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Generational approach to the social patterns of relation to work

Changing social patterns of relations to work

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Patricia Vendramin (ed.)

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SPReW consortium

Fondation Travail-Université (FTU),

Work & technology research centre – Namur, Belgium

Rue de l' Arsenal, 5 – B-5000 Namur, phone +32-81-725122, fax +32-81-725128

Contact person: Patricia Vendramin (pvendramin@ftu-namur.org)

Coordinator

Centro de Investigação e de Intervenção Social (CIS), ISCTE – Lisbon, Portugal

Avenida das Forças Armadas – P-1649 Lisboa 026, phone +351-21-7903079

Scientific contact: Paula Castro (paula.castro@iscte.pt)

Fondazione Regionale Pietro Seveso (FRPS) – Milan, Italy

Viale Fulvio Testi, 42 – I-20099 Sesto San Giovanni (Mi), phone +39-02-24426251

Scientific contact: Anna Ponzellini (ponzmi@tin.it)

University of Bremen - Bremen, Germany

Institut Arbeit und Wirtschaft (IAW),

Parkhallee, 39 – D-28209 Bremen, phone +49-421-2183472

Scientific contact: Rainer Zoll (zoll@uni-bremen.de); Götz Richter (richter.goetz@baua.bund.de)

Institute for Political Science of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA PTI) – Budapest, Hungary

PF 694/115 Budapest H-1399, Országház u. 30, 1014 Budapest, Hungary, phone +36-1-2246728

Scientific contact: Julia Vajda (h13073vaj@ella.hu)

Social Development Agency (SDA),

Agency of the European Trade Union Confederation – Brussels, Belgium

Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5 – B- 1210 Brussels, phone +32-2-2240462

Scientific contact: Claudio Stanzani (cstanzan@etuc.org)

Direction de l'Animation de la Recherche, des Etudes et des Statistiques (DARES),

Ministère de l'emploi, du travail et de la cohésion sociale – Paris, France

Quai André Citroën, 39-43 – F-75015 Paris, phone +33-1-44382254

Scientific contact: Hélène Garner (helene.garner@dares.travail.gouv.fr)

Centre d'Etude de l'Emploi – Paris, France

Le Descartes 1, 29, promenade Michel Simon, F-93166 Noisy le Grand Cedex, phone +33-1-45926888

Scientific contact: Dominique Méda (Dominique.meda@mail.enpc.fr)

Website: <http://www.ftu-namur.org/sprew/>

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Introduction

The SPReW project focuses on the factors leading to solidarity or tensions in intergenerational relations, in the area of work. Recent researches raised the hypothesis that the younger generation has different attitudes, forms of participation, expectations and engagement in work than the older generations. The pessimistic view concludes to an increased individualism, but this assumption is not founded on robust research. The project will provide a better understanding of the evolving relation that generations have to work. Such changes have important consequences on intergenerational relations at the workplace, on solidarity between generations, and on the relevance of specific work and employment policies as well as on other public policies.

The relation to work can be analysed through different angles: value given to work, expectations associated to work, vision of the future, relation to precariousness or mobility, more generally the construction of an identity through work and the linking with other key values. A link is also established between the relation to work and other correlated issues: family formation and lifestyles, intergenerational relations in society, social inclusion or exclusion. The gender dimension and the position of migrants are constitutive and transversal aspects of all research tasks. The project also analyses age policies related to work and employment and identifies good practices. The research methodology combines qualitative, quantitative, comparative and participatory approaches.

The key objectives are to draw out social patterns of relation to work for different generations, including the gender dimension; to study articulations with other societal fields (family formation and lifestyles, intergenerational relations, social cohesion); to develop awareness of public authorities and social actors on the generational dimensions in the relation to work and employment; to draw out guidelines for youth policies and ageing policies in this area.

The report

This final report provides a synthesis of the theoretical framework, the results of the qualitative and quantitative analysis, the evaluation of good policy practices, the cross-national comparative approach, the outcomes from the dialogue workshops, and the conclusions and recommendations.

The first chapter consists of a synthesis of the state of the art of current research on the project issues. It proposes a summary of the literature overviews done by each team in each country.

The second chapter draws the methodological design of the whole project.

The third chapter gathers the analyses based on the qualitative approach (163 narrative interviews and 18 group interviews). A common methodological design supports this in-depth empirical study.

The fourth chapter consists of an overview of relevant quantitative surveys conducted at the national or regional level in all the countries included in the partnership. It also gives an overview of quantitative survey schemes conducted at the European and international levels.

It provides a transversal overview of all the surveys inventoried and points out interesting conclusions regarding the SPReW issues.

In chapter five, links are established between the interpretation of the qualitative and quantitative empirical results and the diversity of institutional frameworks in the different countries, especially labour market organisation, welfare systems and policies, youth-targeted policies, role of the family, industrial relations systems, etc. The cross-national analysis aims at explaining why comparable social societal trends, which are observable all across Europe, are likely to entail differentiated impacts, according to the respective institutional environments.

The sixth chapter is based on the analysis of a collection of policy practices in the field of youth, employment and ageing policies that have an intergenerational perspective and that can be learning experiences. The purpose of this research task is to support the transition between research results and policymaking. This overview of policy practices and orientations has been made at the national and the European levels.

Finally, in the last chapter, the report suggests conclusions and recommendations. They result from a process of discussion and validation of intermediate conclusions through a set of national dialogue workshops, in each of the six participating countries, and through the round tables at the final conference.

Most of the chapters refer to a specific workpackage (WP) of the project (cf. description of work): chapter 1 (WP1); chapter 3 (WP3); chapter 4 (WP4); chapter 5 (WP6); chapter 6 (WP5); concluding chapter (WP7).

The authors

Vendramin Patricia (FTU), editor.

This report is based on all previous reports that have been written by the following authors

CEE: Bureau Marie-Christine; Davoine Lucie; Delay Béatrice; Méda Dominique; Wong Michal

CIS: Carvalho Sandra; Castro Paula; Nogal Ângela; Passos Ana; Soares Celia

FRPS: Franco Maria Teresa; Greco Sylvana; Lebano Adele; Ponzellini Anna Maria

FTU: Cultiaux John; Damhuis Lotte; Valenduc Gérard; Vendramin Patricia

IAW: Belit Saka; Grützmacher Nicole; Knop Alexander; Richter Götz; Zoll Rainer; Zoll-Grubert Elisabeth

MTA-PTI: Füleki Katalin; Polyacskó Orsolya; Vajda Júlia

SDA: Monaco Marina

Chapter 1:

The societal challenges of a changing relation to work - State of the art review

Introduction

This first chapter consists of a synthesis of the state of the art of current research on the project issues. It proposes a summary of the literature overviews done by each team in each country. It points out the convergences and divergences in the social contexts. It looks at the continuity and changes in the orientations towards work and the intergenerational challenges it raises. It describes how changes in families and life styles are strongly intertwined with changes in work. Social cohesion and gender are key issues in all these analyses. This overview of researches and debates in different European countries supported the finalisation of the research questions and the selection of hypotheses that have been investigated in the empirical approach.

1. Common trends and divergences in the national social contexts

During the last decades, radical changes have occurred in the economic and social spheres. The experience of work has been deeply reshaped by diverse transformations (technological and schooling, among others). The places and roles of generations in work are no longer the same, with some positive results but also negative outcomes. Precariousness, destandardisation of work and diversity in positions and trajectories are shaping nowadays the relation to work. However, this common economic framework is also embedded in national contexts that shape the final outcomes of such common changes.

1.1 Common trends...

Durable *mass unemployment* that invaded all Western countries is a key feature that marked the whole life of European citizens. Unemployment remains one of main problems for all generations, but mostly for those who are at the two extremes of the age spectrum: young workers and ageing workers.

On the labour market, new requirements in the areas of flexibility, autonomy and adaptability regarding both the production processes (organisation of work) and the production means (equipment, capital, manpower) have led to *the destandardisation of work*; this constitutes another common trend that concerns all countries. Mass unemployment took place in a labour market confronted with technological innovations; downsizing; high employment decrease in traditional industries; development of services; externalisation of low-qualified workers in small organisations. Rather than a root, working life has become a permanent flux. These changes lead to the development of new “biographical patterns”.

During the “Trente glorieuses”, the place of generations at work was largely characterised by stability and intergenerational continuity. The organisational and managerial models (mainly Fordist and bureaucratic organisation) referred to statutory principles that gave a place to

different age groups and organised full-time permanent contracts. “Age” was a key value that provided the older workers with preferential positions in organisation. Seniority certified professionalism, maturity and experience and supported organisational and technological changes. Seniority also played a strategic role in the social and professional integration of the young workers (Troadec, 2006). Such “reciprocal loyalty” (Alter, 2000) expressed a singular relation between workers and the organisation. Workers of all ages were belonging to a shared “economic destiny” (Attias-Donfut, 1988) throughout institutional frameworks (social security systems), which merged the generational destinies and made life trajectories stable and foreseeable. Because they linked life periods to social roles (Gauillier, 1999), legal frameworks reinforced solidarity between generations.

During the 70’s, in the modern countries, this equilibrium got threatened. A series of ruptures took place and uncertainty became permanent (concerning growth rates, employment, investments, etc.). In the 80’s, the labour market grew up both with financial, familial and societal insecurity; rapid changes; greater diversity and lack of solid traditions (Smola, Sutton, 2002).

During this period, a *disqualification of youth and ageing* on the labour market grew up. The youth could benefit from progress in schooling and became the age group with the higher rate and level of schooling, but this did not assure a good position on the labour market anymore. Ageing workers also faced a growing precariousness on the labour market. In a context characterised by lengthening of schooling and the persistence of mass unemployment, the new organisational models contributed to a redefinition of roles and assessment criteria within work; seniority progressively lost its positive connotation.

