the employee (...). In order to find jobs, employment centres should go and visit companies, do screenings, ask what is missing, organize courses, which are tasks better currently carried out by temporary agencies”*³¹⁴ (Representative of CISL Tuscany).

³¹² “Lo que sí que es una realidad cierta es que más del 60% prácticamente de la oferta que se hace no pasa por ningún cauce específico si no es el del círculo de conocidos (...). Por eso cuando se dice “es que intermediamos mucho en un sitio”.. [significa] un 15%, bueno” (SERVEF).

³¹³ “Que si entre el Infojobs, el Infoempleo y no sé qué, tienen un dinamismo que nosotros no podemos permitirnos porque nosotros nos debemos a una ley de procedimiento administrativo.. una serie de condicionantes y encorsetamientos que otras entidades que intermedian en el mercado.. intermedian en el mercado, o en la red [no tienen]” (SAE).

³¹⁴ “[I centri per l’impiego] hanno fallito completamente: non riescono a mettere in contatto nessuno, proprio non funzionano, non mettono in contatto l’azienda con il lavoratore (...). Per trovare lavoro, i centri per l’impiego dovrebbero muoversi e andare nelle aziende, fare gli screening, domandare che cosa manca, fare corsi di preparazione, cose che stanno facendo molto meglio le agenzie interinali” (CISL Tuscany).

“If a worker enters the branch of a small temporary agency and if that agency is not specialized in the worker’s activity, it may be difficult to place that worker whose expertise is in a different sector from that overlooked by the agency; however, this could challenge the agency itself into developing a competence on that expertise as well”³¹⁵ (Representative of Assolavoro).

It is interesting to notice in the previous extracts how different actors – the Spanish representative of SAE, the Italian representative of CISL Tuscany and the Italian representative of Assolavoro – converge in the opinion that temporary work agencies and private job platforms are more dynamic than employment services. Employment agencies are also able to offer employment contracts and to hire people who are later passed on to companies under contract with the agencies themselves.

Finally, an important tool used to facilitate the matching of supply and demand is made up of on-line job portals and national online platforms, such as ‘ClickLavoro’, managed by the Italian Ministry of Labour and ‘SISPE’ – ‘Servicios de Información del Servicio de Empleo Público Estatal’ – (which followed SIGE – ‘Sistema de Información y Gestión de Empleo’) in Spain. Their role is to spread awareness at national level about the offers available in each region/autonomous community and to facilitate national mobility, thus overcoming the issue of the lack of transparency of job opportunities between regions. However, the actors interviewed have claimed many problems regarding the effectiveness and possibility of intercommunication among regional systems. One of the limitations of these platforms is linked to the fact that, according to the interviewees, they fail to cover many professional profiles, especially those related to Arts and Culture.

In synthesis, the match between actions carried out by employment services and demands of the labour market is identified as the main critical aspect by the Spanish and Italian interviewees. But while Spanish actors focus on the efficacy of public services in matching supply and demands, Italian actors still question the role of the services in executing the matching. Also, the Spanish and Italian actors of public bodies at the national and regional level highlight the aspect of social capital and administrative limitation in determining the effectiveness of employment services.

³¹⁵ “Se un lavoratore entra nella filiale di una piccola agenzia, probabilmente se quella agenzia non è specializzata su quell’attività, probabilmente potrebbe fare un po’ più di fatica nel collocare un lavoratore che magari ha una professionalità per la quale quell’agenzia non è competente; però magari potrebbe essere uno stimolo per quell’agenzia per trovare, invece, competenza anche in quel settore produttivo lì” (Assolavoro).

10.4.3. The perspective of the continuity: continuity of the attendance by professionals and temporal continuity of programs

The continuity of the path of the unemployed through actions provided by employment services according to a life course perspective is one more relevant aspect within the framework of the capabilities. In fact the growth of the individual and the development of his/her potential are supposed to take place through a consistent long-term process. For this reason, the interruption of any support may affect the whole process. However, in the view of some Spanish and Italian interviewees, this approach is lacking, which is generated according to them by two different kinds of causes.

Firstly, the lack of continuity of attendance can be referred to the job instability of professionals who work in employment programs. In both the Italian and the Spanish case, the interviewees of trade unions highlight the problems of short lasting contractual arrangements and precariousness in the functioning of the public service, due to the lack of resources. Such problems affect not only the implementation of employment policies, but also the relationship between the professional and the vulnerable user:

*“I am talking about Tuscany, but it is not that different somewhere else. We are witnessing a singular situation, in which more than 50% of professionals – that is, people who work in employment centres and do guidance and mentoring or establish relationships of trust with temporary workers and workers with difficulties – are atypical workers; they are employed with contracts that range from project contracts to 7-year-contracts, thanks to the European Social Fund. There is every kind of contract”*³¹⁶ (Representative of CGIL Tuscany).

*“As far as entities are concerned, for example the network ‘Red ARAÑA’, professionals are assigned to programs, which means that every employee is hired and paid for a specific program. This causes that a technician, when his/her specific program ends, must be passed to another program; otherwise, he/she loses his/her job. Things are different in UGT because – with the sole exception of technicians working at ORIENTA – employees belong to the union and there is more permanent staff, no matter the program...”*³¹⁷ (Representative of UGT Andalucia).

³¹⁶ “Assistiamo alla singolare situazione in cui - parlo della Toscana, ma non è diverso altrove - più del 50% degli operatori che lavorano nei centri per l'impiego e che dovrebbero fare orientamento, tutoraggio, stabilire rapporti fiduciari con quei lavoratori o lavoratrici che sono in una fase di difficoltà, sono lavoratori precari; si va dai contratti a termine di 7 anni con i fondi del Fondo Sociale Europeo ai contratti a progetto, c'è di tutto” (CGIL Tuscany).

³¹⁷ “En el caso de entidades como la red ARAÑA, el personal se encuentra adscrito a programas, es decir, cada empleado es contratado y pagado para y por un programa específico, lo que provoca que un técnico cuando finaliza el

Secondly, the programs proposed by the employment services often are lacking in continuity, as they undergo the need for a periodical renewal. The Italian representative of UPI Tuscany depicts this issue in a soft way, due to the contribution of the Europe Social Funds that guarantee the durability of programs, whereas the Spanish representative of UGT Valencia denounces the situation of brief renewals of programs:

*“Thanks to the ESF, every year since 2001 we have been able to count on resources; every year there have been courses, chances to make career guidance, budgets of competence, seminars for preparing people for the labour market: such services have been ongoing in the territory for more than ten years...”*³¹⁸ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

*“We do not understand very well why programs are not developed annually, or even once every two years. For us, this would be the ideal solution. And we have always been told that it is ‘because the Public Finance Act does not allow it’”*³¹⁹ (Representative of UGT Valencia).

The Italian actor states that the risk of an interruption of programs has been overcome thanks to the European economic support, while the Spanish trade union reports that economical reasons related to the functioning of the public sector are often brought for justifying the inadequacy of the programs delivered for the unemployed.

In Spain, the Public Employment Service uses abundantly the collaboration of entities in order to manage specific programs of orientation or training or job placement. However, the stabilization of agents working at programs is not possible because access to open-ended contracts in the public sector is bounded to competitive examinations, for which funds are not enough if not entirely unavailable. This situation gives way to short-term programs. Therefore, the Spanish interviewees remark the difference between “programs”, which have a limited duration, and “services”, which are more stable. Indeed, it is possible to speak of continuity only when actions and measures are offered through stable and long-term services. The national representative of trade unions and the

programa en concreto debe pasarse a otro o si no pierde el empleo. Es distinto en UGT, por ejemplo, dónde, excepto los técnicos ORIENTA, son empleados del sindicato y hay más personal de estructura independientemente de los programas” (UGT Andalucía).

³¹⁸ “Grazie al FSE, ormai sono dal 2001 che tutti gli anni ci sono le risorse, tutti gli anni ci sono i corsi, tutti gli anni ci sono le possibilità di fare percorsi di orientamento, i bilanci di competenza, piuttosto che seminari di preparazione al mercato del lavoro; questi sono servizi che ci sono stabilmente ormai da 10 anni sul territorio” (UPI Tuscany).

³¹⁹ “No entendemos muy bien porque los programas no son de carácter anual. O incluso bianual que para nosotros sería la solución ideal. Y siempre se nos ha dicho que es “porque la Ley de la Hacienda Pública no lo permite” (UGT Valencia).

representative of FEMP Valencia converge on underlining this distinction, which are crucial for defining different functioning of services and opportunities for users:

“Surely, this is not a service! It is a program! A program!”³²⁰ (Representative of UGT at national level).

“So... I agree that, in the end, as the goal is not to provide a service, but, rather, to manage a program, everything has turned to the control of the program; and the programs are even more rigid and compartmentalized, but this is why the idea of ‘service’ has been lost”³²¹ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

“Then, usually, the problem is that programs are limited. They are short-term (...) and have no continuity. That is their main drawback”³²² (Representative of FEMP Valencia).

This distinction between ‘programs’ and ‘services’ is fundamental when delineating the quality of employment centers, as it affects the way in which public officials relate to the unemployed and determine the imbalance of the ratio staff/unemployed. Furthermore, it affects the complexity and duration of the activities proposed, which are often maintained at a minimum level of provision, due to the awareness that a most complete offer would require a re-structuring of public officials’ contracts.

To sum up, Italian respondents emphasize the problem of the continuity of attendance by professionals, due to short-term contracts, whereas the temporal continuity of programs is less remarked, due to the economic support provided by the ESF. By contrast, the Spanish interviewees remark both the question of the continuity of attendance by professionals and the temporal continuity of programs, claiming the value of enduring services in comparison to passing transient programs.

³²⁰ “¡Claro, ya no es un servicio! ¡Es un programa! ¡Es un programa!” (UGT at national level).

³²¹ “O sea que.. que yo estoy de acuerdo que al final, como.. como el objetivo no es dar un servicio sino gestionar un programa, pues todo ha derivado en el control del programa y en..hacer cada vez programas más rígidos y más compartimentados, pero porque se ha pedido la idea de servicio” (CCOO at national level).

³²² “Entonces, normalmente, el problema que tienen que los programas están limitados. Que son programas de muy corto plazo (...) y por supuesto son programas prácticamente sin continuidad. Eso es..Esa es la principal inconveniente que tienen” (FEMP Valencia).

10.4.4. Coordination between different measures of the employment policies

The functioning of the various actions provided by employment services cannot be adequately discussed without an analysis of their level of coordination. In particular, the proper link between active policies and social protection is one of the first elements that have to be observed, not solely because they are the well-known pillars of flexicurity, but also because, according to the capabilities approach, individual development stems from the balance and consistency among them. Moreover, the way they are connected and the relation duties/possibilities proposed or imposed to the unemployed is determinant for the individual. Indeed, as stated by Bonvin and Orton, “the beneficiaries’ freedom to choose is at the very core of the capability approach and its insistence on the real freedom to lead the life and perform the job one has reason to value” (2009: 568). In the capabilities view, one of the key points is represented by the possibility for the users to choose among different valuable job offers and refuse the constrain of valueless work. This is made possible thanks to the possibility not to work via a valuable exit option, namely the financial compensation of social protection through decent unemployment benefits (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2005a; Hirschman, 1990), which refers to the capability for work. In Bonvin and Farvaque’s view “Capability for work does not however imply the disappearance of all constraints. On the contrary, it recognises that the opportunity set is necessarily limited and constricting, but it advocates a fair and negotiated construction of this constraint” (2005a:6). The issue of the deliberative participation will be deepened in the next chapter.

In Italy, the link between active and social protection is hardly detectable. As we saw in Chapter VI, social protection at national level is managed by the INPS (National Institute for Social Security – Istituto Nazionale della Previdenza Sociale), whereas active policies are managed by the provincial and regional directorates of work. There is often no dialogue between them, as the representative of the Tuscany Region, of CGIL Tuscany and the national representative of Caritas state. As the representative of Caritas Italy states, the absence of only one of the pillars of flexicurity does not permit to create the conditions for the unemployed necessary to exit their state of vulnerability. It is interesting to observe the discourse of the representative of Tuscany Region and his use of the words “limit” and “still”, which highlights the normative framework of the actor. Such framework seems to be oriented towards an activation disciplinary perspective.

“Our limit, at least until now, is that a distinction has always been maintained between active policies and passive policies, whereas in the rest of Europe the two are closely related. The State should give unemployed unemployment benefits or income support; unemployed should have to

*prove that they are actually looking for a job in order to receive benefits. In Italy, this still does not happen*³²³ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

*“There are evident contradictions; firstly, active policies and passive policies travel on parallel tracks and yet they seldom meet. The INPS rarely relate with regions and often conflicts ensue*³²⁴ (Representative of CGIL Tuscany).

*“There is no clear mechanism of flexicurity (...); disconnections are a characteristic feature of our country, thus it is even hard to imagine paths of support for vulnerable subjects*³²⁵ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Italy).

In addition to the fact that not all the unemployed receive social security benefits, as shown in Chapter VI, the lack of connection between active policies and social protection makes it impossible for some individuals to seize the opportunity to attend a retraining or a training course. For many of them, indeed, affording a training course or even reaching the place where the course is delivered causes problems. One of the solutions provided has been the delivery of vouchers. Vouchers are mostly utilized for the youth, as they can also be used to finance higher education courses and degrees, while at the same time they may be available for precarious workers and other vulnerable subjects (such as workers with project contracts or members of cooperatives). An interesting example is provided by the Tuscany Region that has introduced the ILA card (Individual Learning Account) – a training tool tailored to cover the costs of a course necessary for the individual professional development. The national representative of UPI brings the example of Tuscany that started issuing vouchers for those people who could not receive attendance allowances for training courses:

“There is also a market of the voucher, by which I mean that you go to an employment centre, (...) where someone is going to make you a perfect analysis [of your skills] and then you acquire a

³²³ “Il limite nostro, almeno fino ad oggi in Italia, è che si è sempre mantenuta una distinzione fra politiche attive e politiche passive, mentre nel resto d’Europa le due cose sono strettamente legate. Io, Stato, ti do un sussidio di disoccupazione o un sostegno al reddito, in cambio devi comunque dimostrare di essere effettivamente alla ricerca di un impiego. In Italia ancora questo non avviene” (Tuscany Region).

³²⁴ “Ci sono delle contraddizioni che sono evidenti; la prima delle quali è che le politiche attive e le politiche passive viaggiano su binari paralleli e spesso non si incontrano; l’INPS poco parla anche con la regione, anzi spesso ci sono atteggiamenti conflittuali” (CGIL Tuscany).

³²⁵ “Non c’è un chiaro meccanismo di flexicurity (...); di fatto le sconnessioni sono il dato del nostro Paese e quindi su questo si fa fatica anche a immaginare percorsi di ricostruzione, nei casi di soggetti fragili” (Caritas at national level, Italy).

*tool – the voucher – that will allow you to pay for a training course*³²⁶ (Representative of UPI at national level).

It is curious to note the expression used by the national representative of UPI, who employs the expression “market of voucher”. Despite the fact that vouchers are supposed to provide possibilities of training for people out of the market, they are depicted to be fully involved in the logic of the market. Also, the interpretation of the user seems to shift from the citizen to the client who “acquire(s) a tool”, which reveals the assumption of the mercantilistic framework by the actor. This aspect is also highlighted in the literature on the position of activation service users, which remarks the opposition in several countries between the idea of job-seekers as customers or consumers and the actual impossibility to choose among different services and service providers (Van Berkel and Valkenburg, 2007; Wright, 2006).

The lack of connection discussed so far is also confirmed by the literature, according to which policies perform separately (Alacevich, 2007). Moreover, the lack of connection is not limited to active policies and social protection. It also concerns the different actions included in active policies. In this case, the disconnection is mainly reported by the Spanish representatives of UGT Andalusia, Caritas Spain and SAE:

*“Indeed, there was no link here between orientation and training, they lead on their own way”*³²⁷ (Representative of UGT Andalusia).

*“Integrated itineraries of placement have been invented to coordinate guidance, training and supply-demand matching, but these are seldom implemented. Each service continues to operate according to its little plot, and that is where we see the greatest difficulty”*³²⁸ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

*“We have so much workload (...) that we lack the time to know very well what our colleague in the office next door is dealing with”*³²⁹ (Representative of SAE).

³²⁶ “C'è anche il mercato del voucher; mi spiego, tu vai al centro per l'impiego (...), quelli ti fanno l'analisi perfetto [delle tue competenze] e tu ti acquisisci uno strumento; tendenzialmente, quello strumento ti paga un corso di formazione”(UPI at national level).

³²⁷ “Efectivamente no había vinculación entre orientación y formación, iban cada una por su lado” (UGT Andalusia).

³²⁸ “Se han inventado los itinerarios integrados de inserción como un método para coordinar servicios de orientación, de formación y de intermediación, pero que después en la práctica no se aplican. Cada uno sigue funcionando con su parcelita y ahí es donde vemos la mayor dificultad” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

³²⁹ “Tenemos tanto volumen de trabajo (...), que no tenemos tiempo ni siquiera de saber muy bien qué es lo que lleva mi compañero de al lado del despacho” (SAE).

The lack of institutional coordination is often reflected in the organization of departments in both Italy and Spain, as reported by the representatives of the Sicily Region and SERVEF. However, according to the literature on the field, a clear attempt of integration between the spheres of work and training can be detected in both countries, even if it seems to be scarcely institutionalized (Alacevich, 2007).

“Here, training and work are two separate worlds. Unfortunately, we experiment the separation between these two different organizational structures that not even belong to the same department”³³⁰ (Representative of Sicily Region).

“The department [of work] is out of joint with the department of training. The department of training is absolutely important and is normally able to provide support for the delivery of active policies”³³¹ (Representative of Sicily Region).

“During the last 2-3 year we have achieved some degree of coordination. Even if we are all working within the SERVEF [Servicio Valenciano de Empleo y Formación], there are two different General Directorates: the General Directorate of Work and Placement and the Department of Training”³³² (Representative of SERVEF).

The Spanish representative of SERVEF also highlights that the IT (information technology) system contributes partially to obtain a closer link between the different actions of policies:

“Since 2000/2001, we have developed own computer management system – TAURÓ – that is connected to the SISPE and to all the systems run by the State. This system has allowed us to do many things we deemed important (...). Traditionally, the three pillars of work – training, employment and integration – were disconnected in this organization. The computer system has

³³⁰ “Da noi praticamente la formazione è un mondo a sé e il lavoro è un altro. Purtroppo viviamo una separazione tra due strutture organizzative diverse; non fanno parte nemmeno della stessa compagine dipartimentale” (Sicily Region).

³³¹ “Questo dipartimento [in materia di lavoro] è disgiunto da un altro dipartimento che è assolutamente importante che è il dipartimento della formazione, che, solitamente, è quello che può dare una mano nell’erogazione delle politiche attive” (Sicily Region).

³³² “En los.. los 2 o 3 últimos años, hemos cogido bastante buena coordinación, aunque estamos dentro del SERVEF, son dos direcciones generales distintas: Dirección General de Empleo e Inserción y Dirección General de Formación” (SERVEF).

*been particularly important here, as it allowed to merge the three pillar into one*³³³
(Representative of SERVEF).

In this section, a deep disconnection among different measures has emerged in the Spanish and Italian interviews. Nonetheless, Italian respondents mainly construct such disconnection in terms of links between active and passive policies, which in their view also leads to the failure of the application of the flexicurity policies. In this case, the idea of the individual that needs both social security and activation is lacking, prejudicing thus the exit from conditions of vulnerability. Spanish respondents, instead, construct the disconnection mainly in terms of coordination among active policies measures, such as vocational guidance, training and supply-demand matching, which should allow the individual to carry out a consistent capabilities-enabler path.

10.4.5. Recipients of the active policies and in/equity of employment services

This section will look at the main recipients of employment policies in the attempt to assess the actors' interpretation on whether such policies promote substantial in/equity and in/equality in terms of opportunities. The aim will be to observe how Spanish and Italian interviewees construct the concept of equity.

According to the national representative of UPI and Assolavoro and the regional representative of UPI Tuscany, users of public services in Italy are mostly people with low professional profile, whereas users with high profiles usually refer to specialized recruiting companies or to their own personal relationships. However, the representative of UPI Tuscany and Assolavoro consider that this trend is partly changing. In fact, not only people with a lower professional profile, but also precarious workers who want to develop their employability have started to consult employment services. In other words, individuals are acquiring the cognitive framework and the language of the new paradigm of activation:

“It is true that public employment services are more attentive to lower profiles while some private recruiting companies are more specialized in high profiles, but the real point is that from

³³³ “Desde el año 2000/2001 hemos desarrollado un sistema de gestión propio que es el TAURÓ, que lógicamente está cohesionado con SISPE y con todos los sistemas estatales, pero este sistema propio nos ha permitido hacer muchas cosas que creíamos importantes (...). Tradicionalmente, los tres pilares del empleo - formación, empleo e inserción - en esta organización estaban... cada uno es disperso. El sistema informático aquí adquiere una importancia especial porque ha permitido..eh.. unirlos en uno” (SERVEF).

*Rome down the public employment service does not work, with some exceptions. The market on high profiles has collapsed in the last years*³³⁴ (Representative of UPI at national level).

“There is the need to provide answers to a growing number of subjects with high professional profiles. Indeed, those who are now turning to employment services belong to any target and any level of professionalism. By contrast, in the past subjects who turned to a public service used to be low-skilled workers. Today (...) everybody is precarious (...) and people begin thinking about how to strengthen their skills so as to increase their employability”³³⁵ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

“Look, people belonging to all levels, from nuclear engineers to fortune tellers, come to the employment agencies. This is as it should be, because the concept is: ‘if I need to work, I go to those who can find a work for me or that may have the knowledge of my local labour market”³³⁶ (Representative of Assolavoro at national level).

As shown in the previous extracts, the opinion of the Italian institutional representatives is that public services propose activities that are not always appropriate for all levels and professional figures, whereas the representative of Assolavoro provides an image of the employment agencies trying to welcome all types of professionals.

As far as the issue of in/equality is concerned, the major problem lies in the North/South divide, which contributes to an unfair distribution of the opportunities provided by employment services throughout the territory, as stated by the national representative of UPI. On the topic of the North/South divide, we can observe here the divergent opinions between the representative of the Tuscany Region and the representative of the Sicily Region on the effectiveness of employment centers:

“We provide career paths and opportunities; we provide tools. For example, in many cases the internship of a graduate is later transformed into a collaboration contract or a fixed-term contract.

³³⁴ “E’ vero che i servizi per il lavoro, i servizi pubblici, siano più attenti ai profili bassi, mentre ci sono società di recluting private più specializzate nei profili alti; ma la vera differenza è che da Roma in giù non funziona, con qualche eccezione. Il mercato sui profili alti in Italia negli ultimi anni è crollato come tale” (UPI at national level).

³³⁵ “La necessità di dare delle risposte a un numero sempre più alto di soggetti e con alte professionalità...; cioè i soggetti che ora si rivolgono ai servizi per l’impiego sono di qualsiasi target e di qualsiasi provenienza professionale, mentre prima erano i soggetti più a bassa qualificazione che si rivolgevano a un servizio pubblico. Oggi (...) tutti i soggetti hanno una precarietà (...) e iniziano a ragionare su come devono rafforzare le loro competenze per aumentare la loro occupabilità” (UPI Tuscany).

³³⁶ “Tutti i livelli, guardi, arriva di tutto: dagli ingegneri nucleari alle cartomanti; arriva di tutto, come è giusto che sia, perché il concetto è proprio questo: se io ho bisogno di lavorare vado da chi di lavoro può saperne o comunque può avere la cognizione di quello che è il mio mercato del lavoro locale” (Assolavoro).

*We also provide opportunities for high-profile workers, not only for low-profiles workers or first-level employees*³³⁷ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

*“Nowadays, what matters are temporary jobs at Disney, such as mainly low-quality jobs, not high-quality jobs. The real reason why employment offices failed is that they helped only those workers who held operative qualifications. Indeed, high-level workers did not go to employment offices, which is why employment offices have no longer any reason to exist. Or, for instance, if one moves abroad and wants a [job interview], where is he/she supposed to submit his/her own application? [Unemployment services] are not able to help the unemployed in this... and thank goodness, Internet exists”*³³⁸ (Representative of Sicily Region).

As reported in the extracts, some regions and municipalities are depicted as being provided with sufficient infrastructures that enable them to perform actions and activities, while others do not. Hence, conversion factors are distributed in a heterogeneous mode within the Italian territory and only few people are able to enjoy some of the opportunities.

In Spain, according to the national representatives of CCOO and UGT, employment services are mainly addressed to priority groups, such as the youth, women, and long-term unemployed, even though for the representatives reaching out everyone should be the actual goal of the Spanish system. However, both the representative at national level of the CCOO and UGT highlight the risk that the Public Employment Service may turn into yet another measure of social inclusion for people with serious problems, not only related to employment. Services could thus produce an effect of stigmatization for the users.

“The Public Employment Service cannot become the service of the marginalized. It is the public employment service of everybody. Employment services should not be based on whether job-seekers receive benefits or whether they are long-term unemployed. The actual possibilities of people to enter the labour market must be considered instead. Within public employment services, [there are] many people who have difficulties in finding a job, so it is necessary to develop specific programs

³³⁷ “Noi offriamo percorsi e opportunità, forniamo strumenti (...): un laureato che va a fare uno stage in azienda in molti casi poi alla conclusione si trasforma in un contratto di collaborazione piuttosto che in un contratto a tempo determinato; anche per profili elevati non solo per profili di operai o di impiegati di primo livello” (Tuscany Region).

³³⁸ “La cosa più importante da cercare sono i lavori temporanei a Disney, principalmente lavori di bassa qualità, non di alta qualità. Il vero motivo per cui gli uffici di collocamento hanno fallito è che avviavano solamente operai da qualifiche meramente esecutive; da un certo livello in poi non transitavano dagli uffici del lavoro, dagli uffici di collocamento. Questo è stato uno dei motivi per cui gli uffici di collocamento non hanno più motivo di esistere; se uno si trasferisce all'estero e vuole un [colloquio di lavoro] in tutto il mondo, dove posso presentare una mia candidatura? No, perchè non abbiamo questi sistemi.. e meno male che esiste internet” (Sicily Region).

for them (...), maybe in collaboration with social services”³³⁹ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

“And in the end, what we do not want at all is that public employment services become public employment services for the marginalised tout court ... as if these were the places for those people that nobody wants and do not fit anywhere (...). Anyone who wants to seek employment should be enrolled in public employment centres (...). If this assumption is not met, then, even if we talk about modernization (...), in reality the management is still that of the nineteenth century”³⁴⁰ (Representative of UGT at national level).

The idea is that active policies should be directed to everyone, according to the universalistic principle which is distinctive of the public service. They should serve the unemployed, no matter if they receive benefits, if they are precarious workers, or are young people who have never entered the labour market. Nevertheless, often even reaching users that are not marginalised people is not considered a goal of employment services.

With regard to the equity of active policies, and consequently on the equality of opportunity offered by employment services, one of the issues mostly highlighted by the Italian and Spanish actors interviewed belonging to public bodies is the uneven availability of resources that allow to respond, to a greater or lesser extent, to the variety of needs of all users:

“There are not resources for everybody”³⁴¹ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

“We have difficulties in providing possibilities for all groups”³⁴² (Representative of SAE).

³³⁹ “O sea.. (...) es que el Servicio Público de Empleo no puede ser el servicio de los marginados; es el Servicio Público de Empleo de todos. Entonces, la..las.. la atención no debe ser en función de si cobra desempleo o de si lleva aquí 20 años apalancado. Tiene que ser en función de las posibilidades de inserción que tenga esa persona. En los servicios públicos de empleo [hay] mucha gente que va a tener muchas dificultades de inserción ¡pues con esos habrá que hacer programas específicos! (...) Que igual hay que hacerlos en colaboración con los servicios sociales” (CCOO at national level).

³⁴⁰ “Y al final nosotros lo que no queremos en absoluto es que el servicio, los servicios públicos de empleo se conviertan en servicios de empleo públicos marginales para aquellas personas... como si fuera la asistencia social que nadie quiere y que no caben en ningún sitio (...). Pero en el servicio público de empleo se deben de inscribir todo aquel que quiera buscar empleo (...). Si esas premisas no se cumplen pues podemos hablar de modernización de lo que tú quieras (...), pero la realidad de la gestión sigue estando en el siglo XIX” (UGT at national level).

³⁴¹ “Le risorse non ci sono per tutti” (UPI Tuscany).

³⁴² “Pero luego tenemos nuestras dificultades a la hora de poner el territorio sobre la mesa que estén todos los colectivos cubiertos” (SAE).

The lack of resources for everybody becomes lack of fairness on the part of policies, which then produces inequality of conversion factors and opportunity for individuals throughout Spain and Italy.

In synthesis, Italian respondents prevalently construct the idea of in/equity with reference to the North/South divide and to low/high professional profiles. According to them, individuals living in South Italy as well as high professional profiles suffer mostly of scarce attention by employment services, which are dedicated mostly to low profiles and are better developed in the North of the country. By contrast, the Spanish interviewees focus more on the difference between marginalised individuals and all the other people, claiming that public employment services should provide opportunities for everybody. In both countries, the interviewees remark the substantial lack of resources, which produces an uneven distribution of opportunities among people and the structural diversity of conversion factors throughout the national territory.

10.4.6. Young people and activation policies

Despite the fact that youth unemployment has reached high rates in the last decades in comparison to other age cohorts in Italy and Spain (see Chapter VIII), the interest for the young has remained in the margin of the political attention.

The focus on the youth remains low in the Italian case. As shown in the previous chapter, this situation is depicted by some of the interviewees to spring from the avowed tendency of policies to privilege adults and old people. This discourse may partly reflect the socio-cultural structure of the Italian system, which has always mostly concerned senior workers. This also confirms what is already emerged in Chapter VI from the analysis of the distribution of social expenditures, which showed that the highest percentage is dedicated to old age unemployed. The national representative of UPI also affirms this:

*“In Italy, active policies are mostly for those who have lost their job, not for those who have never had one; basically, who has never had a job is lost! (...) We have a very high rate of youth unemployment, but all in all we are facing the problem of unemployment of older workers, who have family, who are older and weaker, and above all who are almost all unionised”*³⁴³
(Representative of UPI at national level).

³⁴³ “Le politiche attive in Italia sono un altro punto fortemente indirizzate a chi il lavoro lo ha perso, non a chi non lo ha mai avuto; [quindi chi non lo ha mai avuto] si attacca (...). Noi abbiamo un altissimo tasso di disoccupazione giovanile, ma tutto sommato ci stiamo rimettendo in carreggiata sulla disoccupazione dei lavoratori più anziani che hanno

The national representative of the UPI underlines that the Italian system is not oriented to attend those who have never had a job and clarifies that the political choice is to help older people with families. This may be influenced by the old male breadwinner model, according to which the whole family depends on the income of the man who acts as the economic reference for different generations. According to this traditional conception, protecting the householder still means protecting the whole household. Moreover, the representative suggests that unions are mainly elites of power, which consists of older people trying to maintain their power at the expense of the youth.

According to some interviews, labour market policies for the youth seem to be only a residual aspect. Some actors explain that job offers of employment services often concern low or medium level jobs, useful to make only a brief work experience somewhere in Italy or abroad. All this has not led to the definition of employment centres as reference points for the youth, where they can find formative and informative services which would allow them to move into the labour market according to what they value. As the national representative of CGIL states, the youth often face with very little in terms of types of contracts and wages. Furthermore, unemployment benefits are set on the basis of paid insurances and delivered according to a level of contribution impossible to reach for the youth, especially in Italy as shown in Chapter VIII. Social protection and active policies that create actual opportunities to enter the labour market are not designed for young people:

“[We have policies that help people] re-enter the labour market; there are not policies that help young people enter the labour market for the first time. This is because we do not have any tool that aids the entry of young people. Italy is still a country that basically thinks that young people finish their educational course and then start working; it does not take into account, for example, the fact that young people could also not finish the course. In fact, the phenomenon of early school leaving in the South is relevant (...). Or, second example, it does not take into account that young people are allowed to study during the undergraduate degree if their families are able to support them or if they carry out part-time jobs [that the most of the time are full-time in reality] or work in the black market”³⁴⁴ (Representative of CGIL at national level).

famiglia, che sono più anziani e sono più deboli, e soprattutto che sono quasi tutti iscritti al sindacato” (UPI at national level).

³⁴⁴ “Per rientrare, non per entrare, perché noi non abbiamo (...) uno strumento che, diciamo così, aiuti l’ingresso per i giovani (...). L’Italia è ancora un Paese che pensa sostanzialmente che tu finisci la scuola e vai a lavorare; non prende in considerazione il fatto che tu potresti non finire la scuola; il fenomeno della dispersione da noi ancora una volta nel Mezzogiorno è rilevante (...). Oppure, secondo esempio, tu durante l’università funzioni se la tua famiglia è in grado di sostenerti oppure inventandoti dei part-time improbabili oppure lavorando al nero” (CGIL at national level).

As shown in the extract, the national representative of CGIL seems to complain about the fact that the youth does not seem to be a priority for policies in the Italian reality. There are no measures for entering the labour market, and indeed politicians and the society itself assumes that families take up such role. All this reveals disinterest towards the young, who, while ageing, miss out on developing their potential and cannot find the opportunities that they deem worthy to invest in.

The situation in the Spanish case is fairly close to the Italian case and employment services are depicted to fail in meeting young's needs. The national representative of UGT claims that young graduates do not turn to employment centers, because their profiles are not considered suitable for the programs that the centers promote and because the employment services do not provide opportunities to them. In addition, the Spanish expert depicts the situation of young people in a very direct way, affirming that the better opportunity for them will take place leaving the country. This reveals a strong critique to the institutional capacities of functioning and an acknowledgement of the impotence of public services in improving the Spanish situation in matters of employment:

*“And now I am referring, for instance, to all graduate, that is, to people with a rather high level of education who do not attend the public employment service (...). Why does this occur? It is because the public employment service does not offer anything that will help them to get a better position in the job market”*³⁴⁵ (Representative of UGT at national level).

*“What is the best employment policy for the youth? What can young people do? [My answer is that] they can prepare their passport”*³⁴⁶ (Spanish expert).

The interviewees bring some examples of programs for the youth; the representative of FEMP Valencia illustrates the “young wage program” (“programa salario joven”), which offers apprenticeship contracts to young graduates below 30 years of age with no previous work experience within the municipalities of the Community of Valencia:

“It is true that most of the time .. eh .. those who benefit from these aids are recent qualified young people; huh? then, well, this is useful to them as a practice and to develop their curricula (...). Moreover, municipalities can take advantage of the transition [from school to work] of youth.

³⁴⁵ “Y me estoy refiriendo ahora, por ejemplo, pues a todos los titulados que salen. Es decir, gente de un determinado nivel, no pasa por el servicio público de empleo (...). ¿Por qué no se inscribe? Porque el servicio público de empleo no le está ofreciendo nada que al él le sirva para situarse mejor en el mercado de trabajo” (UGT at national level).

³⁴⁶ “Cuál es la mejor política de empleo de los jóvenes ? qué pueden hacer los jóvenes? Sacarse el pasaporte” (Spanish expert).

Municipalities should take advantage of this transition with a desire to put young people in the condition of working and training”³⁴⁷ (Representative of FEMP Valencia).

The representative of FEMP Valencia seems to agree that young people are not a resource to exploit, but, following a capability approach, they should be helped to develop their capabilities for work and education according to what they value. However, all this is still based on a short-term view of the experience of the young, which will serve to enrich their curricula and to give them more opportunities to meet others who may help them obtain employment.

In the Spanish case, special attention is paid to the problem of the early school leaving. Some interviewees present the specific case of the construction sector, where the crisis produced considerable difficulties in the reintegration of the young people, even if the distribution of unemployment benefits is extended on a large part of young population, contributing to support the youth in the phases of unemployment or job transitions, as shown in Chapter VIII. The representative of FEMP Valencia remarks the situation of young people who abandoned their studies or training courses to integrate quickly into the labour market, attracted by the richness of jobs that was available in the past. Therefore, the actor problematizes the fact that the characteristics of the market restrained the probabilities of empowering young people through education:

“The issue was that a lot of young people did not go to school... because there was job! The market absorbed [job-seekers]! (...) So, if you trained painters and you did a one-year course or a school workshop ... then, perhaps after three months half of the students had gone to a painting company”³⁴⁸ (Representative of FEMP Valencia).

Both Spanish and Italian respondents highlight the issue of the transition from school to work. The Spanish representative of FEMP Valencia reports this gap between university, education and work experience in Spain and denounces the inadequacy of the education delivered by schools and university in relation to the requests of the labour market. Hence, goodness of education is considered in terms of the advantages it provides for the achievement of occupability. For this reason, in Spain, over the last decade, there has been an intense struggle, due to the risk of

³⁴⁷ “Es verdad que la mayoría de las veces..eh.. los que se benefician de esas ayudas son jóvenes recién titulados ¿eh? entonces, bueno, todavía les sirve.. les sirve como una práctica, para desarrollar luego su.. les sirve de curriculum (...). Y esa transición es la que podemos aprovechar los ayuntamientos. Deberíamos aprovechar esa transición, pero con un afán de formación y de trabajo” (FEMP Valencia).

³⁴⁸ “Pero el problema era.. ¿Quién..quien iba a la escuela..? ¡Porque había mercado! ¡El mercado lo absorbía! (...) Que tú formabas pintores, pero en un curso que duraba un año, una escuela taller, y a lo mejor a los tres meses ya se te habían ido la mitad a una empresa de pinturas” (FEMP Valencia).

interference by the production world into the University, and this has sparked numerous protests by students in support of the public university. The Italian representative of UIL Tuscany instead constructs the problem in a different way. In fact, on the one hand he depicts the school as “stranger to the world of work and to society”, but on the other hand he deems that this may be the way for the university of remaining “free”, preserving its autonomy from the labour market. In addition, Italian politics is described to be unable to intervene on this issue, and this is partly attributed to vested powers hindering change, like that of University:

*“I also worry about education of [young people] because education provided by universities does not fit with the labour market”*³⁴⁹ (Representative of FEMP Valencia).

