



EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF

NEGOTIATE

Overcoming early job-insecurity in Europe

Early job insecurity in Europe: Mapping diversity and the impact of the economic crisis

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INTRODUCTION

One of the main objectives of the project is to set out the general context in which young people in each country and across Europe form their work expectations and 'negotiate' their labour market integration and transition from youth to adulthood. This has been achieved by carrying out a macro-level comparative analysis of early job insecurity in Europe.

Since the 1990s, youth unemployment and job insecurity have been issues of high priority for policy makers and institutions at both national and European level. In fact, youth unemployment and early job-insecurity have been continuously incorporated in the European Employment Strategy from 1997 onwards. In addition specific tools and measures targeting youth, e.g. employment activation programmes, Youth Guarantee scheme etc., have been deployed throughout the last two decades.

Early-job insecurity is still a challenge that affects all European countries. Nevertheless, it seems that despite convergences, particularly in the field of policies, there are still significant divergences among European countries. By analysing available data at the European level, under the coordination of the team of the Department of Social Policy at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences (UPSPS), NEGOTIATE provides new evidence and knowledge regarding the differential impact of the 2008 financial crisis on youth employment and particularly on patterns of school-to-work transitions across European countries.

DATA AND METHODS USED

The data used in order to map the diversity and the impact of economic crisis were drawn from two main sources: the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) and the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). From both surveys, raw data from 2006 to 2014 (in the case of EU-SILC up to 2013) were used in order to provide a mapping of early-job insecurity throughout Europe and examine the impact of economic crisis on youth employment.

The two sources were used in a complementary way, since they contain different variables concerning employment, but they also provide both cross-sectional (EU-LFS) and longitudinal data (EU-SILC). Therefore, by combining them, wherever sufficiently comparable data could be drawn, a global view on the employment situation of the youth is produced in both static and dynamic terms. Specific focus was placed on the statistical analysis on input and transition probabilities of young people from one employment situation to another, e.g. from education to employment/unemployment/inactivity and from employment/unemployment/inactivity to employment/unemployment/inactivity. Specific attention has also been paid to the flows between permanent and temporary jobs.