Diversification is another common key trend in the socio-economic contexts. Life trajectories as well as professional trajectories are more and more diversified. There is no longer a common reference to a standard way of life neither to a standard profile of employment and career. Changes in life choices, entry routes in paid work and career paths have significantly transformed the social framework for integration, especially as regard mobility and careers development (Tremblay, 2003). Professional trajectories are discontinued and made of a collection of experiences and jobs.

1.2 ...embedded in national contexts

However, this common economic framework is embedded in national contexts that shape the final outcomes of the trends described above. Within the consortium, we can point out roughly some features that determine the specificities of the social context.

The examination of the German employment systems must not overlook the historical specific situation since the unification. The unification in 1990 forced together two highly populated states, economically strong, with completely different employment patterns and family models, into a single system of law (Bosch/Knut, 2003). Moreover, the German labour market differs from other European countries by having a profession-based structure. Typically Germany is the combination of internal organisational and external professional labour market. Enterprises react to increased competition first of all with strategies of internal flexibilisation, especially flexibilisation of working time (Promberger, Böhm, Heyder, Pamer, Strauß, 2002; Herrmann, Promberger, Singer, Trinczek, 1999) but also through elastic collective agreements and collective bargaining agreements on plant or enterprise level (Seifert, 2002; Richter, Spitzley, 2003).

In Hungary, the change of political regime, both with a shift from one reproduction model (state socialist redistribution) to another (market economy) have deep impacts on the position of generations at work. The socio-economic context is also characterised by the disappearance of, or a change in the operation/function of, some of the old institutions and the emergence of new ones. Another aspect of the transition is a change in norms and mentality. Expecting an improvement in the standard of life, society was instead faced with mass unemployment and high inflation for which political freedom could hardly compensate (Róbert 1999).

Unemployment became massive throughout the country. Most affected by this were, on the one hand, the oldest segment of the population in active age, which was closest to retirement, and the youngest one on the other hand, which only entered the labour market or was about to enter it. The former was forced to leave the labour market sooner, while the latter had to postpone entry into it.

The fall of communism and the emergence of knowledge-based society affected generations differently: they had to face different challenges. The older generations found themselves in a setting in which their knowledge and experience gained in the previous system might have lost their relevance and thus they found themselves competing with younger people whose education suited better the new requirements. A common threat to all, however, was unemployment, not known up until then and the different generations had to resort to different strategies to fight it. From the point of view of generational differences, it is also very important to note that there are generations, which did not live under the previous system. On the one hand, they were not subjected to its oppression and therefore they did not experience liberation from it, but on the other hand, they were not exposed to the security the system provided in exchange for the oppression. Therefore communication is rather difficult between these younger generations and those, which grew up in the lax version of communism.

The situation in France shows a stronger pressure on young workers. Although the diffusion of more flexible contracts is a constant among European countries, France has been the most prolific concerning the multiplication of such contracts, which have been particularly concentrated on the young. For example 80% of the fixed term contracts concern young workers.

In Italy, a stronger tradition of intra familial solidarity is shaping the relation to precarious employment and the extension of the youngsters' life inside the parental family. Italian youth has an increasingly delayed access to adult life: in 2005, 60,2% of 18-34 Italian people is still living with parents, which rises to 74,8% in the case of flexible workers; the male share is higher than the girls' share (Censis, 2006). Anyway, besides economic factors, also cultural and psychological factors seem to be significant.

In Portugal, contrary to other western European countries, industry has never been the most important employer of the working population. It was the tertiary sector that passed directly from last to first place in hiring manpower. Public administration grew strikingly. Along with tertiarisation, coastalisation and urbanisation have also intensified. Population movements within the country have continued, concentrating populations along the coast and in the urban centres, especially in the two large metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto, but also around some foci of urban growth which have resisted the pull of Lisbon and Porto: Braga, Aveiro, Coimbra, Viseu, Évora and Faro.

So, a common socio-economic context, embedded in national frameworks and characterised by a durable mass unemployment, the destandardisation of work, the disqualification of youth and elderly and the high diversification of private and professional life, is thus supporting a changing relation to work that presents some major trends but also questions for the future.

2. Continuity and change in the relation to work

As summarised by our German partners, the concept of work orientation (or relation to work, depending on the translation of concepts) relies on studies in the 70s and 80s. The *patterns of interpretation* and *practical everyday-life orientations* were in the spotlight of interest (Neumann, 1984). Patterns of interpretation are socially acquired knowledge, which results partly from own experiences and partly from collective experience, i.e. family-, profession-, group- and class-specific processes of socialisation. For different areas of life different patterns of interpretation are available. It is necessary to differentiate between worldviews and everyday-life orientations. Worldviews are an interpretation of the societal totality in the perspective of the subjective relevance (Schütz, Luckmann, 1974). Everyday-life orientations are self-evident patterns of action, which structure work-, family- and leisure-life. Everyday-life orientations are usually defined by non-conscious motives. The theoretically constructed work orientation “is in its content an initialising force comparable with the concept Motive.” (Friedrich/Lantz, 1996, S. 476). An analysis of work orientation is, in this sense, motive-research. Work orientations are social patterns of the individual for his relationship to work. Orientation here is a sociological term and means the norms the individual applies to the relevant areas of his regular daily life. The relevant areas (Schütz, 1971) are, for example, family, leisure and work, etc.

These everyday-life orientations are shaped by socio-economic and cultural contexts. Deep transformations in these contexts will influence the orientations. Work, as individual and societal feature and experience, has deeply changed, so the relation or orientation to work is supposed to have also significantly changed. The debates about the central value of work or the distance to work, the statements about differentiated attitudes of age groups at work, the assumptions about specific women patterns of relation to paid work are all elements that reveal the social concern about these social mutations. The generational dimension in such approach is of high importance. As they have been socialised in different contexts and also because their specific experiences are different, generations are supposed to have more or less different orientations towards work. However, it is not easy to capture such non-conscious structures of consciousness. This section gathers some hypotheses coming from the overview of literature. Targeted qualitative research will help us to go further in the next steps of the project.

2.1 A new balance between instrumental and expressive dimensions

There are two or three (depending on the authors) different dimensions in the relation to work that we can find in diverse analyses, sometimes with different terms but rather convergent meanings (Paugam, 2000; Nicole-Drancourt, Roulleau Berger, 2001; Riffault et Tcherna, 2002, 2003). The first dimension is called *instrumental*; it refers to the material expectations, the idea of income, the importance of payment and the possibilities of being promoted. The second dimension is the *social* one; it refers to the importance of the human relations at work. The third dimension is called *symbolic* and has to do with the opportunities to express oneself

in an activity, the interest of the work, the feeling of success, the level of autonomy and the social usefulness. Symbolic and social dimensions are sometimes considered together and called the *expressive* dimension of work (Habermas, 1973, 1987; Zoll, 1992, 2001).

There are different assumptions regarding this double or triple reference to work. In many current jobs, according to some analyses, there is no place anymore for the expressive dimension of work. Due to its own dynamics (Habermas, 1973), to the increasing difficulties to “read the social” (Arliaud, Eckert, 2002) and to the current precariousness of the labour market, workers develop mainly an instrumental relation to paid work (Zoll, 1992, 2001). However, meeting both material and subjective needs does not seem possible for everybody. Current situations in the world of work can be interpreted rather as *a new balance between instrumental and expressive dimensions*. What has changed is not the double/triple reference to work but it is rather the weight and relation of these dimensions.

2.2 Increased importance of other social areas

There is an abundant literature about the debates on distance or centrality of work. For some authors, in Europe and in the United States, this situation leads to an increasing distance with paid work (Coupland, 1991; Cannon, 1994; Baethge, 1994; Gorz, 1997; Zoll, 2001) and threatens the social integration or the citizenship of the weakened groups (Bourdieu, 1993; Gorz, 1997; Sennet, 1999). However, other researches develop an opposite analysis and consider that work remains, for all generations, a central value in the construction of social identities, in Europe as in North America (Boudon, 2002; Castel 1995; Wilson, 1996; Hamel, 1999). Nevertheless, if the second group of authors tend to confirm the importance devoted to work, they also reveal the increased *relativisation of the central place of work*. They also observe an increasing *importance of other social areas*, in particular, non-economic areas in the construction of identities.

The young generation is the one who is supposed to have more distance with work. However, this relativisation of work does not mean that young people prepare for a life in the leisure- and fun-society. Many surveys demonstrate that the life-goal “Job and Family” is still crucial. Their distance to work is also questioned by the increased importance of student jobs. Young people can develop quite early a relation to work through student jobs, these jobs are also part of the socialisation process for these young people (Hamel, 2003).

There are different assumptions regarding the place of work for the young generation. The first one is the period of progressive entry into adult roles. During this period, young people are tempted to invest all the activity fields that are accessible to them and not only the work field. When they are confronted to an increased number of responsibilities in private and professional life, young people give more importance to work. A second assumption relates to deep structural changes in modern societies, notably the development of schooling. Tchernia (2005) suggests that socialisation within the framework of schooling has probably an impact on the way people consider working life. The relativisation of work (especially observed among the highly qualified young) cannot be understood without putting forward the disillusion caused by the drop in status process observed at the entry into the labour market and more generally, frustration and dissatisfaction towards a social model that does no longer associate education / work and social mobility in a linear way.

Despite possible relativisation of work that can take diverse degrees among generations, as regards some key expectations such as personal recognition or professional identification, generations seem convergent.

2.3 Subjectivisation of work

Paradoxically, debates about relativisation of work are contemporaneous to debates about subjectivisation of work. Once more the young generation seems more concerned. Subjectivisation means the claiming for personal requirements, ideas, demands in work, or, in other words, the introduction of subjectivity in work.