*“If you attended the world of vocational and technical-professional schools, you would realize that they are equipped with material that is neither used in the corporate world, nor in very small enterprises... it is a very old equipment (...). The world of education is far from the world of work because... because the school (...) has always claimed, and it still does, its total autonomy as a school. Thus, it has slowly become a little like a ‘stranger’ to the world of work and to society at large (...). Education seems an impervious world, because it is though that adapting to the demands of the productive system may harm the autonomy of research, which should necessarily and substantially be free”*³⁵⁰ (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

*“However, the political level does not intervene in all this. There are ‘barons’ and forms of resistance (...). Anyone who is going to lay hands on the university will die...”*³⁵¹ (Representative of CISL Tuscany).

As shown in this section, the main construction of the Spanish trade union at national level and the Spanish expert as well as of the Italian actors belonging to public bodies and trade union at national level is that young people do not receive attention and adequate services. This is partly

³⁴⁹ “Yo, me preocupan también (...) cómo [los jóvenes] se van a formar. Porque una cosa es la formación que te da la Universidad y otra cosa es el mercado de trabajo” (FEMP Valencia).

³⁵⁰ “Se tu frequentassi il mondo delle scuole professionali, tecnico-professionali, ti renderesti conto che loro sono dotate di attrezzature che nel mondo delle imprese, ma neanche nelle piccolissime imprese, vengono più utilizzate, perché sono attrezzature vecchie; (...); cioè questo mondo dell’istruzione è molto lontano dal mondo del lavoro perché, perché la scuola, (...) ha rivendicato sempre, e lo fa tuttora, la propria totale autonomia scolastica, e quindi è diventata una scuola un po’ estranea al mondo del lavoro e al mondo della società (...). E’ un mondo impermeabile, perché si ritiene che magari mettersi al servizio, tra virgolette naturalmente, di un sistema produttivo lede l’autonomia della ricerca che deve essere libera” (UIL Tuscany).

³⁵¹ “Comunque questo è a livello di politica che non viene minimamente toccato. Ci sono i baroni, ci sono le resistenze (...): chi tocca... muore, chi tocca l’università...” (CISL Tuscany).

justified by the Italian actors with the assumption that the whole system has always protected old workers, since this meant to protect also their families, including the new generations. The traditional discourse is reiterated by the trade unions' words for explaining the situation of the Italian young people. This does not occur for the Spanish situation, where the focus is more oriented on the consequences for the youth of fluctuations of the labour market. The general assumption is to help young people to adapt to the labour market and university has to serve this scope. Hence, in Italy the young seem to be scarcely considered as part of the labour force, whereas in Spain the situation seems to be quite the opposite: they are mostly forgotten to be young. The most Spanish and Italian interviewees consider that employment services are not able to provide the youth with possibilities for improving their conditions.

10.5 Concluding remarks

The chapter has attempted to shed light on the meanings given by Spanish and Italian interviewees to employment policies and on the conceptualization of job opportunities. Indeed, job opportunities can be viewed in a restrictive way as associated to productive work according to the rhetoric of the active welfare state oriented to an employability perspective. But, they can also be formulated according to the capabilities approach in terms of utility and as a way to realise oneself, which can spring only from a valuable job. It is important to bear in mind that the valuability is based on individuals' needs and desires. Therefore, the substantial freedom to choose the work one has reason to value means to enhance the capability for work. Firstly the chapter has tried to analyse how Spanish and Italian key actors construct the concepts of availability and valuability of job opportunities. Since such concepts are strictly related to the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of job, the analysis has focused on the observation of these dimensions.

First of all, quantitative and qualitative dimensions of job are often depicted by the interviewees to be in opposition each other, with the latter submitted to the former. This view mirrors the trends of the European institutions that have generally promoted policies and recommendations with a quantitative focus. Even if since the mid 1990s a growing interest for job quality has been arising at the European level, quality has always been thought of in function of a major economic performance. Moreover, the qualitative dimension is mainly neglected because of the idea that any job is better than no jobs. Spanish trade unions seem to have refused the European discourse of prioritizing full employment and increasing employment rate at the expense of job quality. Still, they seem to have accepted more than the Italian counterpart the resizing and narrowing the concept of stability, probably due to the strong flexibilization of the labour market that have partly

facilitated the predominance of the idea of job stability over that of employment stability. Italian actors seem to resist more to the abandonment of the idea of employment stability, which represents one of the most important components used for the construction of the concept of 'job quality'. Although Italian actors give great emphasis to the aspect of stability, they construct the concept of quality in an articulated mode in comparison to Spanish actors who strongly focus on job stability and qualification. Several Italian and Spanish actors belonging to different social groups problematize the issue of job quality. Nevertheless, according to the Spanish and Italian expert, the interest for the qualitative aspect is not developed in their countries and remains in the background in comparison to the quantitative dimension. The dimension receives great attention by the European institutions that encourage the creation of job opportunities, with employment policies contributing to increase economic performance. This position seems to be also supported by the Italian institutional representatives, whereas Spanish trade unions seem more cautious or more aware of this issue. All the interviewees share the idea that employment policies can run only when job opportunities are available, but not all the actors agree on the concept of availability. In fact, Spanish actors exhibit a strong agreement in claiming the prevalent role of the economic system and labour market in producing the lack of job opportunities, whereas among the Italian actors, there is some divergent opinions. Italian actors belonging to public bodies share the same position of the Spanish actors, but the representatives of one of the trade unions attribute this lack to an individual-moralizing dimension, whereby employment opportunities are missing insofar as people devalue specific categories of jobs. Therefore, making people change their attitude towards such jobs and their representations of a good or a bad employment also means increasing the availability of employment opportunities. This view sharply contrasts with the capabilities approach, according to which the individual cannot be assumed to be accountable for his/her circumstances that stem instead from the combination of the individual factors and the environmental conversion factors. According to the interviews, national governments have poorly promoted job creation in Spain and Italy and in their view, measures for self-employment and recruitment incentives have barely proved their efficacy. In Sen's view, the scarce creation of job opportunities entails, above all, hindering individual freedom and possibility of choice.

Then, the analysis in this chapter has moved on focusing on the issue of the access to job opportunities, since in a capabilities view individuals should be adequately equipped to escape from social vulnerability and from the constrain of valueless work. In this regard, the chapter has treated how the Spanish and Italian interviewees construct the meaning of employment services, the process of their modernization, the actions they carry out, the connection among active policies and social protection and the concept of equity of access to opportunities for recipients, especially for

young people. All these elements are supposed to act as conversion factors for the enhancement of the capability for work. The overall picture depicted by Spanish and Italian actors is that employment services, education and training as well as social protection scarcely provide individuals with the appropriated tools for entering the labour market and achieving the job they value. The Italian interviewees construct the process of modernization as inevitable, describing the old rigid employment offices, mainly bureaucratic-focused, as inadequate to facing the new challenges of the labour market. By contrast, the new “free” system of employment centres is described to be at the core of a process of activation that concerns both employment services and individuals, although some bureaucratic activity has been maintained. The search of job is described as having become an individual matter and for this it is criticized by some of the interviewees. Such critique is in line with the capability approach that combines individual and social responsibilities in the fight against unemployment. Employment centers are now treated as an alternative social and relational support that constitutes a personal network for those vulnerable people who do not have it. They are also described to be involved in an interactive and emotional relationship with the user, who is considered at the centre of policies. Spanish interviewees identify an element that, in their view, has been maintained during the process of modernization, such as the users’ representation of employment services as offices for unemployment. This representation seems to contrast with the view of the regional representatives, who conceive the services in a more active connotation oriented to make users enter the labour market. Trade unions attribute to the employment services the role of preparing unemployed for being accepted by the labour market. The meaning of employment services is controversial and generally oriented to accomplish market demands in the view of some of the Spanish and Italian trade unions. A common aspect that is highlighted by both parts is the lack of resources and the precariousness of the public services in terms of continuity of attendance by professionals. Deep disparities seem to emerge among the recipients in the access to job opportunities in the view of the interviewees. This is evident in terms of the North/South divide and adult/young people in Italy as well as in terms of marginalised/general population and qualified/unskilled young in Spain. As far as youth is concerned, Italian and Spanish actors, mainly trade unions, claim for a major attention and facilities for this group. In the view of Italian interviewees, the traditional familistic system has always protected and supported old workers with the scope of providing security to the whole household, including the new generations. This has led to the scarce consideration of the young as labour force. By contrast, Spanish interviewees problematize the consequences of the fluctuation of the market in the empowerment of young people, who are conceived mainly as labour force. Both in the Spanish and Italian case,

interviewees consider that employment services are not able to provide the young with possibilities for improving their conditions.

Chapter XI.

Technocratic and centralized mode of governance versus situated action: the decentralization

11.1 Introduction

The macro-indicator “*technocratic and centralized versus situated action*” has a special relevance, since the evolution of decentralized governance occurred in the last decades has emphasized the role of local agency and the territorialisation of social and employment policies. Top-down procedures have been recognized to produce pitfalls and have lost their predominance, also for the boosts of the EES (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007). Also, this indicator is especially salient in the capabilities approach, since decentralized services allow to stay close to individuals and give them the possibility to express their needs and preferences designing life and professional project according to what they value (capability for voice). A contextual deliberative informational basis is the core of the capabilities approach (Salais, 2003). It is thus important to understand the meanings given to the decentralization process and to the relationships among State, Regions and local governance for a better comprehension of how employment policies are constructed. This category assesses the actors’ interpretations about how and to which extent policies should relate to the recipients through the decentralized agency that delivers employment programs in the local contexts. Indeed, they can be informed by a technocratic or centralized conception of policies and delivered to generic target groups or, conversely, they can be designed and implemented in such a way as to be as close as possible to individuals. In fact, the capabilities approach considers that only tailor-made policies implemented with the collaboration of users may act as conversion factors and increase individuals’ possibility of choice, since the basic assumption is that same entitlement to formal rights (i.e. right to training) or same resource (i.e. cash benefits) do not necessarily convert into the same valuable achievements for all recipients. Decentralisation and territorialisation have been acknowledged to allow an on-going interconnection between the phases of policy design (normative step), policy implementation (pragmatic step) and policy assessment (evaluative step). This reshuffling of the policy process has favoured the increase of importance of the policy assessment and intensified the conflicts among different evaluation procedures. In fact, procedures can be inspired for example to the New Public Management, focusing on quantitative outcomes and

performance target, or to the capabilities approach, attempting to have a comprehensive view of the state of recipients and helping them to exit their conditions of vulnerability with respect to their individual liberties.

11.2 Closeness to individuals: centralized vs. decentralized governance

This first section focuses on the process of decentralization and territorialization, which can be considered as opposed to the technocratic and centralized conception of social and employment policies. Indeed, a strict top-down procedure in the implementation of activation programs – with clear-cut objectives, binding performance indicators, central directives and technocratic managerialistic modes of operation – hinders local agency and tailor-made interventions. By contrast, the capabilities approach requires a combination of top-down and bottom-up procedures in accordance with the notion of “situated public action” (Bonvin and Orton, 2009; Salais and Villeneuve, 2004; Bonvin, 2006). Although decentralized-oriented trends were already evident in the past, a major turning point in terms of systematization and consolidation of the decentralized governance occurred between the end of the XX and the beginning of the XXI century.

In Italy, an important reform of the Title V of the Constitution that extended the powers of regions was approved in 2001. The reform established the matters embedded in the legislative power of the State, those exclusive of the regional legislative power and those subject to concurrent legislation (whereby the regions are given legislative power within the framework of fundamental principles posed by national laws). The transfer of authority to the regions also passed to provinces. In Spain, the process of decentralization began in 1974, when some Autonomous Communities received extended powers through the Organic Law 9/1992. The process, which had both a political and administrative connotation, was especially relevant, since after the Francoist dictatorship “decentralization” often meant “democratization” (Burroni, 2007). A second decentralization recently took place, which involved a further transfer of powers from the regional to the local level. Hence, in Spain the decentralisation developed very much at two different levels of collaboration: 1. between national and regional/local governance, 2. between public and private agencies present in the local area. Therefore, the degree of decentralization of the Spanish model results to be higher than in Italy. However, it is weaker insofar as Regions have not the possibility of legislating, but only the power of implementing and managing programs, in opposition to the Italian model where Regions have the authority to make laws. Still, some attempts of re-centralization have appeared recently in the Italian case (Alacevich, 2007).

With regard to the field of employment, the process of decentralization has mostly affected active policies in both Italy and Spain. The national regulatory framework unquestionably gave regions competences of great importance, like those related to the implementation of training and apprenticeship. These actions of active policy were among the first to be transferred in both countries. In Italy, the decentralisation of active policies resulted in a strong articulation between the Regions (authorization phase) and the provinces (management of active measures through employment centers), while national active policies remained largely marginal and were entrusted to Italia Lavoro. Italia Lavoro operates by law as the agency of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to promote and manage actions on labour policies, social inclusion and employment. In Spain, responsibilities and duties related to active policies were gradually passed to the Autonomous Communities and partly shared with the national body dealing with employment policies, namely the Public Employment Service (Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal, SEPE) which replaced the old INEM (Nation Institute of Employment, Instituto Nacional de Empleo). In contrast, social protection in both countries has continued to be concentrated in the hands of the State, which operated through the SEPE in Spain and the INPS in Italy. In a capability approach, the issue of the cooperation between regional governments and these institutions is determinant for the success in making active policies and social protection working together, as we have already seen in the previous chapter.

A marked trend to decentralization does not necessarily entails that policies are oriented towards the capabilities approach. In fact, it is necessary to assess the meanings attributed to the decentralization, to the articulation of the powers defining its development and to the way in which it is implemented. These will be the topics of the successive paragraphs.

11.2.1. Meanings of decentralisation

An analysis of the definition of the process of decentralization by the actors involved in the drafting and application of employment policies illustrates a few main points. Firstly, decentralization is considered by the Spanish representative of CCOO at national level as the governance's adaptation to a changing articulate society, since centralization does no longer respond to the new demands of society.

“In other words, we are not going back to the idea of INEM that achieved little more than carrying out a vast number of courses, directly in its own schools. Because this is no longer the case! Because first ... because society is much more open, and there are many entities ... and ... and

*because we are not going to return to a situation of centralization of the management of all programs in the hands of Public Employment Service*³⁵² (Representative of CCOO at national level).

As the national representative of CCOO states, the old structure of employment policies, which were based on the activity of a central body – the INEM –, is constructed as an antiquated conceptualization of the past. Hence, the idea of “going back” to the previous system is not taken into account, while the new system is legitimated and depicted as able to meet current needs.

The transfer of competences entails a greater degree of autonomy for Regions in terms of management of employment policies and financial resources available, thanks to European and national funds, as the Spanish representative of SAE underlines. Also the representative of INEM seems to be aware of this and accepts it:

*“The time for the transferring [of powers] came and we began to enjoy autonomy in the management of active policies. Funds arrived because at that point we were working only with our own funds. In fact, after the transfer [of powers], we started to receive European and State funds with which to manage what would-be active policies”*³⁵³ (Representative of SAE).

*“We should think that each region knows exactly what to do with their unemployed”*³⁵⁴ (Representative of INEM).

The two extracts expose briefly the distinct points of view of the regional employment service and the national institution of employment. The regional representative narrates the process of decentralisation as the empowerment of Autonomous Communities and their enhancement of a greater autonomy. Instead, the national representative displays how the process of decentralisation has also been the attempt of leaving aside a paternalistic view of the State, deemed as the only body able to tackle unemployment. Indeed, the exhortation of the national representative of INEM - “we should think” - seems to reveal the on-going effort by a body that hold the power in the field of employment policies to believe that regions could relieve this function from the State. This is linked

³⁵² “O sea, que no vamos a volver a la idea del INEM que hacía no sé cuantos cursos de formación y poco más. Y los hacía directamente en.. hasta en sus propias escuelas. ¡Porque esto ya no vale así! Porque primero.. porque la sociedad es mucho más abierta, porque hay multitud de entidades..y.. y porque no se va a volver a una situación de centralización en el Servicio Público de Empleo de la gestión de todos los programas” (CCOO at national level).

³⁵³ “Llega el momento de las transferencias. Políticas activas ya tenemos autonomía para gestionarlas. Llegan los fondos, porque hasta ese momento se estaba haciendo con fondos propios, se hacen las transferencias ya tenemos fondos europeos y estatales para gestionar lo que serían las políticas activas” (SAE).

³⁵⁴ “Debemos pensar que cada Comunidad Autónoma sabe perfectamente que hacer con sus desempleados” (INEM).

to the fact that the transfer of competence is mainly a transfer of powers and responsibilities. In line with the statement of the national representative of INEM, the national representative of the FEMP reinforces the idea that not only regions are able to deal with employment issues, but also that the lower the level of governance, the most effective the policies are made: “*It is possible to operate more effectively at lower levels, [such as the decentralized levels]*”³⁵⁵ (Representative of FEMP).

The conviction that decentralisation means first of all effectiveness of policies is also widespread among some Italian actors, as shown in the following quotations of the representative of the Tuscany Region and the representative of CISL at the national level. Nonetheless, the discourse of the decentralisation as a transfer of authority and powers stated by the Spanish actors is less noticeable for the Italian case.

*“Basically, if properly implemented, decentralization allows for greater effectiveness of interventions and a better and faster ability to assess their effects. Then it allows to implement all corrections and adjustments that may be necessary in the complex field of employment policies”*³⁵⁶ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

*“The discourse of institutional decentralization has (...) allowed developing good experiences, good practices – especially if handled seriously”*³⁵⁷ (Representative of CISL at national level).

The representative of the Tuscany Region emphasizes the possibility for policies to carry out more effective interventions and evaluations thanks to decentralization. By contrast, the national representative of CISL treats the issue not so much in pragmatic terms as the other Italian actor, but considers decentralisation in terms of possibilities for developing good practices. The two interviewees stress that, if “properly implemented” and “handled seriously”, decentralization can be a resource. Also the representative of CGIL Sicily states that “*in a healthy system [decentralization would allow the analysis of the context, identifying the needs of firms and individuals]*”³⁵⁸. It is interesting to note that the interviewees at national and regional level, coming both from the Centre and South Italy, use the metaphor of ‘illness and health’ (Cuvardic, 2004) for underlining that

³⁵⁵ “En el nivel más abajo se efectúa de manera más eficaz” (FEMP).

³⁵⁶ “In sostanza, se correttamente attuata, la decentralizzazione consente una maggiore efficacia degli interventi, una migliore e più rapida capacità di valutare i loro effetti e quindi attuare tutte le correzioni e gli adeguamenti che si rendono necessari in una materia così complessa quale quella delle politiche del lavoro” (Tuscany Region).

³⁵⁷ “Sul discorso del decentramento istituzionale della decentralizzazione, diciamo che (...) ha permesso – soprattutto là dove è stata gestita in modo serio – di sviluppare delle buone esperienze, buone pratiche” (CISL at national level).

³⁵⁸ “...in un sistema sano [la decentralizzazione permetterebbe di analizzare l'aspetto contestuale e vedere maggiormente quali sono i bisogni delle aziende e delle persone]” (CGIL Sicily).

decentralization can work solely in a healthy, effective and faultless system. This seems to not correspond to the actors' interpretations of the actual state of things.

From Sen's approach, decentralization can be an opportunity, insofar as policies remain as close as possible to individuals in opposition to a standardization and bureaucratization of employment programmes. Both Spanish and Italian interviewees working at the lower levels remark upon this aspect. In the view of the Italian representative of UPI Tuscany, decentralization also means to increase the knowledge of local situations: *"You are more directly involved in the issues, which means that you know better how to analyse and to read into them"*³⁵⁹ (Representative of UPI Tuscany). In the interviews of the Spanish representatives of SAE, we can observe that special attention is given to the issue of approaching the territory: *"We bet a lot on the territory"*³⁶⁰ (Representative of SAE); *"I have to give priority to ATIPES"*³⁶¹. And to the territories, as well"³⁶² (Representative of SAE). The regional representative of SERVEF also identifies decentralisation with a greater investment into local development agents (agentes de desarrollo local, ADL): *"Local development agents are among those with who we connect and about who we care most. And, a very high percentage of courses that we program in the regions is based on the data provided by development agents"*³⁶³ (Representative of SERVEF). Still, with regard to the Spanish representative of CCOO and FEMP at the national level and the representative of SAE, it is possible to notice that decentralization is mainly considered as a closer proximity to the context and its specificities, as well as a more direct relationship to the citizen:

*"So what are the potentialities? It is true that the decentralization of these policies is positive, in that it is a service. Therefore, the closer the service to the specific field [the better], because in such a way it knows where policies will develop, where people, companies, and workers are, even what is the state of the labour market. This is a potentiality and certainly we agree on that administrative decentralization"*³⁶⁴ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

³⁵⁹ "Sei più dentro le questioni, hai più capacità di analizzarle, di leggerle" (UPI Tuscany).

³⁶⁰ "Nosotros apostamos mucho por el territorio" (SAE).

³⁶¹ ATIPES (Actuaciones Territoriales Integrales Preferentes para el Empleo) are plans of intensive intervention focused on the specific situation of a territory in the Autonomous Community of Andalucía.

³⁶² "Tengo que dar prioridad absoluta a las ATIPES. Y a los territorios" (SAE).

³⁶³ "Una de las gentes que conectamos y que le hacemos bastante caso son con los agentes de desarrollo local. Y casi el..un porcentaje muy alto de los cursos que a lo mejor programamos en las comarcas es en base a los datos que nos dicen los agentes de desarrollo" (SERVEF).

³⁶⁴ "Entonces, ¿cuáles son las potencialidades? Es verdad que la descentralización de estas políticas..eh.. es positiva..eh.. porque es un servicio (...). El servicio cuanto más próximo esté al ámbito concreto donde se van a desarrollar estas políticas, donde está la gente..eh.. donde están las empresas, donde están los trabajadores y trabajadoras, eh..donde están incluso.. donde se conoce cuál es la situación del mercado de trabajo local, pues eso es una potencialidad en sí misma y desde luego nosotros estamos de acuerdo en esa descentralización administrativa" (CCOO at national level).

“The transfer [of powers] has pros and cons. There are more pros than cons. First of all, for instance, we are closer to citizens and the territory. We are closer to them than [the governance of] Madrid (...). Because each provincial directorate is the institution that solves and handles [problems] as well as that relates with citizens. So, it is much easier with regard to the management, because the treatment is much more straightforward (...). And then we know more, we are closer, we know the problems of the autonomous communities”³⁶⁵ (Representative of SAE).

“About 80% of active policies in this country are services owned by municipalities, which are those who really know which actions should be applied to certain groups in certain contexts, since they are dealing directly with citizens”³⁶⁶ (Representative of FEMP).

“A feature of the Spanish labour market, is that we have rather marked differences at a territorial level and they are persistent over time. What do I mean by this? For example, that not only employment rates are very different between Navarra and Andalusia. The same can be said of unemployment rates. I also mean that the labour markets are different because they are related to the educational levels of the population in the different regions. Therefore, we consider that decentralization is important to tailor policies to the features of each territory”³⁶⁷ (Spanish expert).

Observing the extracts, several details can be highlighted. Firstly, the position of the different actors interviewed seems to converge towards the same point: decentralization favours policies thanks to a significant closeness to the context that allows them to be more concrete. The main difference among the interviewees lies in the focus on the context. What or who is the context? The national representative of CCOO for instance focuses on all the stakeholders composing the labour market landscape, namely workers, firms and people. The stakeholders are set on the same plane and employment policies are depicted to be a service for all of them. Therefore, we can see that no great attention is given to the different powers and needs they have or to the role that firms play in

³⁶⁵ “Transferencia, pues tiene sus pros y sus contras. Pros más que contra. Estamos nosotros más cerca, más cerca, por ejemplo, del ciudadano y del territorio. Más cerca que Madrid (...). Pero ya quien resuelve, quien tramita, quien se relaciona con el ciudadano, es cada provincia. Cada dirección provincial. Entonces, para lo que es la gestión es mucho más fácil ¿sabes lo que te quiero decir? Porque el trato es mucho más directo. Y después nosotros sabemos más, estamos más cerca, sabemos la comunidad autónoma los problemas que tiene” (SAE).

³⁶⁶ “Cerca del 80% de las políticas activas en este país son servicios de titularidad municipal, que son los que realmente conocen qué acciones deberían de hacerse con determinados colectivos en determinados contextos, pues son los que tratan directamente con los ciudadanos” (FEMP).

³⁶⁷ “Una características de España, o del mercado de trabajo en España, es que tenemos a nivel territorial diferencias bastante acentuadas y que además son.. persistentes en el tiempo. ¿Y con esto qué quiero decir? No solo las tasas de empleo sean muy diferentes entre Navarra y Andalucía, por ejemplo. O las tasas de paro. Sino que las características del mercado de trabajo son diferentes porque tienen que ver ...con las características de los niveles educativos de la población de cada región.. Entonces nosotros planteamos que la descentralización es importante para adecuar las políticas a las características de cada territorio” (Spanish expert).

determining the situation of workers. By contrast, the representative of the SAE and the representative of FEMP, who are dedicated to implement policies daily, focus mainly on the user of their services: the citizen. Yet the Spanish expert focuses on the whole context and on the match between population and labour market. The kind of conflict between the regional and national level is also noticeable from the words of the regional representative of SAE in the previous quotation: *“We are closer to them (the citizens and the territory) more than [the governance of] Madrid”*. Hence, the local level pretends to be close to citizens in opposition to the distant relationship set by the central governance. Nevertheless, decentralization is sometimes formulated as closeness to the citizen only in administrative terms; it is certainly a significant aspect, but definitely not indicative of an orientation towards the capability approach:

*“Here there is an inside area, [composed] of (...) small towns; but what does not make sense is that people have to come to Lidia to sign up, that is, the last office we have in that direction, which is 30 ... 40 ... 50km away. Our policy is to make services closer to citizens, avoiding travelling, if possible, and offering them all services”*³⁶⁸ (Representative of SERVEF).

It is interesting to note in the previous extracts that among the Spanish interviewees decentralization is mainly understood as a major proximity to the labour market and the population. Also, the approach to community seems to take precedence over the individual. By contrast, Italian interviewees stress that decentralization implies a close approach to the productive-industrial system, as shown in the following quotations of the representatives of UPI Tuscany and UIL at national level. This means that the concept is constructed in terms of efficacy and profitability for firms, which is connected to a productivist framework, more than in terms of individual empowerment:

*“I make an example regarding my territory. We need to invest in the marble industry, in mechanics, and, partly in tourism. Therefore, in recent years we have worked in the creation of professionals who would serve this purpose. This was the strong value of the Tuscan model”*³⁶⁹ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

³⁶⁸ “Aquí hay una zona muy interior que es (...), que son pueblos pequeños pero que.. imagínate.. lo que no tiene mucho sentido es que una persona para inscribirse tenga que venir hasta Lidia, que es la última oficina que tenemos en esa dirección que está a 30..40.. 50 km. Nuestra política es acercar al ciudadano los servicios, evitando en la medida de lo posible, por supuesto, desplazamientos y ofreciéndole todos los servicios” (SERVEF).

³⁶⁹ “Le faccio un esempio per il mio territorio: noi abbiamo bisogno di investire sul marmo sull’industria, sulla meccanica, in parte anche sul turismo e quindi, in questi anni abbiamo lavorato nella costruzione di figure professionali che servissero a questo elemento. Questa è stata la valenza forte del modello toscano” (UPI Tuscany).

*“Meetings are carried out within the territory in each geographic area of the province of Siena. We try to have the perception of territory and companies, such as of those who then hire people: where the market is going and what do employers of larger companies need? Here in the province of Siena a large company is considered to be formed by at least 50 employees. We ask what are their needs in terms of professional supply. Therefore there is definitely a kind of contact [between institutions and firms]”*³⁷⁰ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

*“Active policies by constitutional mandate do not belong to the State, they belong to the regions, which entrust them to the provinces. This is good because it is clear that the local authority is closer to the problems of the territory. Active policies in Pisa are not the same as those in Ravenna or Isernia, due to the different industrial and agriculture system; therefore, it is right that policies should be adapted to the territory”*³⁷¹ (Representative of UIL at national level).

In these interviews, we can note a convergent view. At both the regional and national level, the focus is on the territory in terms of its productive characteristics, to which policies have to adapt. The national representative of the UIL clearly states this point and the interest in the worker seems to be implicit in the attention for the industrial and agriculture activities. Therefore, the concept of decentralization as a greater proximity of the policies to the individual, as shaped by the capability approach, seems to be blurred in the Italian case more than in the Spanish case.

A similarity can be detected between the interviews of Spanish and Italian actors, namely the disillusion for the whole process of decentralisation. In the Italian case, a high level of agreement among some of the people interviewed is evident on the topic of decentralisation that is presented mostly as a failed attempt of applying a new fruitful system. The national representative of the CGIL makes the consideration that efforts of approaching the territory carried out by policies appear more like a goal than a reality:

“There is no relationship with the territory (...). Above all, what is missing is the attempt to connect individuals’ biography with the prospects of development of their territory. But doing this

³⁷⁰ “Vengono fatti poi degli incontri sul territorio, anche per area geografica della provincia di Siena, in cui si cerca appunto di avere la percezione del territorio e delle aziende, di chi insomma va a assumere le persone: dove sta andando il mercato, quali fabbisogni hanno (...) i datori di lavoro delle aziende più grandi? Qui in provincia di Siena un'azienda grande viene considerata da 50 dipendenti in su. Chiediamo quali sono i loro fabbisogni professionali, quindi il contatto c'è sicuramente” (UPI Tuscany).

³⁷¹ “Le politiche attive, per mandato costituzionale, non sono dello stato, sono delle regioni e affidate dalle regioni, alle province; questo è un bene perchè è chiaro che l'ente locale è più vicino alle problematiche del territorio. A Pisa la politica attiva ha un indirizzo che non sarà uguale a quella di Ravenna o di Isernia, perchè là c'è un tessuto industriale e qua non c'è, qua c'è l'agricoltura e là non c'è, e quindi è giusto che sia adeguata” (UIL at national level).

*takes time, resources, and capacity. Instead, active and employment policies have always been the black sheep, the Cinderella of the allocation of resources in a country [like Italy] that has always spent very little in employment policies*³⁷² (Representative of CGIL at national level).

The representative of CISL Sicily points out that in its practical application decentralization ended up merely as a copy of old systems, rather than as an incentive for regions to construct ad-hoc measures, drawn and designed according to the peculiarities of the territory. This aspect of decentralization is especially stressed in the Italian context for the case of Sicily:

*“It is true that each region had to make a proper ad hoc legislation concerning people, but in many cases we noticed the ferrying of the old systems, rather than the development of something new”*³⁷³ (Representative of CISL Sicily).

In the Italian case, trade unions at regional level also describe decentralization to have taken the form of a greater dispersion of employment policies between different levels of governance in terms of decision-making and economic resources. In the view of the national representative of CISL, it has also taken the form of a bias in terms of dislocation of human resources, so that highly-qualified professionals kept their jobs at national level, which contributed to the impoverishment of policies at regional level:

*“Policies have been decentralized to the provincial level, but I think that this has been a mistake because now there is a dispersion that has not produced good results (...). There is dispersion. Resources and decisions are widespread over the territory, but there is no coordination and no results; it has been a failure”*³⁷⁴ (Representative of CISL Tuscany).

“Until before the reform on decentralization in 1996, employment policies were a responsibility of the State. [Following the change] and having to choose between working at the national level and the regional or the provincial level, the State civil servant surely chooses to keep working at the

³⁷² “Non c’è relazione con il territorio (...). Soprattutto quello che manca è una messa in relazione della tua storia con le prospettive di sviluppo del tuo territorio; ma per fare questo ci vogliono tempo, risorse e capacità, e, invece, le politiche attive o le politiche del lavoro sono sempre state la pecora nera, la cenerentola dell’allocazione delle risorse di un Paese, che di politiche del lavoro ha sempre speso molto poco” (CGIL at national level).

³⁷³ “E’ vero che poi ogni regione doveva fare una legislazione sulle persone adeguata ad hoc, però in molte realtà si è visto più il traghettamento dei vecchi sistemi, piuttosto che puntare a qualcosa di nuovo” (CISL Sicily).

³⁷⁴ “Questo è stato decentrato, è stato decentralizzato a livello provinciale, ma io credo sia un errore perchè c’è una dispersione che non ha portato buoni frutti (...). C’è una dispersione, le risorse e le decisioni sono sparse sul territorio, però non c’è coordinamento e non ci sono risultati, è stato un fallimento” (CISL Tuscany).

*national level. That was indeed a bad mistake, for all the best civil servants – by which I mean those with a higher professional level – decided to stick to the State; so, employment policies were impoverished as an effect of the decentralization. That was a collateral effect and, as such, it was probably due to the superficial behaviour of the legislators and the government...*³⁷⁵ (Representative of CISL at national level).

Several Spanish actors agree that decentralisation must not be questioned, even if they express several complains. The representatives of CCOO at national and regional level believe that the applications of decentralization have actually departed from the objectives that were originally intended, namely a major closeness to territories, workers and firms. Due to the lack of a concrete actual process of decentralization, the representative of CCOO Valencia claims the need for reform and change:

*“Decentralization was positive and allowed to attach policies to territories, workers and companies in a particular context; but, in the end, all was messed up”*³⁷⁶ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

*“The decentralization of employment policies is still awaiting a thorough reform, if what we want is its adaptation to the needs of the territory”*³⁷⁷ (Representative of CCOO Valencia).

Decentralization is described to have acquired the characteristics of an organizational change disentangled from a transformation of the actual contents of employment policies. This transformation of contents was instead the goal that the programs managed by the Regions had to pursue, in the view of the national representative of CCOO:

“The biggest problem is this: actually, if you notice, there have been many organizational changes in terms of management, whereas few changes concerned the content of programs (...). So,

³⁷⁵ “Fino a prima della riforma del decentramento del ‘96 il lavoro era una competenza statale, dello stato; lo statale, tra rimanere a [lavorare presso] lo Stato o andare in regione o in provincia, non ha dubbi e tutti infatti.. fu un errore grave quello, perché tutti i migliori scelsero di rimanere nello Stato; i migliori sono quelli che avevano più professionalità (...); e quindi si impoverì la politica del lavoro attraverso il decentramento. Fu un effetto collaterale, non voluto, questo, dovuto probabilmente anche diciamo a una certa superficialità e approssimazione da parte del legislatore e anche dei governi di allora” (CISL at national level).

³⁷⁶ “O sea, que este sería el aspecto negativo de como una cuestión, la transferencia, que era positiva en sí misma, y que permitía poder hacer políticas más pegadas al territorio y a los trabajadores.. y a las empresas de ese ámbito territorial, pues al final se ha convertido un poco en un caos” (CCOO at national level).

³⁷⁷ “El proceso de descentralización de estas políticas hasta el momento continúa pendiente de una reforma profunda si se pretende su adaptación a las necesidades del territorio” (CCOO Valencia).

*these programs managed by autonomous communities – but which were under State regulation and financed with funds from the State Public Employment Service – undergone very few changes. Now, they are the same programs as those we had in 80'. Maybe there are some novelties in vocational guidance, which has gained prominence since the late 90s. But programs have changed very little. It is perhaps the management that has changed most*³⁷⁸ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

Also the Spanish representative of SAE shares the view that decentralisation has taken the form of an organizational change that has produced the negative effect of an increase in the load of bureaucracy, as each level of governance is appointed specific administrative duties. However, this change, in the representative of SAE's view, was not supported by an increase of human resources, thus giving way to a slowdown of bureaucratic practices with clear consequences for the recipients of the employment policies:

*“Everything comes to us turns into excessive bureaucracy. Excessive bureaucracy. I understand that all money has to be justified and that each quantity of money has to be used for a particular issue, okay? But, for us this entails a big problem: the straitjacket and typecasting of funds (...). We have regional funds, State funds and European funds. So I, Andalusia, have to report and justify how I spend my funds. I have also to justify to [the governance of] Madrid the money it turned me. And then I have to justify to Europe what it turned me. Therefore, I have to justify to three, to three, entities”*³⁷⁹ (Representative of SAE).

According to the Spanish representative of INEM, the measures adopted with the decentralization were an imitation of previously existing ones. His opinion is that this was most likely due to the fact that in most cases, those who were responsible for the design of the new

³⁷⁸ “Eh.. el mayor problema es este, porque en realidad si te das cuenta, se han producido muchos cambios..eh.. organizativos, en la gestión e igual se han producido menos cambios respecto al contenido de los programas porque los programas... (...). Entonces, esos programas que gestionan..eh.. las comunidades autónomas pero que son de normativa estatal y financiados con los fondos del servicio de empleo público estatal han cambiado muy poco. O sea, son los mismos programas de los años 80. Las Escuelas Taller..eh.. quizá haya algo más de novedad en la orientación profesional, que ha cobrado mucha potencialidad a partir de los años.. pues de finales de los años 90, antes no había este tipo de programas, pero en los programas se ha cambiado poco. Quizá en lo que más se ha cambiado es en la gestión” (CCOO at national level).

³⁷⁹ “Lo que llega a nosotros, eso se convierte en una burocracia exagerada. Una burocracia exagerada. Yo entiendo que todos los dineros tienen que estar justificados, ¿vale? y que cada dinerito estará para una cuestión en concreto, pero para nosotros nos supone un gran problema. Ese encorsetamiento y encasillamiento de fondos y de..esto está dirigido para esto.. (...). Porque es que como.. tenemos fondos locales, o sea, fondos autonómicos y fondos estatales y fondos europeos. Entonces, yo.. Andalucía.. me justifico lo que invierto en mis fondos. A Madrid tengo que justificarle el dinero que me da para lo que me lo da. Y a Europa tengo que justificarle lo que me dé para lo que me lo da. Tengo que justificar a tres. A tres entidades” (SAE).

programs were officials of the former INEM, who simply transferred the old programs to the regional level. Furthermore, according to Spanish expert, decentralization ended up merely repeating the same programs in different Autonomous Communities, thus failing to adapt to the needs of the regions. The Spanish expert especially emphasize this aspect, referring to it with the notion of “*mimicry*”:

*“Since there was no coordination, problems generated by the decentralization were related to the repetition and the mimicry of performances. When I say ‘mimicry’, I mean, for example, that the same policies are applied in different places”*³⁸⁰ (Spanish expert).