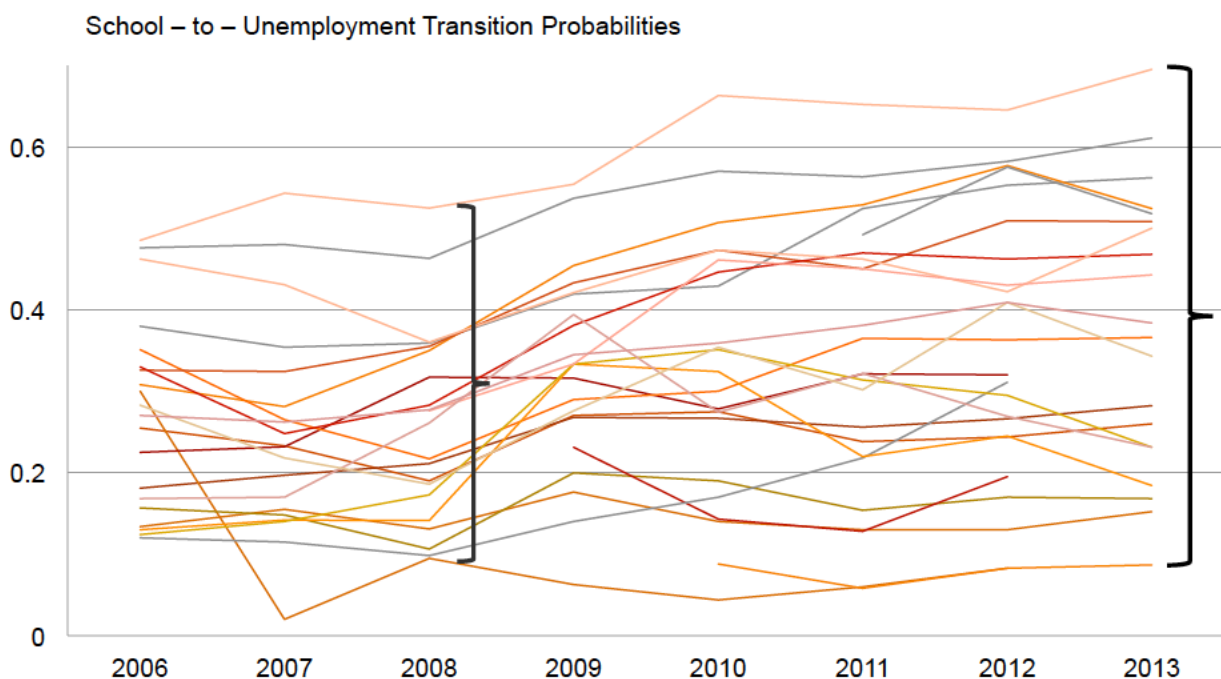
MAIN FINDINGS

Findings from both surveys largely converge as far as main tendencies are concerned. In most countries, certain variables do matter, in the sense that they are not independent of the position of the individual in the labour market. Among them, the most important is gender where in all countries, though at different levels, women are more exposed to unemployment and to job insecurity than men are. Compared to general population, young people are facing higher risk of being unemployed rendering age a significant variable. Equally significant are variables linked to human and social capital, more precisely the educational level of the individual and that of his/her parents.

Through the analysis of data and the mapping of diverse patterns across Europe, the research team has proceeded to a clustering of countries where all job insecurity indicators were taken into account. It is clear that early job-insecurity affects European countries asymmetrically. More precisely, certain countries are characterised by “low” levels of early job insecurity, i.e. lower youth unemployment rates, lower values for the NEET indicator, for the probability of entering unemployment from education and training and for the incidence of long-term unemployment. The second cluster (Belgium and France) matches countries with “moderate” early job insecurity. Between the first and the second cluster, small differences are detected in the majority of the indicators that exhibit slightly worse values for the second cluster. However, significant differences exist in the NEET indicator, the Working time and the percentage of underemployed part-time workers. A “considerable” level of early job insecurity is detected in countries belonging to Cluster 3, mainly from Eastern Europe, while the fourth cluster, which includes Southern European countries and Croatia, represents countries with “high” levels of early job insecurity, i.e. high youth unemployment rate, high probability of entry to unemployment from education and training, long working time etc.

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Croatia
Denmark	France	Czech Republic	Greece
Finland		Estonia	Italy
the Netherlands		Hungary	Portugal
Switzerland		Poland	Spain
Sweden		Romania	
		Lithuania	
		Slovenia	
		Slovakia	

Finally, it is revealing that the crisis has affected asymmetrically European countries. When we examine the distance between countries with regard to the probability of an individual to become unemployed within a year after leaving education, it is clear that the gap has considerably increased after 2008, without any clear indication yet for a reverse tendency.



POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The analysis of the available data is revealing of the fact that divergences among European countries rise. All countries were certainly affected by the emergence of the financial crisis in 2008, however, their resilience and capability to recover as far as employment is concerned have proven unequal. In other

words, while countries that demonstrate high levels of job insecurity are still experiencing the turbulence of crisis, those characterised by low levels of job insecurity have just experienced a short period of stagnation and uncertainty before returning to a positive readjustment of relevant indicators. These strong divergences among countries call for a reassessment of the situation in Europe as far as early job insecurity is concerned.

Moreover, in light of evidence provided by the analysis of existing data certain notions, such as “crisis” and “insecurity”, need to be problematized and contextualised in a productive way for both social research/theory and policy. To put it more simply, in a strongly differentiated context where divergences between countries grow, is there ground for common policies as is the case for EU member states? Or in other terms, how can good practices be transferable from one context to another in a such diverse macro-economic setting? If the data analysis reveals something unambiguously, this is the need to rethink individualistic approaches in dealing with problems of integration in the labour market by taking into account the role of structural constraints that shape contemporary realities of (early) job insecurity in Europe.

PROJECT IDENTITY

PROJECT NAME NEGOTIATE – Negotiating early job-insecurity and labour market exclusion in Europe

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