Subjectivisation is linked to the change of economic, professional and task structures as well as the increasing use of new work and organisational concepts (Heidenreich, Braczyk, 2003). In the 60s and 70s subjectivity of labour was considered as a source of disturbance and insecurity for the economic use of labour (which was ‘objectified’). At the contrary, the present-day companies consider the subjective factor as a resource for economically successful work processes. This nowadays re-subjectivisation is supposed to free potentials formerly trapped by bureaucracy, to mobilise commitment, to replace expensive control mechanism with cost-free and more effective self-control, virtualised rule-by-self-control, and flexible planning by introducing improvisation (Moldaschl, 2003). Especially amongst younger adults there is an increasing desire to introduce their subjectivity into their work (Baethge, 1988/1991/1994).

Subjectivisation seems to go hand in hand with “blurring the boundaries” (de-limitation) that characterises the dissolution or weakening of societal standards and norms of work. In the post-fordist labour society especially the male standards of normality are affected. Blurring of boundaries presents a point of culmination of subjectivisation of work. First of all, blurring the boundaries leads to a new combination of person and manpower in the work process, and is secondly characterised through a massive seizure of the person of the worker, which is concentrated along the dimensions flexibility and self-organisation (Kratzer, 2003). Blurring the boundaries thus means that orders and rules (modes of regulation of performance), as well as hierarchies and bureaucracy (modes of regulation of the employment of manpower), are being replaced by self-organisation and flexibility.

A pathological point of culmination of subjectivisation is the over-investment in work. Many examples can be found in managerial professions, executive positions or ICT professions, but not exclusively. For these workers, work is always a priority. Most of their time and energy is devoted to work. They have excessively integrated the norms and work culture of new organisational models.

2.4 Sense of belonging and collective dimension

The professional commitment of the old generations was sustained by their sense of belonging to a collective and by the concern to integrate well in the group by adopting social and professional behaviours in accordance with their role (GIP-MIS, 2004). In this integration logic, the socialisation framework dominates the individual differences.

On the contrary, among young people, this sense of belonging to a collective, which is really important in the eyes of the old workers, is relegated to a position of secondary importance, in

favour of the intention of being recognised as an autonomous individual getting under control one's life, instead of being confined to one function in the firm. In this perspective, philosophers like the Canadian Charles Taylor put forward the idea of the "ethics of authenticity".

Their particular ethics can also explain their weak investment or even a risk of disengagement when they feel compelled to do something, when they are not recognised for their work, or not interested in the tasks that they have to do. Conversely, they can put a lot in their work when their ability to take the initiative is recognised and when their work allows to express their potential and to meet their needs of searching a meaning to life (Vakaloulis, 2005). Young people expressed a logic of subjectivity (Dubet, 1994) and in the meantime, they distance themselves from the « integration logic » of the old generation.

Young people are often criticised for individualist behaviours, which would mark a break with the traditional working class culture ruled by strong collective solidarities (Beaud, Pialoux, 1999). A finer research carried out in big firms reveals a more complex reality (Gautié, Guillemard, 2004; Vendramin, 2004): indeed, the divide between generations seems to correspond to different modes of linking and structuring individual and collective dimensions. This difference can largely be explained by the evolution of the human resources management and the changes in work organisation (Trodec, 2002)

Older people express a strong identification with the work group and a symbolic opposition to the hierarchy, which is coupled with a collective human resource management, ruled by logic of qualification and accompanied by wage negotiation with unions (Dubar, 1991). But older people experience an individual work process, which reflects a divided and compartmentalised work organisation.

On the contrary, the entry of young people into firms is concomitant with the growing individualisation of the relation between employers and employees. Thus, young workers do not identify with peer groups. They view their relations with their colleagues as a relation between individuals embedded in networks built and ruled by affinities (GIP-MIS, 2004). But they value and experience cooperative work activities, consistent with the evolution of work organisation (a logic of competence instead of a logic of qualifications, decompartmentalisation of production units, activities in network etc.).

In brief, instead of contrasting the individualism of the young and the solidarity of the older generation, distinguishing the "cooperative individualism" of the young generation from the "individualist communitarianism" of the older generations would be more accurate (Thuderoz, 1995; Delay, 2005; Vendramin, 2004).

2.5 Vision of the future, relation to risk, relation to work

The young generation is often depicted as a generation "in negative": without distinctive characteristics, without precise age boundaries, avoiding conflicts, invisible in the society, lacking of future, for-ever-young. No surprise if, in relation to work, they look less ideological and more instrumental, as it has been said. Moreover, their diverse conceptions of time – in particular their different idea of "future" – seem to be a key-dimension in the analysis of the cultural and social factors affecting the relationship to (and the meaning of) work. The difficulty to picturing themselves in "any" future, for both male and female youngsters, is likely to be a significant reason for their instable work paths, just like the specific labour market constraints, i.e. the low employment demand or the job precariousness.

Youth is often depicted as a without generation: without values, without dreams and strong passions; without a vision of the future. However, authors suggest (Diamanti, 1999) that the proliferation of “negative” definitions, that insist on what the absences and the lacks are, might be an effect of the position of the observers and of their incapacity of seeing a “way of being young” which shows to be different from that they were used to. In this sense the strategy of hiding and protecting oneself into the private, the small, the present (family, friends, associative voluntary groups, the day-by-day work project) as opposite to the search for public, collective and to the projection into the future engagements, might be something young-people of the 80^{ies} learnt from their parents and teachers, and from the experience of a country in an enduring crisis (Italy, country of Diamanti). Some central elements of the description of this invisible status are the alliance with the parents and the strategy of reversibility, together with a contradiction between the way young people conduct their life and the issues they protest for. This results in avoidance of definitive choices in work and life matters; the double attitude of dealing quite easily with the instable offer coming from the private sector, on the one hand, and of protesting against the presence of the private in the University, on the other hand. In this sense, young people seem to demonstrate against themselves more than against the system or the old generation (Diamanti, 2005).

The main problem of the young generation does not seem to find a job but to keep it (Facchini, 2005). Young people got used to the risk, provided the emergency net offered by the family. Diamanti (2005) describes this tolerance to - or even search for - the risk as the only way to prove their own value to build an identity now that other practicable challenges are precluded. Cavalli (2002) tends to underline the paradox and yet the actuality of the complicity between children who do not protest against their helping and sensitive parents, and parents who are competing with them on the labour market or in defending their retirement benefits, in order to be able to guarantee a safety net for their children. The flexibility goes together with the invisibility and they both are a symptom of a polycentrism and globalisation, which involves everybody, young and adult people but that the latter seems more ready to recognize. Finding individual, contingent and adaptive answers for collective problems seems to be the strategy, a conscious one. And at the same time it seems to reflect a generalised way of focusing on the individual specific and contingent problem instead of looking for “solution for everybody”. The suggestion is that young people are often called invisible because it is how we prefer to see them in order not to see into ourselves.

The relation to work of young generations seems to evolve from *roots* to *paths*. The idea of a position to hold and where to make roots has faded away, leaving space for the idea of a path, to be often randomly crossed. The significance given to this path is not unique, and this plurality of meanings is the reflection of the many different prospective and expectations young people have towards work: desire of a professional growth, yearn for independence, and need of security (Gosetti, 2005).

In addition to the late entry into the working life previously noted, the young have to face an entry which is often gradual, chaotic, and discontinuous rather than linear, instantaneous and definitive. The length of their insertion process (which becomes for most of them a real phase of precariousness) has got longer and it is done through shorter and spreader spells of employment than in the past. Indeed, a longitudinal analysis shows that there is no more only one scheme of entry into the working life, and they point out an increasing complexity within professional paths.

3. Intergenerational dimensions

3.1 *Collide between generations?*

Due to the 80's transformation of the work framework (destandardisation of work), the intergenerational processes of transmission and solidarity, efficient for previous generations, seem to be blocked in a growing number of situations. Since the 80's, the existence of a "reciprocal loyalty" and the recognition of "a common destiny" appear more and more threatened. The relations between generations is also threatened by the reinforcement of the coexistence of two models of valorisation of employment; the creation of specific areas of employment for the young workers; the exclusion of ageing people; mass unemployment and precariousness at work; but also some discourses that support doubt about ageing people.

Due to this rupture in the intergenerational regulation and also because of the increasing diversity in attitudes and beliefs throughout age groups, many researches have suggested the idea of "collide between generations" (Ferry, 1986; Grand-Maison et Lefèvre, 1993; Light 1988; Beaud, Pialoux, 1999, 2003; Lancaster, Stillman, 2002) which would impact on various issues: management processes and "resistance to changes" (Marquié, 1995; Lagacé, 2003); integration of ages in work (finding a job also supposes a collaboration between ages in an organisation); experiences of conflict, violence or exclusion in the workplace (Cultiaux, 2005b). From this point of view, the experienced workers represent, for young people, an unreachable goal or, at the opposite, a counter-model. For ageing workers, the newcomers sometimes threaten their security in employment (particularly when restructuring is at stake) or, more basically, threaten the values and representations of the world in which they were recognised.

In a quite determinist perspective, some authors analyse these situations as resulting of a "struggle for power" between diverse generations that haven't had the same paths and opportunities for integration. Some authors suggest moderating this reading, particularly when we try to explain the relations between GenXers and Millennials (see chapter 2, section 3). For Chauvel (1998), for instance, this idea of a "clash between generations" refers to a precise period of our recent history when the 80's youth questioned the model of society of their elder. Nowadays we are quite far from the radical ideas of this period. At the opposite, with precariousness, young people seem primarily seeking a place, even uncomfortable, in the current society and its operating forms.

3.2 *Characterising generations*

Characterising generations means identifying significant life experiences (Jurkiewicz, Brown, 1998) and considering all of them as specific "phenomena related to situations and social interactions" (Rioux, 1969). Regarding this definition, "generations at work" are usually defined referring to some significant events that occurred during an historical step of capitalism and the transformation of the social frameworks of work.