The statement of the Spanish expert is in line with the issue of inequality of opportunities available at the regional level, which is yet another crucial aspect that seems to characterize the decentralization according to the interviewees, as we will see later on in this chapter.

In synthesis, all Spanish and Italian actors agree that decentralisation means first of all greater effectiveness of policies. For the Spanish actors the process of decentralisation also means empowerment of Autonomous Communities and their enhancement of a greater autonomy, which is less evident among the Italian actors. In the capabilities approach, decentralization is viewed as an opportunity for people, since policies remain close to individuals. In this regard, Spanish interviewees mainly consider decentralization as a major proximity to the labour market and the population, whereas for Italian interviewees decentralization implies mainly a close approach to the productive-industrial system. Hence, the interpretation of the Spanish actors seems to be more in line with the capability approach. Nevertheless, all the actors remark a kind of disillusion for the whole process of decentralisation. In the Italian case, decentralization is described to have become a copy of the old system and as a greater dispersion of employment policies in terms of decision-making and economic resources between different levels of governance. In the Spanish case, decentralization is described to have become an organizational change disentangled from a transformation of the actual contents of employment policies. It is also depicted as an increase of bureaucracy and a repetition of the same programs in different Autonomous Communities, thus failing to adapt to the needs of the regions – which was the original objective – and contributing to maintain the inequality of opportunities available at the regional level. This point claims for an analysis of the issue of the State-Regions coordination and of the coordination among regions,

³⁸⁰ “Los problemas que generaba la descentralización, porque no hay coordinación, que hay repetición de actuaciones, que hay mimetismo en las actuaciones. Cuando digo mimetismo quiero decir, que por ejemplo, las políticas que se aplican son las mismas en un sitio que en otro” (Spanish expert).

which calls into question the relationships of the different levels of governance with each other. This will be the topic of the next paragraph.

11.2.2. Implementation of decentralization: analysis of the relationships among levels of governance

In order to understand the possibilities of development of Sen's approach, it is important to analyse the issue of the power relations within which the possibility to implement the employment policies by the regional governance is articulated. We begin with an observation of how the interviewees interpret and perceive the role of the State.

Italian actors do not especially emphasize the issue of the role of the State. Also its relationship with regions is not depicted as conflicting. Nevertheless, some actors interviewed highlight a recent trend oriented towards a re-centralization of employment policies originated during the center-right wing governments. In the view of the representative of CGIL Tuscany and UPI Tuscany in this period the State did not act as a facilitator of the process of decentralization that could have increased the potentiality of public services:

*“In recent years, we have witnessed a process of re-centralization of the functions and decisions by the central government. [This was due to] a substantial tendency to authoritarianism in an effort to establish forcefully imbalanced policies from the point of view of powers and oriented to the detriment of the employee”*³⁸¹ (Representative of CGIL Tuscany).

*“I am concerned about this neo-centralist return of employment policies – both national and regional centralism. It has been proved that employment policies work if they dropped on the design of the territories. In this sense, federalism in the labour market is an element that has achieved major success in recent years; in my opinion, coming back to the old model would not be good”*³⁸² (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

³⁸¹ “Negli ultimi anni abbiamo assistito ad un processo di riaccentramento delle funzioni e delle scelte da parte del governo centrale [dovuto a] una sostanziale tendenza all'autoritarismo del governo Berlusconi, nel tentativo di affermare con maggiore forza politiche squilibrate dal punto di vista dei poteri e a danno del lavoro dipendente” (CGIL Tuscany).

³⁸² “Vedo con preoccupazione questo ritorno un po' neocentralista delle politiche del lavoro, centralismo sia nazionale che regionale; le politiche del lavoro – si è dimostrato – funzionano se sono calate sui disegni dei territori. In questo senso, il federalismo sul mercato del lavoro è un elemento che negli anni scorsi ha ottenuto dei risultati significativi; ritornare indietro su questo modello secondo me sarebbe un male” (UPI Tuscany).

As shown in the last extract, the representative of the UPI Tuscany problematized the fact that it is present a risk of a neo-centralism, aimed at downsizing the regional and local space of autonomy and achieving a greater control of social expenditure. Also the representative of the trade union point out a “substantial tendency to authoritarianism”, which reveals the perception of a marked distance set by the central government from the regions and the employees. The State is constructed as unreliable and close to the communication with the other stakeholders, which clearly indicates the fairness of the capability approach and the enhancement of a situated action.

The topic of the relationships among State and regions seem to be a relevant issue in the Spanish case, as stated by the representative of CCOO, according to whom political authorities may hinder the process of empowerment of the autonomous communities:

“In spite of many advantages, decentralization has this problem, namely, it is much closer to the political power, and the political power exercises [its power]. In this way, the Public Employment Service of each region loses its autonomy (...). The political power affects... Our state of autonomy has being led in conditions of competition, not of cooperation, because every time the Minister speaks he says ‘This duty is for the regions’ ‘This duty is for the ...’? Yes, yes, this is for the region (...), but the government leads, while it should work with the regions to achieve the goals we all share. And that's why these instruments of cooperation and coordination are supposed to exist”³⁸³ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

As we can see from the quotations above, the Government “leads”, “exercises” and “affects”. These terms indicate that the State is perceived to act not by promoting a process of collaboration with the regions, sharing with them objectives and tools, but by imposing its own will. This top-down perspective and a still centralized mode of governance are depicted as authoritarian-oriented by the actor. Therefore, this clearly does not encourage the development of a deliberative participation within employment policies, which is consistent with a capabilities approach. Some of the interviewees highlight the quasi-conflictual relationship between national and regional powers, whereas others lament the purely technical connotation of the relationship with the State, embodied in receiving funding and doing reports. Therefore in this case, the communication regards only

³⁸³ “La descentralización también tiene este problema. Tiene muchas ventajas pero también tiene este problema. Que al estar mucho más próximo del poder político, el poder político.... Ejerce. Y entonces también se pierde autonomía del propio Servicio Público de Empleo de cada comunidad autónoma (...) el poder político influye. Nuestro estado de las autonomías..eh.. está derivando también en la concurrencia, y no en la cooperación pues..¿Por qué cada vez que habla el ministro dice “esto es de las comunidades autónomas” “esto es de las..”? Sí, sí, esto es de las comunidades autónomas..Nadie tenemos ningún interés en que no sea de las comunidades autónomas, pero el Gobierno lidera. Y debe trabajar con las comunidades autónomas para ver como todos a una..umm..eh.. vamos a los objetivos que.. que todos compartamos. Y para eso están esos instrumentos de cooperación y coordinación” (CCOO at national level).

bureaucratic aspects, hindering a proper dialogue: *“and it is all the contact we have”*³⁸⁴ (Representative of SAE).

The considerations made above on the role of the State bring us to analyse the issue of the autonomy for regions. Several Spanish respondents particularly highlight this aspect, while the Italian interviewees seem to not see it as much as relevant. We can hypothesize that a higher degree of decentralization, as in the Spanish case, leads to problematize this point even further. The representative of SAE, as a key actor directly involved in the issue, calls for greater autonomy of the Regions from the State:

*“[The governance of] Madrid is a bit like the old guard: very corseted people embedded into old policies. We have to open ourselves. Because the Ministry does not understand anything that is not active policies controlled by them, you know? They do not allow us – the regions – to make innovation”*³⁸⁵ (Representative of SAE).

In this extract, the representative of SAE makes evident his perception of the central governance and, implicitly, its relationship with the regions. An in-group/out-group divide is hinted in the use of the pronouns “them” and “us”, so that the State, identified and personified with “*Madrid*”, is depicted to be in opposition to the regions. Indeed, in the representative’s representation, the State is formed by people that are far from being flexible, open-minded and available to giving possibility of innovation to regions. Several actors interviewed tend to stress the lack of autonomy allowed to them and describe many of the programs elaborated by the State as “*closed*”³⁸⁶, “*rigid*”³⁸⁷ (Representative of SAE), “*too standardized*”³⁸⁸ (Representative of CCOO at national level), not only in terms of funding, but also in terms of contents, targets, basic requirements and length: “*Madrid tells us “Look, I send you this money for these courses with these contents and the entity that is going to deliver the course has to respond to these requirements; and we cannot get out of there”*”³⁸⁹ (Representative of SERVEF). Instead, the interviewees deem that a greater flexibility would make it possible to adapt programs to different territories.

³⁸⁴ “...y es todo el contacto que tenemos” (SAE).

³⁸⁵ “Madrid son un poco como de la vieja guardia. Gente como muy encorsetada, muy metidos en las políticas antiguas de siempre. Tenemos que abrirlas. Porque en el Ministerio, todo aquello que no es política activa de empleo regulada por ellos, no la entienden como tal ¿sabes? No nos dejan a las comunidades autónomas ninguna capacidad de innovación en ese sentido” (SAE).

³⁸⁶ “cerrados” (SAE).

³⁸⁷ “rígidos” (SAE).

³⁸⁸ “demasiado estandarizado” (CCOO at national level).

³⁸⁹ “Ahí Madrid nos dice “Mira, yo te mando este dinero para que impartas estos cursos con estos contenidos, y la entidad que lo imparta tiene que tener tales requisitos” y no podemos salirnos de ahí” (SERVEF).

The fundamental role played by municipalities for the implementation of employment policies is one further issue as regards to the Spanish case; indeed, municipalities act as the interface with the unemployed, helping them to get out of their situation of vulnerability. Their importance is such that the representative of FEMP defines them as a “*leg of the State*”³⁹⁰, even if, as the representative of the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias), his interest in stating the importance of local authorities is evident.

According to a capability approach, municipalities are the main agents of operative programs, since they represent the closest public body to individuals and the main authority operating at the local level that may perform a proper situated action; for this reason, it is necessary to create a space for collaboration and dialogue between them and the regional level. Besides, it is necessary to engage them more substantially in the management and implementation of employment policies. However, the representative of FEMP complains that autonomous communities do not require municipalities’ advice, which hampers the constitution of a stable and systematic debate between the regional and local level. In the representative of FEMP’s view, decentralization has not fully concerned municipalities, whereas instead a major involvement of these would turn employment policies closer to people. It is interesting to notice that the main reference is again people’s needs. Even if such idea is far from being reality, the representative shows a marked orientation toward a capabilities informational basis:

*“The role of municipalities should be acting as an intermediate decentralization (...). This would allow us to design our strategies in each federation and would force us to involve all the agents while carrying out the design. This would make the design adapted to the needs of the people and the result would be that I can say: ‘my city has advanced’”*³⁹¹ (Representative of FEMP).

As shown in the previous extract, the idea is that municipalities play a fundamental role. This is due to the fact that they not only allow active policies to be distributed widely to all individuals and to ensure they are effective, but also, as evidenced by FEMP Andalucía, because they potentially provide the national governance with feed-back on the policies implemented, so to connect high and low levels: “*what is certain is that the role of municipalities is essential; we have implemented it in*

³⁹⁰ “*pata del Estado*” (FEMP).

³⁹¹ “El papel de las municipalidades debería ser una descentralización intermedia (...), y que nos permita diseñar nuestras estrategias en cada federación y que se nos obligue, al hacer el diseño, a contar con todos los agentes, que lo hecho sea adaptado al las necesidades de la gente y que el resultado político de esto sea “mi ciudad ha avanzado” (FEMP).

*Andalusia, precisely so that a bottom-up feed-back was fairly running, at least concerning information and needs*³⁹² (Representative of FEMP Andalusia).

The issue of coordination among different levels of governance is also a key topic. Regional and national interviewees both in the Spanish and Italian case claim its lack at all levels. Spanish and Italian trade union representatives at national level in particular stress this aspect:

*“There is neither idea of coordination in our country, nor at the central level with the regions nor in each region with its municipalities. Then regions act in a complete centralized way, even if they disapprove the centrality of the state”*³⁹³ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

*“If we want to give substance to active policies (...), it is necessary to restore the flow of the connection between the will and the tools (...). In fact, the reform on active policies is a mandate [to regions] and, therefore, decrees for its implementation are needed”*³⁹⁴ (Representative of CISL at national level).

As shown in the extracts, the national representative of the Spanish trade union criticizes the centralistic trend that is evident at both the national and regional levels of governance and the fact that no coordination can be detected among these levels. This critique is very much in line with the capability approach. Moreover, the Spanish representative of SERVEF emphasizes the lack of receptivity on the part of the central government in accepting proposals as well as suggestions by the regions arising from the activities carried out with the territory and the most vulnerable collectives: *“All the work of technicians and managers of programs gets lost”*³⁹⁵ (Representative of SERVEF). The national representative of the Italian trade union alludes to the relationship and the coordination between State and Regions in terms of connection between the ‘central will’ and the ‘regional tools’ that serve the implementation of active policies, revealing thus his interpretation of the role of each level of governance: *“We have a clear determination: we want to make active policies; we are giving the order to our arm to do it, but our arm is not responding. So, we have to restore the connection between the will and the means (...). Just in this moment, there is a meeting*

³⁹² “Lo que es indudable es que el papel municipal es imprescindible en todo esto, y que nosotros lo tenemos en Andalucía estructurado, precisamente para que ese feed-back desde abajo a arriba, por lo menos de lo que es información y necesidades esté medianamente funcionando” (FEMP Andalusia).

³⁹³ “No, es que la idea de coordinación en nuestro país no existe. Pero ni desde el ámbito central con las comunidades autónomas ni en cada comunidad autónoma con sus ayuntamientos. Luego cada comunidad autónoma es totalmente centralista. O sea.. como critican la centralidad del Estado” (CCOO at national level).

³⁹⁴ “Se vogliamo dare sostanza a questa cosa qua delle politiche attive (...), bisogna riattivare il flusso, il collegamento fra le volontà e gli strumenti (...), perchè la riforma delle politiche attive è una delega e quindi ha bisogno dei decreti attuativi” (CISL at national level).

³⁹⁵ “Todo el trabajo de los técnicos y de los gestores se pierde” (SERVEF).

at the Ministry of Labour on the coordination between the regions and the Minister of Labour, which deals with this point exactly”³⁹⁶ (Representative of CISL at national level).

Italian and Spanish respondents mostly claim a unity of policies, understood not as the attempt of carrying out homogeneous policies, but as the effort of making all employment services within the whole national territory converge. In the Spanish case, the representative of SAE affirms that the issue of the unity of policies has given way to several attempts for finding a consensus that would embed the various ways to implement active policies within the national territory. Also the national representative of INEM asserts that the lack of contact among regions raises the urgency to organize a form of coordination both in administrative terms and in terms of technology. The national representative of Caritas Spain emphasizes the conflicts and questions that emerge among regions as well as between regions and provinces or municipalities, claiming for a major role of the local level and municipalities:

“So, I am demanding that the Ministry organizes working groups, that is, groups to unify policies, which does not means that everybody has to do the same, but that they should follow the same direction. So, I demand meetings of small groups with autonomous communities”³⁹⁷ (Representative of SAE).

“It is important to give a prominent role to the local level, a role that has not been given to municipalities so far. There is jealousy between regions and municipalities when managing employment policies, especially if they have different [political] orientation”³⁹⁸ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

The issue of the unity of policies is also underlined by the Italian representative of UIL Tuscany and the representative of the Sicily Region, who describe a very heterogeneous and rigid modality of implementing employment policies among regions. The solution advanced by the representative of UIL Tuscany is the promotion of the dialogue among regions, which can also be translated into a desirable communion of normative and bureaucratic languages:

³⁹⁶ “Ci troviamo come se avessimo una volontà chiara, vogliamo fare le politiche attive; noi diamo l'ordine al nostro braccio di farlo, ma il nostro braccio non risponde. Quindi, bisogna riattivare il flusso, il collegamento fra le volontà e gli strumenti (...). Proprio in questo momento c'è la riunione in corso al Ministero del Lavoro tra il coordinamento delle regioni e il Ministro del lavoro esattamente su questo punto” (CISL at national level).

³⁹⁷ “Entonces, yo estoy demandando con el Ministerio, que hagamos los grupos de trabajo. Grupos para unificar las políticas. No que hagamos.. no que hagamos todos lo mismo, pero que estemos todos a una. Entonces, yo demando reuniones con las comunidades autónomas, por grupos reducidos” (SAE).

³⁹⁸ “Hay que..darle un protagonismo al nivel local que no se le está dando a los ayuntamientos. Hay celos entre comunidades autónomas y ayuntamientos para gestionar.. sobre todo si son de colores distintos, para gestionar políticas de empleo” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

*“We have seen that the models are a little too independent of each other. Also, the connection among regions was missing. There were regions that have gone far ahead because of their economic system, while other regions have not been able to keep up”*³⁹⁹ (Representative of Sicily Region).

*“We – as a municipality – share a law within the region; this law foresees many things, and then it says that municipalities or provinces may decide how to implement it through appropriate regulations. Therefore, you find different municipalities with different regulations, and if you provide the same information written in a different way from that established by each municipality, then this is not considered because each municipality wants you use its own administrative form (...). In Tuscany, there are many small municipalities, so the fact that everyone makes its own rules leads to chaos (...). We are going to be the Tower of Babel, where different languages are used by neighbouring countries”*⁴⁰⁰ (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

To sum up, the issue of the role of the State and its relationship with regions is not depicted as conflicting in the Italian case, even if a recent trend of re-centralization of employment policies by the center-right wing government is highlighted. By contrast, in the Spanish case, relationships among the central governance and regions are depicted to be quasi-conflicting – with a continuous emphasis on the issue of the autonomy of regions – or characterised by a purely technical connotation. Indeed, a kind of in-group/out-group divide is hinted. Also the relationships between regions and local authorities are claimed to need a better coordination by regional and national interviewees both in the Spanish and Italian case. In particular, in the Spanish case, the lack of a proper involvement of municipalities is claimed to hamper the constitution of a stable debate and a space for collaboration between the regional and local level, which is a cornerstone for the capabilities approach. The issue of the lack of coordination among regions and within regions leads the attention on the lack of universal services for the unemployed and inequality, which will be the topic of the next paragraph.

³⁹⁹ “Si è visto che i modelli sono un poco troppo indipendenti l'uno dall'altro, cioè mi è mancato pure il raccordo tra le regioni; ci sono state regioni che sono andate molto avanti perchè hanno avuto un tessuto economico ancora attirato e altre regioni che invece non hanno potuto tenere il passo” (Sicily Region).

⁴⁰⁰ “Noi condividiamo una legge con la Regione, questa legge prevede tante cose e poi c'è scritto che i comuni, o le province, tramite appositi regolamenti, decidono come attuarla, e te ti trovi un comune che fa un regolamento diverso dall'altro; se tu dai le stesse notizie scritte in modo diverso non le prendono perché vogliono che venga utilizzato il loro formulario (...), poi in Toscana i comuni sono tanti, piccolini, se ognuno si fa il suo regolamento, è un caos (...). Noi siamo, facciamo la fine della Torre di Babele, cioè usiamo linguaggi diversi fra paesi limitrofi” (UIL Tuscany).

11.2.3. Modes of implementation: inter-regional and intra-regional inequalities

In order to analyse the Spanish and Italian actors' interpretations of the implementation of decentralization, an investigation of the relationship between decentralization and inequality among and within regions is also required. In fact, decentralization often turns into "territorial differentiation and fragmentation of rights, service availability and service quality because it increases differences between regions or municipalities" (Van Berkel and Borghi, 2008: 396). If a capabilities approach considers that being close to people can promote the development of their potential in the process of construction of the life they value, conversely, a dysfunctional decentralization will lead to an increase of social vulnerability. The forms and the gravity of social vulnerability can vary depending on the context. Therefore, it is important to consider the position of social and political institutions in determining the nature and connotations of justice and inequality (Sen, 1994). Some of the Spanish actors interviewed stress the lack of equal possibilities and the presence of many "*territorial imbalances*"⁴⁰¹ in the country, as pointed out by the representative of the SAE. The national representative of CCOO states that without real instruments of control and coordination of employment policies, it is very difficult to ensure a similar range of services, tailored to the needs of the unemployed. Also Italian actors underline the presence of unequal opportunities with regard to the implementation of employment policies throughout the country. This topic, which is also remarked in the literature on activation (Bifulco et al., 2008; Borghi and Van Berkel, 2007; Gualmini and Rizza, 2014), is frequent among the Italian actors, who often make allusion to the North/South divide. Thus, the most economically advanced regions are actually flanked by other regions characterised by much more vulnerable realities. Since the '90s several public interventions have been made for softening the divide, but any attempts of promoting a local development in the weakest regions failed (Burroni, 2007; Trigilia, 1992). The national representative of CISL and the Italian expert report this disparity to be linked, at least in part, to funding opportunities, actual structures available and regional political orientations:

*"The bad thing is that, unfortunately, we lack a national systematic policy. Consequently, we suffer this strong asymmetry, whereby there are highly advanced regions and very backward regions (...). The system of decentralization in Italy, which everyone considered a good thing, has instead created a large asymmetry"*⁴⁰² (Representative of CISL at national level).

⁴⁰¹ "desequilibrios territoriales" (SAE).

⁴⁰² "Il male è che, purtroppo, non avendo una politica di sistema nazionale, noi scontiamo questa forte asimmetria, cioè regioni molto avanzate e regioni molto arretrate (...), mentre il sistema del decentramento che c'è stato in Italia, che era da tutti considerato una cosa positiva, ha creato una grande asimmetria" (CISL at national level).

*“For example, think of policies related to vocational training: there were abyssal, abyssal differences, because in those years some regions –mainly in the South, but also other Regions in the north, like Lombardy – committed vocational training to private entities and agencies. Other regions instead tried to keep the system under their own control; these include Tuscany, or Emilia-Romagna. Here, the gap is more oriented towards left-wing and non-left-wing regions, as well as between those regions seeking to contain the pressures of clientelism and those which instead are taking advantage of it”*⁴⁰³ (Italian expert).

*“The knot – I want to use an expression that may sound of old usage – concerns the rights people may claim at national level; this is the real point, so what is the issue? That these mechanisms of decentralization have worsened the dramatic disparities and regional differences at least over the last fifteen years (...); however, the evil – so to speak – is not decentralization itself; it is a mechanism of the national government that – though I cannot say that it never provides equal opportunities – has failed to take these differences into account”*⁴⁰⁴ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Italy).

As seen in these extracts, a strong converge can be identified among the different actors. The national representatives of CISL and Caritas Italy as well as the Italian expert agree in linking the decentralization with a greater disparity. Nevertheless, they detect different causes and describe the phenomenon in different terms. In details, the representative of Caritas deals with the issue in terms of rights, nearly adopting a capability approach to describe the problem, and identifies the government as unable to manage it. The representative of the trade union indicates the decentralization as a cause of the inequality, while the Italian expert refers mainly to the political orientation of regions and the clientelistic interests.

Many of the interviews show that unevenness and social vulnerability appear at all levels of governance, also where the degree of decentralization is greater, such as the reality of local governments. The importance of territorial inequality at local level is emphasized by the Spanish

⁴⁰³ “Le politiche per esempio di formazione professionale: lì ci sono state delle differenze abissali, abissali, perché in quegli anni mentre in alcune regioni... - è vero prevalentemente nel Sud, ma anche la Lombardia - si sono affidati per la formazione professionale agli enti privati ad agenzie, in altre regioni invece si è cercato di tenere più sotto controllo il sistema; la Toscana è un esempio, l'Emilia-Romagna un altro; qui la divisione è abbastanza tra regioni rosse e non, e tra regioni che cercano di contenere le spinte clientelari e regioni invece che ci marciano sopra” (Italian expert).

⁴⁰⁴ “Il nodo, lo voglio dire con una parola che sembra antica, è il tema di quali sono i diritti che poi le persone hanno a livello nazionale; questa è la vera questione, quindi qual è il discorso? che le drammatiche disparità e differenze regionali hanno amplificato in questo senso, o quanto meno sono state codificate in questo quindicennio da questi meccanismi di decentralizzazione (...). Il male fra virgolette, non è la decentralizzazione, figuriamoci; è un meccanismo di tipo nazionale di governo del fenomeno che non dà, non dico pari opportunità, ma che non si è fatto carico in questo quindicennio di queste differenze territoriali” (Caritas at national level, Italy).

actors interviewed more than by their Italian counterparts, which is probably linked to the strong involvement of local actors in the decentralization. In this regard, the representative of FEMP Valencia deems that the possibility to offer opportunities varies from one municipality to another and in relation to many variables, such as the number of inhabitants, resources and structures: *“Here, in the Community of Valencia, there are 542 municipalities, whose 392 comprehend less than 5,000 inhabitants. And some of these municipalities have scarce resources and personnel”*⁴⁰⁵ (Representative of FEMP Valencia).

We believe it is important now to clear a point of ambiguity and to trace a difference. The concept of territorial diversity, for which regional policies are adapted to contextual needs according to the capability approach, should not be confused with the concept of regional inequalities. Although there are narrow confines between the two, the risk is a dangerous trend toward a normalization of the phenomenon of inequality and its underestimation, as it is evident in the following quotations of the national representatives of FEMP and INEM:

*“But imbalances are normal (...). Still, this balance is normal. The imbalance is also influenced by the priorities given by each municipality to different areas of intervention. Imbalances are recurring problems ... Also in France. Huge inequalities take place in many places...”*⁴⁰⁶ (Representative of FEMP).

*“Nowadays Spanish unemployed do not receive the same services than French unemployed (...); in this regard, there cannot be protection for unemployed, since there are not tools to control each region”*⁴⁰⁷ (Representative of INEM).

With regard to the issue of regional inequality, a case in point is Andalusia. The representative of SAE exhibit a marked sensitivity to the problem and reports a plan of action carried out by the Region to solve it. He explains that the economic development in Andalusia did not occur homogeneously. Thus a number of municipalities belonging to the most vulnerable areas was identified. Such municipalities were the recipients of all actions of the Andalusian Employment

⁴⁰⁵ “Y como al final, hay ayuntamientos que.. tenemos en cuenta que la Comunidad Valenciana, de 542 ayuntamientos, 392 no llega a 5.000 habitantes..pues cuentan con unos medios.. ya de por sí, bastante escasos, en cuanto a.. a personal para gestionar” (FEMP Valencia).

⁴⁰⁶ “Pero son desequilibrios normales (...). Pero esto es normal. En este desequilibrio también inciden las propias prioridades que dé cada municipio a las distintas áreas de intervención. Se trata de problemas que siempre se van a producir... También se producen en Francia ... Las desigualdades son enormes en muchos sitios...” (FEMP).

⁴⁰⁷ “Tampoco hoy por hoy recibe los mismos servicios un desempleado francés que un español (...); no puede haber tutelaje, no hay instrumentos para exigir cuentas a cada Comunidad Autónoma” (INEM).

Service, in coordination with other entities, institutions and trade unions (training, creation of jobs and building infrastructures). Each entity worked in its own field with its own resources towards the same goal, such as making atypical zones homogeneous in terms of possibilities with the rest of the territory. This example shows the idea of the representative of SAE of how the vulnerability of an area can be treated transversely in a joint and coordinated way by policies that deal with different aspects of the development of a territory. This idea is treating the problem of inequality is embedded within the capabilities approach, according to which this is also desirable for individuals, considering the complexity of the dimensions that compose the well-being of a person.

As evident in this paragraph, all the Spanish actors interviewed stress the lack of equal possibilities. This discourse is especially emphasized in the Italian case where decentralization is identified with a greater disparity, especially between North and South. Nonetheless, the concept of ‘regional inequalities’ must not be confused with that of ‘territorial diversity’, for which regional policies are adapted to contextual needs. While the latter concept is in line with the capability approach, the former sharply contrasts with the idea of equality of opportunities that the approach put on the basis of the idea of national development. This confusion of concepts may lead to a normalization of the inequality and its underestimation, as it is evident among some of the Spanish actors. We now move to analyse an aspect that is considered a cornerstone in the capability approach: the relationship between the employment service and the user. We will study the discourses of the interviewees in order to observe whether policies are oriented to be tailored, individualized and closer to the needs of the job-seekers.

11.3 Individualised tailor-made policies for a capability-oriented approach?

The process of modernization of employment policies has led to a shift from the employment offices where the specific features of the person were left in the background to a greater individualisation of services provided by employment centers. This individualisation has resulted in progressive substitution of standardised programs for predefined categories of social risk or target groups by individual measures ‘sewed on’ people, according to their biography and attitudes (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007). The opposition between the two aspects – targets vs. individualised tailor-made policies – is assumed here to indicate the extent to which the interpretations of employment policies are oriented towards a capabilities approach. Indeed, the use of general administrative categorizations for classifying individuals is conceived as hampering a proper definition of the individual situation (Salais, 2003) and standardized interventions are considered to hinder the delivery of individualized services that mirror human diversity (Goerne, 2010). This

section explores the position of Spanish and Italian interviewees along the continuum between the two poles. Furthermore, individualisation has developed differently in European countries, assuming diverse meanings, such as adaptation to individual circumstances and de-standardization or individual monitoring of compliance with obligations and responsibilities (Van Berkel and Valkenburg, 2007; Van Berkel and Borghi, 2008). Thus, it is necessary to take into account the meaning given by the interviewees to individualised public actions in order to detect the hints of a capabilities approach. It is important to bear in mind that individualised public actions could also be the expression of policy activation, which, in an employability perspective, mainly pursues a quick integration of the unemployed into labour market. In fact, activation policies foster services that are tailored on individual needs, while monitoring recipients' behaviours (Bartelheimer et al., 2012). The meaning of public action can be grasped observing the informational basis of judgment in justice that is consciously or unconsciously used by the interviewees when describing employment policies.

We first rest on the tendency to think policies according to a target-oriented vision. Indeed, the most harmful factor for a capability approach is neglecting the specific characteristics and needs of the person, who may become invisible if diluted within the group in which he/she is artificially inserted through a process of cataloguing and categorization. Although utilizing targets is certainly a useful expedient to simplify a complex reality, developing policies based on rigid classifications may lead to undervalue the exceptions that the life of each person carries with itself. We now move to observe Italian interviewees in order to see their position in this regard:

*“We have carried out many beautiful active policies on targets; these targets have gradually thinned because money have been increasingly devoted, and still are, to the inclusion into the labour market of people who were fired by the firms where they used to work”*⁴⁰⁸ (Representative of UPI at national level).

As shown in the extract, the national representative of UPI treats the issue of employment policies in terms of “targets”, when describing active policies oriented towards vulnerable groups. On one hand, he makes evident that such term is widespread among the actors acting in the field of employment policies; on the other hand, he normalizes its use and perpetuates it. By contrast, the national representative of the CGIL suggests a reflection on the lack of a proper and real knowledge about the unemployed, who is not considered by those who design and implement policies *“as the*

⁴⁰⁸ “Noi abbiamo fatto tante belle politiche attive sui target; questi target sono andati via via assottigliandosi perchè i soldi sono stati sempre più dedicati, e lo sono ancora oggi, al reimpiego dei licenziati” (UPI at national level).

bearer of a history of expertise, skills and desires”⁴⁰⁹ (Representative of CGIL at national level). Therefore, a relationship between professionals and users based on this knowledge does not exist in the representative’s view. The drift of referring to targets is thus, at least partly, present at the national level. This is not evident at the lower levels of governance, where local agents mainly construct employment policies in terms of individualized public actions. Indeed, looking at the Italian interviews of the representative of the Tuscan Region and of UPI Sicily, we observe that the idea of individualisation is widespread in the case of Tuscany and Sicily and that employment services are thought in terms of individual support:

“Yes, of course; clearly, those who wants can accede [to the public employment service]; from the moment that the unemployed loose their job or intend to change position within the labour market, different services are delivered to them through regular appointments: a first guidance activity and a general assessment of the skills is carried out; a training path is proposed and possibility of funding for training courses are indicated, whenever courses are not free. The final outcome of the training is considered and then support is given to the unemployed for finding a job, drafting the curriculum and doing a job interview thanks to interviewing techniques. In short, the path is fairly supported by all points of view”⁴¹⁰ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

*“Regarding the conditions of the previous employment offices – the placement offices –, the unemployed were obliged to come to the offices, after receiving a call for a job offer [proposed by the employment office itself]; therefore, the unemployed were valued neither for the competence nor for the experience nor, above all, for the length of the period of inactivity. The only element considered was the presence of the unemployed at the time of the call. Today, instead, employment centers that have replaced the old placement offices – the new job centers –, have created different conditions, classifying job-seekers on the basis of their experiences, their skills, the time of the unemployment period. Thus, the centers are able to propose job offers to the unemployed”*⁴¹¹ (Representative of UPI Sicily).

⁴⁰⁹ “...come portatore di una storia di competenze, barra di abilità, barra di di desideri...” (CGIL at national level).

⁴¹⁰ “Ma sì, chi vuole può ovviamente venire; e dal momento in cui ha perduto il lavoro o comunque intende muoversi sul mercato del lavoro vengono offerti servizi di accompagnamento con appuntamenti periodici in cui si fa un primo orientamento, una sorta di bilancio di competenze di carattere generale; poi si propone un percorso formativo, si segnalano quali sono le opportunità per poter finanziare questi percorsi formativi, qualora fossero percorsi a pagamento; e poi si vede qual è stato l'esito finale della formazione e allora si sostiene nella ricerca del lavoro nella stesura del curriculum nelle tecniche di colloquio, quindi come si sostiene un colloquio di lavoro; insomma il percorso è abbastanza sostenuto da tutti i punti di vista” (Tuscany Region).

⁴¹¹ “Per quanto riguarda la condizione che c'era prima negli uffici del lavoro – gli uffici di collocamento – il lavoratore era destinatario di un obbligo di presenza all'atto di eventuali chiamate; quindi, non era diciamo valorizzato né per la professionalità, né per l'esperienza, né soprattutto per il periodo di inoccupazione. L'unico elemento che faceva premio

Despite the fact that individualised public action seems to be assumed by both the Sicilian and Tuscan interviewees, we note that individualization mainly is constructed in almost ‘mechanical’ terms.

The representative of the Tuscany Region thinks the support to the unemployed not only in terms of assistance in the job search, growth of professional skills, and knowledge of the labour market, but also in terms of counselling service in order to help people with problems related to the loss of their job, such as the privation of work role identity, low self-esteem, mental health issues (e.g. depression):

*“We also have counselling activities for psychological support because when the unemployed come to the job centers – especially if they are no longer young – all the issues related to losing their job surface”*⁴¹² (Representative of Tuscany Region).

This discourse shows that the representative sees psychological disorders as an aspect to be treated by means of an additional service. The view of the treatment of psychological disorders focuses the attention mainly on the negative effects on the individual of unemployment, which seems to be far from a capability approach in one sense. In fact, the attention on the negative effects of unemployment shifts the focus on the psychological variables, concealing the role of the system in determining social vulnerability. This point seems not to be fully kept in mind of the representative of the Tuscany Region. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the emerging idea of the user is that of the unemployed person who has lost her/his job, overshadowing all other possible users (i.e. young people who have never worked, people looking for a more suitable job according to their professional profile or for better working conditions). Nonetheless, the focus on psychological disorders for ‘repairing’ the consequences of unemployment puts the attention on individuals’ needs, according to the assumption that ‘work’ is considered to be an expression of the individual identity, not a mere productive activity. This is in line with Sen’s approach. Still, the focus on potentialities of the job-seeker that is embodied in the capabilities approach remains on the background.

una volta era la presenza all'atto della chiamata. Oggi, invece, gli uffici che hanno sostituito gli uffici di collocamento, quindi i nuovi centri per l'impiego, hanno creato una diversa dimensione, classificando i lavoratori disoccupati sulla base delle loro esperienze, sulla base della loro professionalità, sulla base del tempo di disoccupazione; e quindi, sono in grado di proporre già, sulla base delle richieste che arrivano, delle offerte di lavoro per il lavoratore disoccupato” (UPI Sicilia).

⁴¹² “Abbiamo anche attività di counseling, di supporto anche psicologico, perché poi quando il disoccupato viene qui da noi, soprattutto il disoccupato di una certa età, vengono fuori tutte le problematiche che sono connesse alla perdita del lavoro” (Tuscany Region).

The idea of employment services that are personalised and attentive to the individual dimension seems to find its main expression in the concept of ‘taking-charge’, used by the representative of the Tuscany Region. Activities of personalization, which in the beginning were called “*innovative activities, experimental activities*”⁴¹³ (Representative of Tuscany Region), then became the main objective to pursue:

*“I think our mission should be to provide individualized support services as much as possible; the concept of ‘taking-charge’ has been experienced in some employment centers (...). The concept actually relates to “take charge” of the unemployed, accompanying them in their integration or reintegration into the labour market, though step-by-step tutoring or assistance. The ideal model would be this: every unemployed person coming to the employment center should find an operator who becomes her/his tutor and accompanies him/her on his/her adventure of seeking a job through training, orientation...”*⁴¹⁴ (Representative of Region Tuscany).

The representative of the Tuscany Region uses the expressions “take charge” and “tutoring” when referring to the role of official servants in relation to the job-seeker, which are often used in the health and educational field respectively. What we can grasp from such expressions is the conception of imbalanced relationship between the two actors at stake, where the employment center is depicted in a paternalistic connotation. Moreover, in a controversial way, the expression “take charge” seems to depict the job-seeker as a load or burden, emphasizing his/her passive more than active role and diminishing his/her responsibility on him/herself while attempting to increase it following the activation paradigm. Thus the job-seeker appears as the disadvantaged or inexperienced person, who needs to be accompanied in his/her path. Therefore, it comes to lack the form of collaboration foreseen by Sen’s approach, which is essential for developing the capability for voice and the possibility of agency. Furthermore, the representative describes the search of a job as an “adventure”, suggesting the idea of the labour market as a risky exciting place, which in a certain way overshadows the view of the job as a “right”. Nonetheless, a special sensitivity is evident in the words of the representative of the UPI Tuscany, whom diverges from the previous interview. She narrates one of the experimental actions carried out in the field of employment

⁴¹³ “Erano chiamate attività innovative, attività sperimentali (Tuscany Region).