In sociological work, different interpretations of the word generation are used. Familial generation are placed on the sociological micro level, societal generations on the macro level. At the societal level of generations, three dimensions are distinguished.

Political generations define themselves, according to Mannheim, through birth in the same historic-social life community; the nexus of generations is characterised by participation at important societal events such as wars or cultural changes and units of generations are characterised by the closeness of the content of the minds of the individuals (Mannheim, 1928/1964). In the consortium, Hungary illustrates the situation of political generations with strong repercussion within work through the discovery of mass unemployment or the disqualification of knowledge and competences build during the former regime.

Cultural Generations define themselves through specific experiences, attitudes and styles. Cultural generations have to do with changes in the values system, stereotypes regarding ICT and age, individualisation, changes in schooling. It seems that many young people today have no difficulties to combine value orientations, which are part of traditional values, with modern values. Adults on the other hand tend to draw stronger borderlines.

Economic Generations are composed of cohorts with specific economic chances and risks. The entry into the job market (for example the Baby-Boomers) is so an important factor for the professional life course. Economic generations are differentially confronted to mass unemployment; insecurity of trajectories; flexibility; changes in organisational models, etc. Effect on generations of economic changes can be differentiated. In Western capitalist countries, the growth of good jobs in terms of qualification and working conditions (managers, white-collar workers) is profitable to the seniors of today. The baby-boom generation took advantage of the education system's development and the concomitant modification of the employment structure. On the contrary, the following generation suffers from the deterioration of the relation between the education system and the employment structure. There is a lower probability of ascending social mobility. In brief, young people are less privileged than the precedent generation on the labour market, in the economic distribution and in the status structure. Cohorts, born between 1920 and 1950, benefit from the Welfare State development. On the contrary young people know unemployment, an increased contribution period and a Welfare State retrenchment. As a consequence, they will not benefit fully from our social model. Furthermore, the future of our social model is uncertain. According to Chauvel (1998), nowadays generations are characterised by a shortage of the advantages that the precedent generations enjoy. Some scholars complete Chauvel's point of view. For instance, Galland (2005) estimates that differences between generations are less worrying than differences within the young generation. Social and economic heterogeneity among young people would be more significant than the drop in status of the whole generation.

Köllö (2002) looks at the labour market position of older generations in Hungary in the decade following the change of the regime. He points out that the labour market position of the older generations was endangered by the change of the regime for many reasons: the erosion of their knowledge acquired at school, the devaluation of their practical experience accumulated through work, their disadvantages in the area of IT and languages.

The specific combination of cultural / economic / historical-political dimensions constitute the roots of generations. All these three dimensions are intertwined. *They shape the specific orientations towards work of each generation.* Transversal to generations, more classical social discriminating factors intervene in the shaping of work orientations, mostly social and financial resources; gender; ethnicity.

3.3 Areas of cooperation and tensions

The age groups at the two extreme of the working age scale seem to support the security of the mid-age group (most of the researches and policy concerns focus on young workers and old workers). However, areas of cooperation or tension between generations are not so clear. Moreover, distribution of economic resources between generations has changed.

The keyword of the “new social inequality” between generations is based on post-materialistic orientations and the life-style centring of the young generation, a finding that Steinrück had already formulated in 1986. Other authors see the origin of growing generational conflicts less in differing values and work orientations: “New lines of conflict, as for example the tension between pensioners and young workers contributing to social security or the tension between permanently employed and young unemployed or between spending on education or spending on pensions rather refer to “materialistic” conflicts” (Sackmann, 2004 p. 44).

Within private life, we see a strange articulation with (supposed) intergenerational tensions within work and increased intergenerational solidarity within family (lengthening of family support to youth). In general the older generation supports the younger generation financially, while the younger generation supports the parent-generation in every-day life. The financial support of their children is possible for the parent-generation because the “public contract of generations” provides them with the required material possibilities. The “public contract of generations” thus is the prerequisite for the “private contract of generations”.

4. Changing families and life styles and work concerns

The evolutions described above (the lengthening of the schooling period, the difficult entry into the labour market) influence young trajectories beyond the professional sphere. They contribute to the delaying of the decision to live together and to have children, but they also make young adults more dependent on the help of their parents, as financial and housing independence arrived later in life.

As a consequence, young people have to consider a wider range of living arrangements and housing (single with their parents, with friends, with a partner) providing more or less autonomy and delaying their definitive independence. They remain dependent on the families for much longer periods than it was previously the norm. Another consequence is the increasing and constant pressure on the public finances of many European countries and the possible erosion of the level of support for young people, which increase the emphasis on the families’ role. Associated to personal resources (qualifications, soft skills or psychological factor like motivation), family resources (education, economic capital...) are traditionally significant in the transition process. But the extent of this role is questionable.

Moreover, leaving the family house is a complex process, with several departures and returns, in particular among students and young people under 25 years old. In all countries, even more in Italy, youth has an increasingly delayed access to adult life for economic reasons (labour market, public policies, housing problems in cities) but also cultural and psychological reasons. In Hungary, some researchers see the prolongation of youth as stage of life. The prolongation of the youth stage promotes other roles, such as the single, or even the “pre-single” stage. As a result of the ongoing economic shift, youth’s paths of integration into adult

society change. This is true in general but in post-socialist states even more so: challenges of a newly set up market economy and those of worldwide economic changes appear at the same time. As a consequence of this, the path to work status becomes more open for the youth while it is more insecure and unpredictable. Most studies and research data on youth consider the prolongation of youth as a stage of life as a significant development.

There is an increased and changing role of families whole over Europe, for economic reasons on the one hand and for cultural and psychological reasons, on the other hand. In Italy, this new kind of family has been called by the researchers a “long family” (Buzzi, Cavalli, De Lillo, 2002). Several factors are involved in generating this new phenomenon: occupational restrictions, together with housing problems (especially in large cities) seem to be the main factors inducing young people to delay plans for autonomous living. Family compensate for the shortage of jobs and for the lack of public policies addressed to young people, like unemployment allowance. Some authors underline this role played by families as an integration of welfare state provision and even as a mean to control social and labour market conflicts (Sgritta, 2004). Anyway, besides economic factors, also cultural and psychological factors seem to be significant and, in particular, a new relationship between parents and children. In addition of giving children psychological and emotional support as traditional families used to do, new families show the “reciprocal need of children and parents to protract the stay in the family”: if youngsters are often unwilling to leave the “home nest”, their parents often want to prolong the self-gratification they feel being capable to offer their children more than they have had in their young years (Cigoli, Scabini, 2004).

Family was perceived as an organic entity based on an unequal and hierarchical order, without possibilities of debates. This traditional model is now eroded. Feminist claims, progress towards gender equality and the evolution of family law has changed family relationships. The family is not any more the sphere of the authority, but a sphere of private life, where the individuals can express their affectivity (De Singly, 2000; Baudelot, Establet, 2000).

Families are very active in helping their children to find a job, too. More than two-thirds of employed young people in Italy found their job through personal and family network, instead of institutional channels. In more recent years, the problem does not seem to find a job but to keep it: the turnover rate of young people 15-34 is eight times higher than older people.

Having one’s first child has been delayed. This is not because young people would be uncertain about wanting children but because of the increased time spent in education and a change in commitment to permanent relationships by men and women in the second half of their twenties. Leaving the parental home mostly coincides with marriage or cohabitation with a partner, and is not simply correlated with finishing one’s studies or entering work.

There is another important consequence of educational expansion, which is described by Beck as the individualisation and diversification of life courses. Two types of life courses can be separated with regard to youth’s life courses: a “standardised life course”, and a “life course of choice” which allows more complexity in, and the interchangeability of, life events. A “life course of choice” is more typical among higher strata of society, while “standardised life course” among middle and lower strata. Prolongation of youth, therefore, is more marked among upper social segments but is increasingly oozing down into other segment, thus becoming a general trend among youth (Gábor, 2002).

To conclude, the new relations between the young and the family can be seen as a paradox: the family, which is not safe from uncertainties and risks, constitutes a place of refuge, a space ruled by confidence and mutual aid. In the family, « *the war of generations does not exist and does not appear, despite the crisis and certainly because of it* » (Baudelot and Estabiet, 2001). The relationship between generations can certainly become strained at the scale of the society, where the wage gap between generations is widening, where unemployment and involuntary part-time employment hit more frequently young people, but the relationship between generations are on the contrary peaceful inside the family, governed by solidarity and affection. The same youth is protected and sustained here, but excluded and exploited elsewhere.

The Hungarian partner also points out that, in their country, neither the State, nor the families were prepared to handle such a sudden upsurge in unemployment. Families were forced to support the child who, after leaving school, could not find a job for months, or in some cases for more than a year. This inflicted an additional burden on the generation of the parents, which was already affected severally by the decrease in the relative value of wages and by unemployment as well, and who therefore had an interest in the child's employment as soon as possible.

5. Challenges for social cohesion

Changes in work and relation to work raise challenges as regards social cohesion. Dualisation of the labour market, precariousness of young workers, place and status of women, exit of work of ageing workers, exclusion of non native workers, changing role of families, access to citizenship, integration of youth in work constitute crucial issues for the cohesion of society. In the inclusion / exclusion processes, work appears to be a determinant factor, however, how these processes operate for all generations and what are the intergenerational dimensions are not obvious.