⁴¹⁴ “Secondo me, la nostra mission dovrebbe essere quella di fornire servizi di supporto il più possibile - se vogliamo - anche individualizzati; c’è un concetto che è quello della presa in carico che in alcuni centri per l’impiego è stato sperimentato (...), che è appunto l’effettiva presa in carico del singolo disoccupato e di accompagnamento al suo inserimento o reinserimento nel mondo del lavoro, attraverso proprio una sorta di tutoraggio passo passo o di accompagnamento. Quindi, diciamo che il modello ideale sarebbe questo: ogni disoccupato che viene all’interno del centro per l’impiego trova un operatore che diventa il suo tutor, il quale lo accompagna nella sua avventura di ricerca di lavoro, quindi appunto formazione, orientamento...” (Tuscany Region).

policies: the ILA card (Individual Learning Account⁴¹⁵). It was introduced to finance individual training courses in any professional sector both in Italy and abroad, so as to accomplish with a specific project of inclusion. With the ILA card, *“persons can follow their own aspirations and interests anywhere in Italy”*⁴¹⁶ (UPI Tuscany). In this case, the discourse on individualisation seems to turn a capability orientation.

The individualization of the services and the possibility of choice for the job-seeker regarding the professional path is described by the national representative of employment agencies in a way that is very different from that of the institutional representatives of local governance. In fact, he seems to privilege the individual dimension of personal needs and aspirations:

*“If a worker has a specific job profile, we will try to place him/her; if he wants to hold his/her own job profile and to continue to work in his/her field and in that mode, we will certainly try to do that, because we know that if we offer a different job, he/she would probably not accept it. Or if the employee has other needs... I give an example, if a worker did the waiter, but he/she aspires to be cooker, the agency may even propose to that worker a training path for re-qualification, so to make him/her a cooker with greater potential of placement in the market”*⁴¹⁷ (Representative of Assolavoro).

The representative of Assolavoro depicts employment agencies’ goal as the most individualized service for the unemployed, according to his/her wished and with no cost for him/her. Consciously or unconsciously, the representative of Assolavoro constructs a picture of employment agencies that markedly diverges from that of public employment services.

In the Spanish case, the situation seems partly different from the Italian one, since the reference to targets is slighter than in the Italian case, also at the national level. Indeed, as shown before, the national Italian interviewees of UPI exhibits a drift to construct policies in terms of targets, while this is a matter of reflection among the Spanish expert and the national representative of CCOO. However, also the Italian representative of one of the trade union problematized such issue.

⁴¹⁵ See also the previous Chapter.

⁴¹⁶ “La persona può seguire le proprie aspirazioni e le proprie inclinazioni e interessi in qualsiasi parte d’Italia” (UPI Tuscany).

⁴¹⁷ “Se un lavoratore ha un determinato profilo professionale, si tenterà di ricollocarlo; se lui vuole quel profilo professionale, vuole continuare a lavorare in quel settore e in quella modalità, si cercherà sicuramente quello, perché sappiamo che se facessimo un’altra offerta di lavoro probabilmente non sarebbe accettata. Oppure, se il lavoratore ha altre esigenze... (...); faccio un esempio: se un lavoratore ha fatto il cameriere ma ha aspirazioni da cuoco, addirittura l’agenzia può proporre a quel lavoratore un percorso formativo di riqualificazione per farlo diventare cuoco e quindi avere maggiori potenzialità di collocarlo sul mercato” (Assolavoro).

*“But before the crisis, the problem of employment policies was that they were very ... very generic policies (...). And then, on the other hand, there is the key problem that leads to the malfunction of public employment services: there is no attention to the individual (...). Indeed, programs mainly work in an administrative way, doing training and guidance to different groups of population”*⁴¹⁸ (Spanish expert).

*“Our employment policies were very general, very horizontal ... and they did not work so well with the idea of actual approach to the person. Neither they carried out specific actions that were actually tailored for the individual and her/his needs”*⁴¹⁹ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

The Spanish expert questions the aspect of target, problematizing the fact that focusing on groups means neglecting the individuals' specific requests. The expert's statement hints a potentially harmful stiffness of programs that work selectively on specific groups without considering that they affect not only the collective, but also the individuals forming it. The national representative of CCOO indicates that employment policies in the country have remained very superficial, failing to focus on the individual. The Spanish expert also shares this opinion.

Analysing the proposal made by the representative of UGT Andalucía in order to overcome the rigidity of targeting, we can observe a position more oriented to take into account people's needs. Therefore, the representative criticizes the rigidity of programs, even if the collective perspective is maintained at the expense of the individual one:

*“[The idea is that] any group has to adapt to a given active policy or program, but that all programs have to be tailored to the needs of collectives”*⁴²⁰ (Representative of UGT Andalucía).

The representative of UGT Andalucía fosters the construction of policies for collective, while at the same time orienting it towards the capability approach. Indeed, he proposes a reform according to which collectives do not have to adapt to programs, but programs should fit the needs of collectives.

⁴¹⁸ “Pero antes de la crisis el problema de las políticas de empleo es que eran políticas muy..muy genéricas (...). Y luego por otra parte, que aquí es el problema clave, que es el mal funcionamiento que tenemos de los servicios públicos de empleo, es que no hay una atención personalizada.. (...) ¿No? Hay programas que son.. que funcionan como diríamos..administrativamente. Formación para estos grupos de población, eh.. orientación integral para estos grupos de población...” (Spanish expert).

⁴¹⁹ “Nuestras políticas de empleo.. eh.. eran muy generalistas, muy horizontales.. y se trabajaba poco con la idea de.. de aproximación real o de.. o de hacer una actuación concreta con cada persona desempleada en función de sus necesidades” (CCOO at national level).

⁴²⁰ “...dónde cualquier colectivo no se tenga que adaptar a una determinada política activa o a un programa, sino que todos los programas se adapten a las necesidades de los colectivos” (UGT Andalucía).

Other representatives of the public services of Andalucía illustrate the activities offered by the services, highlighting the need to know the unemployed in order to adapt actions to the characteristics of the people with greater precision. The representative of SAE considers that it is worth mentioning the Personalized Itinerary of Insertion (Itinerario Personalizado de Inserción, IPI) developed by the SAE Region of Andalucía. In his view, it allows great flexibility to employment services and collaborative bodies so that itineraries can be adapted to the characteristics of the person, the collective, and the territory: *“There may be many types of itineraries and much content as needed”*⁴²¹ (Representative of SAE). He remarks that the Andalusian system tends to maintain a flexible path in order to meet individual needs and requests, with no expectations on its length, which is different from the cases where the unemployed is inserted in a pre-defined path:

*“[The process] is open and there are so many paths as people (...). Individuals develop their own itinerary. Then, the actions reported in each compromise of activity are different. They are adjusted to the needs of individuals themselves. The person subscribes the commitment and also SAE agrees to undertake mutual commitment”*⁴²² (Representative of SAE).

In this extract, we can appreciate that the constructions of the regional representative of SAE are very close to the discourse of capabilities. He hints a “mutual commitment”, highlighting a balanced and collaborative relationship between the unemployed and the employment services. Moreover, he is engaged in underlining the individualization of the services offered to job-seekers. In the representative’s view, the personalized itinerary becomes the roadmap for the unemployed and the counsellors of reference assisting them throughout the process of development of employability until they are fully integrated into the labour market: *“I mean, we’ll never leave anyone alone, no matter how long their process of inclusion (...). Everyone can count on their counsellor of reference”*⁴²³ (Representative of SAE). The issue of the counsellor of reference is crucial and delicate at the same time; in the view of the representative, if on the one hand, the unemployed could claim to decide autonomously how to enter the labour market, on the other hand the path of insertion is shared between the professional and the user. Indeed, the professional is supposed to facilitate the unemployed in the process of insertion, dedicating time to him/her, looking for

⁴²¹ “Puede haber tantos tipos como.. y tantos contenidos como se necesiten” (SAE).

⁴²² “[El proceso] es abierto y hay tantos itinerarios como personas (...). Cada persona desarrolla su propio itinerario. Entonces, las acciones que aparecen en cada una de las cartas de compromiso es diferente. Es ajustada a la necesidad de esa persona. Es lo que se compromete ella y el SAE se compromete a..proporcionar.. un compromiso mutuo, vamos” (SAE).

⁴²³ “Quiero decir, nosotros nunca vamos a dejar a una persona. Dure lo que dure su periodo de.. hasta la inserción.. mientras que ella quiera (...). Un orientador siempre tiene una persona.. de referencia, siempre” (SAE).

information that may be of help and cooperate: *“If it is clear that you need a course, you are going to have it. This is clear. Nobody will tell you what you need. It is agreed. So, if you have it so clear and that is what you need, then the course is there for you. Policies are for people”*⁴²⁴ (Representative of SAE).

The awareness of the issue of the personalization of services has also concerned co-operating bodies involved in employment policies. In particular, the Spanish representative of Caritas alludes to the importance of having a form of self-financing through which to draw programs that are close to people and which support them throughout their path:

*“Then, the great advantage of Caritas is having own funds and donors that allow us to be innovative and to work at ease with the activities we offer. This means that we can design programs or inclusion itineraries very very tailored to the people”*⁴²⁵ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

It is interesting to reflect on the quotation of the national representative of Caritas, who stresses the autonomy of his organization in designing and implementing programs for individuals. The representative highlights the special position of Caritas, insofar as its autonomy allows covering those empty spaces and neglected needs that are left aside by public institutions and other private organizations.

Concern for the issue of the personalization of programs has been observed both in the Spanish and Italian case. However, according to some of the actors interviewed, some aspects hamper the achievement of tailor-made policies. The reasons of this are variegated, but the Spanish expert and the Italian representative of the Tuscany Region relate it to the imbalance ratio between the number of technicians and service users, as personalization requires more attention by public officials, and therefore a larger staff:

⁴²⁴ “Pero si tú tienes clarísimo que tú necesitas un curso y tú vas a una sesión de..., lo vas a tener. Porque es que.. está claro. Nadie te va a decir lo que a ti te hace falta. Es consensuado. Entonces, si tú lo tienes tan claro y es lo que a ti te hace falta; es para ti, vamos. Si las políticas son para las personas” (SAE).

⁴²⁵ “Después, la gran ventaja de.. de Cáritas es el tener fondos propios, tener donantes que.. que permiten que seamos innovadores y que..que en las actividades que ofrezcamos podamos.. podamos trabajar a gusto en el sentido de diseñar programas o itinerarios de inserción muy..muy a la carta de las personas” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

*“However, there is no attention... precisely because the staff of public employment services is very limited (...). Therefore, there cannot be personalized service allowing to adapt job profiles to individual situations”*⁴²⁶ (Spanish expert).

*“Nowadays we are in a state in which the resources of employment services are no longer quantitatively adequate to the number of the unemployed we have to handle”*⁴²⁷ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

Both Spanish and Italian actors agree on a shortage of staff, but the Spanish representative of UGT indicates one more problematic element, such as the training of the staff that receives users from different sectors and occupational categories:

*“[Technicians] have to attend everybody: milling workers, scaffolding builders, industrial engineers and so on. It is thus impossible for them to have a dialogue with the user, being aware of what exactly the user is talking about”*⁴²⁸ (Representative of UGT at national level).

*“Let’s say that the workers of employment centers are already trained and prepared to follow unemployed people in this path; it is mainly a quantitative problem”*⁴²⁹ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

As can be seen, the Spanish actor is very critical on this element, which in his view seriously hinders the development of tailored programs. According to the capabilities approach, the development of individual potentialities is closely related to a favourable context, whereby the context includes also those local agents, civil servants and technicians who are supposed to assist the professional growth of job-seekers.

Another aspect reported by the Spanish representative of CCOO at national level is related to the fact that services are incomplete and disorganized. Therefore, in the absence of coordination between all the entities involved, individuals receive as many personalized actions as the number of

⁴²⁶ “En cambio no hay una atención.. precisamente porque los ratios de personal de plantilla de los servicios públicos de empleo es bajísimo.. (...). No hay una atención personalizada que permita adecuar los perfiles a cada.. a la situación de cada persona ¿no?” (Spanish expert).

⁴²⁷ “Oggi siamo in una situazione in cui le risorse dei servizi per l’impiego non sono più quantitativamente adeguate alla massa di disoccupati che ci siamo trovati a gestire” (Tuscany Region).

⁴²⁸ “...atienden todo. Da igual que seas fresador, que seas montador de andamios o que seas ingeniero técnico industrial. Con lo cual, es imposible que esa persona, ese técnico, pueda tener un dialogo de igual a igual, de saber de que estamos hablando los dos” (UGT at national level).

⁴²⁹ “Però, diciamo che le professionalità presenti nei centri per l’impiego sono ormai formate e adeguate a seguire i lavoratori in questo percorso; è un problema ad oggi quantitativo soprattutto” (Tuscany Region).

times they turn to an employment entity. In this sense, as each entity is concerned exclusively with a specific action that is not part of an itinerary, the end of the action is also the end of the itinerary:

*“There may be users who have never received any offer of activity by the employment services and others that [have received many]. So we think that the idea of ‘itinerary’ is key for the Public Employment Service. Otherwise, the unemployed person is going to receive 500 offers of activity throughout his/her life (...). In fact, now we can see that the unemployed person carry out different activities (...), but once the program (...) ends, the activities end for that person. This is due to the fact that those activities are not part of an itinerary”*⁴³⁰ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

The perception that emerges from the Italian representative of UPI Tuscany is different instead. The Italian actor highlights the issue of the continuing shortage of funding, which if overcome would guarantee everyone the possibility to enjoy the individual itinerary service instead of contributing to increase inequalities:

*“I used the example of the ILA card. We wish we had the resources to finance individual itineraries. The last year we invested over a million of Euros, but then the demand exceeded the funding available”*⁴³¹ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

As shown by the responses of the actors interviewed, services in Spain are perceived as lacking organisation, whereas Italy is perceived to be facing problems more closely linked to a lack of financial and human resources hindering the process of personalization.

Finally, we now move on to discuss the issue of the personalization subject to conditions, which represents one of the crucial aspects according to the capability approach. Indeed, the shift from passive measures, with benefits provided on the basis of citizenship and the previous payment record, to active programs, with benefits conditional to the job-seeker behaviour and availability to quickly enter the labour market, entails the passage from decommodification to recommodification, where social policies are subordinated to labour market goals (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007). This principle of conditionality that underlies the paradigm of activation restricts the meaning of social

⁴³⁰ “Puede haber usuarios que nunca han recibido ninguna oferta de nada, y otros que igual [han recibido muchas]. Por eso a nosotros nos parece clave la idea esta de itinerario por parte del Servicio Público de Empleo porque sí no la persona desempleada, a lo largo de su vida le han hecho 500 acciones (...). Le hacen las acciones (...), pero una vez que se acaba ese programa (...), esa persona acabó ya esa acción. Acabó esa acción. Esa acción, no es un itinerario” (CCOO at national level).

⁴³¹ “Facevo l'esempio della carta ILA; noi ne avessimo di risorse per finanziare percorsi individuali; in realtà, nonostante l'anno scorso abbiamo investito oltre un milione di euro, quindi non si parla di cifre... però poi la domanda supera i finanziamenti a disposizione” (UPI Tuscany).

citizenship (Handler, 2003; Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007). Workers are required to formally accept carrying out active policy actions in order to receive unemployment benefits. The concept of the obligation of the link between social protection and active policies embodies the very question: to whom does the obligation apply? Does the obligation of providing joint active and passive policies run for employment policies and are the policies viewed as possibilities for the job-seekers willing to participate in active policies? Or does the obligation apply to those who are entitled to unemployment benefits because of the risk of falling into a situation of dependency from the public expenditures? According to the answer, employment policies and public services will turn into a specific direction. Indeed, in the capabilities view, recipients should not be constrained to comply with activation strategies, but should rather be able to negotiate and influence the content of their own activation (Orton, 2011: 356).

When the link between passive and active policies in terms of obligation was first introduced in Italy in 2000 (Decree 181 of 2000 as amended by 297 of 2002), this conditional personalization required that, upon registering to the employment center, workers had to sign the so-called Declaration of immediate availability (Dichiarazione di Immediata Disponibilità, DID). By signing the declaration, the unemployed agreed to accept all the proposals offered by the public employment service, while the public employment service committed itself to provide a range of measures and job proposals. In this regard, some Italian actors show different opinions. The idea of introducing this obligation is considered a success by the national representative of UPI, whereas, for the national representative of CGIL, this has consequences on the very value of reintegration into the labour market:

“The Italian legislation has progressively introduced from 2000 the requirement of the registration in the employment service, the obligation of the guidance interview and, above all, the so-called DID, such as the declaration of immediate availability to work (...). But we should bear in mind that the change was painless. This is due to the fact that in most Italian regions the system has not been able – and still is not able – to define a package of job proposals for the unemployed, such that if the unemployed refuse them they will be removed from the lists of the employment services (...). Even the regions that are able to do that do not do it: it is a strong taboo. There are no conditions in most of the regions of Italy for fulfilling the right/duty of the active policies. Consequently, the deletion from the list is virtual. Moreover, there are not punishments”⁴³² (Representative of UPI at national level).

⁴³² “La normativa italiana ha progressivamente introdotto già nel 2000 l'obbligo dell'iscrizione al servizio per l'impiego, l'obbligo del colloquio di orientamento e soprattutto la cosiddetta DID – la dichiarazione di immediata disponibilità al

*“The procedure of relocation is (...) lived as a duty, not as an opportunity, in the sense that the unemployed think ‘I have to do these things, otherwise I will lose the money I need in order to make a living’”*⁴³³ (Representative of CGIL at national level).

In this extract, the national representative of UPI complains about the inefficiency of the system, which is considered as not able to apply conditions. Since the system does not provide job proposals to the unemployed, their punishment also does not make sense. In the representative’s view, the aspect of the ‘punishment’ is reported to be “a strong taboo”, providing a critical reflection of the important role of cultural factors in the Italian society. Indeed, even the regions that have the ability to offer training courses or job proposals do not provide sanctions for the unemployed who refuse them. The representative considers that the application of conditions would be the objective to pursue revealing a moralizing and individualised perspective of unemployment, which deeply contrasts with the assumptions of the capabilities approach. By contrast, the national representative of the CGIL points out the drawbacks of the conditional personalisation and of the DID, inasmuch in his view the focus shifts from the idea of opportunity to that of duty and obligation, pauperizing the meaning of the whole process of relocation.

In Spain, the Ley de Empleo of 2003 introduced the conditionality on unemployment benefits (compromiso de actividad) during the activation process. However, it resulted in being more a formalit than an effective strategy (Bartelheimer et al., 2012; Salas, 2011). The conditionality included following established individualized itineraries, participating in training courses and guidance interviews as well as accepting job offers, as recommended by the European institutions. The overall idea is that the unemployed should accept an ‘adequate placement’ (colocación adecuada), although specific criteria relating to the term ‘adequate’ have yet to be defined clearly. The Spanish expert underlines the contradiction of the conditionality, since the public system requires the obligation to the unemployed to carry out actions and to accept adequate placement, without effectively having the possibility to do that. The Spanish expert does not reveal his position in this regard, which is instead very clear in the words of the representative of SAE, who strongly disagrees with the concept of ‘obligation’ and promotes the concept of ‘voluntary’ of taking part in the process of activation:

lavoro – (...); però bisogna tener presente che questa cosa è stata indolore in ragione del fatto che nella maggior parte delle regioni italiane il sistema non è stato in grado e non lo è ancora oggi, di definire un pacchetto di proposte di reimpiego per il disoccupato che, qualora rifiutate, definissero la [sua] cancellazione dalla lista (...). Anche le regioni che potrebbero [farlo] (...), non l'hanno fatto: è un grosso tabù. Non ci sono le condizioni nella maggior parte dello Stato italiano per poter adempiere al diritto-dovere alla politica attiva; la conseguenza è che la cancellazione dalle liste è virtuale, non ci sono tra l'altro particolari punizioni” (UPI at national level).

⁴³³ “La procedura di ricollocazione viene (...) vissuta come un dovere e non un’opportunità, nel senso che io devo fare queste cose altrimenti perdo i soldi con i quali campo in questo periodo” (CGIL at national level).

“And how is the concept ‘adequate’ defined? (...) Of course, there is a debate on this..There are a number of criteria. It is supposed to be appropriate to the characteristics of the professional profile and, in a way, also suitable to personal circumstances (...). The unemployed should accept an adequate placement. Then, there is the question of the unilateralism. Indeed, public employment services presumably design itineraries for the unemployed and there is a ‘conditionality’, in the sense that if the unemployed do not accept the activation, for instance an appropriate placement or the participation in other activities, they could lose their unemployment benefits. Right? Of course, in reality this is in contradiction with the ineffectiveness of public employment services. Indeed, on one hand, it is assumed that public employment services, following the criteria set by the European Commission, have to offer integrated actions, services of guidance and training courses. But, on the other hand, this does not happen in practice”⁴³⁴ (Spanish expert).

“This Region used to work with active policies linked to [individuals’] voluntariness. This was working. It was going well. We were suspicious about the legal obligation and the INEM. Yes, a commitment to work was subscribed, but the commitment – that is a non-sense – was a mere paper, right? (...) The commitment was done at that time and is still done (...). Then the decentralisation came and we began to have autonomy to manage active policies. Also we started to get European and State funds, while until then we were using our own funds. So at that point, we had to respond to the state legislation. Consequently, the freedom we had in active policies in the Red Andalucía Orienta had to become obligatoriness for all people receiving unemployment benefits. What am I trying to say with this? With regard to our attempt to marry active and passive policies with the intention to improve [individual] employability, we faced previously with the voluntariness of people willing to work (...); now we face with their obligation and their commitment to activity, such as a piece of paper that we must do”⁴³⁵ (Representative of SAE).

⁴³⁴ “¿Y cómo se define lo adecuado? (...) Claro, ese es un debate bastante.. presente..Hay una serie de criterios. Se supone que tiene que ser adecuado a las características de tu perfil profesional ¿no? (...). Y en.. y en cierto modo también adecuado a tus circunstancias (...). Se supone que se.. que deberían aceptar, los desempleados, una colocación adecuada. Y luego hay un elemento que es el tema de la unilateralidad. Es un elemento, que es que, los servicios públicos de empleo, se supone que diseñan itinerarios para los desempleados.. y hay una cierta condicionalidad, en el sentido de que si no aceptas esta.. esta.. activación, esta colocación adecuada o la participación en los..en las acciones que te dan, pues podrías perder la.. la prestación por desempleo ¿no? Claro, en la realidad, eso entra en contradicción con el hecho de la ineficacia de los servicios públicos de empleo. Es decir, por un lado se supone que los servicios públicos de empleo...por ejemplo, según los criterios marcados por la Comisión Europea, te tienen que ofrecer una acción integrada, un servicio de orientación, cursos de formación. En la práctica eso no se da” (Spanish expert).

⁴³⁵ “Es decir, la comunidad autónoma ya tenía intenciones de trabajar con lo que sería la política activa de empleo. Siempre y cu.. siempre vinculado a una voluntariedad. A una voluntariedad, ¿vale? Eso iba funcionando. Se iba bien. Había diferentes recelos respecto a la obligatoriedad legal y el organismo competente en materia de políticas que en aquel momento era el INEM, que sí que se suscribía a su compromiso de actividad (...), pero el compromiso de actividad, que es una de las burradas..eh.. se ha convertido en un mero papel ¿vale? (...) Eso se sigue haciendo.., se hacía en aquel momento (...). Llega el momento de las transferencias (...). Políticas activas ya tenemos autonomía para gestionarlas. Llegan los fondos, porque hasta ese momento se estaba haciendo con fondos propios, se hacen las

The representative of the SAE believes that obligation spoils active policies of meaning, whereas willing people actually and knowingly use them for developing their own professional career. She considers that participation in active policies is more profitable if tied to volition, rather than to a legal imposition; indeed, imposition “*distorts and undermines all the content and the work that active employment policies do*”⁴³⁶. Furthermore, the aspect of the imposition does not affect only the attitude of the unemployed, but also the behaviour of the service’s operators. The unemployed and the operators thus do not seem to work together to construct future prospects and paths, while the intention at the central level, according to the representative of the SAE, is to promote the combination between the personal choice of the people and their commitment of availability to work. Such commitment should have been agreed between the unemployed and public official.

To sum up, all the actors interviewed identify individualized public action and personalized services for the unemployed as the ideal path to follow. Nevertheless, the capability orientation stills results to be far to be achieved. At national level, the discourse on target and standardised program for vulnerable groups is partly evident among Italian actors, even if at a local level employment policies are mainly constructed in terms of tailor-made services. Still, the concept of individualised action on beneficiaries seems prevalently to be constructed in terms of accomplishment of tasks, more than helping unemployed to develop capabilities and freedom of choice. Also, an imbalanced relationship between the job-seeker and the official servants is evident, where the job-seeker is depicted as the disadvantaged person. This unevenness of role in the relationship hampers a genuine collaboration oriented to the development of capability for voice and the possibility of agency for the job-seeker. Among the Spanish actors the situation seems different, since the reference to targets results slightly lower than among Italian actors, also at the national level. However, in both cases, trade union representatives are more disposed to problematize the issue in comparison to other actors. The idea of the individualization of policies seems to be a reference model for Spanish and Italian interviewees, who consider that this ideal failed when translated into the everyday practice. In fact, Spanish and Italian interviewees highlight that the role of local agency is not sufficient in promoting the enhancement of capabilities. This is due in their view to the deficiency of the number of public servants of employment services in

transferencias ya tenemos fondos europeos y estatales para gestionar lo que serían las políticas activas. Vale. Entonces, en este momento, nosotros nos debemos a la legislación estatal y entonces ya esa voluntariedad que teníamos en lo de la atención de las políticas activas en la Red Andalucía Orienta, pasa por una obligatoriedad a todas las personas que cobran una prestación por desempleo. ¿Qué estoy queriendo decir con esto? Lo que a nosotros nos supone políticas activas y pasivas, casarlas, en intención de acciones de mejora de la empleabilidad, nos estamos encontrando con que antes teníamos una voluntariedad de las personas que verdaderamente desean y quieren trabajar (...), a una obligatoriedad, a ese compromiso de actividad, que he dicho antes, a ese papelito, que por narices tenemos que hacerlo” (SAE).

⁴³⁶ “[Esa obligatoriedad]...desvirtúa, desvirtúa, todo el contenido y todo el trabajo que se hace con las políticas activas de empleo” (SAE).

relation to the users on the one hand and the inadequacy of the training of the staff that receives users from different sectors and occupational categories on the other hand. Also, services in Spain are perceived as lacking organisation, whereas Italy is perceived to be facing problems more closely linked to a lack of financial and human resources. Finally, the issue of the obligation for the job-seeker to accept active policies in exchange for receiving unemployment benefits represents a key aspect. The obligation is considered more than welcomed by some of the Italian interviewees, who emphasizes the individual and moralistic perspective of unemployment whereas it is sharply questioned by some of the Spanish interviewees. In particular, different and controversial points of view can be detected among Italian actors, while a major reflection is evident among Spanish actors who question the obligation of the link between social protection and active policies. In more details, among Italian actors, a moralizing position emerges at national level, supported by one of the technical representatives, who seems to partly attribute the responsibility of unemployment to the features and lacks of the person. The national representative of one of the Italian trade unions seems to depart from this position that, in his view, spoils the process of relocation of the idea of opportunity.

11.4 Evaluation of policies: quantitative output versus global assessment of capability enhancement

The choice to include the ‘evaluation of policies’ as one of the indicators is motivated by the fact that, according to a capability-oriented approach, the success of employment policies should be evaluated in terms of capability enhancement for recipients. This view contrasts with a managerial logic that focuses on performance, with scarce attention for the political, ethical and normative aspects that underlie employment policies (Salais, 2010). Observing the process of evaluations means investigating the interpretations of its meaning and the election of the objects under evaluation. Indeed, these aspects mirror the normative preferences and the ideological positions according to which the goal of employment policies is seen as the employment integration of the unemployed, through the individual’s adaptation to the labour market demands, or the enhancement of real freedoms (Salais, 2006; Lambert et al., 2011). In this sense, the selection of categories and indicators makes manifest the ideological position or informational basis assumed for the policy assessment. In fact, indicators cannot be considered a reflex of reality, rather they delineate it according to specific values and norms that constitute their informational basis. As they perform not only in a descriptive way, but contribute to transforming the reality by establishing which are the most relevant questions to observe, the elaboration of indicators can be defined as a prescriptive and

political action (Bonvin et al., 2011). Therefore, we believe it is relevant to take into account the process of policy assessment. This process can be distinguished in three types: 1. *ex ante*, which evaluates policies moving from the assessment of the characteristics of the recipients, 2. *intermediate*, which focuses on the functioning and implementation of the policies and on the process itself, and 3. *ex post*, which makes an analysis of the results. We will see later on that attention is usually given only to the latter type. The capability approach criticises the *ex post* form, as “only after this stage could the policy process be triggered again in order to adapt legislation to changing circumstances. By contrast, the new pattern of social policy relies on the permanent interconnection and interdependence between the three stages [the normative step or policy design, the pragmatic step or policy implementation and the evaluative step or policy assessment], which allows a much quicker adjustment when necessary” (Bonvin, 2007: 47).

The evaluation of policies is considered by some of the Spanish actors a key moment in the process of development and implementation of policies. Nevertheless, the reasons and the aims behind this assumption vary very much among these actors, who belong to different social groups, and are expressed in different ways. In this regard, we will see how the representative of CCOO Valencia, the Spanish expert and the representative of Caritas Spain interpret the issue of policy evaluation and we will reflect on it after showing the extracts:

*“As CCOO, we consider that the evaluation is important in all the plans that are carried out, either in the field of employment, or training, etc., which should be done according to the results emanating from the various evaluation reports”*⁴³⁷ (Representative of CCOO Valencia).

*“Moreover, I will always insist very much that there are two key elements in the employment policies, a part of the content: firstly the budget (...) and then the evaluation. The evaluation is in fact another key element”*⁴³⁸ (Spanish expert).

*“Of course, the issue of evaluation does not scare us. By contrary, [we are available to show] openly all we do ¿no?”*⁴³⁹ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

⁴³⁷ “Desde CCOO, se considera que en todos los planes que se llevan a cabo, sean de empleo, formación, etc. lo importante es la evaluación y deberían actuarse de acuerdo a los resultados que emanan de los distintos informes de evaluación que se realizan” (CCOO Valencia).

⁴³⁸ “Es más, yo siempre insisto mucho que si hay dos elementos clave en las políticas de empleo a parte del contenido son: por un lado el presupuesto (...) y otra es la evaluación. Eso es otro elemento clave” (Spanish expert).

⁴³⁹ “Claro, el tema de la.. de la evaluación.. no nos asusta la evaluación. Al revés. Eh..con luz y taquígrafos todo lo que hacemos ¿no?” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

While the Spanish expert highlights the importance of the evaluation that is assumed to be something “a part of” the content of policies, the representative of CCOO includes this element into the broad and retroactive process of planification and development of policies, formulating it in the concrete terms of report results. The position of the representative of Caritas, which belongs to those NGOs claiming for a major involvement in the policy design and implementation, differs widely from the other respondents insofar as the evaluation is constructed as an accountability exercise, but also as a judgment and a mean to make evident the work carried out by Caritas, which looks forwards to be acknowledged by the other actors operating in the field; hence, Caritas, in the view of the representative, welcomes the evaluation as a ‘personal assessment’, whose judgment is not feared, thus underlining its superiority and legitimacy upon other NGOs and associations. In the case of the representative of Caritas, the evaluation is constructed as a form of control of the social actors’ work, that they accept in exchange of the recognition of their existence.

The issue of the importance of the evaluation is less remarked among the Italian interviewees. Yet, it is noticeable when it contributes to the definition of the relationship between European institutions and regions, as the representative of CGIL Sicily underlines :

*“We believe that the rules of the European Social Fund, which entails a real concrete reporting that is anchored to the attendance to the courses, are those that, in our view, will inevitably make a selection not only of the spending, but also of the quality; because, surely, the programs financed by Europe will be much more suited to the times”*⁴⁴⁰ (Representative of CGIL Sicily).

As in the case of the CCOO Valencia, the representative of the CGIL Sicily constructs the issue of the evaluation in practical, concrete and numerical terms, which he claims to be “real” in comparison to other ‘no-real’ ways. This “real” evaluation is that one promoted by the European institutions through the ESF. In a process of over-estimation of the European Union, the representative considers that this real evaluation will make possible to carry out a selection of the programs, increasing thus their quality and their adequacy to the current demands while reducing spending. The politics of indicators fostered by the European Employment Strategy (Salais, 2006) seems to be more than welcome for the CGIL in Sicily, mostly referring to it for a proper benchmark of national employment policies when receiving European funds. The support of the EES discourse by this trade union actor makes us to hypothesize that it had discouraged the

⁴⁴⁰ “Siamo convinti che le regole del Fondo Sociale Europeo, quindi una rendicontazione reale concreta ancorata alle presenze alle aule è quella che a nostro modo di vedere inevitabilmente farà una selezione non solo della spesa, ma anche della qualità, perchè sicuramente i programmi che finanzia l'Europa saranno programmi molto più adeguati ai tempi” (CGIL Sicily).

development of a different discourse and perspective, like that of the capability approach, that traditionally contrasts the former.

A strong convergence can be detected among some Spanish respondents, who report a lack of evaluation of public policies at different levels of governance. Indeed, the representative of CCOO Andalucía, the Spanish expert and the national representative of FEMP complain about the lack and, simultaneously, individuate causes and propose alternative normative practices that will be discussed after the following extracts:

*“In general, we are not asked for inclusion, which is what should be done; indeed, when a person spend two years in a guidance service, something happens (...). Overall, I think that there is little policy of evaluation in this country”*⁴⁴¹ (Representative of CCOO Andalucía).

*“Of course, [evaluation] costs money. But aside there is another element: usually administrations do not like at all to be evaluated. It is a problem of.. that’s why I state that it is a problem of culture. Not only a practical problem, but a problem of culture. Because, obviously, evaluation means to grade you”*⁴⁴² (Spanish expert).

*“We do not have time enough for a calm and sensible assessment (...). Economic [resources] and time make it impossible to carry out a proper assessment”*⁴⁴³ (Representative of FEMP).

The representative of CCOO Andalucía identifies the evaluation as a “policy”⁴⁴⁴ in itself and claims for a kind of evaluation based on measures of “insertion”, which, in his view, would give meaning and substance to the activities of employment centres. The Spanish expert highlights the implicit act embodied in the evaluation of assigning marks to service operators and argues that their scarce appreciation to judgements may hinder the development of assessment itself. Again, evaluation is constructed in terms of judgment and, therefore, the expert believes that a culture of evaluation in a generalised sense is absent. Finally, the representative of FEMP, who is directly involved in the process of evaluation, states that time and economic resources are actually lacking, placing the fault

⁴⁴¹ “En general no se nos pide inserción, que es lo que tendrían que hacer, cuando una persona lleva dos años en un servicio de orientación, algo ocurre (...). En general, yo creo que hay muy poca política de la evaluación en este país” (CCOO Andalucía).

⁴⁴² “Claro, eso (hacer evaluación) cuesta dinero. Pero aparte hay otro elemento que es que las administraciones en general le cues.. no les gusta nada que las evalúen. Es un problema de.. por eso te digo que es un problema de cultura. No solo ya de práctica sino de cultura. Porque claro, evaluarte es ponerte nota” (Spanish expert).

⁴⁴³ “No tenemos tiempo para una evaluación sosegada y sensata (...). Los modos económicos y de tiempo imposibilitan hacer la evaluación como se debe hacer” (FEMP).

⁴⁴⁴ The term ‘política’ embraces both the meaning of ‘policy’ and ‘politics’ in the Spanish as well as in the Italian language.

of this missing outside Councils' intention. Nevertheless, the very point of the lack of evaluation mainly regards the question of who is supposed to be evaluated. Indeed, from the analysis of the interviews, it emerges that assessments do not concern all the actors in the same measure: *"Furthermore, the most of time we, as Councils, forget to do evaluations in quantitative terms"*⁴⁴⁵ (Representative of FEMP); *"Although again, there are no tools to claim results from the Autonomous Communities, beyond the count of general objectives"*⁴⁴⁶ (Representative of INEM). *"That is, what [public employment services] require is the control of the collaborative bodies in order to pay them"*⁴⁴⁷ (Representative of CCOO at national level). As we can read in these statements, the treatment of public administrations and collaborative organizations deeply diverges. It is not surprising that this occurs especially in Spain, where the collaboration of external organizations is broadly used. On the one hand, public administrations seem to be exempt from the evaluation, as noted in the words of the representative of FEMP. On the other hand, collaborative entities are those who experience the most the process of evaluation, insofar as their contracts are renewed *"if the organization worked well"*⁴⁴⁸ (Representative of SAE). Along these lines, the assessment is thought as a form of control that is exerted through the imposition of performance-related variables. Hence, the discourses on evaluation mirror a power conflict, which embed the definition of different roles, like that of 'the evaluator' and 'who undergoes the evaluation'. Collaborative organizations have an interest in being evaluated in order to demonstrate the value of their existence; by contrast, the process of evaluation is barely considered within public services.

The issue of the lack of evaluation is also stressed, as can be seen in the following extract, by the Italian representative of CISL Sicily, who underlines the shortfall of indicators that would make it possible to carry out the assessment as well as the lack of the institutional interest of running a system that has the possibility of being monitored. However, as shown before in this paragraph, the representative of CGIL Sicily indicates that the situation looks very different when the European institutions are involved as granters of social funds. In this case, criteria are very clear and the regional resolution to be in line with the European demands looks alike evident. Here, European institutions become the evaluator of the regional governments, which undergo the process of evaluation. A part of this case, a proper systematic evaluation of employment policies in Sicily still seems to be wanted according to the interviewees. Besides this, it is interesting to note that the

⁴⁴⁵ "Además se nos olvida, en la mayoría de las veces a los Aytos. hacer unas valoraciones en términos cuantitativos" (FEMP).

⁴⁴⁶ "Aunque de nuevo, no existen instrumentos para exigir cuentas a las Comunidades Autónomas, más allá del cómputo de objetivos generales" (INEM).

⁴⁴⁷ "O sea, lo que exigen es el control de la entidad para pagarla" (CCOO at national level).

⁴⁴⁸ "Si la entidad ha ido bien" (SAE).

representative of CISL Sicily, as well as the representative of UPI Tuscany, constructs the concept of evaluation in terms of ‘effectiveness of policies’:

*“This is one of the limits: there are no criteria for evaluation, such as clear indicators serving both to test the effectiveness of the system and the effectiveness of the activity realised by those who work in it, also at a subjective level. We always work like this: the Government or the Ministry of Labour assign a budget to the Councillorship or the Region. Then the Region invests more in paperwork than in tools for improving the efficacy. Finally, there is a bureaucratic reporting and monitoring, but objectively in the end there is not evaluation of results and merits”*⁴⁴⁹ (Representative of CISL Sicily).

*“An assessment is made (...) on the correspondence between the request for carrying out a training course and the professional goals of the person. And, above all, the assessment is made about the potential of the course in terms of providing a chance to be integrated in the labour market, instead of merely increasing skills”*⁴⁵⁰ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

Despite the prevailing focus on evaluation in terms of effectiveness through the assessment of employment outcomes, highlighted by the two Italian representatives, a special sensitivity coming from a different context emerges from Tuscany actor’s words, in comparison to the representative of Sicily. Such sensitiveness stems from the awareness that employment services can provide chances, paying attention to professional careers and individual needs or problems, rather merely accomplishing fixed objectives. Furthermore, it is evident an orientation towards the ex ante evaluation in terms of pertinence at the individualized level. However, from the analysis of the other interviews, we can see that the dominant trend of thinking evaluation still remains the mode ‘ex post’, in terms of achievement of predefined objectives and pre-established quantified outcomes, whereas the ex-ante and the intermediate evaluation usually remain in the background. The representative of Sicily seems to oppose his idea of effectiveness of policies to the production of paperwork and reports, assuming that the evaluation of results and effectiveness of policies is countered by bureaucratic activities. Also the national representative of CCOO critiques the

⁴⁴⁹ “Questo è uno dei punti limite: non ci sono criteri di valutazione, cioè indicatori chiari che servano sia a verificare l'efficacia dell'impianto che si è costruito sia l'efficacia dell'attività anche soggettiva di chi ci opera; si lavora sempre così. Si assegna un budget dal governo dal ministero del lavoro all'assessorato alla regione; la regione investe più in burocrazia che in strumenti di efficacia e ci sta poi alla fine una rendicontazione e un monitoraggio burocratico ma non ci sono obiettivamente risultati di merito” (CISL Sicily).

⁴⁵⁰ “Viene fatta una valutazione (...) se la richiesta del corso di formazione corrisponde all'obiettivo professionale del soggetto e se, soprattutto, non è un corso che aumenta le skills e basta, ma c'è una possibilità poi di essere inserito nel mercato del lavoro” (UPI Tuscany).

bureaucratic connotation of practices carried out by the public administration, claiming that public employment services *“have become bureaucratic entities for the management of funds, but they neither manage objectives nor results. So, no, there is no assessment of employment policies”*⁴⁵¹ (Representative of CCOO at national level). The representative depicts evaluation of policies primarily as bureaucratic reports, based on the analysis of the effectiveness of the instruments employed (expenditures, attendance of training courses, quality, adequacy of time), without taking substantive results into real consideration.

Evaluation is also discussed by both Spanish and Italian respondents in terms of ‘efficiency of services’ of services, which includes *“technological equipment, opening hours, signals, respect for privacy, logistic structure, skills possessed by the operators of the Centre for Employment”*⁴⁵² (Representative of CGIL at national level), the number of technicians working in programs, their training *“and then, an evaluation of their performance carried out at least twice every year”*⁴⁵³ (Representative of SAE). The interviewees state that sometimes evaluation also takes into account users’ opinion, in order to verify whether they are satisfied with the service provided and with technicians:

*“We have a costumer satisfaction, so we also undergo users’ evaluation”*⁴⁵⁴ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

*“We also take note of users’ satisfaction about how they are treated (...); for us, a good treatment of the users and a good management of the requests play an important role”*⁴⁵⁵ (Representative of SERVEF).

We can note that this specific statement is used by the actors as an adding value of the assessment, which supposedly make them close to the users and available to listen to suggestions and comments more than the central governance. This discourse is used to tracing the line of opposition between the local and the national level. Moreover, in the case of the Italian representative, the use of the expression “customer satisfaction” discloses the adoption of the discursive framework belonging to

⁴⁵¹ “Se han convertido en entes burocráticos que gestionan subvenciones..eh.. pero no gestionan objetivos, ni gestionan resultados. No, no hay evaluaciones tampoco de las políticas de empleo” (CCOO at national level).

⁴⁵² “..dotazioni tecnologiche, orari di apertura, segnaletica rispetto per la privacy, rispetto alla struttura logistica, competenze possedute dall’organico del Centro per l’impiego” (CGIL at national level).

⁴⁵³ “Y luego tienen una evaluación del desempeño, que se está constatando.. al menos dos veces, todos los años” (SAE).

⁴⁵⁴ “Abbiamo un’attività costumer satisfaction, per cui ci sottoponiamo anche alla valutazione degli utenti” (Tuscany Region).

⁴⁵⁵ “También vemos la satisfacción del usuario de como ha sido atendido (...) y se va dando importancia a que haya, lo que entendemos, una buena..trato hacia los demandantes y una buena gestión de las.. de las instrucciones..” (SERVEF).

the managerialistic orientation. Indeed, the New Public Management (NPM) emphasizes exclusively the informational basis of justice related to efficiency and performance targets. Nevertheless, according to the capability approach, “the respect of individual liberties risks being denied in order to produce good results. Performance aims at changing individuals’ behaviours in order to make them comply with exogenous objectives. But this is not necessarily achieved in ways which improve service delivery (Write, 2001)” (Bonvin, 2007: 50).

Evaluation of policies may be also constructed in terms of ‘assessment of recipients’. Therefore, the delicate matter for which the evaluation of policies may be confused with a form of control of the unemployed is also worthy of consideration. Indeed, the border between the two is thin. Counting the number of hours and days each user has benefited from the services offered by employment centers, observing the actions he/she performs during his/her period of unemployment, monitoring how many bids he/she has rejected and for what reasons, seem to suggest that this process of evaluation might easily end up as a control of the individual. The representative of CCOO problematizes this point, but also seeks to clarify that this may never be the case:

*“But control only concerns the management [of programs] (...). The Public Employment Service is not a service for the unemployed. It is an institution that controls programs (...). It controls each collaborating body for each program. That’s why I say that public services manage employment subsidies. They manage funding. They do not manage the unemployed”*⁴⁵⁶ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

The representative states that employment services actually do not aim to exert a form of control over the unemployed, clearing that this is something outside their concern. For this reason, they have no record of what exactly the person is doing. From this perspective, it might be objected that consequently the risk may be the opposite – namely, that in avoiding supervising the individual, this is instead forgotten or neglected. This specific question is not raised by the Italian interviewees.

As far as the choice of indicators is concerned, the main trend among Spanish and Italian actors is to think and translate the evaluation in a quantitative assessment: beneficiaries of employment policies, costs, number of people attended, number of hours dedicated to care. In particular, and as declared by the representative of UGT Valencia, SAE and SERVEF, the evaluation of policies is frequently measured in terms of percentages of inclusion into the labour market:

⁴⁵⁶ “Pero el control es exhaustivo respecto a la gestión (...). Los servicios públicos de empleo no son un servicio para la persona desempleada. Son una entidad que controla programas.. (...). Hay control de cada entidad para cada programa. Por eso digo que los servicios públicos de empleo gestionan subvenciones. Gestionan subvenciones. No gestionan personas desempleadas” (CCOO at national level).

*“And even, I have to accomplish certain objectives of placement”*⁴⁵⁷ (Representative of SAE).

*“In the end, (...) collaborating bodies (...) are paid according to the percentage of placement”*⁴⁵⁸ (Representative of UGT Valencia).

This type of evaluation oriented to taking into account percentages of inclusion into the labour market seems to be in line with the goal of increasing the employment rate, set by the EES, in opposition to the capabilities approach. In fact, performance targets do not appropriately and satisfactorily consider needs, wishes and the personal situation of the unemployed (Bonvin, 2007).

The use of quantitative indicators is also pointed up by the Italian representative of UPI at the national level and the Italian representative of the Tuscany Region. It is interesting to observe here how the following technicians differently describe the process of evaluation, which will be discussed later on:

*“Programs were more related to their results in terms of employment placement; this is true of national programs”*⁴⁵⁹ (Representative of UPI at national level).

*“[The evaluation concerns] the number of internships that we are able to organize, (...) the number of guidance interviews we carry out and the activities we do, with special attention to active policies; it concerns, substantially, all the numbers that we manage in these services”*⁴⁶⁰ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

The representative of UPI at national level gives priority to the objectives of placements more than to distinct goals, which may be linked to the need by the Italian government of showing the national progress towards the goals settled by the EES face the other Member States as well as serving the ranking process made by the European institutions. By contrast, the regional representative of Tuscany describes a concrete and detailed evaluation, which gives more space to the daily practice of the employment service. In this case, the assessment takes the form of a precise counting of activities with a special emphasis to active policies. Nonetheless, the predominance of quantitative

⁴⁵⁷ “Y encima tengo que cumplir una serie de objetivos de inserción” (SAE).

⁴⁵⁸ “Entidades colaboradoras (...), pero que también al final..(...) se paga por porcentaje de inserción” (UGT Valencia).

⁴⁵⁹ “I programmi erano più legati al risultato in termini di ricaduta occupazionale, questo vale per i programmi nazionali” (UPI at national level).

⁴⁶⁰ “Il numero di attività di stage che riusciamo ad organizzare (...), il numero dei colloqui di orientamento che facciamo, la nostra attività, sottolineando maggiormente quelle che sono le politiche attive e quindi i numeri che gestiamo su queste linee di servizio sostanzialmente” (Tuscany Region).

indicators seems to keep constant and it is absolutely relevant to bear in mind the meaning that this fact may entail. Indeed, the strong presence of the quantitative information hides the scarce interest to the topic of the global evaluation, accomplishing thus implicit normative choices and values (Lambert et al., 2011; Salais, 2006; Vero, 2012): “In other terms, indicators are used to monitor what we care about, need to control, or make decision about. Clearly, not all indicators are similar. What is common is their prevailing role to make complex situations and development understandable or visible” (Lambert et al., 2011: 195).

It is interesting to notice that the evaluation of the number of entries into the labour market does not include any information on the quality or stability of the new job. This is one of the most crucial elements to take into account, since implicitly it transforms the concept of ‘job’ itself. The transformation goes into the direction of converting the definition of ‘stable job’ into what was used to be considered ‘unstable’ (Salais, 2006) in both Italy and Spain.

In the Spanish case, the minimum requirement for an entry is an offer of at least one-month contract. In this regard, the position of the representative of the UGT Valencia on the one hand mirrors the effort of trade unions for increasing the protection of the workers, while on the other reveals their awareness that in a precarious labour market permanent jobs have become utopia. This has led them to re-treat the concept of ‘stability’ and to fight for new stable jobs, such as 6 month contracts as the actor states in the extract. Moreover, as we will see in the Spanish representative of CCOO Andalucía’s words, the evaluation of inclusions into the labour market is considered a relevant aspect, since in a country where continual transitions are almost normalized the permanence in the status of unemployment is viewed as the most critical issue.

*“What they fix to you is that contracts have to last at least a month. Right now, a one month contract is already considered as an entry. That is, in their view, a-month-and-a-half contract is worth to them. That's where one of the major differences with regard to what we think lies. We think that a one-month contract is not a stable contract. We think it should be at least a 6 month contract”*⁴⁶¹ (Representative of UGT Valencia).

⁴⁶¹ “Lo que ellos te marcan es que sean contratos por lo menos de un mes. A partir de que el contrato sea un mes, ya lo consideran una inserción en estos momentos. Es decir, un contrato de mes y medio, a ellos les vale. Ahí es donde también..es.. radican una de las diferencias importantes respecto a lo que nosotros pensamos. Nosotros pensamos que un contrato de un mes, no es un contrato estable. Nosotros pensamos que debería de ser contratos de mínimo 6 meses” (UGT Valencia).

*“Generally, we are not asked for placement, which is how it should be; when a person spends two years as part of a guidance service, something happens. I am not talking about the transition in and out of the labour market... that’s normal”*⁴⁶² (Representative of CCOO Andalucia).

In the Italian case, the idea of policy evaluation is also linked to the amount of entries. It refers to the so-called ‘mandatory communications’ carried out by public and private companies, which declare the number of opened or closed contracts to the employment centers. The centers then calculate the total of placements, understood not as a permanent hiring, but just as an entry. This allows them to grasp the movement into and out of the labour market:

*“Therefore, not always the number of placements refers to people; much less the number of placements means jobs in the traditional sense, in the sense of Istat. So, if in a year placements are 10 millions, this does not mean that 10 million of open-ended job places have been created”*⁴⁶³ (Representative of UIL at national level).

The choice of indicators, as told previously, is not made naively or casually, as the process of measurement of employment policies legitimatises and makes effective the change of discourses around job opportunities.

Another aspect worthy of being observed is that in both the Spanish and Italian case evaluation turns out to be a controversial issue. Professionals of employment centres, who are involved in the implementation phases of active policies, consider themselves as independent subjects with no responsibilities with regard to the dynamics that take place within the labour market, since they cannot ensure the success of the job-seeker placement. This results into being a paradoxical aspect, since the actors called for the activation of the unemployed, such as those who are recognized as the witnesses and spokesmen of the new paradigm of active policies, do perceive themselves as powerless face the movements of the market. Again, the paradox experienced by job-seekers is relived by employment services servants, who are supposed to empower people even if they do not have possibility of influence on the socio-economic structure. This is one of the major critiques by the capability approach, which ‘also implies the shaping of the social context in order to make it more professionally and socially inclusive’ (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2006: 129). Therefore, Spanish

⁴⁶² “En general no se nos pide inserción, que es lo que tendrían que hacer; cuando una persona lleva dos años en un servicio de orientación, algo ocurre. No estoy diciendo que entre y salga del mercado de trabajo, que eso es lo normal” (CCOO Sevilla).

⁴⁶³ “Quindi, non sempre il numero di avviamenti significa persone; tanto meno il numero di avviamenti significa posti di lavoro in senso tradizionale, in senso Istat. Tant’è che in un anno gli avviamenti sono 10 milioni, che non vuol dire che sono stati aperti 10 milioni di posizioni di lavoro a tempo indeterminato” (UIL at national level).

the representatives of SERVEF, UGT Valencia and the Italian representatives of the Tuscany Region question the process of evaluation that is arranged to assess their activity:

*“Often the fact that the placement of an unemployed person does not take place is not because of the management of the supply, it is not because of a bad management, but it is because of the company that chooses not to hire in consequence of a change of circumstances”*⁴⁶⁴ (Representative of SERVEF).

*“If an employer does not want to hire, you cannot force her/him into hiring anybody”*⁴⁶⁵ (Representative of UGT Valencia).

*“But this discourse of entrance and exit is also linked to the economic environment (...). It might be misleading to make evaluations on the fact that unemployed go in and out of the labour market more or less quickly depending on training or support services”*⁴⁶⁶ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

*“At times, we are asked to report exactly on the amount of matchings between job supply and demand we were able to do, on how many jobs we handled, how many people we managed to place thanks to our services. However, for me, these are not very significant parameters for what we have said so far, that is, I think that our main goal – as employment services – is not to intermediate between the supply and the demand of jobs. And anyway, it would be a distorted assessment, since we record very low percentages in this field”*⁴⁶⁷ (Representative of Tuscany Region).

Despite the fact that, as shown in the previous extracts, the Italian and Spanish interviewees agree that employment services have little opportunities to influence the hiring or the persistence of the unemployed into the labour market, the assumption at the basis of the capability approach is that an

⁴⁶⁴ “No es muchas veces la gestión de la oferta, no es que se haga una mala gestión lo que hace que no se termine una colocación, sino que la empresa ofertante pues.. cambian las circunstancias, decide no contratar o cualquier otra circunstancia” (SERVEF).

⁴⁶⁵ “Si un empresario no quiere contratar no le vas a coger de la oreja y obligarle a que contrate” (UGT Valencia).

⁴⁶⁶ “Ma questo discorso dell'entrata e dell'uscita è legata anche al contesto economico (...); diventerebbe forse fuorviante fare una valutazione rispetto appunto al fatto che un disoccupato entra ed esca più o meno rapidamente dal mercato del lavoro a seconda della sua formazione o dei servizi che l'hanno sostenuto” (Tuscany Region).

⁴⁶⁷ “In alcuni casi ci viene richiesto appunto la quantità di incontro domanda-offerta di lavoro che riusciamo ad intercettare, quindi quante offerte di lavoro abbiamo gestito, quante persone sono state collocate attraverso i nostri servizi; però, secondo me, è un parametro poco significativo per quello che abbiamo detto fino ad ora nel senso che secondo me non è la nostra mission principale quella di incrocio domanda-offerta di lavoro; e poi, comunque, sarebbe una valutazione distorta perchè intercettiamo una percentuale bassissima di incrocio domanda-offerta di lavoro” (Tuscany Region).

individual receiving support for his/her process of placement by employment centers, which act as conversion factors, is supposed to have greater chances to get a job and remain in employment for a long time.

The indicators analysed so far have received some critiques by the actors interviewed because of the negative effects they produce on policies. The main criticism made by Spanish respondents is related to the fact that imposing a certain percentage of insertion in the labour market, to which funding and grants are linked, pushes services and agencies' staff to focus on the requested figures, rather than on individuals. Additionally, sometimes this also can lead to the attempt of distortion of results by collaborative organizations or, in particular, to a greater support for inclusion of unemployed who are forced to accept job offers no matter their appropriateness. This is remarkable since it influences the manner in which the operators at employment centers relate to users:

*“‘How many [unemployed persons] are you going to integrate into the labour market, 30%? Okay, in the end, if you have not integrated this 30%, you will receive less money’ (...). Now [SERVEF] ask for actions with quantifiable results. This is something that did not happen before (...). If you do not achieve that goal, SERVEF will impose a reduction [of the funding]”*⁴⁶⁸ (Representative of UGT Valencia).

*“And now, the last law has removed the quantitative objective concerning how many people have to be attended; a number is only suggested, but it is not compelling. Why? Because, otherwise, it is a kind of pressure (...). Indeed, the number of people that have to be attended sometimes press professionals that think ‘I have to attend to, I have to attend’. And we do not want this (...). Now it is better because we provide hours of care”*⁴⁶⁹ (Representative of SAE).

The important role played by the economic independence of the services dealing with active policies is acknowledged by some Spanish and Italian actors, such as the Spanish expert, the representative of SERVEF and the representative of CISL Sicily. Furthermore, some of the critiques made by the interviewees regard the drawbacks of the quantitative aspects of the evaluation, which fail to assess adequately policies in terms of impact, results and qualitative objectives:

⁴⁶⁸ “¿Cuántas me vas a insertar, 30? Vale, al final, si no me has insertado las 30, minoración. Ahora ya te piden (...), ya le piden acciones con resultado cuantificados. Cosa que antes no ocurría (...). Que tú no consigues ese objetivo, el SERVEF te aminora..” (UGT Valencia).

⁴⁶⁹ “Y ahora ya la última normativa hemos eliminado el objetivo, es estimativo, no es obligado, de personas a atender. ¿Por qué? Porque presionaba (...). Que los profesionales estaban un poco, a veces, presionados: “Tengo que atender, tengo que atender..” por el número de personas. Y no queremos (...). Ahora son horas de atención (...) lo que concedemos” (SAE).

*“But, for example, there is no evaluation of impact”*⁴⁷⁰ (Spanish expert).

*“The standard we have today is not caring about the final result”*⁴⁷¹ (Representative of SERVEF).

*“We simply look at quantitative targets: how many students you take, how many types of courses you carry out, and for how long (...). The objection we make is about the fact that we should define aims and test the quality of interventions (...); we are wasting resources for interventions that are still focused only on quantitative elements”*⁴⁷² (Representative of CISL Sicily).

In the Spanish case, where one of the evaluation criteria used is the number of ‘hours of care’ dedicated to users, the determination of a minimum number of hours is described to cause a lack of adaptability by the employment service to users: *“it is absurd... there are unemployed people who need only one or two hours, and others who need much more; this should not to be decided a-priori by anyone”*⁴⁷³ (Representative of UGT Andalucia).

Following the critiques against the existing indicators, some respondents – Spanish actors in particular – advocate new measures, more attentive to the complexity of policies and individual conditions. The representatives of SERVEF, FEMP and the Spanish expert require more attention for: 1. quality of treatment, when dealing with the users; 2. functioning⁴⁷⁴ of policies; and finally 3. individual biography:

*“We have set some guidelines about how to deal with users; we do not want numbers, we want quality”*⁴⁷⁵ (Representative of SERVEF).

*“[What matters is] not only the assessment of results, but mainly and most importantly, the assessment of the functioning [of policies]”*⁴⁷⁶ (Spanish expert).

⁴⁷⁰ “Pero no hay una evaluación, por ejemplo, de impacto” (Spanish expert).

⁴⁷¹ “Con independencia de cuál sea el resultado final. Esa es la norma que tenemos hoy” (SERVEF).

⁴⁷² “Ci si limita a obiettivi quantitativi: quanti allievi prendi, quante tipologie di corsi fai, in quanto tempo lo fai (...); quello che noi contestiamo: diamoci obiettivi e qualifichiamoli e verifichiamo la qualità dell'intervento (...). Stiamo sprecando un mare di risorse per interventi ancora quantitativi” (CISL Sicily).

⁴⁷³ “Es absurdo, hay desempleados que necesitan sólo una o dos y otros mucho más, no lo debe marcar nadie” (UGT Andalucia).

⁴⁷⁴ In this case, the term ‘functioning’ is not used in Sen’s definition.

⁴⁷⁵ “Ya tenemos fijadas unas pautas de cómo hay que atender.. no queremos cifras, queremos calidad” (SERVEF).

⁴⁷⁶ “No solo la evaluación de resultados sino sobre todo y probablemente más importante, de funcionamiento” (Spanish expert).

*“[What matters] is not only quantity, but more of it (...). [For instance, we should wonder:] ‘What happened to the people who benefited of a service? Where are they now? Were the activities [they carried out within public employment services] useful to them? Why?’”*⁴⁷⁷ (Representative of FEMP).

Finally, another factor highlighted by the respondents is the heterogeneity of the evaluation process within the Spanish and Italian national territory. The Spanish expert highlights that each region defines specific criteria for evaluating the bodies that will implement policies (percentage of entries, number of users, number of hours of care). The representative of FEMP extends the issue of heterogeneity also to the institutional level, so that criteria of evaluation may vary between different institutions. The same is claimed by the national representative of CGIL, who presents the heterogeneity in form of detriment for South regions:

*“As employment policies are one of the competences (...) of the autonomous regions, each region has its own evaluation system”*⁴⁷⁸ (Spanish expert).

*“We must begin to share (...) a methodology of evaluation”*⁴⁷⁹ (Representative of FEMP).

*“Now the issue of the efficiency of employment centers undergoes a process of monitoring (...) that, unfortunately, takes place in a way that mirrors the radical divide in the country. This is typical of Italy and remains fairly unchanged”*⁴⁸⁰ (Representative of CGIL at national level).

However, if on the one hand heterogeneity also means inequality of opportunities, on the other hand, the sharing of policy evaluation criteria partly contrasts with the possibility for employment services to carry out individualised programs and tailor-made actions.

To sum up, the definition of the concept of “evaluation” and of the object that has to be evaluated as well as the identification of indicators are keystones in making the evaluation a substantial element for the promotion of employment policies capability-oriented. The formulation

⁴⁷⁷ “No sólo importa lo cuanti sino más de eso (...). ¿Qué ha pasado con el sujeto que ha recibido una acción? ¿dónde esta ahora? ¿le ha sevido o no? ¿por qué le ha servido?” (FEMP).

⁴⁷⁸ “Como las políticas de empleo (las activas) es una competencia de las (...) de las comunidades autónomas, cada comunidad autónoma tiene su propio sistema de evaluación” (Spanish expert).

⁴⁷⁹ “Tenemos que comenzar a compartir de una manera más hermanada (...) una metodología para la evaluación” (FEMP).

⁴⁸⁰ “Ora il panorama dell’efficienza dei Centri per l’impiego è oggetto di un monitoraggio (...) che però avviene su una base che purtroppo rimane abbastanza inalterata di radicale spaccatura nel Paese, che è tipica di questo Paese” (CGIL at national level).

of the concept in terms of judgment of services and servants – instead of assessment of individual real freedom of choice –, the preponderance of a discursive domain on management emphasizing efficacy and effectiveness – instead of enhancement of capabilities –, and the almost predominant choice of quantitative indicators, mainly placement percentage – instead of an assessment including the qualitative interest for job quality – hint the departure from Sen's view. Indeed, the continuous and prevailing attention to ex-post assessment and to the relationship between objectives and results more than between employment policies and individual needs goes in this direction. This is evident among Italian and Spanish actors. Nevertheless, a different sensitivity emerges from the interviews in the Spanish case of Andalusia and the Italian case of Tuscany, which reveals a more significant interest for the individual and a greater caring of job-seekers. The great attention for quantitative indicators that sometimes has brought to the construction of the evaluation process as a merely counting of practices and users seems to have turned operative the change of discourses around job opportunities, with severe repercussions on the conceptualization of the term 'employment'. In fact, the emphasis for activation policies and the increase of employment rates seems to focus on entries, without any specification of the work conditions or individuals' desires as in accordance to the capabilities approach, bringing to a transformation of the meaning of 'employment'. The answer to the questions: "What is 'employment'?", "Which are the conditions that make acceptable to talk of 'employment'?" "Can a one day-job or a month long-job be considered 'employment'?", "And, a six-months job?". According to the Spanish interviews, the answer to the last two questions seems to be oriented in an affirmative sense, also by trade unions. In fact, the idea that permanent jobs have become a utopia seems to have led the representatives of trade unions to normalize transitional phases and short-term jobs as well as to shrink the compass of their protests, resizing the concept of stability. A controversial issue is also evident when analysing the discourses of some Spanish and Italian interviewees. Those servants of employment services who are designed by the flexicurity paradigm to play a key role in the implementation of active policies do not recognize their own responsibility in the success of job-seeker placement. The empowerment of unemployed, which is stressed by activation policies, obscures the other part of the process, such as the intervention on the labour market and the shaping of the social context. This is the main point of the capability approach, according to which opportunities can arise only if both the following conditions are met: responsibility is placed on the unemployed and socio-economic context is shaped in order to act as conversion factor. From a study of the discourses of the interviewees, evaluation emerges to be mainly an issue of conflicting powers, which is represented by who is the evaluator, who undergoes the process of evaluation and in which terms such process is carried out. This is especially evident in the Spanish case, due to the strong presence of collaborative organizations, which are enrolled in

the implementation of active policies. Looking at the interviews, we note that such organizations accept the conditions and requirements established by the regions, inasmuch their whole existence develops around the ability to demonstrate their work. By contrast, in the Italian case, where the collaboration with NGOs, associations and external bodies is less notable and conspicuous, the process of evaluation mainly concerns the relationship between the European and regional level, with the European institution occupying the role of evaluator. In both the Italian and Spanish cases, the interior evaluation within the nation and the relationship between different levels of governance in this regard is reported by the interviewees to be almost missing. But it is worth wondering which are the reasons behind this. On the basis of the prevalence of the interviewees for considering evaluation as a judgment, we suppose that the strong resistance or attempt to nullify it through bureaucratic practices could hinder the assessment of employment policies. This would preclude the idea of the possibility for employment centers to become providers of opportunities for unemployed people.

11.5 Concluding remarks

Over the last decades Spain and Italy have seen an important evolution of decentralized governance, with an increasing territorialisation of social and employment policies as well as a growing relevance of the role of local agencies. This has also contributed to the reduction of the idea of policies informed by a technocratic or centralized conceptualisation. Decentralization and territorialisation have taken on different meanings and different forms in the Spanish and Italian contexts. In particular, according the Spanish actors, decentralisation has embodied the process of empowerment of the Autonomous Communities with greater autonomy, but it has also represented an attempt of enhancing a major proximity to individuals and the labour market. Such an attempt is depicted as an organizational change and a quasi-failure from the interviewees, since it has not been so radical in the transformation of the contents of employment policies as it was expected. In the view of the representatives, the adaptation to the needs of the region has not been addressed, maintaining a situation of inequality in the distribution of services within the national territory. Among the Italian actors, decentralization has been identified with a major closeness to the productive system, but it is depicted as having faced several difficulties during its implementation. Indeed, it is described to have taken the form of a greater dispersion of employment policies in terms of decision-making and economic resources between different levels of governance. Moreover, it seems to have turned into a repetition of the old employment schemes at the local level. Both Spanish and Italian actors claim for a major State-Regions coordination as well as for

greater coordination among regions. Nevertheless, relationships among different levels of governance are depicted to be sometimes conflicting in the Spanish case, with a poor attention paid to local authorities. This is less noticeable in the Italian case. In the view of the interviewees, the scarce coordination favours the inequality of opportunities within the national territory, which is especially highlighted among the Italian actors. Indeed, Italian actors argue that territorial imbalances not only characterise the socio-economic structure, but also policies implementation, often regionally and locally fragmented. The individualisation of services is considered as a goal to be pursued by both Spanish and Italian actors, which is still far to be the case. In the Italian case, national representatives still construct policies in terms of target and standardised program for vulnerable groups, whereas local representatives do it mainly in terms of tailor-made services. However, even in this case, individualised action does not seem to be oriented to the increase of individuals' possibility of choice, but to the accomplishment of supportive tasks for the unemployed. Consequently, the relationship between job-seeker and civil servant results imbalanced, which is far from the idea of a collaboration between the two oriented to the development of capability for voice and the possibility of agency for the job-seeker. In the Spanish case, the construction of employment policies in terms of targets results slighter than in the Italian case, both at national and regional level. The idea of the individualization of policies seems to be the ideal model for the Spanish and Italian interviewees, even if it encounters relevant difficulties in its application. Finally, the issue of the obligation for the job-seeker to accept active policies in exchange of receiving unemployment benefits represents a key aspect. This issue that concerns the limitation of individual freedom of choice and that is promoted by active policies employability-oriented, seems to be well-accepted by some of the Italian actors, who emphasize the moralizing dimension of the activation and the question of the dependency from the unemployment benefits. This kind of view, which is far from the capabilities approach, is strongly refused by Spanish actors. However, the issue of the obligation is described to be relatively operational by the interviewees, especially the Italian actors. This is justified by the actors with the scanty possibility for employment services to make job offers and, consequently, negotiate the unemployed's freedom to refuse them. In the two countries under analysis, according to the interviewees, decentralisation and territorialisation seem to have only partly contributed to increasing the interconnection between policy design, policy implementation and policy assessment. In particular, principles far to the capabilities approach seem to have informed the policy assessment, since a discourse on efficacy and effectiveness as well as ideas of procedures inspired to the New Public Management prevail. Also, a focus on quantitative outcomes and performance target (i.e placement percentage) seems to overwhelm global qualitative indicators and the interest for the evaluation of individual real

freedom of choice. Any attention for the recipients' capabilities and their conditions of vulnerability seems to remain in the background.

Chapter XII.

Technocratic and centralized mode of governance versus situated action: social dialogue and involvement of civil society organizations

12.1. Introduction

The macro-indicator “*social dialogue and involvement of civil society organizations*” is recognized as a fundamental issue by different perspectives and political bodies at all levels of governance. According to the capabilities approach, social dialogue serves the scope to gear policies to people through “the setting up of a genuine discursive space guaranteeing that all partners’ point of view is duly taken into account in the course of the public policy process” (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007: 61). The constitution of such a genuine discursive space can stem from a local deliberative approach in the development and assessment of active labour market programs (decentralization or vertical dialogue), as shown in the previous chapter, as well as from the involvement of social partners and individuals’ representatives in the design and implementation of policies (social dialogue and involvement of civil society organization or horizontal dialogue). In fact, the closeness to the territory and to people takes place not only through the participation of the individuals, but also of their representatives and other social partners in the policy process. The involvement of partners and the presence of a form of deliberative democracy contribute to defining the informational basis of a society (Salais, 2008, 2009; de Munck and Zimmermann, 2008), as Sen suggests: “it is up to the political community under consideration to decide for itself, according to democratic procedures, which value achievements it thinks everyone must be capable of attaining (such as having a good job, having a secure livelihood)” (quoted in Salais, 2009: 226). However, some scholars critique Sen’s position, since his emphasis on public discussion and deliberation for constructing more equal institutions (Sen, 2009) is considered to neglect “the often disruptive influence of power dynamics that are highlighted by a more social conception of human life” (Deneulin and McGregor, 2010: 503). The same notion of “community” is deemed by these authors to hide the conflicts that are embedded in society. Another critique relies on the fact that Sen does not clarify adequately concrete procedures that can foster collective choices (Zimmermann, 2012). Deneulin does not highlight this issue as a concern, insofar as leaving room to each community to define its own procedure means to observe its freedom (2005). Nonetheless, the authors underline

the importance of constructing deliberative spaces in order to convert potentialities into functionings (Zimmermann, 2014; Deneulin, 2005). The participation of partners in the various decision-making and implementation processes plays a pivotal role in the process of construction of policies, provided it is substantial, effective, and open to everybody. In this chapter we will analyse how the actors interviewed that participate in the design and application of policies interpret this issue.

12.2 Meaning of social dialogue and actors involved in the construction of employment policies

Social dialogue is one of the main aspects promoted by the EU, forming part of the European Social Model.

Some Spanish interviewees deem that social dialogue is particularly important for the success of the fight against unemployment that is described as “*a matter of all*”⁴⁸¹ (FEMP). This point is shared especially by those who are interested in being increasingly involved in the social dialogue, such as the representative of the federation of municipalities and provinces and the representative of the NGO Caritas. In the view of the Spanish expert, social dialogue is represented in two ways: 1. Bipartite social dialogue, that develop inside firms and is understood as collective negotiation, and 2. Tripartite social dialogue, including the government, trade unions and enterprises, that develops both at national and regional level through ongoing negotiations among the stakeholders. This kind of representation seems to be strictly linked to the role and work of trade unions, despite in the others actors’ representation the first form remains prevalently overshadowed. According to the Spanish expert, an intense process of social bargaining took place from the ‘90s onwards in Spain, addressing active employment policies. The process has been characterized by a strong fight for the enhancement of a major acknowledge among different bodies, entities and social partners. In the following extracts, the interviewees show convergent points of view with regard the importance of social dialogue. Even if the representatives of FEMP and Caritas claim respectively for a major involvement of the local governance and NGOs that they represent, their constructions hint that the context partly enables the dialogue and set the condition for a space of discussion that has to be gained by the different stakeholders:

“Social dialogue in Spain has always had a very strong influence on the development of active employment policies. You know that social dialogue assumes different forms. One is that take place

⁴⁸¹ “Una cuestión de todos” (FEMP).

*within companies, which is the collective bargaining; then another is the tripartite social dialogue between governments and the social partners, namely employers and unions, which takes place both centrally and at the level of the autonomous region. Since the mid- '90s a very intense process of social bargaining of policies, including active employment policies at the territorial level, occurred. In all autonomous communities, employment pacts were signed. These were large social employment pacts thanks to which unions and employers on one side and regional governments on the other sides decided which employment policies had to be implemented. Therefore, this element of bargaining, development, and agreement was a constant throughout this period*⁴⁸² (Spanish expert).

*“The important thing is to discuss objectives to be achieved by all and decide who will be charged of what, considering that we are all partners and nobody is below the others. When the town hall demands to unions and employers to do something is in this direction (...). We have to be involved in the SNE (National Employment System) as a leg more. In Europe, it is not understood that local governments are missing within the bodies that embed unions and employers; this is not understood. It is important to take into account that local employment services do exist; it is important to acknowledge this*⁴⁸³ (Representative of FEMP).

*“The main thing, I think, is coordination and ensuring that all the stakeholders participate*⁴⁸⁴ (Representative of Caritas).

Some Italian interviewees depict a different picture concerning the social dialogue. The representative of CGIL Sicily narrates the difficulties of developing a proper social dialogue within the Italian context, especially in the last decades. The representative of UPI Tuscany also highlights drawbacks and inadequate uses that have turned social dialogue into the lack of assuming positions

⁴⁸² “En España (...), el diálogo social siempre ha tenido un peso muy fuerte en el desarrollo de las políticas activas de empleo. Sabes que el dialogo social tiene diferentes dimensiones. Una es en el ámbito de la empresa, todo eso sería negociación colectiva, pero luego está el diálogo social entre los.. tripartitos, que es entre los gobiernos y los interlocutores sociales: empresarios y sindicatos. Y eso se da tanto a nivel central como a nivel de la comunidad autónoma. Desde mediados de los años 90 hubo un muy intenso proceso de concertación social de las políticas, incluidas las políticas activas de empleo en el ámbito territorial. Es decir, en todas las comunidades autónomas.. se firmaron pactos de empleo, como pactos más grandes, sociales, donde los sindicatos y los empresarios por un lado y los gobiernos autonómicos por otro, concertaban las políticas de empleo. Y eso sí que fue un elemento de empleo generalizado durante todo este periodo ¿no? De concertación, de desarrollo, de acuerdo..” (Spanish expert).