A first challenge for social cohesion concerns the youth. *The period of socialisation of youth to work tends to be replaced by a period of instability and risk.* This creates potential areas of tensions between generations. The disappearing of specific work areas for youth that were supporting their socialisation and entry into the core jobs both with the increased level of education and time spend in schooling are the common framework of job instability for the youth. However, the issue of job instability can be seen from different points of views. A first one is the different influence of social factors in getting job instability “a bridge or a trap”. A recent survey in Italy on freelancers and temporary workers shows that for workers who occupy strong positions (i.e., high qualified people), moving free on the labour market can be a great opportunity, while young people with low qualification, few contacts, low entrepreneurship are likely to be trapped in an enduring risky situation (Fullin, 2004). However, the way people experience job instability is not only a matter of level of education. Roulleau-Berger and Nicole-Drancourt (2001) analyse the more or less long period of instability as a work socialisation process of youth that seems to be not possible anymore at school or in the core jobs. However, such a path to stable job is risky and can lead to exclusion processes. The increasing destandardisation of young people's transition between education and work also contribute to blur their perspective of social integration and participation in society as citizens. They are caught in a certain “yo-yo” transition between youth and adulthood, a socio-political vacuum without clear status.

The adequation of institutions and public intervention is also questioned by the changes in the economic, cultural and social spheres. Institutions of the welfare state are no longer in line with current development of society. The balance between active workers and non-active workers progressively undermines the welfare systems. As an example, the Belgian model of social security, positively assessed in the eighties for its efficiency regarding poverty issues, is currently considered as critical because it does not succeed anymore in integrating in employment whole groups of the population: low-qualified workers, migrant workers, women, ageing workers (Moulaert, Reman, 2006). Young workers do not have enough opportunities to value their investment in education and social mobility is not linear anymore (education/work/social mobility); at the same time, older workers are disqualified and loose their place in the work and competences hierarchies.

The State intervention has been thought for occupations and careers today totally out of time, while in addition the capability of families to support professional careers of their members cannot be widened anymore (Bertolini, Rizza eds, 2005).

The need for freedom and independence characterising many life projects of today's young men and women should not be left aside to the neo-liberal politics; they require new forms of welfare and social organisation. Those could vary from recognising the importance of non-market activities such as care and training, to a different retirement system, the harmonisation of work and life times, the extension of active life, new balance between security and freedom. Other approaches are more radical, claiming for a thorough change of social regulation: work is not going to be a reasonable mean of wealth distribution and social protection any longer, societies need new forms of social security, especially based on "citizenship minimum income", independent from any working performance.

In a perspective of social cohesion, *it appears also important to pay attention to regional differences but also to differences between cities and countryside*, and moreover to understand the explicative factors and social consequences of these differences. For example, traditional differences in attitudes towards work between young people living in the North and the South of Italy are confirmed by an important survey (IREF, 2001): breaking down the data by geographical area indicates that young people living in the North of Italy tend more to see work as a form of professional identity, while those living in the South are more likely to believe that work has the primary function of supporting the individual financially. According to the latest numbers of the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (BA) (employment office) by now, there are 4,37 millions people unemployed, unemployment in East Germany is twice as high (16,7%) as in West Germany (8,8%). Work problems and work related problems are also rooted in economic zones and the situation of large cities, small cities or countryside can be highly different. Housing in large cities is an important factor that has to be taken into account in the access to independence of youth or in the examination of professional mobility; integration in communities too.

Unemployment becomes a forced way of life for a growing number of employees in various ways. Unemployment, as well as overinvestment in work, the pathologic point of subjectivisation, represents danger of isolation and lack of citizenship. From a social cohesion perspective, belonging to certain communities is important. Unemployment leads to de-solidarisation and isolation; the own social situation is being experienced as separated from the self (Morgenroth, 2003). For the examination and study of processes of social closure on the micro-level of every-day actions the concept of belonging is useful. Belonging to is of great importance in the unofficial spheres of every-day life (Neckel, 2003). Who belongs to

which group, or is assumed to by third parties, will influence the chances of taking care of interests and articulating needs.

The situation of workers, and particularly young workers, with migrational background on the labour market is worsening in all countries. In Germany, the chances for education and employment especially of young people with and without nine years of elementary school and especially of young men with migrational background have decreased enormously in the postfordist work society. In Hungary, the situation of Roma is worse than the situation of the non-Roma population with the same educational background (or the lack thereof): their chances of access to employment are only half of the other group's; the jobs they are typically hired for are three times as unstable as those of their non-Roma counterparts. Unstable employment has become general, therefore social disintegration reached even those who do have jobs: the lack of systematic jobs brings forth the lack of systematic life-style, bread-and-butter worries, a lower level of state social benefits and company welfare and, in certain cases, the loss of entitlement to those. In France, young from immigration are faced with a risk of unemployment twice as high as a young whose parents are born in France. Furthermore, people of foreign origin get bad jobs more frequently, and they rarely occupy manager's position. Today, there is a decoupling of cultural integration and economic integration. Social and cultural behaviours of young people from immigration are similar to the other's behaviours. But they suffer from discrimination on the labour or housing market (Béhar, 1998). This gap feeds feelings of resentment.

As regards women, there is a lack of research on the mid-age group, the age group in which gender issues are highly crucial. There is also a *lack of approach of gender questions in research work about generations at work*. Most of the effort is dedicated to youth and older workers. However, we find *unquestioned assumptions such as the lower importance of the professional status for women*. They refer to the double socialisation of women in which the various moments of the socialisation through work and family combine to specific constellations (Geissler/Oechsle, 1996). Thus women would cope better with the loss of employment by excluding work from their identity. Unlike men, women do not feel that the end of working life means the end of their lifetime as they create new roles and identities. This kind of assumption is not supported enough by robust researches.

The worsening of women place on the labour market is better documented. Authors in France notice that unstable careers and drop in status compared to the level of education are more frequent in the tertiary sector, mainly composed of women, whereas the relationship between education and employment is stronger in industrial sectors (Lefresne, 2003). In Hungary, in the past decades, social opportunities of women have also worsened in many respects, their relative disadvantages, compared to men, increased. A large share of these disadvantages has to do with the aggravation of labour market position of women. Twenty years ago the employment of women in Hungary was among the highest worldwide, whereas female employment today is similar to the lowest in Europe. Moreover, four times as many women as men depend financially on their families. The changed labour market conditions after the regime change strengthened views approving of the traditional division of labour within the family. The general accepting of, and agreement on, these roles (the "man as a bread-winner" and the "woman who takes care of household duties") strengthened in general, even in the case of the youngest generation. On the other hand, the concept that "women have to work for the livelihood of the family as well" became almost entirely exclusive. In Germany, the educational gaps between girls and boys, between foreign and German young people augments. The female gender emerges as a winner from this process while more than 20% of

the young men from the lower social classes are given the slip. (Shell- Jugendstudie, 2006) Although 70% of the 2500 questioned young people under 25 are aware of the demographic change and the problems related to it, and although half of the young people consider their relationship to the elder generation as tense, there seems to be an avoidance of confrontation. They react to the changes by increasing their willingness to performance and to adapt to the existing conditions (ibid). The authors of the 15th Shell Jugendstudie were looking in particular for a “war between the generations” and discovered surprisingly that we are rather faced with a “war between the sexes” (ibid).

This draws rapidly the general framework in which orientations towards work are changing. How can we characterise these orientations now? How to capture the generational dimensions of these orientations? Are there emerging divides or new potentials that have to be taken into account in the public/private spheres? Giving some answers to these questions is the purpose of the SPReW project.

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Chapter 2: Methodological design of the research

Introduction

The second chapter draws the methodological design of the whole project. It starts with desk research (WP1), followed by qualitative (WP3) and quantitative approaches (WP4). In a next step it assesses a collection of policy practices (WP5, transition between research and policy). All the material and outcomes has been discussed in dialogue workshops with stakeholders (WP8), validation through participative approach). Finally the research suggests recommendations to diverse actors (WP7). Before this last step a cross-national comparative analysis has been conducted (WP6).

1. General overview of the research design

The research process developed into several subsequent steps:

Analysis of the existing literature on the topics and the drawing up of a framework of hypotheses (desk research - WP1 and 2)

An integrated approach has been implemented regarding the various dimensions of the relation to work for the younger and older generations, covering analysis and hypotheses in different scientific disciplines (mainly sociology, economics, psychology, history, and statistics).

Description of the changing over time of the relation to work, its meaning for workers belonging to different generations, the societal consequence of the change (analysis of statistical data, international surveys' data, qualitative research on the field - WP 3 and 4).

Existing documents, as national, European and international surveys, have been used together with a large empirical research. Such qualitative investigation consists of 150 individual narratives interviews (25 in each country, involving three different group of ages: under 30, from 30 to 50 and over 50; a mix of women and men, employed and unemployed, employees and self-employed workers) and 18 group interviews, in six European countries. The method for analysing narrative interviews is based on a combination of collective hermeneutics and qualitative content analysis. The group interviews followed narrative interviews, aiming at clarifying particular issues and at pointing out areas of solidarity and tensions between generations. The analysis of empirical material took into account the four investigation fields connected to the social patterns of relation to work: work itself; intergenerational relations; family and lifestyles; social cohesion.

Highlighting the institutional factors which can lead to solidarity and social cohesion and the ones which may cause tensions among generations (cross-country comparative analysis - WP6)

The cross-national analysis explains why comparable social and psychological trends concerning the changing relation to work are likely to entail differentiated impacts, according to the respective institutional environments and what kind of institutional frameworks are

more likely to enhance intergenerational cooperation. The methodological approach of comparative analysis, which has been applied, refers to the neo-institutionalist theory.

Providing social actors with useful ideas to manage generations at work (collection of good practices - WP5 and 8).

A selection of the best practices targeted to youth issues, intergenerational cooperation, knowledge transfer and active ageing workforce has been realised in each country. On the basis of these examples and on the basis of the results of the empirical research, final proposals to social actors and well-funded recommendations have been drawn out, in order to ensure the European value-added of the research results.

2. Background research hypothesis

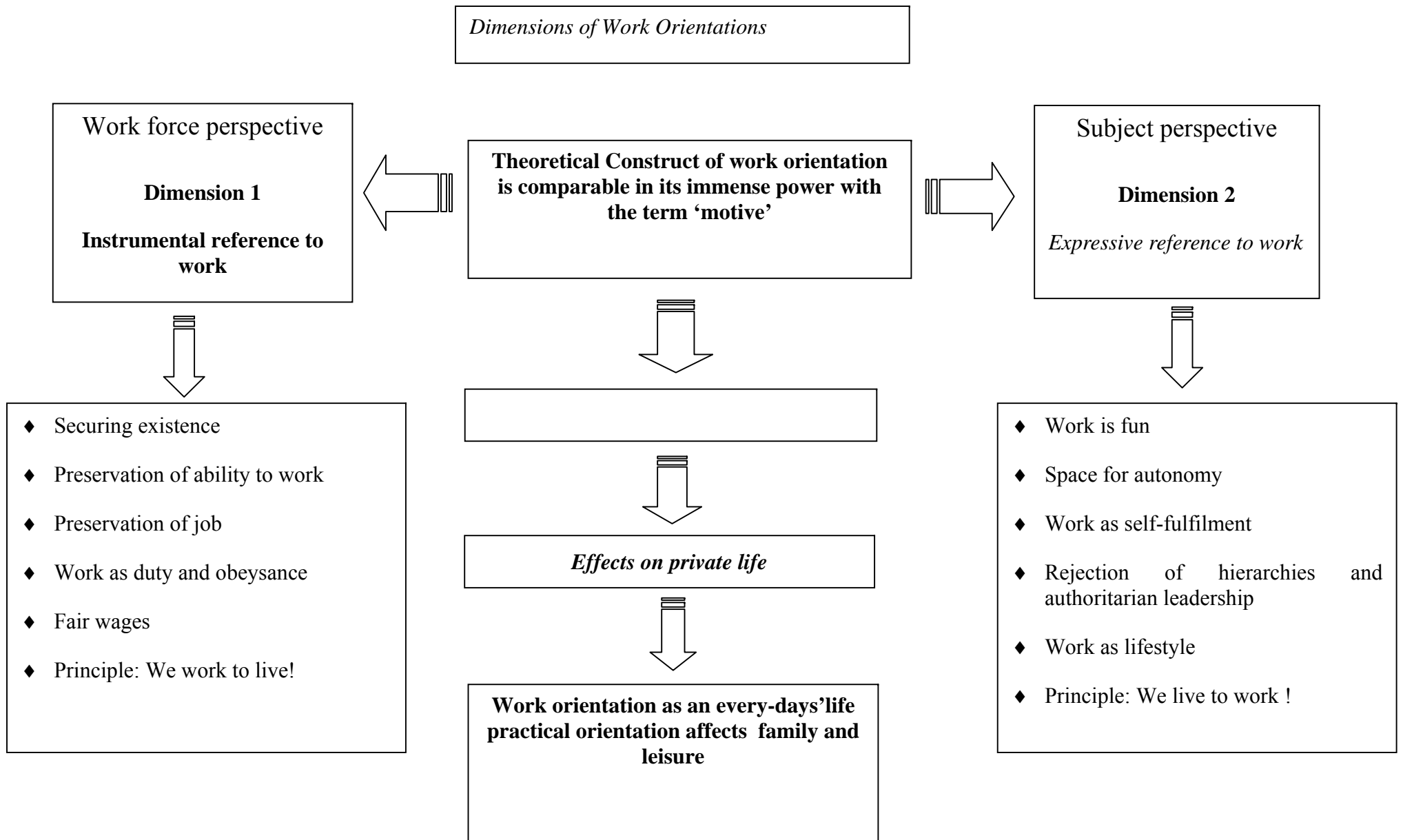
Before entering into the empirical work, diverse hypothesis, based on desk research, have been suggested and discussed (WP2). They are organised around the key issues of the project: work components; lifestyle and family construction; generation and intergenerational relationships; social cohesion.

2.1 Work components

Kruse (2001) examined the relevance and extension of work orientations in different European countries. He understands the socio-cultural work model as the whole of the subjective dispositions, orientations, expectations and fears of the employees. On the basis of empiric studies in the 80s and 90s and before the background of the EU expansion southwards, the author asks questions about divergence or convergence of the socio-cultural work models. Is the central-European model of work orientations asserting itself or is it conforming to the southern work model?

	Central-European Work Model	Southern Work Model
Description	Central-European life-concept oriented towards performance, organized with respect to family and profession.	Family- and life oriented work model with inter-generationally transferred cycle-of-nature orientation
Promoter	Central employee-group of high professional competence and high professional consciousness (male industrial skilled worker)	Instrumental work orientation and sometimes improvised work practise
Religion	Protestantism	Catholicism

An important motor for the change or, better put, the cultural modernisation of work orientations, are returning work migrants. These bring the central-European work orientations to their homelands. The process of the formation of new work orientations **is inter-generative**. The question of convergence or divergence is answered for Kruse by the idea of “Mass individualisation. Herein a possible new socio-cultural work model accentuates itself” (Kruse, 82). The different dimensions of work orientations are shown on the diagram.



There are three distinct periods in the development of work orientations (in Germany, in Europe, world wide?). It all began with the thesis of John Goldthorpe who in “The Affluent Worker” (1964) claimed, that workers had a primarily instrumental relationship to work. The author himself corrected this thesis shortly after. Numerous other studies have confirmed the thesis of a double reference to work (Knapp, 1980; Schumann 1981; Geissler 1984; Zoll 1993).

2.1.1 First period

In the time after WW2 a special relationship between the two dimensions prevailed among the workers. It was a relationship of reciprocal restriction. These restrictions are rarely emphasized, but they are rather important: a too strong identification with work is prevented by the awareness that the spending of the person’s manpower has to stand in an acceptable relation to wages. The instrumental reference is limited by the necessity or the will of a psychic arrangement with work (Zoll, 1993, P.72)

This reciprocal restriction of the dimensions makes it necessary that every worker has to find an individual balance between the two dimensions. Balance in this case does not mean that they are equal; they can but do not have to be. The weight of the interests in the balance is, in the end, an – usually not conscious – individual decision. Especially amongst the skilled workers the idea of professionalism is quite important: it encompasses the norm of work ethics (Weber 1922) that work has to be “done well”. Many white collar and unskilled workers share this norm.

2.1.2 Second period

In the 1970s and 1980s a break occurred. Work changed, despite the dominance of standardisation and Fordism a public criticism of the production line work and other work occurred. Supporters of this criticism are at first science and the Unions, and later the public (the media). Since then the young people know that work cannot be fun for a whole life. Unlike their predecessors they do not have illusions in this direction. Exempt from this practical criticism are professions with creative or socially useful aspects. However: Only a few can become a photographer or a journalist. The others, however, the majority looking for fun, even self-fulfilment in their work, can only find it in their leisure time. Just as the photographers remain a small minority, so, too, remain those who make a profession of their hobby and e.g., become professional rock musicians (Laurence Roulleau-Berger 1997).

For the majority of young workers work has only an instrumental dimension. They want to have at least some fun at work and most often found it in the communication amongst each other. “Fun” becomes an ambiguous term, its meaning is set somewhere between self-fulfilment and divertissement.

2.1.3 Third Period

The re-strengthening of the expressive reference to work marks this period. This process is based on the subjectivisation of work and has many roots, but one of the most important ones is a new management strategy: in the economic competition it is no longer sufficient to supply cheap commodities of high quality, new products are needed. The employees however do not show innovation and creativity when they are treated as in the tayloristic plant or in a

bureaucratic administration. They will only become innovative and creative if given those kinds of freedom that had been almost forbidden before. Suddenly these usually well-paid workers are permitted to work to conditions that contain large spaces of autonomy. (Baethge 1994, Schumann 2000) All that matters is they are innovative and creative in the fulfilment of the target bargaining. Thus a new type of worker, in Germany called *entreplooyee*, came into being. These continually growing minority consisted primarily of ICT workers, but also others. They work – far too long – to their own conditions because they are looking for self-actualisation in their work. Considering their way of working, they are the successors of scientists and artists.

Dimension	Old Cultural Model	New Cultural Model	Hypothesis: Flexible cultural model
Decade	Youth in the 50s and 60s	Youth in the 70s and 80s	Youth in 90th und millennium
Work Orientation Skilled Workers	Double Reference: Instrumental (necessity) and expressive (identification) at the same time	Split: Jobber (instrumental) or self-actualizer (expressive)	Instrumental as a prerequisite for expressiveness
Work orientation of young women	Arranging with work – limited perspective until marriage	Autonomy through work – unlimited perspective	Profession through education
Ethics	Duty against others	Having fun or self-fulfilment/ duty against one's own self	Pragmatism and idealism
Community	Class solidarity	Everyday-life solidarity	Solidarity individualised / NIMBY solidarity
Lifestyle	Adaptation to normality	Trying out new things: Search for I-identity (personal identity)	Splitting between town and country: In the town: Anything Goes
World View	Dichotomic view	Critical generation in new sense	Dichotomic view
View of family	Pair relation and nuclear family as natural	Pair relation and nuclear family under pressure for legitimisation	Plurality of the life-forms
Family	Nuclear family	Singe/patchwork	Normalisation of homosexual partnerships
Social environment	Unquestioned, naturally given pre-existing trust	Trust achieved through communication	Distrust
Gender	Discrimination against women	Politicisation of the discrimination	Politics of gender mainstreaming
Parents-children relationship	Parents refuse dialog Children into opposition Father-son-conflict	Children succeed with dialog	Mutual recognition and dialog
Relation to parents cultural model	Take-over	Rejection	Partly

Hypothesis 1: Old and new cultural model are encountered in all European countries

Hypothesis 2: Besides the two known cultural models a third one appears. It is marked by the differentiation and flexibilisation of the orientations in the new cultural model. Special characteristic is a specific balance between freedom and security.