⁴⁸³ “Lo importante es discutir objetivos a conseguir por todos y quien se va a encargar de cada cosa teniendo en cuenta que todos son partner, que son partenariado, no que están por debajo. Cuando el municipio llama a sindicatos y empresarios para hacer las cosas es en este sentido (...). Tenemos que estar dentro del SNE como una pata más. En Europa no se entiende que en el órgano en que están sindicatos y empresarios no están los gobernantes locales eso no se entiende. Debe contemplarse que hay servicios locales de empleo, reconocer esa realidad” (FEMP).

⁴⁸⁴ “El.. lo principal yo creo que está en las coordinaciones. En asegurar que hablen todos los interlocutores” (Caritas).

and taking decisions. Moreover, as stated by the representative of UIL Tuscany, programming and designing actions by means of the social dialogue between trade unions and employers' associations play a crucial role, in order to remain as close as possible to the demands of the labour market. Indeed, the dialogue allows to identify accurately the needs of enterprises and consequently to set the plans for training courses. According to this connotation, social dialogue is constructed as an expedient to favour the placement of employable unemployed and the economic growth. By contrast, the representative of the CGIL Sicily defines social dialogue as the discussion between politics and people:

*“There is a willingness to move forward without taking into account trade unions. The lack of dialogue or the fact that dialogue is announced but then is not effectuated (...) are also a signal of the lack of discussion and especially of the separation between politics and people”*⁴⁸⁵ (Representative of CGIL Sicily).

*“Bargaining can also kill, this is true; but if bargaining becomes an element of synthesis with respect to problems of the territory, then it has its own relevance. I believe that bargaining should not be a way to avoid taking decision. But, when all people have been listened to, a summary has to be made and a decision has to be taken; this has not always been the case”*⁴⁸⁶ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

*“We would like a system that is composed by social partners, such as by the world of employers and the world of trade unions. This system should individuate the needs of the labour market, which should be transformed then in employability-oriented training courses”*⁴⁸⁷ (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

⁴⁸⁵ “C'è la volontà di andare avanti non tenendo conto di quelle che sono le organizzazioni di rappresentanza, la mancanza di dialogo oppure il dialogo annunciato con le parole ma poi di fatto non realizzato (...); sono anche quello un segnale emblematico della mancanza di confronto e soprattutto del distacco che c'è fra la politica e la gente” (CGIL Sicily).

⁴⁸⁶ “Perché di concertazione si può anche morire, questo è vero; se, invece, la concertazione diventa un elemento di sintesi rispetto alle questioni del territorio ha una sua importanza. Io credo che la concertazione non debba essere un modo per non scegliere mai; nel momento in cui si è ascoltato tutti, si fa una sintesi e si sceglie; e questo non sempre si è verificato” (UPI Tuscany).

⁴⁸⁷ “Vorremmo che si creasse un sistema che è composto dalle parti sociali, cioè dal mondo dei datori di lavoro e dal mondo delle organizzazioni sindacali, e che questo sistema fosse quello che, come posso dire, individua i fabbisogni di manodopera del mondo del lavoro delle imprese e quant'altro; e questo fabbisogno di manodopera del mondo del lavoro dovrebbe trasformarsi in un'attività di carattere formativo (...) che è orientato all'occupabilità delle persone” (UIL Tuscany).

One of the issues that some Italian and Spanish actors highlight is the point concerning the limits of political representation, due to the fact that some social groups are barely present in the social dialogue. The Italian representative of UIL at national level underlines that in Italy only employees working in companies with at least 15 workers can join the unions. In all the other cases, which account for the majority in a country like Italy that is characterized by small and medium enterprises, workers are represented indirectly, that is through contracts. Even the young people, women, and immigrants are poorly represented within trade unions, as the Italian expert adds:

*“Trade unions has technical and legal constraints. The first is that unions can be present substantially only in companies that employ 45% of all the employees, such as firms with over-15 employees. We cannot enter in the rest of firms, which is not because we do not want to represent them directly. Therefore, we do represent them indirectly. Indeed, if someone belonging to an under-15 employees company joins the union is likely to undergo a certain type of reactions. And this happens in a country where small and medium enterprises are overspread. In fact, 90% of companies are under-15 employees (...). How do we protect the employee in that case? With the contract”*⁴⁸⁸ (Representative of UIL at national level).

*“Within trade unions, half of the members – in some cases more than half, very often half minus one – are retired. It is clear that young people are not there; they are not sufficiently represented. This is one of the faults of the center-left wing governments. Indeed, though their existence was brief, they did not understand that they had to increase the representation of the young at the tables of discussion. The unions do not represent the youth enough, just like immigrants, women, the elderly and those who have just lost their jobs as well as the retired”*⁴⁸⁹ (Italian expert).

As for the Spanish case, the representative of Caritas claims that those at risk of social exclusion do not find adequate representation in the processes of negotiation, although they represent a great

⁴⁸⁸ “Il sindacato ha tecnicamente e giuridicamente dei vincoli; il primo è che parliamo di presenza sindacale sostanzialmente tra imprese che hanno il 45% di tutto il lavoro dipendente, le imprese sopra i 15 dipendenti; nel resto non possiamo entrare, non è che non vogliamo, che non vorremmo rappresentare direttamente, li rappresentiamo indirettamente anche gli altri; se un lavoratore di un’azienda sotto i 15 si iscrive al sindacato è facilmente soggetto a reazioni di un certo tipo. E questo in un paese dove la piccola e media impresa è abbastanza diffusa. Sono il 90% delle imprese sotto i 15 (...); come li tuteliamo? Con il contratto” (UIL at national level).

⁴⁸⁹ “Nei sindacati, la metà – in qualche caso la metà più uno, ma molto spesso la metà meno uno – sono pensionati; è chiaro, voi giovani non ci siete, non siete a sufficienza rappresentati e lì, una delle colpe dei governi di centro-sinistra pur brevi è stata quella di non capire che dovevano aumentare la rappresentanza ai tavoli di discussione. I sindacati non rappresentano a sufficienza i giovani, non rappresentano a sufficienza gli immigrati, non rappresentano a sufficienza le donne, non rappresentano a sufficienza gli anziani, non quelli che hanno appena perso il lavoro o quelli che sono pensionati” (Italian expert).

percentage of the population in a vulnerable situation. This is the reason why he states that NGOs have to be allowed to participate in social dialogue:

*“Caritas, Red Cross, the Secretariado Gitano, Fundación ONCE and other large and small entities work for the most disadvantaged people that belong to sectors of the population that other public bodies do not attend, nor trade union. Yet, it is an important sector of the population. 10-20% of the population is in a very precarious situation, but does not have adequate representation at the negotiating tables. Of course, NGOs should be present. Steps are being taken in the right direction... [which is why] the State Board of NGOs of Social Action was introduced in 2000”*⁴⁹⁰ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

The involvement of NGOs is not strongly taken into account in the context of Italian employment policies, although the discourse on “partnership” reported in the Lisbon Treaty by the European Union is intended to promote the integration of civil society: “A fully decentralized approach will be applied in line with the principle of subsidiarity in which the Union, the Member States, the regional and local levels, as well as the social partners and civil society, will be actively involved, using variable forms of partnership. A method of benchmarking best practices on managing change will be devised by the European Commission networking with different providers and users, namely the social partners, companies and NGOs” (Presidency Conclusions, point 38; Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000). This is especially true for Italy, whereas in Spain NGOs are slightly more widespread, even though their commitment in this field is not always openly acknowledged, as it is evident in the words of the Spanish expert. Moreover, according to the literature, their involvement seems to be tied to specific issues (i.e. immigration), remaining often a part of the social dialogue (Burroni, 2007). Consequently, NGOs defend their position stating that they deal with a portion of society – individuals at risk of exclusion – that otherwise would not receive attention, justifying thus their existence, as we can observe in the discourse of the representative of Caritas Spain. The representative quotes the European intentions of involving NGOs as well as the fact that they are currently attending a great amount of person in situation of vulnerability:

⁴⁹⁰ “La población a la que atendemos, Cáritas, Cruz Roja, el Secretariado Gitano, la Fundación ONCE..eh.. estas entidades grandes y también pequeñas que trabajan por las personas más desfavorecidas son sectores de población que otras entidades..eh.. públicas no llegan a ellas y.. los sindicatos tampoco, y sin embargo, pues es un sector importante de..de la población que podríamos cifrar.. hay entre un 10 y un 20% de la población que está en situación muy precaria pero que no tiene una representación adecuada en la mesa de negociación. Desde luego, las ONGs tenemos que estar. Se van dando pasos en la dirección adecuada.. desde el año 2000 existe el consejo estatal de ONGs de acción social” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

*“Trade unions always highlight that, in the field of employment or labour relations, Unions are the legitimate representatives of workers, rather than NGOs”*⁴⁹¹ (Spanish expert).

*“In order to ensure the right to work, all the stakeholders have to participate, which is what the European policies state. Obviously, stakeholders are employers’ associations and unions, but also NGOs that are attending every year [a lot of people]. Caritas has attended 60,000-70,000 people in 2008 and more than 70,000 people were included in employment programs. If you consider Cruz Roja, Fundación ONCE, all the entities that perform in the field of disability and the other small entities that also work in the field of unemployment for disadvantaged groups, we can calculate that NGOs are attending maybe between 300,000 and 500,000 people. Thus, NGOs have a space. Why? Because those people [individuals at risk of exclusion] do not find access to public employment services ...”*⁴⁹² (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

Temporary employment agencies play an important role as entities involved in the development of active policies. They are responsible for providing temporary workers upon the requests by companies, for implementing actions of guidance and retraining for the unemployed, as well as for giving advice to enterprises so that good matches with their employees can be favoured. As stated by the representative of AGETT, agencies are fully concerned with workers. The worker is seen in terms of human resource, but also as a ‘good’ that serves the work of the agencies: *“Workers are our added value, that is, what matters to us is that the company is satisfied with the worker. I do not care to produce a cheaper product”*⁴⁹³ (Representative of AGETT). From this perspective that describes the worker as a ‘merchandise’, we can assume that the relationship between employment agencies and individuals is not the same as that with employment centers, since the interests of employment agencies and employment public center are oriented to enhance different goals. We now move to observe how the interviewees construct the interaction between public and private sectors with respect to job seekers.

⁴⁹¹ “Desde las organizaciones sindicales siempre se plantean que en el ámbito estricto de empleo, o en las relaciones laborales, quienes son los legítimos representantes de los trabajadores son los sindicatos, no son las ONGs. ¿De acuerdo?” (Spanish expert).

⁴⁹² “Y para garantizar ese derecho al trabajo tienes que contar con todos los actores, que es lo que está diciendo también desde las políticas europeas. Los actores evidentemente que son empresarios y sindicatos, pero los actores también estamos siendo las ONGs que estamos atendiendo año tras año, Cáritas a 60.000 personas, 60, 70.000 personas; va a salir ahora en la memoria del 2008, más de 70.000 personas en los programas de empleo. Multiplica esta cifra por Cruz Roja, Fundación ONCE.. todas las entidades de discapacidad, otras entidades pequeñas que hay que también trabajan el tema del desempleo de colectivos en desventaja, y nos encontramos que.. que quizá entre 300.000 y 500.000 personas están siendo atendidas por las ONGs. Por lo tanto las ONGs tienen un espacio. ¿Por qué? Pues porque esas personas no encuentran acceso a los servicios de empleo públicos” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

⁴⁹³ “Nuestro valor añadido son los trabajadores. Es decir, a mi no me interesa producir papel más barato. Sino que el trabajador satisfaga a la empresa usuaria” (AGETT).

Both Italian and Spanish respondents believe that the connection of job centers and employment agencies could play a central role in the management of active employment policies, provided it is oriented towards collaboration, rather than competition. As far as the Italian case is concerned, the representative of employment agency association Assolavoro seems to hint at a collaborative relationship in terms of sharing of competences that at times overlap each other, due to a lack of coordination of different activities. By means of an example, he states that while the public service deals with the management of ‘compulsory communications’ (that is, communications foreseen by law concerning the entry of hired workers into the labour market), private agencies are more interested in providing consultancy for companies and in offering contracts to the unemployed. Private agencies also have at their disposal a dense network of branches throughout the territory in close connection with each other, which is greater than the network of public employment services. Finally, they carry out dynamic research of enterprises, and this cannot be compared with the activities of employment centers: private employment agencies may personally get into contact with companies, whereas for public services it is more difficult, which is why they often fail in their attempt of matching supply and demands. This division of competences, which is not reported in the extract because of the excessive length, is used by the representative of Assolavoro for motivating their existence thanks to their specific specialization and professionalization. In fact, they have adopted the specific language of consulting firms for acting within the labour market. Italian interviewees express the relationship between public centers and private agencies in different ways. As shown in the following extract, the national representative of Italia Lavoro constructs private agencies as more effective than public services, legitimating their role in the implementation of employment policies. The national representatives of UPI and Assolavoro describe a collaborative interaction between the public and private sectors, placing them on the same plane and shading the competitive component of their relationship. However, if the representative of Assolavoro may intentionally do this for a major legitimation of private agencies, it results more interesting to observe a similar position by the national representative of UPI. Finally, the regional representative of Tuscany describes employment agencies as “costumers” of the public employment service:

“The connection between public and private sectors has not been realised yet (...). The potential of the private sector flanks the potential of the public sector, but with a greater propulsion because private entities are much more attentive. This is due to the fact that the private sector has its profit and its chance to earn on the implementation of policies. Therefore, it is much more active than the public service (...). The importance of the public-private connection becomes central in the

*definition, activation and management of active labor market policies in our market (...). However, even if there are conventions and agreements at the local level, we are still very far from enhancing a finished and working model*⁴⁹⁴ (Representative of Italia Lavoro).

*“There were no conflicts or cultural contrasts, albeit the Biagi reform asked the regions to make the public sector to compete with the private sector. In reality, since the system is organized according to a regional configuration, the region of Lombardy is the only that has applied a competitive model. The other regions actually have kept the model of collaboration between public and private sectors”*⁴⁹⁵ (Representative of UPI at national level).

*“[Relationships were] absolutely collaborative from the beginning, even if with some difficulties of making the private and public entities working together. But we should acknowledge that the private and, especially, the public system have never wanted a competitive relationship. They both have always desired a complementary relationship, because it is clear to all that some activities are better implemented by the private system, while other activities have inevitably to be carried out by the public system”*⁴⁹⁶ (Representative of Assolavoro).

*“Job companies, as employment agencies are called nowadays, are our customers, which means that they send us their job offers. Also they seek here the profiles they are interested in”*⁴⁹⁷ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

The situation in Spain is more complex and articulated than in Italy. Firstly, a greater number of bodies is involved in the implementation of employment policies, which would require a proper

⁴⁹⁴ “Non si è ancora concretizzato un altro scenario importante (...), cioè del raccordo tra pubblico e privato (...). Alle potenzialità dell'offerta pubblica si aggiungono anche le potenzialità dell'offerta privata, con una propulsione maggiore perché il soggetto privato è molto più attento, perché c'ha il suo margine di guadagno, c'ha la sua possibilità di guadagnare anche sulle politiche, sull'erogazione delle politiche, per cui è molto più attivo rispetto al servizio pubblico (...). L'importanza del raccordo pubblico-privato diventa centrale nella definizione, nell'attivazione e nella gestione delle politiche attive del lavoro sul nostro mercato (...). Ci sono delle convenzioni, ci sono degli accordi che vengono fatti a livello territoriale, però diciamo siamo ancora molto distanti da un modello compiuto e da un modello funzionante” (Messina).

⁴⁹⁵ “Non ci sono stati conflitti o contrasti culturali di questo tipo quando la riforma Biagi chiese alle regioni di mettere il pubblico in competizione con il privato. La realtà è che questa impostazione, siccome il sistema era regionale, è stata seguita solo dalla regione Lombardia; le altre regioni, in realtà, hanno mantenuto il modello della collaborazione tra i servizi” (UPI at national level).

⁴⁹⁶ “...assolutamente collaborativi fin dall'inizio, nelle difficoltà di mettere insieme soggetti privati e soggetti pubblici. Però fin dall'inizio va dato atto sia al nostro sistema che soprattutto al sistema pubblico di non aver mai voluto un rapporto concorrenziale, ma complementare perché è chiaro a tutti che alcune attività possono essere svolte meglio con un sistema privato, altre attività devono, per forza di cose, essere svolte dal sistema pubblico” (Assolavoro).

⁴⁹⁷ “Le aziende per il lavoro, come si chiamano ora le agenzie per il lavoro, sono nostri clienti: diciamo così, nel senso che ci mandano le loro offerte di lavoro. I profili che loro ricercano li cercano anche presso di noi” (UPI Toscana).

management for coordinating interventions and resources and tackling unemployment. The Spanish expert, as we can read in the extract below, denounces that the cooperation between temporary employment agencies (Empresas de Trabajo Temporal, ETTs), and public employment service is not yet fully regulated. More specifically, the Spanish expert emphasizes that this collaboration should occur at the regional level in order to cover fully the needs of the territory and of individuals, taking into account the powerful decentralization that involves private entities in the country. Interestingly, the stronger decentralization and the broader involvement of stakeholders produce a demand of major control, coordination and regulation. The representative of SAE highlights that his idea is that private agencies are oriented to profit; consequently, in his view, they refuse the part of work that does not allow them to achieve such aim. This part of work, that the representative calls “social part”, remains to public employment services. However, the participation of temporary employment agencies and placement agencies is controversial, since they pressure for taking part into the process of implementation of employment policies. Trade unions are depicted by the national representative of AGETT as hampering the entrance of private agencies due to ideological prejudice, whereas public institutions seem to accept their collaboration to such an extent that they ask for their help. It is interesting to notice that the national representative of AGETT is constructing the public service as subordinated to the private agency, while in the Italian case the representative of the public services constructed the opposite situation:

“You know that with regard to active labor market policies, there was a double decentralization in Spain. One was a territorial decentralization and the other one concerned private entities, right? [The involvement of] temporary employment agencies, or, recently, placement agencies has also generated many problems, due to the multiplication of resources and the lack of coordination. But, anyway, I think that decentralization is important because the labor market has specific characteristics at the local level. A part of this, it is necessary some coordination”⁴⁹⁸ (Spanish expert).

“I think we (as public employment services) have to attend the social part .. (...), such as the part that employment agencies would never cover. I think we have to be there. What do I think about their participation? I think that we are going in that direction. In addition, they want this, they want

⁴⁹⁸ “Sabes que las políticas activas de empleo en España..hubo una doble descentralización. Una fue la territorial y otra fue la.. dar pie a entidades privadas ¿no? Las agencias de empleo temporal, o ahora por ejemplo se ha dado pie a las agencias de colocación, etcétera. Eso también ha generado bastantes problemas por .. la multiplicación de recursos, de descoordinación. Pero vamos, que en cualquier caso la descentralización, sí que yo creo que es importante porque el mercado de trabajo tiene características específicas a nivel territorial. Otra cosa es que tenga que haber elementos de coordinación” (Spanish expert).

*this. Third sector agencies and placement agencies are asking loudly enter the market of intermediation. They are asking loudly enter here*⁴⁹⁹ (Representative of SAE).

*“The unions are most strongly reluctant, because regional public employment services are asking us for help. Our answer is: “I would like to help you, but I cannot”. So, what happen? This position needs the support of the political will and that unions do agree. Why don’t they agree? Because since the regulation in 1994, trade unions have been disapproving [employment agencies], due to certain prejudices (...). Because they consider that this would be an attempt to privatize public employment service, whereas instead this is not one of our aims. In other words, what we want is collaboration with the public employment service and that it leads*⁵⁰⁰ (Representative of AGETT).

We now observe how the representatives of employment agencies construct their account. As shown in the following interviews, the representatives of Assolavoro and AGETT declare that the image of the employment agencies has changed positively over time in both Italy and Spain. Nevertheless, the Spanish representatives of AGETT focus mainly on their ‘political and normative’ inclusion in the list of the stakeholders working in the field of employment policies; by contrast, the Italian representative of Assolavoro focuses mainly on the public opinion and trade unions, highlighting how their relationships have been transforming in the direction of a major acceptance:

*“For now, I think the greatest achievement has been a very significant change in the image of temporary agencies. I think it is important and that it is a step to overcome. The shift has been from being considered the ‘black beast’ to being viewed as part of the solution, not just the solution, but part of it (...). Now, the point is declaring this at a normative level. And that is the difficult step to carry out. That’s the difficult step*⁵⁰¹ (Representative of AGETT).

⁴⁹⁹ “Yo creo que nosotros tenemos que tener cubierto la parte.. (...) la parte social que esas empresas no cubrirían nunca. Creo que nosotros tenemos que estar ahí. ¿Darles participación a ellas? Yo creo que es a lo que se tiende. Además ellos están pidiendo ya su bocado. Ellos están pidiendo su bocado. Las empresas del tercer sector, y las empresas de recolocación.. están pues pidiendo entrar a gritos en este mercado de la intermediación. Están pidiendo a gritos entrar aquí” (SAE).

⁵⁰⁰ “A ver, las reticencias más fuertes.. realmente están en los sindicatos. Porque.. es decir, ya hay servicios regionales que nos piden ayuda. Entonces, la respuesta es “me encantaría ayudarte, pero no puedo”. Entonces, ¿qué pasa? Que tiene que haber voluntad política y que los sindicatos.. ummm, estén a favor. ¿Por qué no están a favor? Pues porque desde 1994 que se reguló el sector está mal visto, por ciertos prejuicios, (...). Porque lo ven como una manera de privatizar el servicio público de empleo, cuando nosotros no queremos privatizar nada. O sea, nosotros de hecho, lo que queremos es colaborar y que el servicio público de empleo tome las riendas” (AGETT).

⁵⁰¹ “Por ahora, yo creo que el mayor logro ha sido un cambio muy relevante en cuanto a la imagen de las empresas de trabajo temporal. Incluso yo creo que es importante, y que evidentemente es una etapa que pasar, ¿no?, porque pasar de la bestia negra a ser parte de las soluciones, no decimos que seamos la solución, pero parte de ella sí. (...) Ahora viene que las cosas se pongan sobre el papel. Y ese es el paso difícil de dar. Y ese es el paso difícil de dar” (AGETT).

“We know that an evolution concerning the evaluation and the notion of “the agency” is taking place. There used to be demonstrations outside agencies, people throwing stones and breaking windows, invading the branches, turning desks upside down. Now, it seems that unions have realized [how important employment agencies are]”⁵⁰² (Representative of Assolavoro).

As far as the perception of the public sector is concerned, a general distrust by the Spanish and Italian interviewees can be detected, which is described to prevent the unemployed and enterprises from overcoming prejudices. The overall idea is that the public employment service will never be able to find a job for an employed person. Private agencies are aware of this mistrust towards the public sector that they use for imposing themselves within the stakeholders that implement employment policies. This is especially evident in the interviews of the Spanish representatives of AGETT:

“There you can see the trust towards the public employment service (ironic tone), because, after all, those who want to apply for unemployment benefits have to register at the public services. And, indeed, those who cannot receive unemployment benefits do not register, as you can read in the statistics (laughs). But how many companies do rely on the public employment service? how many? How many deals do they manage per month? 30,000? Puff, that is nothing. So, the scarce trust in the public employment service is evident not only in the supply side but also in the demand side”⁵⁰³ (Representative of AGETT).

The perception of scarce efficacy of the public sector is reported by both Italian and Spanish interviewees in a generalised way. Furthermore, the Spanish representative of CCOO as well as the Italian representative of the Sicily Region express their own feeling of helplessness with regard to the participation of the public sector in the implementation of policies:

⁵⁰² “Dà il segno che un percorso evolutivo anche nella valutazione, nella concezione di ciò che è l’agenzia, c’è ed è in corso; da che c’erano manifestazioni fuori dalle agenzie con sassi e rottura delle vetrine, invasioni all’interno delle filiali, rovesciamento di scrivanie; oggi sembra che anche il sindacato si sia reso conto [di quanto sono importanti le agenzie per l’impiego]” (Assolavoro).

⁵⁰³ “Pero ahí, ahí se ve precisamente la confianza del sistema en el servicio público de empleo porque al fin y al cabo el parado que quiere cobrar una prestación no le quedan más narices que apuntarse y aparecer como vacante..O sea como..Y de hecho los que no tienen prestación no se apuntan (risas) que es lo que sale en los datos. Pero cuantas empresa confían en el servicio público de empleo ¿cuántas? ¿cuántas ofertas tienen al mes?¿30.000? Es que. .puff, o sea.. no es nada. Entonces, ya no solo por el lado de la oferta sino también por el de la demanda, que ahí se pone de manifiesto que la confianza en el servicio público de empleo pues es muy baja” (AGETT).

*“This is the least [we can do]. It is the least and all we can do at one and the same time”*⁵⁰⁴ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

*“I have this sense of inadequacy in my own role (...); unfortunately, we live a daily sense of discouragement because we cannot meet the most pressing needs”*⁵⁰⁵ (Representative of Sicily Region).

In synthesis, a first difference between the Spanish case and the Italian case can be traced with regard to the meaning and the use of social dialogue. While in the Spanish case social dialogue seems to have worked in the last decades until 2008, in spite of the claims by local governance and NGOs for a major involvement, in the Italian case it seems to have encountered relevant obstacles because of the government's aversion to favour its development. This is also confirmed by the literature in the field, which highlights a weakening of social dialogue since 2001 in the Italian case and a recent strengthening in the Spanish case (Alacevich, 2007). In addition to this, the Italian interviewees highlight a misuse that has often made social dialogue an expedient for avoiding of assuming a definite and clear position. Furthermore, Italian actors consider social dialogue to be mostly useful for meeting the labour market's needs more than representing workers and other people, i.e. the youth. In Spain, the great number of stakeholders involved in the policy process seems to be widely accepted, but not completely acknowledged. Spanish NGOs seem to be aware of their position and to require a full participation, whereas Italian NGOs seem to not consider themselves as legitimate stakeholders as much as the Spanish counterpart, which the absence of claims by the interviewees seems to hint. Also private profit agencies research legitimation for participating in the implementation of employment policies, since their entrance in the arena of employment policies has been difficult in a certain extent. While the Spanish representatives of employment agencies focus mainly on their political and normative legitimation, the Italian representative seems to focus mainly on the acceptance of the agencies by the population and trade unions. With regard to the relationship with trade unions, in the Spanish case, trade unions are depicted to have hindered the entrance of employment agencies, whereas public institutions seem to have welcomed their presence much more. While NGOs seem to justify their own existence through the specific target of users they care for, private agencies seem to use their own expertise in the labour market for the same scope. Collaboration between the public and private sectors is identified by both Spanish and Italian interviewees as a major need. Nevertheless, an imbalanced relationship emerges in the

⁵⁰⁴ “Esto es lo.. lo mínimo. Es lo mínimo y lo único que podemos hacer” (CCOO at national level).

⁵⁰⁵ “Ho questo senso di inadeguatezza del ruolo (...); purtroppo giornalmente viviamo questo senso di sconforto perchè non riusciamo a venire incontro a quelle che sono le esigenze più pressanti” (Sicily Region).

discourses of the interviewees. The superiority of one sector on the other varies according to the actor interviewed, even if a generalised distrust towards the efficiency of the public sector prevails, even by public officials. As shown also in Chapter X, both employees and employers are reported to be skeptical of the public sector and the Spanish representatives of private agencies use the mistrust for establishing themselves. We now move on to observe how the interviewees construct the type of participation of the social partners and civil society organizations.

12.3 Kinds of participation in social dialogue

A first distinction that we can adopt to analyse the kind of involvement of social partners in social dialogue and that is identified as an important criterion of evaluation by the interviewees concerns the dichotomy between advisory and decision-making participation. In the Italian case, the national representative of CISL states that the instrument of collective bargaining, although with an advisory function, has had a strong influence when defining agreements, particularly as regards to the issue of retraining. Nonetheless, the major example of agreement that the representative of CISL describes dates to the '90s and does not refer to the field of employment policies, but to the economic goal of achieving the possibility of adopting the European currency. At the regional level, the representative of the Region of Sicily highlights the prominence of collective bargaining on employment policies and the wide use of the Tripartite Commission as organ of consultation. The representative emphasizes that the involvement of social partners – regional government, employers' associations and trade unions – represents a picture of the world of employment, even if occurs primarily on a level of design and management of policies:

*“Yes, advisory [participation], but also very substantial because we also did several agreements in recent years with the regional governments in order to make policies of re-training and re-qualification. Then, of course, effects are always influenced by economic cycles. If they are negative, as they were since 2008, it is clear that [bargaining] does not give satisfactory results. Despite this, there are also several positive results. For instance, the collective bargaining carried out in the '93, which concerned economic more than labour issues, allowed Italy to meet the European requirements for obtaining the European currency; this was done through collective bargaining”*⁵⁰⁶ (Representative of CISL at national level).

⁵⁰⁶ “Sì, consultivo, ma anche molto sostanziale; insomma, perché abbiamo fatto anche parecchi accordi in questi anni a giro per le regioni per fare le politiche riformative, per fare le politiche di riqualificazione. Poi naturalmente gli effetti sono sempre condizionati dal ciclo economico che se è negativo come lo è stato ormai il trattamento dal 2008, è chiaro che non ti dà risultati soddisfacenti; però, nonostante questo, ci sono parecchi risultati positivi: quella del '93 era una

*“The Regional Commission for Employment is the actual body that represents all social partners. It is a picture of the world of work including all the stakeholders. The Commission is the highest organ of consultation related to work; it is located in this department. It includes the Confederation of Italian Industries (Confindustria), trade unions and all the organizations that are involved in planning and management but do not want to get involved in the provision of services”*⁵⁰⁷ (Representative of Sicily Region).

The instrument of the Tripartite Commission also works at the provincial level. Bringing together the Province, the trade unions and employers’ associations, the Commission functions as advisory body of the Province itself, for the purposes of the debate on the planning of activities related to the field of work and training. As regards to the involvement of social actors, it is interesting to look at the opinion of the representative of Caritas. While at the local level, the involvement of Caritas is depicted to be complex and articulated, at the national level, it is described as highly unsatisfactory. Indeed, the involvement is carried out as an ‘emergency measure’ useful to address urgent problems related to certain categories of individuals. This does neither lead to clearly defined targeted policies nor to the growth of social actors as ‘mature partners’ in an ongoing debate, in the view of the representative:

*“Segments, segments of action; although, they are better than nothing, of course! But this is not social dialogue. This is a form of cooperation or collaboration that is especially helpful when it can affect at least the legislation, at least partly; still, this not the way for constructing [social dialogue]”*⁵⁰⁸ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Italy).

In the Spanish case, in the view of the trade union representatives, a mostly informative and consultative participation seems to characterize the social dialogue at the national level. Informations are passed on from the government to the unions so as to let them know decisions

concertazione sui temi economici non del lavoro, che però permise all'Italia di centrare l'obiettivo europeo, di raggiungere l'indice di bilancio che permetteva di accedere alla moneta europea; fu fatto attraverso la concertazione” (CISL at national level).

⁵⁰⁷ “Da noi la commissione regionale per l'impiego è a tutti gli effetti l'organo che è rappresentativo di tutte le parti sociali: è uno spaccato del mondo del lavoro dove ci sono tutti i soggetti. E’ il massimo organo di consultazione in materia di lavoro e che ha sede in questo assessorato; e c’è Confindustria, organizzazioni sindacali e tutte le organizzazioni di categoria che vengono coinvolte nella fase di programmazione, nella fase di gestione, ma non si vogliono far coinvolgere nell'erogazione delle attività” (Sicily Region).

⁵⁰⁸ “Segmenti, segmenti di azioni che, figuriamoci, meglio del nulla evidentemente, però non è un dialogo sociale; sono forme di collaborazione, collaborazioni utili, tanto più quando riescono a condizionare quanto meno in maniera parziale i fenomeni legislativi, però evidentemente così non si costruisce” (Caritas at national level, Italy).

once they have already been taken. The perception of the representative of CCOO is that trade unions are not participating in the development of employment policies:

*“Yes, we are convened. What happens is... Let’s see, specifically, Spain is one of the few countries where social partners are convened, which in other countries do not even occur. In Spain, we are convened for participating in consultative and informative meetings, eh... and we are not allowed to take decisions (...). Until now, we were only convened for providing informations or requiring consultancy. But we have not power or ability to negotiate employment policies with the government”*⁵⁰⁹ (Representative of UGT at national level).

*“No... I mean, we are not participating. We are not participating!”*⁵¹⁰ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

Trade unions representatives at regional level show a different position, since they state to have a decision-making role with voice and vote in the field of active policies. Negotiation is guaranteed by the presence of trade unions in different organs, including – for instance in the Andalusia Region – the Andalusian Employment Service (SAE), the highest decision-making body in matters of employment:

*“We are not merely consulting entities queried about rules; we are those with whom norms are negotiated”*⁵¹¹ (Representative of CCOO Andalusia).

*“As a novel unique aspect, it is worthy underlining that [Andalusia] is the only autonomous community in which the two main trade unions are part of the SAE Board of Directors”*⁵¹² (Representative of UGT Andalusia).

⁵⁰⁹ “Sí, se nos convoca. Lo que pasa es.. eh... vamos a ver, son.. eh..concretamente en España, y de los pocos países donde se convoca a los interlocutores sociales, ¿eh? Que en otros países ni si quiera eso, pero en España se nos convoca pero son fundamentalmente.. eh... reuniones de carácter consultivo e informativo, eh.. y no tenemos ninguna capacidad de decir (...). Hasta ahora, a nosotros lo único que nos han hecho, eh.. ha sido, eh... llamarnos a nivel de información y consulta. Pero nosotros no tenemos ningún poder, hasta ahora, ninguna capacidad para pactar con la administración determinadas políticas de empleo” (UGT at national level).

⁵¹⁰ “No.. digo, si nosotros no estamos participando. Y es que no estamos participando” (CCOO at national level).

⁵¹¹ “No somos exclusivamente meros entes consultores a los que se consulta una norma, somos con quién se negocia una norma” (CCOO Andalusia).

⁵¹² “Como aspecto novedoso, único, cabe reseñar que [Andalusia] es la única Comunidad Autónoma dónde los dos sindicatos mayoritarios forman parte del Consejo de Administración del SAE” (UGT Andalusia).

A further distinction that can be made concerning the involvement of the various bodies and actors is between a kind of effective and substantial participation and a type of formal participation that does not find a real space for dialogue. At the national level, the perception of Spanish and Italian respondents is similar. Indeed, in the Italian case, according to the national representative of CISL, the advisory contribution of social actors' emerges as anything but formal. In the Spanish case, the Spanish expert expresses the same perceptions:

*“Yes, [our role was mainly about] advisory, but also very substantial because recently we signed several agreements on retraining policies in some regions”*⁵¹³ (Representative of CISL at national level).

*“[Our contribution is] substantial. Yes, yes. It is not merely formal. We definitely participated to some [extent]”*⁵¹⁴ (Spanish expert).

At regional level, a different picture emerges in the Italian case; the representative of CGIL Tuscany depicts it to be more formal and ineffective at the official level and more substantial at the relational level. The representative of UIL Tuscany underlines instead that the social dialogue take place only at a formal level and that many initiatives born in cooperation among the stakeholders do not find any practical application. Yet, at the same time, as underlined by the representative of UPI Tuscany, collective bargaining overall in this region worked. The representative of Caritas shows a different point of view, according to which involvement is consultative, formal and not very effective:

“We are often more focused on the form, rather than on the substance. Indeed, when there are 40 associations around a table discussing for 4 hours (...), some asymmetries ensue; but, I have to say that beyond the formal venues, the relationship among the Regional Authority, local authorities in particular, (...), unions and professional corporations is – all things considered – very straightforward, very fluid. So, it is among the associations and us. If there is a problem, we talk, we meet. There is no need for solemnity, and I think we have handled many difficult situations with less conflict because of this [informal relationship], more than anywhere else. So, there is a formal

⁵¹³ “Sì consultivo, ma anche molto sostanziale, insomma, perchè abbiamo fatto anche parecchi accordi in questi anni a giro per le regioni per fare le politiche di riqualificazione” (CISL at national level).

⁵¹⁴ “Sustancial. Sí, sí. No meramente formal, sino que se participaba hasta cierto [punto]” (Spanish expert).

basis that works, but I have doubts on its effectiveness (...); and then there is an [informal] dialogue that never fails”⁵¹⁵ (Representative of CGIL Tuscany).

“I believe that the dialogue with social partners – namely, trade unions and employers’ associations – has been valid. Consultations in this region worked. It was not only a formal involvement, rather a substantial involvement in the process of decision-taking. It is clear that since 2008 the configuration of the relationships has changed, because the government is working in a situation of urgency”⁵¹⁶ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

“So, we wrote a nice document, we made an official signature in the red room of the Province of Florence, but once everything was signed it remained ineffective, because nobody has done anything since then”⁵¹⁷ (Representative of UIL Tuscany).

“The plans were drafted by the Ministry of Labour theoretically after one or two consultation meetings; they were not even sent to the stakeholders, and then, the following year, we all were called again for drafting the following [plans]. And the time between these two moments was basically empty. This was not social dialogue, it was a kind of invitation to a dinner from time to time, so to speak, whose main purpose was to be informed on how people were doing”⁵¹⁸ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Italy).

Some Spanish actors also lament the lack of substantial involvement by trade unions at the regional level. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that the political orientation of regional government affects notably the possibility of social dialogue. In the following extract, the

⁵¹⁵ “Siamo spesso più alla forma che alla sostanza perché quando metti intorno a un tavolo per 4 ore 40 associazioni (...), insomma c'è qualche asimmetria; però devo dire che al di là delle sedi formali e conclamate, il rapporto tra l'istituzione Regione, soprattutto gli enti locali (...), con gli altri sindacati, con le categorie, è tutto sommato - anche tra le associazioni di rappresentanza e noi - molto lineare, molto fluido. Se c'è un problema ci sentiamo, ci incontriamo, non c'è bisogno di particolari solennità, e credo che più che altrove si siano gestite tante situazioni difficili con tassi di minor conflittualità proprio per questo. Quindi c'è una sede formale che funziona benissimo sulla cui efficacia però esprimo qualche perplessità (...), e poi c'è un dialogo che non viene mai meno” (CGIL Tuscany).