Hypothesis 3: Precariousness becomes a necessary passage for many young people. Precariousness is lived as a threat by a large part of the young people. A growing number of the younger and older generation is affected by chronic precariousness.

Hypothesis 4: The differences between developed and peripheral regions, between town and land, increase. These differences lead to different **distributions** of the cultural models.

Hypothesis 5: Migrants act as catalysts for land of origin and for the immigration country.

2.2 Lifestyle and particularly family construction

Until the 70s male and female biographies differed significantly: The model for the male life course was the role of the family provider, the model for the female life course was the role of the family caretaker, the common model was the *provider marriage*. The crossover of the models in one family model was normative and institutionally backed. In the 70s the range of this family model contracted for a number of reasons. Indicators for this are shrinking birth rates, the shrinking number of marriages, changes of the divorce behaviour. The familiar **life style** had been an unquestioned lifestyle model up to the 70s; in the 70s it became a design to be negotiated, to which alternatives existed. In the present homosexual partnerships are increasingly legally adapted or treated as equal.

The **labour integration** of women has been increasing since the 1960s. In many countries the rising labour participation can be explained primarily with the increasing rate of part time jobs. High rates of growth, shorter working times and especially the expansion of the service sector created jobs for women, whose qualification level has been rising continually (Auth 2004)

Hypothesis 6: Family evolves – the traditional family model has eroded

Hypothesis 7: In fewer and fewer families live more than two generations under the same roof, but young people remain much longer in their parents home than before

Hypothesis 8: The integration of women into the labour market has risen but often only in the form of part time employment. Is this trend increasing?

Hypothesis 9: Will conflicts of interest develop between highly qualified employed women and women with children, working part time?

Hypothesis 10: The pluralisation of life styles is most likely going to be increasing

2.3 Generation and inter-generation relationships

For research a term for generation is proposed which combines different political and cultural experiences as well as divergent structures for chances on the labour market over several birth cohorts. We suggest to differentiate between three generations.

- The representatives of the younger generation are today between 15 and 29 years old, i.e., they were born between 1977 and 1991. The members of these birth years live aware in the 1990s and the new century. This generation has consciously experienced the collapse of the former Eastern Bloc and the expansion of the EU for the middle-European countries. The preparation and realisation of the European economic and monetary union are natural for this generation, the liberalisation of goods and labour markets is known to them since their earliest youth.
- The representatives of the middle generation are today between 30 and 49 years old; they were born between 1957 and 1976. This generation has experienced their youth in the 70s and 80s and experienced the institutions and politics of the EWG and the COMECON. The division of Europe into two blocs was considered **natural**.
- The representatives of the older generation are today between 50 and 65 years old. This generation encompasses the birth years of 1941 to 1956. This generation has experienced their youth in the 50s and 60s. They know the “cold war”, the foundation of EWG, EFTA and COMECON has been witnessed by them.

Hypothesis 11: In a permissive society marked by youth mania the following generation is lacking boundaries to rub against and to develop their own identity as youth.

The relationships between the generations are often discussed as opposition of the categories inter-generation conflict and inter-generational solidarity. At the core of the representation of the conflictual relationship between the generations there are two base patterns: inter-generation conflict as renewal and positions of interest.

- a) Starting with the model of the father-son conflict a competition of displacement between the established generation and the following generation seems to occur. This competition leads to a **fight for hegemony** in questions of culture, fashion and lifestyle.
- b) Conflicts from positions of interest are due to the competition for limited resources. Differing interests between the generations are, e.g., due to inequality of the distribution of social-welfare-state payments before the background of demographic change.

Hypothesis 12: The father-son-conflict has lost on importance of both practically and as a cultural pattern. The generational dynamic can no longer be explained with the father-son-conflict.

Hypothesis 13: Newspaper articles and popular-scientific publications (Schirmmacher 2004) have presented the inter-generational conflict as due to diverging positions of interest with, for example, the system of social security. Empirical support for this thesis is currently not available and is not expected.

Intergenerational solidarity is usually discussed together with **family life style**.

- On the one hand solidarity is considered as a value, which is given from one generation to the next. “The family is – rhetorically emphasized – a preferred place to learn solidarity (**rather than: where solidarity can be learned**) (Lüscher/Liegle, 2003, p264)
- On the other hand solidarity is seen as a mechanism of socio-political control beyond market and hierarchy. Solidarity is then limited to small social groups that can be **overviewed** easily. Inter-generational solidarity is measured along the three dimensions association, affection and consensus (Bengtson et al (1976) in Liegl/Lüscher 2003, P 268)

It is to be advised that this use of the term ‘inter-generation solidarity’ analyses the relation between the generations, but not the relationship itself.

Hypothesis 14: An increase in the family-based inter-generation solidarity is expected, as the life form family is experiencing a renaissance for heterosexual partnerships and is becoming more realisable for homosexual partnerships.

With respect to the inter-generation relationship the authors contrast two logics.

- Amongst relatives binding *duties* regulate the reciprocal exchange of services. Duties are embedded into legal, moral and (e.g. amongst siblings) negotiable regulations. Services are intra-family often defined as *support*. Support refers to the emotional connection between the participants and can create *duties*. Duty and support refer to the exchange of material and immaterial values. This transfer can also lead to *debt*. “A form of abstract dealing with debt can consist in understanding it as great debt of gratitude in form of lifelong respect against the parents (Lüscher/Liegle 2003 P274)
- Parent-Child-Relationships are often described through the principle of reciprocity. Reciprocity means with an eye on the social relationships also the implicit duties, which arise from the repeated giving and taking. Reciprocity creates from the action a (more or less) stable social connection. This ability is often normatively interpreted as an intrinsic value. If, on the other hand, relationships are oriented along the base pattern rationality, then complementarity becomes the opposite of Reciprocity (Lüscher/Liegle 2003 P 275). Complementarity in the relationships between the generations is achieved, if the planned action orients itself along cost-benefits calculations. **As the analyses of WP1 show, reciprocity has in the area of family as factual basis reciprocity, which is created by social policies.** Which results reductions in social policy will have on the reciprocity in the family space would have to be examined.

In the specific character of inter-generation relations, in their relationship logic “two principles come to bear which we marked with the terms reciprocity and rationality; one meets them at the analysis of single actions or action patterns as well as larger action contexts of longer duration and of sayings and terms based on those.” (Lüscher/Liegle 2003 p. 285). The authors developed from the simultaneous side-by-side of reciprocity- and rationality-logic of the inter-generational relationships the term of the “Generationenambivalenz” (intergenerational ambivalence). This way they characterise the in the generational logic inherent tension between opposite orientations. Ambivalence denotes a state of floating ambiguity. Characteristic for ambivalence is that

- The opposites creating the ambivalence belong to the same category (like love and hate, but not love and respect). Setting one factor over the other cannot dissolve ambivalence.
- The opposites are positioned in a temporal relationship of simultaneity, which, depending on the topic, can be marked by a different temporal horizon.

- Ambivalences are the result of an interpretation, a reflected attribution by involved subjects or third parties. **Latent or hidden ambivalences**
- Ambivalences mark the identity as indecision or staggering from one position to the other.

They are not the every-day indecision but “ambivalence is the case if simultaneously opposites of feeling, thinking, wanting, acting and the formation of relationships, which are relevant for the constitution of individual and collective identities, are temporary or permanently interpreted as unsolvable. These interpretations can occur by those involved, or through third parties, (e.g. therapists, scientists) (Lüscher/Liegele 2003, p 288). The authors use the term of generation ambivalence as a research construct and as interpretation pattern. When generational ambivalences as a research product is used we can, with qualitative and quantitative procedures, collect direct and indirect information about activeness strategies and assign them. When generation ambivalences are understood as patterns of interpretation then the possibility “to examine content and terms in which the same and equal is dealt with without the term ambivalence turns up.” (Lüscher/Liegele 2003, p 296). Generational ambivalence as pattern of interpretation is adaptable to other areas. The basic idea to use an open term to bypass the bottleneck, which is inherent in bipolar patterns of examination, such as solidarity or conflict, permits the analysis of fields of topic, which border to generational relationships, such as different type of child policies.

Hypothesis 15: The often-feared “War of the Generations” does not happen at the work place. Rather “speechlessness” between the generations is observed.

Hypothesis 16: In many companies there are only two generations that meet, in a large number of companies the middle generation is mostly amongst itself. The younger generation only has little experience in professional interaction with the older generation, just as the remaining elderly have only limited experience with younger ones. Medial transferred experiences take the place of **self-lived experiences**.

The transfer of knowledge is at the centre of the intergenerational relationships at the work place. Seitz (2003) emphasised that the transfer of knowledge between the generations has lost on importance. The transfer of knowledge has lost its function as basis for intergenerational relationships within companies due to a number of reasons. This applies especially in the service sector. Baecker (1999, p76) differentiates five different types of knowledge in a company: product knowledge, societal knowledge, leadership knowledge, expert knowledge and milieu knowledge. The strong dynamics of the market lead to a continual change of the products, so that experience is being devalued. Societal knowledge is equally marked by a high rate of change. Through the economic- and monetary union the basic conditions for organisations of all kinds change, from railways and post, corner stores disappear and are being replaced with new forms of organisation. Knowledge of leadership changes its character significantly from ordering to explaining. Expert knowledge has, especially when dealing with the development and deployment of technical systems, a rather short half-life period. The transition from analogue to digital technique devalued the experience of a large number of experts. Milieu knowledge loses a great deal of relevance with permanent restructuring.

Hypothesis 17:

- The middle generation is connected with politics of maintaining their assets. This generation is trying to isolate themselves against the younger and older generation and tries to take care of themselves first.