⁵¹⁶ “Io credo che il dialogo con le parti sociali - considerando nel concetto delle parti sociali, oltre al sindacato, anche le associazioni di categoria - in Regione Toscana sia stato valido; la concertazione in questa regione ha funzionato (...). Complessivamente non è stato, diciamo, solo un coinvolgimento formale, è stato un coinvolgimento sostanziale nelle scelte; è chiaro che in questa fase, dal 2008 in poi, è cambiato anche il profilo del rapporto con le parti sociali perché si è governati e si sta governando l'emergenza” (UPI Tuscany).

⁵¹⁷ “Quindi abbiamo scritto un bel documento, abbiamo fatto una firma ufficiale nella sala rossa della Provincia di Firenze, però una volta firmato è rimasto tutto lì, perché nessuno l'ha fatto proprio” (UIL Tuscany).

⁵¹⁸ “Cioè i piani venivano elaborati teoricamente dopo la consultazione di una o due riunioni a livello di ministero del lavoro, non venivano neanche rinviati ai soggetti e poi l'anno successivo si veniva riconvocati per la costruzione del [piano] successivo e il tempo in mezzo era un tempo assolutamente vuoto sostanzialmente; cioè, di fatto,...questo chiaramente non era un dialogo sociale è un cortese invito a cena, diciamo così, di tanto in tanto, tanto per capire come si sta gli uni e gli altri” (Caritas at national level, Italy).

representative of UGT Valencia illustrates how the involvement of the union takes place, claiming for a major participation in the policy process. Indeed, according to the representative, the participation seems to be mainly formal and substantially ignored.

“They prepare a program to promote employment, then they send us the draft of the order that will be delivered, we review it and then we make our contributions, which are often ignored; some of the contributions are picked, but most of the time this does not happen, at least at the degree that we would like; generally, then we meet, they explain the yes and no and finally publish the order. This is the level of participation we have. Then, through the bodies of the SERVEF (...), both economic and social partners are informed about the degree of implementation of these programs, the budget and so on. And that’s it”⁵¹⁹ (Representative of UGT Valencia).

A last distinction that can be made to better understand the involvement of various actors concerns the participation in the design and/or implementation of policies. Both Spanish and Italian unions are involved in the two types of participation, in as much as they contribute to the design of policies with the government and the employers’ associations as well as to the implementation of policies in terms of training and guidance. NGOs and a group of other entities are also totally involved in the implementation, but they do not participate in the design of policies, such as in the definition of categories that structure social questions. In Spain, this aspect is particularly marked because of the so-called ‘double degree of decentralization’. NGOs work in collaboration with the regional government for the proposal of projects according to the needs of the territory in which they operate. They are subcontracted according to rigid selection criteria, for example the number of technicians involved, the technicians’ experience, and the evaluation of performance. The relationship between the Public Employment Service and collaborative entities remains unclear, even if the former is supposed to coordinate the latter. At the regional level the relationship between public employment services and entities is considered crucial for establishing forms of coordination and integration between the activities carried out by the social partners cooperating in this field, so that the unemployed receive a number of ordained and relevant offers for re-employment. Nonetheless, a mismanagement of coordination is recorded by the national representative of CCOO:

⁵¹⁹ “Nosotros participamos a nivel.. eh..ellos van a sacar, por ejemplo.. sacan un programa de fomento de empleo.. o un programa de empleo, nos envían el borrador de la orden que van a sacar, nosotros lo revisamos, hacemos nuestras aportaciones, casi nunca se nos hace caso, pero..no..la mayoría no en el grado que nos gustaría a nosotros; nos reunimos, nos explican el por qué sí y el por qué no y luego publican la orden. Ese es el grado de participación que nosotros tenemos. Luego, a través de los órganos de dirección del SERVEF, (...), se nos da cuenta, tanto a los agentes económicos como a los agentes sociales del grado de ejecución de esos programas, el presupuesto y demás. Y ya está” (UGT Valencia).

*“No committee among Autonomous Communities, Public Employment Service and social partners has yet been convened. So, the presence of a committee was established by law in 2003 but until the end of 2007 it was not regulated by any Decree (i.e. how many people have to be included and who compose it, etc.), and to this day it still has not been convoked. Therefore, there is no annual plan; there is no coordination, with the sole exception of the Sectorial Conference, which is the area of coordination between the General Administration of the State and Autonomous Communities. We are not involved in the Sectorial Conference and, ultimately, instruments of coordination between administrations have not yet been developed (...). But, of course, I could not provide a good example of regional public employment services that have achieved to coordinate perfectly collaborative entities according to different objectives and tasks, so to avoid they act concurrently. I could not find any”*⁵²⁰ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

Public employment services are described to be engaged in preparing calls for collaborative bodies and monitoring their economic management, which converts them prevalently in manager of public expenditures. Furthermore, this often leads collaborative bodies to compete with each other in a fight for the survival within the labour market: *“I see that they act based on competition, in order to obtain funding”*⁵²¹ (SAE). However, some measures have been taken to ensure that these entities may cooperate, rather than compete. Among them, the proposal of the Region of Andalusia considers that if individuals need specific measures offered by other organizations from those that they asked for help, the hours of care that they will receive, and which are one of the indicators for evaluating results, will be counted for both entities. This is intended to eliminate external competitive factors that may affect the integration process of the unemployed:

*“Because these ‘hours of attention’ are counted for the two entities engaged in attending the unemployed; therefore, there are not problems (...). This do not create competition between them”*⁵²² (Representative of SAE).

⁵²⁰ “..Un consejo donde estarían las comunidades autónomas, el Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal y los interlocutores sociales todavía no se ha convocado. O sea, desde el año 2003 esto está establecido en la ley hasta finales del año 2007 no se regula a través del Decreto, es decir, cuantas personas lo componen, quienes lo componen, etcétera, etcétera.. y a día de hoy todavía no se ha convocado. Por tanto, no hay plan anual..eh..en fin, no hay ninguna coordinación, salvo, la Conferencia Sectorial que es el ámbito donde.. de.. de coordinación de la Administración General del Estado con las comunidades autónomas. Ahí no estamos nosotros y en definitiva, los instrumentos de coordinación entre administraciones no se han desarrollado (...). Pero desde luego, yo no podría señalar un buen ejemplo de servicio público de empleo autonómico donde haya integrado perfectamente a las entidades colaboradoras en base a unos objetivos de trabajo..y..y.. en base a división de tareas..no.. para que no actúen en concurrencia. No podría señalar a ninguna” (CCOO at national level).

⁵²¹ “Yo veo que actúan, digamos, en régimen de concurrencia, pues para obtener una subvención..” (SAE).

⁵²² “Porque esas horas de atención, también se derivan, le cuentan a las dos entidades, entonces eso lo decimos para que no hubiera problemas (...). Con lo cual no crea entre ellos.. eh.. política de fricciones y ellos..” (SAE).

Although the main objective of NGOs and other collaborative entities is to provide services, the representative of Caritas claims the right to participate in the design of social and employment policies on the basis of their expertise on vulnerable subjects and on the territory. This point is especially important for the Spanish representative of Caritas, who states that Caritas is missing from the design of policies.

*“Eh ... therefore we are not only implementing policies, but also – as we meet these people at risk of exclusion – we may be able to suggest the most appropriate policies for them. Whereupon, the role of Caritas and NGOs is not only to implement policies, but also to negotiate, to make suggestions and to build new proposals”*⁵²³ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

As far as the period under analysis is concerned, the Spanish expert believes that in Spain social dialogue developed in a certain extent. In his view, it was only later, in 2010, that a break of the social dialogue took place:

*“There was considerable social dialogue .. within a certain measure; there was collective bargaining of social policies, even if with relevant territorial differences”*⁵²⁴ (Spanish expert).

In the Italian case, the political attitude towards social dialogue in the period under analysis is described to be controversial. The Italian expert in fact emphasizes that the authorities have impeded or hindered the participation of social actors: *“[Left-wing governments] had to expand the audience of stakeholders and they did not do it, whereas the government of the centre-right wing had not the conceptual references [of enhancing social dialogue], they had them not at all”*⁵²⁵ (Italian expert). In particular, the interviewees lament that, under Berlusconi’s government, the goals of the exclusion of the union and the refusal of the collective bargaining for the compromise of conflicting interests were pursued:

“The government by Berlusconi was based on separations and on the attempt to divide the unions. Indeed, what it did was to seek prior approval of the associations of employers and of those

⁵²³ “Eh.. por tanto, no solo somos ejecutores de políticas, sino que también al conocer a esas personas..eh.. en situación y riesgo de exclusión, pues somos los que podemos decir..eh.. cuáles son las políticas más adecuadas para estas personas. Con lo cual, el papel de.. de Cáritas, de las ONGs, no solo es de ejecutores de políticas sino evidentemente también de estar negociando, sugiriendo, proponiendo..eh.. políticas” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

⁵²⁴ “Hubo bastante diálogo social.. dentro de un cierto margen, pero por lo menos hubo cierta concertación social de las políticas, con diferencias..sobre todo a nivel territorial..” (Spanish expert).

⁵²⁵ “[I governi di sinistra] quindi dovevano allargare questa platea di stakaholders e non lo hanno fatto; i governi di centro destra viceversa non avevano questi riferimenti concettuali, non ce l'avevano proprio” (Italian expert).

*that the Minister Sacconi used to define the ‘reformist unions’, such as CISL and UIL. But above all, Berlusconi’s government was mainly based on the idea that silencing the CGIL was the only possible way out of ‘backwardness and inefficiency’ of this country”*⁵²⁶ (Representative of CGIL at national level).

*“[Both the right-wing and the left-center wing governments] have pursued a constant Thatcherite policy of de-legitimization of trade unions and of fracture between the unions. They did not believe at all in negotiation, nor they believed in social dialogue between the parties which instead plays a fundamental role in employment for taking into account the interests of everybody (...). Because employment policies – differently to fiscal and monetary policies – work thanks to employees and employers”*⁵²⁷ (Italian expert).

To sum up, both Italian and Spanish interviewees construct social dialogue at a national level as a consultative participation. The representatives of trade unions claim for a major participation that has been limited so far to an informative and advising involvement. An interesting difference between the Spanish and Italian case can be remarked at the regional level. Indeed, while Italian interviewees depict a situation similar to the national level, Spanish interviewees deem that the dialogue turn into a full involvement in the decision-making process of trade unions, at least in the case of Andalucia. Nevertheless, both Spanish and Italian trade union representatives construct their participation as absolutely substantial at the national level, whereas the regional representatives describe it as controversial and mostly formal. Also, Spanish and Italian trade unions representatives highlight the contribution of the unions to the design and implementation of employment policies, while mostly Spanish representatives of other civil society organizations (Caritas and Femp) that are engaged in the implementation of policies call for their involvement in the design process. In the end, the general construction of Spanish interviewees is that social dialogue has worked during the last decades, facing an opposite trend since 2008. By contrast, Italian interviewees depict the involvement of social partners as a path full of obstacles, due to the national government that has ignored or even hampered their participation. Finally, we will observe

⁵²⁶ “La stagione berlusconiana si è fondata sulla divisione, sulla ricerca della divisione sindacale. Infatti il modo con il quale il governo Berlusconi ha agito è stata la ricerca del consenso preventivo delle associazioni dei datori di lavoro e di quello che il ministro Sacconi chiamava il sindacato riformista fra CISL e UIL; ma soprattutto si basava sull’idea pregiudiziale che per uscire dalle condizioni “di arretratezza e inefficienza” di questo Paese, bisognasse mettere la CGIL in condizioni di non nuocere” (CGIL at national level).

⁵²⁷ “Hanno perseguito una politica taceriana di delegittimazione dei sindacati costante, di frattura fra i sindacati. Non hanno creduto minimamente alla concertazione, comunque al dialogo tra le parti che è importantissimo nelle politiche del lavoro per tener conto di tutti gli interessi (...). Anche perchè le politiche del lavoro sono - diversamente da una politica fiscale e monetaria - sono politiche che camminano sulle gambe dei lavoratori e dei datori di lavoro” (Italian expert).

in the next paragraph how the interviewees construct the ‘effectiveness’ of social dialogue and the involvement of civil society.

12.4 Effectiveness of social dialogue

Different opinions can be detected as regards to the effectiveness of social dialogue and the involvement of social partners. Tripartite social dialogue is depicted to be partly present, at least to a certain extent, in the Italian case. The analysis of the Italian interviewees shows that the effectiveness of networking reflects the traditional gap between the North and the South of the country. Indeed, the representative of the Sicily Region points out that social dialogue have developed in absence of a systemic view throughout the territory, which has led to the constitution of a fragmented framework. Moreover, the assumption of the representative of UPI Sicily is that relationships between employers’ associations and trade unions are still problematic and cannot yet be considered as mature. By contrast, the representative of UPI Tuscany states that, although putting into contact all the actors working on employment policies required a great effort, social dialogue took place:

*“Technically, social dialogue works. Then, creating a dialogue between all these negotiating tables and interventions is always very hard. However, the situation has improved from this point of view during the last 10 years”*⁵²⁸ (Representative of UPI Tuscany).

*“There is no a permanent dialogue among different stakeholders. It depends upon the situation. There are surely situations in which the stakeholders meet and have a dialogue, which, nevertheless, remains often isolated and never becomes part of a system”*⁵²⁹ (Representative of Sicily Region).

“The trend is oriented towards the full involvement; however, the full participation probably has been achieved in terms of workers and trade unions. Instead, it is less effective in the case of firms,

⁵²⁸ “Tecnicamente, la filiera funzionerebbe. Tutto poi è sempre molto faticoso, far dialogare tutti questi tavoli, tutti questi, tra virgolette, interventi; però da 10 anni a questa parte la situazione è migliorata da questo punto di vista” (UPI Tuscany).

⁵²⁹ “Non esiste un meccanismo tale per cui le parti comunque si raccordano in maniera costante; dipende dalle singole situazioni contingenti, per cui ci sono delle situazioni in cui i tavoli si riuniscono con le parti sociali, si dialoga, sicuramente si dialoga, ma rimane chiusa poi in quel quadro di situazione specifica. Non diventa mai un quadro di sistema” (Sicily Region).

*because companies still tend to assert their needs firstly. Nowadays, perhaps, the dialogue between employers' associations and employment services is not mature*⁵³⁰ (Representative of UPI Sicily).

In the Spanish case, tripartite social dialogue and the confrontation between the regional government with civil society organizations, collaborative entities and private agencies working on employment policies is described to be more developed than in Italy. It is worth remembering that this reflection on the social dialogue is useful to understand what are individual possibilities and whether people are actually considered as a cornerstone by all entities and social partners. In this regard, the analysis of the interviews of the trade union representative at national level frames the individual undergoing all the failures due to a poor social dialogue and lack of coordination between the entities involved:

*“And as I said before, this is what failed: all the actors act in competition and not in collaboration. I say this always looking at the unemployed person”*⁵³¹ (Representative of CCOO at national level).

*“There is a great proliferation of collaborative entities; consequently, in many occasions, these only confuse the unemployed and discourage them from undertaking the types of actions they think favourable for entering the labor market. But, in the end, the unemployed realize – because people are not stupid – that all this is a simple dizziness and that they are sent from one entity to another for receiving the same action or a similar action that they have already received a few days before”*⁵³² (Representative of UGT at national level).

However, the national representative of Caritas Spain report cases of successful coordination, synergies and social dialogue, as well as of cooperative interactions leading to good results, following the idea of the person in the middle:

⁵³⁰ “La tendenza è al pieno coinvolgimento; soltanto che questo pieno coinvolgimento, probabilmente, mentre si è realizzato sul fronte dei lavoratori e quindi dei loro rappresentanti sindacati ecc.; è resa un poco meno efficace dal punto di vista delle imprese perchè le imprese ancora oggi tendono primo ad affermare i loro fabbisogni, quindi le loro necessità. Oggi, forse, ancora il raccordo non è pieno fra datori di lavoro e agenzie per l'impiego” (UPI Sicilia).

⁵³¹ “Y como decía antes, esto es lo que ha fallado, porque todos esos actores actúan en concurrencia y no en colaboración. Siempre, lo digo de cara a la persona desempleada” (CCOO at national level).

⁵³² “Hay tal proliferación de entidades colaboradoras que lo que están haciendo a los parados, de verdad, es en muchísimas ocasiones, marearles. Marearles y desincentivarles de cara a emprender determinado tipo de acciones que ellos pudieran pensar que les favorecen de cara al mercado de trabajo. Porque al final, se dan cuenta, porque la gente no es tonta, al final se dan cuenta, de que esto es un simple mareo de mandarte de una entidad a otra a recibir la misma acción o parecida que la que has recibido hace unos días” (UGT at national level).

“It depends very much on the place and the people. There are cities – for example, Zaragoza – where coordination between NGOs, municipalities, unions and autonomous regions is working pretty good. It can be improved, but it works and that ultimately leads to efficiency. This means that nobody considers users in terms of ‘these are my users’. Instead, the idea is that ‘the user in the center’, which is also what we state here in Caritas: ‘the person is in the center’, and all the services available in a geographical area have to serve that person to find a job (...). Eh .. we are interested to contribute and, obviously, we want that everyone face its own responsibilities. This means that [in our view] the Administration has to assume the leadership and to strive for the employment of all citizens, including the most vulnerable, who actually deserve this effort; and well, I think that Caritas and the other social bodies, with which Caritas collaborate, bet on this”⁵³³ (Representative of Caritas at national level, Spain).

In synthesis, social dialogue is depicted as more developed in the Spanish case than in the Italian case. A fragmented picture is outlined by the Italian representative of Sicily, whereas a better situation results from the representative of Tuscany. The opinion of the representatives on social dialogue mirrors in a sense the North/South divide. In the Spanish case, the national representatives of trade unions underline the drawback of social dialogue for the unemployed. By contrast, the representative of Caritas, whose intentions seem directed at making evident the positive collaboration of NGOs, highlights the cases in which the dialogue worked successfully. Again the representative of Caritas reveals the effort by NGOs to take part in the social dialogue within the field of employment policies.

12.5 Concluding remarks

The analysis of the indicator “social dialogue and involvement of civil society organizations” reveals that, according to the interviewees, the public policy process has not been oriented to setting an open, effective and substantial discursive space. Thus, the informational basis of the Spanish and Italian societies seems to have not stemmed from the full involvement of social partners and

⁵³³ “Sí. Eh.. depende mucho del..depende mucho del sitio, de las personas. Eh.. hay ciudades, por ejemplo, Zaragoza, donde la coordinación entre ONGs, ayuntamientos, sindicatos, comunidad autónoma, se está dando bastante bien ¿eh? Donde esto fluye. Todo es mejorable siempre ¿no? pero fluye y eso al final lleva a una eficiencia. Es decir, a que.. no se.. no considere cada servicio a los participantes o a los usuarios de este servicio “estos son mis usuarios” si no que el centro es el usuario, es un poco lo que defendemos desde Cáritas, el centro es la persona, y todos los servicios que hay en un territorio están al servicio de que esa persona encuentre un empleo ¿um? (...) Eh.. a nosotros nos interesa contribuir y nos interesa evidentemente que.. que cada palo aguante su vela. Es decir, que la Administración asuma el liderazgo y la energía que merece el empleo de todos los ciudadanos, también de los más desprotegidos, eh.. y bueno, pues ahí yo creo que.. Vamos, Cáritas desde luego, y de las demás entidades sociales con las que nos relacionamos también, que.. que apuestan por esto” (Caritas at national level, Spain).

individual's representatives. Indeed, according to their opinion, their low participation in the design and implementation of employment policies has not allowed for the enhancement of a closer contact with the territory and the people. The Italian interviewees affirm that in Italy over the last decades the governments have hindered the involvement of trade unions in the policy process with scarce consideration for other civil society organizations. Also, the interviewees deem that the social dialogue has been often used inappropriately and rarely with the scope of broadening individuals' voice in the decision-making process. In the Spanish case, the actors interviewed depict a strong attempt by the government and the social partners for making social dialogue works, at least until 2008, hinting a maturing social dialogue. Besides, the basin of the stakeholders involved in the performing of employment policies result to be wider than in Italy. Spanish representatives of the NGO and of profit private agencies association research legitimization for participating in the implementation of employment policies. The justification the representative of the NGO uses at this scope concerns the specific target of users they care of, whereas the representatives of the private agency association refer mainly to their expertise. While the Spanish representatives of employment agencies focus mainly on their political and normative legitimization, the Italian representative seems to focus mainly on the acceptance of the agencies by the population and trade unions. Collaboration between the public and private sectors is identified by both Spanish and Italian interviewees as a major need. A generalised distrust towards the efficiency of the public sector is evident, even by public officials, which is used by the Spanish representatives of private agencies for establishing their superiority. All the actors interviewed – either trade union representatives, NGO representatives or employment agencies representatives – require a major substantial participation in the policy process, which seems to lack prevalently in both countries at national and regional level. Finally, the interviewees construct social dialogue as poorly effective and with scanty coordination among the entities implicated in the development of employment policies, with relevant consequences in defining individuals' opportunity of taking part in the process of enhancing their own capabilities. Italian and Spanish interviewees construct social dialogue at national level as a consultative participation. The representatives of trade unions claim for a major participation that has been limited so far to an informative and advising involvement. Nevertheless, both Spanish and Italian trade union representatives construct their participation as substantial at the national level, whereas the regional representatives describe it as controversial and mostly formal. Also, Spanish and Italian trade union representatives highlight the contribution of the unions to the design and implementation of employment policies, while mostly Spanish representatives of other civil society organizations that are engaged in the implementation of policies call for their involvement in the design process. Social dialogue is depicted to be not so much effective in the

Spanish and Italian cases. More specifically, the opinions of the Italian representatives on social dialogue reflect the North/South divide. In the Spanish case, the national representatives of trade unions point out the effects on the unemployed of a poor social dialogue and collaboration among the bodies involved in the policy implementation. By contrast, the representative of Caritas remarks the cases in which the dialogue worked successfully, thanks to the collaboration of NGOs.

Conclusions

The aim of this dissertation has been to compare employment policies and the mechanisms of fight against social vulnerability associated to a situation of precariousness or unemployment in Spain and Italy. In particular, this research has assessed in the light of the capabilities approach welfare systems and employment regimes as well as the cognitive and normative frameworks in relation to vulnerability in each context. Despite the considerable debate in the literature on comparative analysis, these countries have been assimilated into the same social model most of the time because of some common characteristics. These characteristics refer to the important role of family and micro-solidarity, the marginal position of the State in the accomplishment of welfare obligations, the scarce social protection against unemployment, the strong presence of undeclared work, the high segmentation of the system of income support for unemployed and the territorial fragmentation. These similarities have made inter-model differences among the Southern Europe and all the other members of the EU more evident than intra-model distinctions. This is also the consequence of a process of classification, that contributes to the construction of reality while ordering it in categories and naming it. Therefore, this dissertation has attempted to create the space for an analysis not only of the commonalities, but also of the divergences between the two countries. Such divergences between the two countries derive from the institutional and political configuration that produces diverse power relations as well as from dissimilar cognitive and normative frameworks that define social questions, distribute responsibilities and depict possible interventions. Moreover, differences stem from the specific evolution of social protection and active policies as well as from socio-economic and labour conditions, which gives rise to particular profiles of social vulnerability.

The concept of social vulnerability concerns individuals' exposure to instability, poverty and exclusion, due not only to the scarcity of resources, as by the weakness of the mechanisms used to obtain them and the inadequacy of the main systems of social integration. This social position compromises autonomy and the capacity of individuals and families for self-determination, insofar as it turns into a reduction of opportunities in life. The concept of social vulnerability is more undefined than other notions (i.e. poverty, unemployment and social exclusion), since it lies in the interstitial space among intertwined spheres of life (i.e. labour instability, care needs, housing problems). This dissertation has deepened only those related to unemployment, job transitions and integration into the labour market, paying also attention to the case of young people. The concept

seems especially suitable to capture the consequences produced by the new socio-economic configuration. The concept of social vulnerability can be enriched if treated in the light of the capabilities approach, according to which it also means the impossibility for people to exercise their freedom of choice and pursue what they value in their life. Starting from the assumption that social protection systems, institutional arrangements and labour legislations on the one hand and cognitive and normative frameworks on the other hand may tend to be capability- or vulnerability-enabler, this doctoral dissertation has explored the Spanish and Italian social models and flexicurity policies in relation to the topic of social vulnerability. The capabilities approach is especially useful when studying flexicurity policies. It is important to remark that an important element distinguishes the capabilities approach from flexicurity, in spite of the fact that both try to combine firms and workers' interests. Such element is represented by freedom and the possibility of choice. Indeed, according to Sen's approach, a trade-off between flexibility and security can be pursued insofar as it stems from an individual decision. No flexicurity informed by the capabilities approach can be reached if flexibility is the only option available to unemployed for surviving within the labour market. Moreover, as it has been argued in the literature, the activating orientation embedded in the concept flexicurity proposes a moralizing and individualizing view of unemployment, which might work in contexts where social and political conditions are favourable and power relations are well balanced. Nevertheless, where these conditions are not present, flexicurity fails and capabilities hardly achieve to convert into functionings. Therefore, a capabilities approach is necessary for reviewing the key concepts (i.e. unemployment and vulnerability as well as the meaning of the integration into the labour market) and evaluating social models and flexicurity policies.

The thesis aims to contribute to the literature on public policy assessment, insofar as it adopts a pluridimensional view for the evaluation of employment policies. Indeed, it combines the comparative perspective, the capabilities approach and the qualitative method in the light of a psychosocial focus. The psychosocial focus allows to underline the relations between the macro level and the individual, while the capabilities approach provides the cognitive and normative framework for carrying out the policy assessment. The comparative perspective results to be especially relevant, since in a capabilities approach the conversion factors that are embedded in each social model are fundamental in the fight of social vulnerability. However, social models in this thesis refer not only to institutions and policies, but also to ideologies and values. Therefore, the capabilities approach is used to analyse discourses and representations of key actors that are involved in the design and implementation of the employment policies, according to the assumption that vulnerability is tied to institutional, cognitive and political resources. The basic idea is that the capabilities approach is first and foremost a way of thinking, which allows to assess the cognitive

and normative framework of the actors that shape the meanings and logics of policies. Furthermore, actors' representations of the policy orientation influence the mode in which they participate to its definition. This dissertation aims to constitute a relevant attempt to use the capabilities approach for assessing cognitively and normatively ideas, meanings and discourses. This is the most original aspect of this research work. Indeed, the approach is generally applied for evaluating if the concrete conditions of people allow them to develop their capabilities. In this regards, it is worth remembering that the roots of Sen's approach have to be found in the discipline of economy. In this sense, the dissertation is an effort to foster an interdisciplinary perspective that embodies diverse dimensions of social vulnerability. The study provides an overview of the situation, representations and meanings that were widespread before the 2008 and that have constituted the ground on which the financial crisis have taken place. This type of investigation has been scarcely developed in comparative and evaluative studies of social policies. Nonetheless, the analysis of the cognitive frameworks is extremely relevant for better understanding values and ethics that inspire policies. Therefore, this research work claims the need of using a social psychological perspective that allows to point out the ideological dimension. Our attempt is also to remind that an alternative cognitive and normative framework other than the one proposed by the current paradigm does exist or can be created. Nevertheless, it requires a pervasive cultural revolution and, according to Lakoff (2004), a new language that could allow socially and politically constructing well-being in society. A further contribution of this dissertation consists in three aspects. First of all, we tried to propose valuable indicators that can be useful for the evaluation of public policies. Part of them stems from the literature on the Sens' approach, whereas the analysis of the interviews have led us to produce more specific categories. Secondly, we focused on underlining the differences – and not only the similarities – between Spain and Italy, which are frequently assumed by the literature to share the same social model. The adoption of a comparative perspective allows us to better comprehend flexicurity policies, which stem from specifics social, political and economic contexts. Finally, attention has been paid to the youth, which represents one of the most vulnerable group in both countries under analysis.

This investigation develops in three parts. The first part presents the theoretical and methodological framework that has been used for the following analysis. The second part traces the profiles of vulnerability in the Spanish and Italian context, focusing on productive structures, contractual arrangements, social protection and active policies as well as legislative provisions, which all act as conversion factors defining individual's opportunities. The third part studies the cognitive and normative frameworks as well as the representations of key actors through a qualitative analysis of the contents and discourses. In this thesis the analysis of social models and

flexicurity policies have been carried out in relation to the period 1995-2008, such as before the outbreak of the financial crisis when emergency measures started to be applied.

Looking at the results of the first empirical part, as it emerges in Chapter V, in Spain, the Francoist dictatorship has led to the late development of the welfare system that has undergone several changes in correspondence with variations of the labour market and the productive structure. Such changes and variations have had an extensive and abrupt nature. In fact, the financial crisis of 2008 followed an intense and brief period of labour expansion and growth of GDP. By contrast, in the same period Italy performs economically very poorly with a consequent low productivity. Here, variations have been moderate and have occurred slowly in comparison to the Spanish ones. As far as GDP per capita is concerned, Italy exhibits high punctuations in comparison to Spain and the European average, which indicates better standard of living conditions. A decreasing trend characterizes the Italian case, while the Spanish case reveals an opposite trend over the same period. The two countries show low average yearly compensations per employee, but Spain holds a level of yearly compensation lower than Italy and the European average as well as low growth compensation in the period 2000-2007. Hence, wages in Italy are higher than in Spain. Spain is not only characterised by scarce wages, but also by low quality and insecure jobs that are connected to the development of highly labour intensive and low qualified sectors, like construction, catering and tourism. Spain presents low intensity of competition and a high number of small firms, which is also detectable in the South of Italy, whereas an opposite situation is present in the North. In fact, the main feature of Italy is the sharp divide between the North and the South in matters of economy and employment. These aspects concerning the dominant productive structure and (as presented in the following section) the type of labour market are relevant insofar as quality and quantity of job opportunities, joint with policy interventions, determine the social vulnerability in a specific country.

As far as labour forces are concerned, in the period 1995-2008 a substantial increase in active population, partly tied to the growth of women participation in the labour market, took place in Spain, reaching almost 10%. By contrast, for all the period under consideration in Italy activity rates are much lower than in Spain and the European average. An important raise in employment rates also occurred in Spain, reaching almost 20% and was flanked by a pronounced decrease in unemployment until 2005, when it started to grow up again. Italy follows the same trends, even if variations result to be much less accentuated. Moreover, it exhibits lower punctuations than the European average in activity and employment rates, whereas unemployment rates remain higher until 2005 when it begins to decrease. Long-term unemployment is stably much higher in Italy than in the other member states, reaching more than 60% in 2000, whereas it decreases visibly in Spain

shifting from 55% to 20% in roughly ten years. Low rates of long-term unemployment in the Spanish case concern both men and women and result to be the lowest in comparison to Italy and the European average in the period from 2000 to 2008. By contrast, the rates of temporary employment are especially high in Spain maintaining not less than 30%, while in Italy it is around the half of the percentage in 2008 and much less in the past years since 1995. Another relevant aspect for our study is provided by data concerning the satisfaction of people with regard to their own situation. In fact, most of the people, especially in Spain, declare to wish a permanent job and state that retaining a flexible employment is mainly due to the fact that no other option was available. Nearly 90% of the Spanish respondents report this reason, whereas this is true in the Italian case for nearly 60% of the respondents. Even if in a smaller measure, the same can be told for part-time employment, with Italian people preferring more than Spanish people full-time employment. In this regard, Italian people show less life satisfaction as well as a greater perception of financial insecurity and labour dissatisfaction than Spanish people. In the light of the capabilities approach, it indicates that society has not been able to provide adequate conversion factors that allow people to pursue what they value. This is especially true for vulnerable groups, such as women and low-qualified workers who are mainly affected by unemployment and are more often than men and skilled employed in atypical jobs. In this sense, education acts partly as a conversion factor and the higher the level the more job opportunities. However, in both countries the relation between the level of ISCED and the contractual arrangement seems not to be so linear, since often workers with higher ISCED are more likely to be employed in temporary and part-time jobs in comparison to workers with lower ISCED. Spanish workers with ISCED 5-6 and Italian workers with ISCED 3-4 are those who experience the most temporary and part-time work. The discrepancy between ISCED 3-4 and ISCED 5-6 is more pronounced in Italy. Besides, Spain shows considerable problems related to under-qualification and severe over-qualification, which results to be stronger than in the Italian context.

In the attempt of tracing social vulnerability profiles, we can see that in Spain the picture of a “dynamic” social vulnerability emerges in the period under consideration. It derives from a precarious situation where individuals are affected by the temporary nature of their contractual arrangements that bring them to continuous job transitions. Unemployment rates are extremely high in comparison to the European average, but long-term unemployment rates are low, probably due to the widespread presence within the labour market of short-term jobs that allow some people to keep working, although in an unstable position. Italy reveals different traits, since it shows the configuration of a “static” social vulnerability. In fact, long-term unemployment rates (1 year or more) are extremely high as well as the percentages of discouraged people that have renounced

looking for employment. The perception that opportunities are not available contributes to making people remain entrapped in a paralysing depressed system. Also, the inactivity rates are especially high. Hence, two profiles of social vulnerability are evident and the differences seem to become more accentuated over the time. Still, in both countries, individuals' conditions contrast sharply with what they value for their life. Thus it seems that freedom of choice does not encounter possibilities for being accomplished.

As it results in Chapter VI, despite the extremely vulnerable situation of individuals in the two countries, welfare systems seem to be totally inadequate for helping people cope with damaging situations. Indeed, expenditures for unemployment are deficient in the two cases in comparison to the unemployment levels. Moreover, the rate of deflated social expenditure per capita for the unemployed (expenditures per potential recipient divided by the mean workers' remuneration), which indicates a type of investment by society in people's capabilities, are lower in the two countries than the European average. In particular, Spain shows nearly half of the percentages in relation to Italy. Another relevant element to consider is the percentage of expenditures that are employed in service in kind, which, according to the literature on capabilities, is a good indicator that proves that public services are likely to act as conversion factors. Expenditures used for services in kind are more conspicuous in Italy than in Spain, but percentages remain lower than those in the other European countries. The same can be said for expenditures in active labour market policies and services, even if in this case Spain shows both a higher and a growing level compared to Italy, which can be linked to the high and increasing unemployment rates. By contrast, expenditures in training and education are lower in Spain than in Italy. Still, in both countries unemployment benefits have a preponderant role in comparison to active policies. This reveals a relatively scarce orientation towards the activating dimension of the flexicurity strategy, despite the fact that the deregulation of the labour market and atypical contracts have increased considerably in last decades. Unemployment coverage is not so developed in these countries belonging to the Southern European social model. Here, the most of the time families accomplish the tasks of the State and try to repair its non-fulfillments, sometimes contributing to maintain the permanency of this system. The male-breadwinner model still acts as a framework for orienting social protection, suggesting that providing guarantees for male workers all the other family members will result to be protected. Replacement rate and duration of unemployment benefits are higher in Spain than in Italy. Furthermore, employment protection holds low levels in Italy and higher levels in Spain, even if the Spanish case exhibited a decreasing trend over the time. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that the Spanish labour market is heavily marked by unstable work. Hence, in the two countries active measures, unemployment benefits and employment protection seem not to be

sufficient to make individuals able to cope with their conditions of social vulnerability. Starting from the assumption that a generous welfare state is at the basis of a system oriented to enhance the life chances of people and to favour the achievement of capabilities, we can see how far the two countries are from allowing the enhancement of capabilities and even more a fair and impartial distribution of opportunities for everyone.

As far as the issue of equality is concerned, as Chapter VII shows, the Italian system is characterized by provision of guarantees for small groups of workers, the ‘insiders’, whereas the most of the people, the ‘outsiders’, remain uncovered by the traditional social protection. In addition, reforms implemented in the last decades have neglected to change eligibility requirements, widening social security in terms of provision of unemployment benefits mainly for those recipients who already had access to them. Concurrently, it is worthy considering that in Italy the main trend since the end of the ‘90s was the introduction of atypical contractual arrangements. In Spain the flexibilization of labour market was even more marked and began earlier, so that the ‘90s were characterised by the attempt of reducing temporary contracts. Still, the effort was mainly oriented at promoting more flexible permanent contracts and reducing the difference between fixed and open-ended contracts. The overall trend in the Spanish case was maintaining the flexibility of the labour market, while fostering activation measures. In both the Spanish and the Italian case, the legal framework was not oriented to favour job security, lifelong learning and income maintenance, which have a key role in the creation of valuable opportunities for individuals. Focusing on some key aspects (activation policies, unemployment protection, commitment of activity and sanctions), more differences appear among Spain and Italy. In Spain, policies seem to be mainly work-first oriented, since reforms developed towards cost containment and retrenchment of unemployment benefits while high expenditures of active labour policies were inverted in employment incentives. This orientation is less marked in Italy, where the main trend was a raise of the protection in terms of duration and replacement rate, especially since 2000. Despite this, a variation of eligibility criteria did not take place, hindering the process of expansion of the protection to vulnerable social groups and favouring the fragmentation. Moreover, the commitment of activity and the sanctionary apparatus were introduced quite early in the Spanish case. As far as the concept of “commitment” is concerned, the definition results to be more articulated in the Spanish case than in the Italian one and, in relation to the sanctionary system, it has become more flexible in recent time. By contrast, in the Italian case, the disciplinary system appears more rigid and the definition of “commitment of activity” seems more poor, included the definition of “adequate employment”. Nonetheless, in both countries the effectiveness of implementation of sanctions has been questioned by many authors and by our interviewees. Hence, a structured system that aims to enable unemployed to

quickly re-enter the labour market emerges in Spain, while a weaker emphasis on the idea of work-first seems to be present in Italy, which still does not hint at a capabilities-oriented approach.

Looking at the previous results in the light of the capabilities approach, we can see that the Spanish and Italian social models seem particularly close to the idea of a low-cost social model, since they are characterised by scant expenditures in both passive and active policies. Possible explanations may rest in institutional factors, like the central role of the family, the scarce accountability of the state and the inequality embedded in social and political practices. It is important to remember that in Italy and Spain the eligibility criteria for the access to social protection are tied mainly to labour market participation. This is true in Spain, where unemployment rates are largely above the European average, despite the presence of non-contributory transfers (minimum income and non contributory unemployment subsidies). But it is also true in Italy, where the long-term unemployment and inactivity rates are especially high in comparison to the Spanish case and non-contributory transfers do not exist. This consideration brings us to realize how much dramatically vulnerability-oriented the Spanish and Italian systems are. No space for “capability for work” and “for voice” seems to be available. Furthermore, after the analysis of the rates of atypical contractual arrangements, we can notice that the increase of flexibilization of the labour market has not been flanked by the raise of social protection. Therefore, flexibility and security do not proceed hand in hand, contrasting the flexicurity strategy. This favours the process of social vulnerabilization more than the development of individual capabilities and the development of the whole country according to Sen’s view. Moreover, as far as inequalities are concerned, a strong South/North divide has to be highlighted in the Italian case, in addition to important gender differences and, above all, disparities between the adult population and young people, which also concerns the Spanish case.

Since the youth represents one of the most vulnerable groups in both Italy and Spain, the analysis of their situation within the labour market and of the policies addressed to them is relevant, insofar as it allows us to have a wider view of the policy orientation in each country. In this regard, as it results in Chapter VIII, the situation of the youth is dramatic, since the lack of opportunities hampers them to construct the type of life they value. Frail trajectories are the product of reduced social security guarantees. Underdeveloped public policies turn young people dependent of their parents and make the familiar emancipation difficult, forcing them to renounce to any kind of autonomy. In fact, in both countries unemployment rates are high among young people more than in other age cohorts and in comparison to the European average. Observing the profiles of vulnerability of the youth, it is evident that they are in line with those delineated for older workers. Hence, high inactivity and long-term unemployment rates can be highlighted in the Italian case,

whereas temporary work constitutes one of the most predominant aspects of the Spanish case. Nevertheless, two important differences between the group of the young and the other age groups relies on the fact that the former is the most affected by unemployment and experiences the most temporary work, while pursuing other kinds of contractual arrangements. In this sense, the 15-24 year-olds represent the weakest and vulnerable age cohort in Italy and Spain. As regards the gender dimension, a gap at expenses of women is mainly evident in unemployment rates, which proves that young women are still those who suffer the most this vulnerable situation. The gap is also evident in the number of participants in active and passive labour policies, where male presence is more conspicuous. Looking at policies, participants in active measures are more than participants in passive measures, although the number is much higher in Spain than in Italy. Consequently, we can affirm that employment policies have not succeeded so far to address young unemployment in both Italy and Spain. Nevertheless, some differences can be detected between youth policies in the two countries. A first difference can be tied to the concept of “young”. In the Spanish case, the concept was mostly defined as a phase of life towards the adulthood and, accordingly, policies were mainly oriented to foster education, training and employment. Although, they seem to neglect the aim of enhancing capabilities and allowing young people to pursue their own life project. Then, a youth-perspective replaced the old concept of “youth”, which was thus defined as an independent phase of the human life. By contrast, in Italy the concept of “youth” was disconnected until recently from an idea of economic emancipation and personal empowerment, which made policies mainly oriented to provide recreational facilities. Another difference relies on the kind of organization of programs and services as well as on the presence of a comprehensive view of policies directed to young people. Indeed, in the Spanish case, an important effort of implementing measures in different fields (education, housing, employment) was carried out, whereas in the Italian case the attempt of proposing interventions in multiple fields seems to be barely present. Therefore, the analysis of the policies directed to the youth leads us to acknowledge again the inability of Italian and Spanish programs, services and resources to act as effective conversion factors.

At this point, we will try to reply to the very questions of this dissertation: in relation to the period under consideration, are Spanish and Italian flexicurity policies oriented towards fostering individuals’ opportunities or rather they end up to reinforce social vulnerability instead? Before providing answers to these questions, we briefly present the analysis that has been used in this second empirical part of our research work. Two kinds of analysis can be highlighted. The first type of analysis observes directly the representations of some actors participating in the design and implementation of employment policies in order to understand if, according to their descriptions as key informants, policies are oriented to flexicurity and, above all, to the development of valuable

job opportunities. The second type of analysis studies the cognitive and normative elements the actors use when describing policies, following the assumption that they re-produce and at the same construct the framework that contributes to the constitution of policies. It is thus possible to identify the main interpretative frames that are used for the elaboration of policies, which encompasses focusing on which specific issues are problematized and which ones are normalized. Both qualitative discourse analyses have been carried out in the light of the capabilities approach. In this regard four indicators and several micro-indicators have been proposed. Indicators and micro-indicators have been drawn partly from the literature on capabilities in the field of employment policies and partly from the analysis of the interviews. The indicators are formulated in terms of opposition between poles in an effort of simplification. Although, the analysis has considered all the alternatives and shades among the two poles as well as the options out of them. More in detail, we present now the indicators (categories) that have been used for assessing the discourses of the actors, while micro-indicators will be shown when describing the results:

1. Market versus social oriented policies, which refers to the overall normative objective that policies have to pursue. In a capabilities approach, such objective is represented by the principle of social justice that must not be subordinated to the primacy of the market. This entails the availability to an enlargement of the scope of public action, as foreseen by the capability approach, in the direction of providing an adequate opportunity set for people (resources, entitlements and social conversion factors). This indicator focuses on the logic that the interviewees use and their representations of policy orientation in matters of some key aspects, such as the emphasis on passive/active policies, on supply-side/demand-side policies and on work-first/capabilities-enabler policies. The capabilities approach support a combination of passive and active as well as supply-side and demand-side oriented policies according to the view that the unemployed is not the only responsible of his/her own situation nor guilty. In fact, the role of the context is fundamental in defining the enhancement of capabilities or rather the establishment of a principle of work-first that promotes the quick integration into the labour market. The indicator also examines the underlying assumptions that constitute the cognitive and normative framework used by the actors in relation to specific concepts (i.e. “unemployed”, “worker”, the role of the State) as well as their considerations with regard to a long-term and systemic perspective of policies. Only long-term and systemic policies can actually construct opportunities for individuals and the possibility to effectively exit of a situation of social vulnerability.

2. Restrictive view of opportunity as productive work versus valuable job, which considers the meanings of ‘valuable job opportunity’ and the actors’ representations related to how public employment services addresses or should address the access to such opportunities. The capability

approach promotes a view of work as a utility and, consequently, the freedom of choosing the job one has reason to value in opposition to the restrictive conception of productive work as a marketable commodity. The main issue at stake is creating the conditions not only in terms of quantity and quality for valuable employment, but also in terms of access and equality through quality employment services and measures.

3. Technocratic and centralized versus situated action (decentralization), which looks at the meanings of ‘decentralization’ and at the way the actors describe how employment policies relate and should relate with recipients. In the capability approach, decentralized governance is considered necessary to serve individuals’ needs and address diversity. Indeed, policies should be tailor-made and negotiated with regional and local actors, including job-seekers. In this view, decentralization can empower vulnerable people giving them voice. Policy evaluation is thus relevant for ensuring the effectiveness of the process of individual empowerment.

4. Technocratic and centralized versus situated action (social dialogue), which studies the meanings of ‘social dialogue’ and how the interviewees depict the participation of social partners in the design and implementation of employment policies. Social dialogue can favour a deliberative process and the establishment of more symmetrical relations among different stakeholders. The capability approach foresees the commitment of diverse bodies, according to the view that policies should stem from a deliberative process between all social partners in order to enable them to take part in the policy decision-making.

First of all, in Chapter IX, we looked at the micro-indicator ‘general direction of policies’, which focuses on the policy orientation. In this regard, we have also observed the influence of the European discourse, which is especially important, since European institutions play a pivotal role of cognitive, interpretative and discursive normalization, addressing the European and national debate in the field of employment. The European discourse consists mainly of a strong emphasis on individualization and activation – which foster the quickest transition of the unemployed towards the situation of employment – and the attempt of disqualifying unemployment benefits that come to be defined as “passive policies”. This relies on the assumption that the individual is responsible of his/her own situation as an unemployed and that has the duty to re-train and adapt himself/herself on the basis of the labour market requests, which is expressed by the concept of “employability”. Moreover, the activation perspective does not encompass a capability for voice based on tailored-actions by public employment services, rather it envisages that the unemployed must pursue a rapid integration into the labour market and relieve the public system from providing benefits. In the Spanish and Italian cases, a slight influence of the European Employment Strategy is evident. Indeed, on the one hand, respondents state explicitly that the organization of employment services

has been adjusted to the requests of the European institutions. On the other hand, the influence emerges in an implicit way through the actors' discourses, which incorporate, reproduce and legitimise the language that has been disseminated by the European institutions. Both in the Spanish and Italian cases, regional and national representatives of public bodies seem more oriented towards accepting the European demands, whereas the Italian trade unions and, according to the Spanish expert, also the Spanish trade unions, show a marked opposition and critical distance. The concept of flexicurity is highly questioned by Spanish and Italian actors who agree in the identification of some crucial points. Critiques mainly concern the applicability of the model in countries that deeply diverge from those where the model born, which makes it mostly a theoretical solution. Furthermore, some critiques regard the fact that flexicurity has finally assumed the meaning of prevalence of the side of flexibility on that of security, delineating an asymmetrical relation between the two. In spite of the fact that the actors criticize the notion of flexicurity, it is clear that the European proposal for combining flexibility and security has had a strong impact on the political ideas and beliefs of the actors. As far as general policy direction is concerned, from the analysis of the interviews we can see that the Italian actors report and construct their discourses focusing mostly on the market, according to the idea that meeting the needs of the market means favouring the increase of employment. Besides, regional representatives of trade unions criticize that transformations of the market have not been accompanied by a change in public policies in the direction of activation, which again reveals the primacy of the market and the importance of the adaptation of public policies to its mutations. Also in the view of the Spanish respondents, a supply-side policy, mainly oriented to labour market and based on the idea that individuals have to adapt to firms' demands, is prevalent, which contrasts with the informational basis of the capabilities approach. It is worth remembering that the capabilities approach claims instead the balance between supply-side and demand-side policy orientation. The assumption that both individual and collective responsibility participate in determining individuals' opportunities is at the basis of the approach. Thus, the assumption strongly contrasts with the view that persons are the only accountable for their unemployed position and that they have the duty and the capacities for managing their damaging circumstances. In fact, taking into account this view while neglecting the pivotal role that social context and conversion factors have in establishing individual freedom means to be far from Sen's original thought. This is what appears in the two countries under analysis.

The influence of the European discourse is also evident in the dichotomy used by the interviewees between the concepts of 'active' and 'passive' policies, which embodies the attempt of devaluing passive policies in comparison to active ones. It is important to recall that the capabilities approach promotes simultaneously unemployment benefits and active policies, with the latter

negotiated with recipients and oriented to empower individuals according to what they value, instead than on the basis of labour market demands. Several Italian respondents problematize the negative attitude of society towards the paradigm of activation and some of them – including trade unions – depreciate passive policies in comparison to active ones. Besides, some respondents problematize the strong resistance carried out by society, politicians and trade unions to the acceptance of the activation framework and to the shift to active policies, describing a firm opposition to changes. Such cultural resistance to change is presented to hamper the application of the paradigm of activation, which is constructed as a synonym of modernization. It is evident in the actors' discourses that social protection in terms of unemployment benefits represents one of the pillars of the traditional Italian welfare state. It has also represented the most relevant claim by the trade unions for decades, becoming one of strength points for obtaining workers' consensus. The Italian system is mostly based on the idea that old generations have to be protected according to the principle that supporting old male workers means sustaining whole families and young people. The support to old/adult workers evokes the familistic framework that protect male adults even at the expense of the youth, women or other vulnerable groups. In the Spanish case, divergent viewpoints emerge in this regard. In fact, while at the national level, representatives remark the prevalence of passive policies and the inefficacy of active policies, at the regional level, passive policies are considered to be overcome and active policies are described as already working.

The indicator 'specific policy orientation' focuses more precisely on the logic used by the interviewees according to which aims and solutions are outlined. Italian actors provide several and diverse answers, whereas Spanish actors reply in a more uniform way. In particular, in the Spanish case, actors belonging to public bodies identify the satisfaction of labour market demands as one of the main orientation, which indicates the presence of a logic according to which meeting the requests of the market by adapting the labour force is the solution for coping with unemployment and social vulnerability. In this regard, the expression of "centrality of the individual" marked by respondents encompasses a relevant element of ambiguity. In fact, the expression may indicate the idea – in line with the capabilities approach – that employment policies are oriented to foster individuals' well-being and to take into account vulnerable people's needs; conversely, it may indicate that individuals are considered responsible of their own integration or the target of the state intervention in the field of employment, following the principle that they have to adapt to labour market requests in a perspective of employability-oriented active policies. Italian actors use the same expression. In the Italian case, numerous orientations and logics that determine or flank the implementation of employment policies are reported, namely the satisfaction of firms' requests or the achievement of occupability and employability. In addition, a few dynamics that hamper the

adequate functioning of policies are highlighted, such as the intensification of the labour market liberalization or the accomplishment of political and clientelistic interests. Some logics even replace the goals of policies, as it occurs in the Sicilian case where the objective of survival of the institutions that implement policies dominates on the objective of supporting people to enter the labour market. Some of the actors deem also that no precise and transparent guiding logic in employment policies can be detected, as an overall plan was missing. Neither in the Spanish nor in the Italian case, employment policies are depicted to be proper conversion factors aiming at empowering individuals.

Observing the concepts that compose the cognitive framework and the conceptual basis of employment policies, which constitute the indicator on the underlying assumptions, it is interesting to notice how the profiles of the unemployed has changed over the time. In the Spanish case, the current unemployed is described by one of the trade union representative as a young person, a woman or an immigrant, whereas in the Italian case, interviewees belonging to the employment agency association, national and regional representatives of public bodies and the national expert focus mainly on the new active identity. A common element between Spanish and Italian respondents belonging to public bodies at a regional level appears to be the idea that being unemployed no longer means staying at home and waiting for a job. Rather, the unemployed have to become professional job-seekers that actively search for employment, which reveals the European influence. This new conceptualization is flanked in the Italian case, according to the opinion of one representative of the trade unions, by the moralistic view that the unemployed is responsible of his/her situation, emphasizing his/her role in holding the circumstances of the status of unemployment. Not all the Italian actors, included among different trade unions, share this view. By contrast, the principal trend in the Spanish case is identifying the unemployed as someone who is willing to work and whom is affected by a detrimental situation that leads him/her to benefit of public social protection. In the Spanish case, the social attribution seems to prevail on the individual-moralizing view that characterizes more the Italian case. Thus, an important distinction in terms of cognitive elements between the Spanish and Italian case is the reference to a cultural-familistic and individualistic framework by the Italian actors and a prevalently political framework by the Spanish actors. Nevertheless, in the capabilities approach, the individual cannot be considered the only responsible of his/her own situation, since a co-responsibility with society is instead affirmed. The definition of the relationship between State and individuals is also changed with the introduction of the new paradigm of activation. In fact, according to the paradigm, the State plays a pivotal role in checking individuals accomplishing their obligations. The issue of the control exerted by the State on unemployed is object of reflection among the Spanish actors,

whereas some of the Italian trade union representatives claim it. Few Italian representatives seem to normalize the fact that working has become a right to gain with a proper behaviour by individuals and is not longer seen as a right defended by the Constitution. Italian interviewees, included the representative of the employment agency association, especially problematize the deterioration of the old idea of permanent job. Such idea really seems to be at the very core of the Italian culture, whereas Spanish actors seem to have accepted more than the Italian counterpart the transformation of the labour market and the growth of temporary employment, in spite of the fact that this constitutes one of the main reason of fight. This may be due to the fact that the extreme process of flexibilization of the labour market has turned permanent work a 'utopia' and has fostered trade unions to claim for a more feasible idea of 'stable' job. Besides, it is interesting to note that Spanish actors depict a consistent view of the world, according to which flexible and dynamic workers pass by through short-term jobs and transitions during their career life path within a flexible labour market. In the Italian case, a sort of incongruity is detectable instead. Indeed, the idea of the worker as a flexible person has encountered a major degree of acceptance than that of a labour market characterized by fixed-term jobs, which has been mostly refused. Thus, the new concepts seem to be far from the informational basis of the capabilities approach, since the interest for what the individual values in his/her life seems to be lacking.

Temporal dimension and the overall overview constitute another of our micro-indicators, which highlight the trend by the interviewees to deem that policies have to be designed according to a long-term perspective and a systemic view. They also focus on actors' representations of how policies actually are in practice in relation to these aspects. According to the representations of the Italian expert and the representative of the Sicily Region as well as of the Spanish expert and various representatives of the trade unions, a long-term perspective of policies is missing. Although, the representatives strongly agree that a long-term planning is desirable, since acting in a short-time modality does not allow policies to carry out interventions that effectively help vulnerable groups and generate job opportunities. Hence, the interviewees seem to endorse the language of the capabilities approach that considers long-term and systemic policies necessary for the development of individuals' capabilities.

As far as the second category on the concept of "job opportunities" is concerned, two of the micro-indicators that we have analysed in Chapter X refer to how the actors construct the meaning of the 'availability' of opportunities and their value. These two aspects refer to two conceptual discursive domains, since the former concerns a quantitative dimension and the latter a qualitative dimension. Such domains are depicted by the interviewees to be in opposition, with the qualitative dimension subdued to the quantitative one, which reflects the European view that quality job has to

be treated in function of economic performance. This view embodies the conceptualization of job opportunities in the restricted connotation of productive work, according to the rhetoric of active welfare state oriented to an employability perspective. It conflicts with the capabilities approach that considers valuable jobs – where the value is based on the compliance with individuals’ needs and desires – as a source of utility for people and refuse the idea that any job is better than no jobs. Spanish trade unions seem to have refused the European discourse of prioritizing full employment and increasing employment rate at the expense of job quality. Still, they seem to have accepted more than the Italian counterpart the resizing and narrowing the concept of “stability”, probably due to the specific features of the Spanish labour market where temporary work is extremely high. Indeed, Italian actors seem to be more renitent to renounce to the idea of employment stability, which represents one of the most important component used for the construction of the concept of ‘job quality’. In addition, Italian actors construct the concept of ‘quality’ in an articulate mode, focusing on a broad variety of aspects, namely closeness to family, safety and health in the work place, life work balance. By contrast, the attention of the Spanish actors is mainly focused on the aspect of qualification and above all of work stability. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that in the Spanish case the fight against precarious jobs also means defending those guarantees and working conditions that constitute job quality, which have been questioned through the introduction of temporary work. Several Italian and Spanish actors belonging to different social groups problematize the issue of job quality. Nevertheless, according to the Spanish and Italian expert, in both countries, the qualitative dimension referred to job value remains in the background in comparison to the quantitative dimension and the discourse around availability of job opportunities. Both dimensions are crucial in Sen’s approach, since they favours individual freedom and possibility of choice. Particularly, the quantitative dimension is viewed as the starting assumption on the basis of which all the other discourses related to employability and activation policies make sense. However, the meaning of ‘availability’ and identification of the causes of scarce presence of employment diverge among the actors. In particular, while Spanish actors underline the pivotal role of the economic system and labour market in determining the lack of job opportunities, some of the Italian actors belonging to trade unions emphasize more the role of individuals, whereby employment opportunities are missing insofar as people discriminate specific categories of jobs. Therefore, making people change their attitude towards such jobs and their representations of good or bad employment also means to increase the availability of employment opportunities.

We now move to observe how the respondents define the meaning of public employment services, the actions they carry out, the connection among active policies and social protection as well as the conceptual basis of their modernization, which represents the third micro-indicator of

the category oriented to study the concept of “job opportunity”. Indeed, in the capabilities approach, these factors are supposed to adequately equip individuals to escape from social vulnerability and from the constrain of valueless work. The actors do not construct public employment services as proper conversion factors that facilitate the access to job opportunities and the get-away from the condition of vulnerability. Italian interviewees depreciate the old employment offices, describing them as rigid and focused on accomplishing mostly bureaucratic tasks, in that their modernization is depicted to be inevitable. Since the search for jobs is now conceived as an individual matter – in contrast with the capability approach –, the objective of employment services is considered to support in relational and professional terms the job-seeker and to meet the requests of the labour market. Spanish interviewees, including trade unions, are more oriented to stress the duty of employment services to promote job-seekers’ entrance into the labour market and to satisfy its demands. This view is shared also by Spanish regional representatives, who conceive the services in a more active connotation. In the Spanish and Italian cases, the lack of resources that impede a proper functioning and an adequate long-term perspective of employment programmes is highlighted. Moreover, in the two cases deep disparities seem to emerge among the recipients in the access to job opportunities in the view of the interviewees. This is evident in terms of North/South divide and adult/young people in Italy as well as in terms of marginalised/general population and qualified/unskilled young in Spain. As far as youth is concerned, Italian and Spanish actors, mainly trade unions, claim a major attention and facilities for this group. According to the Italian interviewees, the traditional familistic system has always protected old workers with the scope of providing security to the whole household, neglecting the view of the young as labour force. By contrast, Spanish interviewees problematize the consequences of the fluctuation of the market in the empowerment of young people, who are conceived mainly as labour force instead.

When using the capabilities approach for policy assessment, one of the most relevant aspects is the orientation toward a situated public action and the involvement of individuals in the process of making-decision in phase of design and implementation of policies. This represents the indicator of the closeness to individuals, which focuses on decentralized governance. In fact, decentralization has a key role in making policies close to recipients. However, as it is evident in Chapter XI, its meaning and forms result being different in the two cases under consideration. In the Spanish case, decentralization is viewed as an attempt to empower regions (Autonomous Communities) as well as to increase the contact with people, in spite of the fact that the general representation is that in practice the effort has been unsuccessful. By contrast, in the Italian case the meaning of decentralization is that of a major closeness to the productive system. Still, also in this case, according to the actors’ representations, it did not find a full application. Both Spanish and Italian

actors claim for a major State-Regions coordination as well as for greater coordination among regions, since it influences the in/equality of opportunities within the national territory, which is especially highlighted by the Italian actors. Another indicator to be taken into account is the individualized tailor-action. In fact, policies whose cognitive and normative framework is informed by a capabilities approach should encompass services that are as close as possible to people's requests and expectations. In both Spanish and Italian cases the individualisation of services is a goal to be pursued, even if actors' constructions partly go in a different direction. In fact, Italian national representatives construct policies in terms of target standardised program for vulnerable groups. Still, local actors mainly do it in terms of tailor-made services. Such distinction is not evident among Spanish actors, who tend to construct policies in terms of target less frequently than Italian actors. However, especially in the Italian case, the attempt of increasing individuals' possibilities of agency and improve their capabilities for voice is missing. A controversial issue to take into consideration is the obligation of job-seekers to accept active measures in order to benefit of public social protection, which represents a limitation of freedom of choice for the unemployed in the capabilities approach. This issue is considered very differently by Spanish and Italian actors. While the former strongly agree in refusing it, some Italian actors maintain a moralizing view with respect to unemployment and believe that such obligation is required for limiting the dependency of unemployed from the State and public expenditures. Nonetheless, obligation is described to be ineffective, especially by the Italian actors, due to the poor possibilities for employment services to make job offers and, consequently, negotiate freedom of the unemployed to refuse them. In Sen's approach, decentralization also entails a policy evaluation that looks at the individual freedom of choice and the development of capabilities, which is the last micro-indicator of the category on situated action. Nevertheless, in the Spanish and Italian cases, a different interest seems to prevail, such as that for quantitative outcomes and performance target, according to principles inspired to the New Public Management. This is probably tied to the bureaucratic requirements that employment services have to accomplish in order to obtain funding. In particular, in both cases, attention towards policy evaluation seems to be underdeveloped and any mention to enhance recipients' capabilities seems to lack.

The first indicator of the category on situated public action based on the involvement of civil society organizations focuses on the meanings of social dialogue and on the actors involved in it. As Chapter XII shows, Spanish and Italian actors' representations indicate that employment policies in the two countries have not been addressed in the direction of promoting an open, effective and substantial social dialogue within society. Consequently, also the contact with people and territories has remained apart from the design and implementation of policies, affecting thus the provision of

opportunities for individuals according to what they value. In both the Spanish and Italian cases, social dialogue has been constructed as ineffective and all the interviewees (trade unions, employment agencies representatives and NGO representatives at national and regional level) claim for a major participation in the process of decision-making in matters of employment policies. Nonetheless, some differences can be detected among the two cases. In the Spanish case, the interviewees highlight an important effort by the government and social partners to make social dialogue works and a relatively wide basin of stakeholders involved in the implementation of policies; by contrast, the basin results to be restricted in the Italian case, also due, according to the interviewees, to the strong attempt by the government to hamper the dialogue with social partners, included with trade unions. The Spanish representatives of the profit employment agency association focus mainly on their political and normative legitimation, whereas the Italian representative seems to pay more attention on the acceptance of the agencies by the population. Both Spanish and Italian actors acknowledge the collaboration between the public and private sectors as an important goal. A generalised distrust towards the efficiency of the public sector is evident, even by public officials. Spanish representatives of private agencies use this mistrust for affirming their authority. In addition, where some kind of dialogue has taken place, seldom the goal was to make policies closer to individuals so to meet their needs and desires. We now move on to observe the following indicator, which focuses on how the interviewees construct the type of participation of the social partners and civil society organizations. National Italian and Spanish interviewees construct social dialogue as a consultative participation. The representatives of trade unions claim for a major participation that has been limited so far to an informative and advising involvement. Nevertheless, both Spanish and Italian trade union representatives construct their participation as absolutely substantial at the national level, whereas the regional representatives describe it as controversial and mostly formal. The last micro-indicator concerns the effectiveness of social dialogue, since in a capabilities approach deliberative democracy should be actually operative. Nonetheless, social dialogue does not seem to be so effective in the Spanish and Italian cases. In particular, in the Italian case a fragmented representation that is tied to the North/South divide emerges.

In synthesis, as for the Italian case, a poorly defined and confused situation made of delays, resistances, failed attempts, formality and lack of substance, clientelism and a general disconnection from people's actual needs emerge. The respondents describe a national and regional situation that seems to reduce opportunities for individuals of finding what they have reason to value and to strengthen social vulnerability. Moreover, the Italian cognitive framework seems to be mainly cultural-individual oriented, whereas the Spanish one seems more political-social oriented.

Furthermore, Spanish actors seem to be more oriented to question and problematize specific issues than the Italian colleagues, and trade union representatives more than the other actors. Spanish and Italian representatives belonging to public bodies show a major acceptance of the activation framework in terms of individual responsibility for the integration in the labour market. The cognitive framework and the conceptual basis emerging from both Spanish and Italian interviews do not result to be oriented towards the capabilities approach for many aspects, even if some hints can be traced in matters of long-term policy perspective, availability of job opportunities, tailor-made actions and importance of social dialogue. In general terms, when describing employment policies the actors interpret opportunities in a mode that is different from that proposed by the capabilities approach. Furthermore, according to their representations, policies fail to act as proper conversion factors, in spite of the fact that some meanings and conceptualizations hint at capabilities oriented views. Hence, our conclusion cannot be different than stating that so far expectations and hopes of freedom of choice and development of capabilities that allow individuals to pursue and achieve what they value have mainly been shattered, especially for young people. Thus, the capabilities approach has not so much resulted to be the cognitive and normative framework that is operative in the Spanish and Italian cases. Before concluding, the dissertation proposes some research questions; are the indicators proposed in this thesis applicable to other public policies? In which way does the cognitive and normative framework of Spanish and Italian interviewees differ among actors belonging to different social models in Europe or social groups (i.e. representatives of employers' associations, representatives of political parties)? How has the financial crisis modified actors' cognitive and normative framework? How has the framework instead contributed to depict possible solutions and alternatives to the crisis? Such questions remain open to future investigations.

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APPENDIX

Interviews

Spain		Italy	
UGT (Trade Union) - national level	1	CISL (Trade Union) - national level	1
CCOO (Trade Union) - national level	1	CGIL (Trade Union) - national level	1
		UIL (Trade Union) - national level	1
UGT - Valencia	1	CISL - Tuscany	1
CCOO Valencia	1	CGIL - Tuscany	1
		UIL - Tuscany	1
UGT Andalucia	1	CISL - Sicily	1
CCOO Andalucia	1	CGIL - Sicily	1
		UIL - Sicily	1
FEMP (Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias) - national level	1	UPI* (Unione delle Province d'Italia) - national level	1
FEMP - Valencia (Federación Valenciana de Municipios y Provincias)	1	UPI - Tuscany (Unione Regionale Toscana delle Province)	2
FEMP - Andalucia (Federación Andaluza de Municipio y Provincias)	2	UPI - Sicily (Unione Regionale Sicilia delle Province)	1
INEM (Instituto Nacional de Empleo) - national level	1	Italia Lavoro - national level	1
SAE (Servicio Andaluz de Empleo – Junta de Andalucia)	3	Sicily Region	3
SERVEF (Servicio Valenciano de Empleo y Formación – Generalidad Valenciana)	4	Tuscany Region	3
Caritas - national level	1	Caritas - national level	1
AGETT (Asociación de Grandes Empresas de Trabajo Temporal) - national level	2	Assolavoro (Associazione Nazionale delle Agenzie per il Lavoro) - national level	1
Spanish expert	1	Italian expert	1
Total	22		23

* UPI has been considered the correspondent of the FEMP for the Italian case.

UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID

FACULTAD DE PSICOLOGÍA



TESIS DOCTORAL

Modelos sociales, políticas de la flexiguridad y vulnerabilidad social en Italia y España. Una evaluación crítica desde el enfoque de las capabilities

TESIS PARA OPTAR AL GRADO DE DOCTOR CON MENCIÓN EUROPEA

RESUMEN

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BAJO LA DIRECCION DE LA DOCTORA

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Durante las últimas dos décadas, los mercados de trabajo europeos y los Estados de bienestar han sufrido diversas transformaciones que ponen en cuestión el antiguo paradigma basado en contratos permanentes, estabilidad en el empleo y garantía de derechos de protección social. Las instituciones europeas han desempeñado un papel clave en la difusión en los países europeos de nuevos marcos cognitivos y normativos, modos de gobernanza y métodos políticos (Serrano y Jepsen, 2006; Serrano, 2009). Los modelos sociales nacionales han ido convergiendo hacia un nuevo “Modelo Social Europeo” (ESM). Aún así, a pesar de estas tendencias convergentes, la modalidad para hacer frente a los nuevos retos varía ampliamente de acuerdo con la configuración institucional de cada país, los marcos interpretativos dominantes, el contexto político e histórico, así como la situación socio-laboral y económica.

En el debate europeo sobre los retos que deben afrontar los mercados de trabajo, el concepto de “flexiguridad” se ha convertido en el marco dominante (Jørgensen y Madsen 2007). Este concepto representa la respuesta hegemónica que plantean las instituciones europeas ante la vulnerabilidad social y tiene como objetivo hacer frente a su estallido, mientras fomenta la flexibilidad del mercado laboral y persigue la competitividad económica. El concepto de vulnerabilidad social se puede enriquecer si para su comprensión prestamos atención al enfoque de las capacidades (Sen, 1985, 1992, 1999), que pone el énfasis en las dificultades antes las que se enfrentan las personas en el ejercicio de su libertad de elección y consecución de lo que valoran en su vida. Este enfoque ha sido utilizado para la evaluación de las políticas de desarrollo y aplicado al ámbito del empleo, a raíz de la asunción de que los sistemas de protección social, las instituciones y la legislación laboral pueden facilitar tanto el desarrollo de las capacidades como la extensión de la vulnerabilidad.

Esta tesis plantea una evaluación de las políticas de flexiguridad y de los mecanismos de lucha contra la vulnerabilidad social asociados a situaciones de precariedad o desempleo a la luz del enfoque de las capacidades en España e Italia. Para ello se analizan las tendencias y transformaciones de la legislación laboral, los sistemas de protección social y los mercados de trabajo en el período entre 1997 y 2008 con el fin de definir los perfiles nacionales de vulnerabilidad. Se estudian, de forma particular, los marcos cognitivos y normativos de los principales actores involucrados en el diseño e implementación de las políticas. Por otra parte, se examinan las representaciones en torno a las políticas de flexiguridad de los actores que actúan como informantes clave en el ámbito del empleo.

La contribución de esta tesis al estudio de las políticas públicas consiste en aplicar de forma combinada 1. el enfoque de las capacidades, que proporciona el marco cognitivo y normativo para la realización de la evaluación de las políticas; 2. el enfoque psicosocial, que subraya las relaciones entre el nivel macro y el individuo; 3. la perspectiva comparativa que destaca las diferencias y similitudes entre los sistemas institucionales y políticos; 4. el método cualitativo, que es útil para la investigación de las representaciones y asunciones implícitas en las políticas. Esta tesis tiene como objetivo utilizar el enfoque de las capacidades para el análisis evaluativo de la evolución de los modelos sociales español e italiano en su lucha contra la vulnerabilidad social. Por ello, se centra fundamentalmente en una dimensión crucial del enfoque de capacidades, es decir la base informativa de las políticas.

Con el fin de evaluar las políticas de empleo, se ha adoptado una metodología variada. Por un lado, se han utilizado datos estadísticos secundarios, documentos oficiales y textos legislativos, de acuerdo con una perspectiva histórica y comparativa, para la contextualización del estudio a nivel nacional con el fin de identificar las características específicas de cada país, la configuración institucional de sus modelos sociales y los perfiles de vulnerabilidad social de Italia y España. Por otro lado, se han llevado a cabo 45 entrevistas en profundidad a representantes españoles e italianos pertenecientes a sindicatos, organizaciones no gubernamentales, organizaciones de las agencias de trabajo temporal, así como a funcionarios públicos a nivel nacional y regional y a expertos en el campo de la protección social y las políticas de empleo. El análisis de estas entrevistas se ha articulado en torno a los indicadores y micro-indicadores con los que se ha operacionalizado el enfoque de las capacidades y que resultan de una exhaustiva revisión de la literatura sobre las capacidades en el ámbito de las políticas de empleo (Bonvin, 2006) así como del análisis mismo de las entrevistas.

Al trazar los perfiles nacionales de vulnerabilidad social, se observa en España una vulnerabilidad social “dinámica”. Esa deriva de una situación de precariedad y altas tasas de temporalidad en el empleo y de desempleo. No obstante, las tasas de desempleo a largo plazo son bajas para el periodo estudiado, probablemente debido a la alta rotación laboral que permite a algunas personas seguir trabajando, aunque en una posición inestable. Italia revela rasgos diferentes, ya que muestra la configuración de una vulnerabilidad social “estática”. De hecho, las tasas de desempleo a largo plazo son extremadamente altas, así como también lo son las tasas de inactividad y los porcentajes de personas desalentadas que han renunciado a la búsqueda de empleo.

Tanto en el caso español como en el italiano, el marco legal ha fomentado la flexibilización del mercado laboral, sin favorecer de forma complementaria la protección laboral, el aprendizaje permanente y el mantenimiento de los ingresos, recursos estos claves en la creación de oportunidades valiosas para los individuos desde el enfoque de las capacidades. Además, España e Italia se caracterizan por un modelo social de bajo coste, con escasos gastos tanto en las políticas pasivas como en las activas. A pesar de la grave situación de vulnerabilidad presente en los dos países, los sistemas de empleo y de bienestar así como los marcos cognitivos bajo los que se construye y se interviene frente a la vulnerabilidad parecen ser inadecuados para mejorar las condiciones de vida y de trabajo de las personas, favorecer el logro de capacidades y permitir una distribución justa e imparcial de oportunidades para todos.

En relación al caso italiano emerge una situación confusa y mal definida en el ámbito del empleo y de la protección social, caracterizada por la presencia de retrasos, resistencias e intentos fallidos en la implementación de las políticas activas, escaso dialogo social, clientelismo y una desconexión general con las necesidades reales de las personas. Además, los marcos cognitivos italianos parecen tener fundamentalmente una orientación culturalista e individualizadora, mientras que los españoles parecen tener una orientación más centrada en plantear los problemas como cuestiones sociales y políticas. Por otra parte, los actores españoles parecen estar más orientados que sus colegas italianos a problematizar cuestiones específicas (como las vinculadas a la responsabilidad individual del desempleo y a la combinación de los intereses del mercado con los individuos), y esto se observa principalmente en el caso de los representantes sindicales. Además, los representantes españoles e italianos pertenecientes a organismos públicos muestran una gran aceptación del marco de la activación en términos de responsabilidad individual para la integración en el mercado laboral.

El marco cognitivo y la base conceptual que emergen de las entrevistas a actores españoles e italianos, en muchos aspectos, no se orientan hacia el enfoque de las capacidades, aunque se observan algunas huellas de este enfoque en materia de perspectiva política a largo plazo y en la importancia otorgada a la disponibilidad de oportunidades de empleo, a las acciones individualizadas hechas a medida de las personas e al diálogo social. En términos generales, cuando se describen las políticas de empleo, los actores interpretan las oportunidades de un modo que no se asemeja a la idea de trabajo como utilidad, tal y como propone el enfoque de las capacidades. Por otra parte, de acuerdo con sus representaciones, las políticas no actúan como factores de conversión adecuados, es decir no facilitan recursos y voces para que los individuos puedan conseguir lo que valoran en su vida.

Como conclusión, se podría plantear que los recursos institucionales y los marcos sociocognitivos bajo los que han evolucionado ambos modelos de flexiguridad no favorecen el desarrollo de capacidades para trabajar ni para participar en la deliberación de aquello que las personas valoran en su trabajo y en su vida, especialmente los jóvenes.