- The older generation loses the respect of the younger generations. The principle of seniority is seen today in many areas as unjust preferential treatment; it has lost its legitimisation and is currently being removed from a number of corporate and collective regulations.

2.4. Social Cohesion

Social cohesion describes the integration of individuals into societal institutions such as

- labour market and company,
- education and school, university,
- family and other life-world social networks in the areas of sport and culture,
- politics and organisations such as parties and unions,
- religious communities such as churches.

With a view on the labour market it is necessary to note that a growing group of economically active persons does no longer manage a frictionless transition from non-employment to employment or from one employment to the next, of from employment to retirement.

Hypothesis 18: The young are more affected by the risk of unemployment than the older ones. A democratisation process of the risk of unemployment has occurred. The fear of being unemployed hangs over the youth's professional integration like a Damocles sword.

Hypothesis 19: Youths from A-Families (foreigners, unemployed and the poor) are pushed into permanent precariousness. The probability of ghetto formation exists. The young go through poor and not very attractive areas of activity.

With regards to family and lived-world social networks the de-traditionalisation should be mentioned. The binding power of the institution marriage has diminished, social roles in the lived world are under pressure: the role of the father with regard to their life-world contribution to family life, the role of the mother with regards to the contribution of women in gainful employment.

Hypothesis 20: The combination of profession- and family-based demands places great stress on the middle generation

For the examination of processes of social closure on the life world level of every-day activity the term of "belonging-to" is available (Neckel 2003). Simmel wrote, "conflict connects", and Lewis Coser has worked out his thesis for the explanation of social cohesion. What is primarily of importance is less the increase of social conflicts but above all the increase of the heterogeneity of society.

Hypothesis 21: The true danger for the cohesion of the societies is their growing heterogeneity rather than open conflicts. The side-by-side existence of generations and societal groups leads to heterogeneity of society. Common values spanning several generations are being lost.

The political and religious organisations are affected by decreasing power of affiliation. The organisational principle of "voluntary membership" is losing attractiveness for an increasingly

large group of people. The membership in unions and social-democratic, socialistic and communistic mass-organisations is decreasing, but even conservative and Christian organisations do not profit from it, and even politically right-wing groups have so far been only marginal and only regionally important, if at all.

Hypothesis 22: Medial socialisation has replaced the process of formation of communities in political, religious and union groups for the young generation. The middle and older generation remain amongst themselves in parties, churches and unions.

Hypothesis 23: Contrary to the prevailing trend small groups of young people organise themselves in small grass-root movements along political and societal conflicts.

3. Main methodological and theoretical aspects guiding the approach to the narrative interviews

The qualitative investigation (WP3) consists of 163 individual narratives interviews (round 25 in each country, involving three different group of ages: under 30, from 30 to 50 and over 50; a mix of women and men, employed and unemployed, employees and self-employed workers) and 18 group interviews, in six European countries. The method for analysing narrative interviews is based on a combination of collective hermeneutics and qualitative content analysis.

3.1 Guiding principles for the selection of respondents

In the six countries included in this report, the respondents to the individual interviews were selected in order to maximise variance regarding personal variables, such as sex, age, qualifications, and parental status. Additional societal criteria were also used in order to adjust the sample and maximise its variability: type of management and structure, occupation and sector (public versus private) were the more relevant. However, in Hungary, France, and Belgium, importance was also accorded to other factors, a fact which diminished the variance of these samples by increasing their level of profundity: in Hungary, the selection was oriented to three sectors of the labour market which were differently influenced by the transition to capitalist economy and there was also an attempt to select members of different generations within same families, for achieving a longitudinal perspective, but this attempt succeeded in only a small proportion. In France, the group interviews were taken as opportunities for joining together employees from the same company and in some cases from the same departments, for an in-depth analysis of trans-generational relations. In Belgium, the analyses were concentrated in five sectors, differentiated by activity, management and structure.

The distribution of the interviews according to sex, educational level and age is shown in the following table.

Table of distribution of 163 interviews by sex, educational level and age

	Men	Women	Total	Low	Mid	High	Total
< 30	23	31	54	6	26	22	54
30 - 50	34	28	62	10	23	29	62
> 50	27	20	47	13	16	18	47
Total	84	79	163	29	65	69	163

3.2 Type and duration of interviews

A comparison across the six countries shows that Hungary, Germany and Portugal took a narrative approach to the interviews, with a biographic orientation aiming at drawing out life stories. Belgium, Italy and France chose to do semi-structured and comprehensive interviews, also with a biographic orientation. The interviews were all long, with a duration that ranged from 45m to 3 hours. So, each of the 163 interviews performed meant that a long and detailed conversation with the interviewee took place, approaching the themes of work, intergenerational relations and biographic trajectories. Some national reports (Hungary, Germany, Italy) highlight the positive impact that these long narrative conversations about the Self may have on the interviewee, and how in some cases they may even have healing effects.

All the interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of respondents and integrally transcribed. Therefore the material produced for analysis is rather extended.

3.3 Aims and modes of analysis; main theoretical guiding concepts

The approaches of the six partners involved in this work-package converge regarding the core assumptions from which to depart for examining patterns of relation to work. First of all, all the reports depart from the notion that in our times it is not possible to explore the meaning of work without the notion of *Identity*. As the Hungarian team has remarked, “relation to work is part of our selfhood”, and it is impossible to understand one without the other.

Within this first point of convergence, it is however possible to give different focuses to the analyses. These can be more focused on the psychological aspects and determinants of the patterns of relation to work, searching for and privileging individualised points of entry into the relation each person maintains with work, and departing from individual level variables. Or, on the other hand, the analyses can be more attentive to the sociological or structural dimensions of the relation to work, concentrating more on the conditions that enable or constrain different types of relation to work.

Nevertheless, some convergence between these two types of approach is always present, because the materials with which we construct our individual identities and ourselves are socially made available, are valued or devalued according to socially shared – although constantly contested – criteria, and differ according to context and culture (Rose, 1996). In this way, exploring identity as a core concept for understanding the relations to work implies looking at individual appropriations of socially produced and shared symbolic resources,

which form the symbolic environment with which each person understands herself and the others.

Within these specifications, it seems possible to say that all the teams combined individual with social dimensions in their approaches. However, the work of the Hungarian, German and Italian teams affords a more clear importance to individual dimensions as entry points for the analyses, while the French, Portuguese and Belgian teams are more insistently focused on the capacity of social conditions and social factors for shaping individual interpretations of the lived experience. For instance, the Italian team states, “we focus on the individual level (...), but our interest is to find a balance between the particular (the subject’s point of view) and some general logic of action, resorting to an ethnosociological approach to situational categories”. And both the German and the Hungarian teams work is informed by psychoanalytic concepts, albeit combined with other theorisations of the Self more socially oriented, and proposes to examine conscious and unconscious structures and aspects of identity and their role. In turn, the Belgian team proposes as a main goal of their work “to identify the transversal role of pregnant social factors”.

Another important point of convergence in the approaches of the different teams regards the importance accorded to narrative. If the notion of *identity* is central for all the reports, the idea that identity is constructed in narrative form and through narrative efforts (Bruner, 1987) is also a structuring element of the reports. Reconstruction of life-stories (Hungary), looking at interaction between objective and subjective elements in this reconstruction (Italy), recovering the narrative structure of the professional and educational trajectories of the persons (Gergen & Gergen, 1984) (Portugal) are goals that permeate the work of the various teams.

There are also convergences in what concerns the conceptualisation of communication, language and discourse as multi-layered and multi-functional phenomena. This is an important point, because this is a work-package based on interviews, most of them narrative. And when a method which yields discursive material is employed, a conceptualisation of what discourse is, what it accomplishes and how to approach it is a necessity.

In these reports, discourse is then seen as oriented to interaction and communication goals, and not just as a way of simply and un-problematically referring to the world and to what the world is. Language and discourse are seen as fulfilling various functions, some of them pragmatic and fulfilling self-presentational goals. This implies that the analyses need to reconstruct structures of signification with both surface and latent dimensions (Germany, Belgium, Hungary), in order to make explicit what was tacit knowledge (Germany), and to look at both at the intention within the discourse and at non-intentional discourse (Belgium). It also implies that the analyses need to attempt to grasp simultaneously the content and the inter-personal and societal functions of discourse (Portugal), as well as the way it is oriented to the relation happening in the interview. Sometimes this multi-layered nature of discourse was dealt with by a comparison between the story told and the story lived and corroborative fine analysis of text-segments (Hungary). The multi-functional nature of language is clearly stated in the Belgian, Portuguese, German and Hungarian reports, remaining more implicit in the French and Italian ones.

3.4 Procedures for the analysis of the textual material

When our research goals are to focus and understand underlying structures of meaning, the hermeneutic approach should be privileged (Flick, 2002). The hermeneutic stance is general to all of the reports, in the sense that the focus of the work developed is always predominantly ideographic, concentrating on comprehension and on thick description (Geertz, 1973), not on explaining, controlling and predicting. In other words, the nomotetic orientation is less privileged in all the reports than the ideographic one.

Some teams also resorted to the collective hermeneutics approach – Belgium, Germany and Hungary – by which personal and social structures of signification are analysed through social patterns of interpretation. Collective hermeneutics relies on the interaction between researchers as a research instrument, and since it is very time consuming, it was used by these three teams for analysing only a portion of the interviews.

Some teams relied also on the elaboration of transversal conceptual categories, using content analysis as a form of approaching their material, either software aided (Belgium - NVivo) or classical (Italy, Portugal). A point of converge regards thematic analyses: these were used by all the teams in order to find the main or dominating themes of each interview regarding the individual relation to work life stories. These themes are expressed throughout the reports in identification labels for the interviews, such as: “Work as a means to earn money” (FTU); “My job is not my career” (CIS); “Work as a source of money (MTA PTI); Work as a means of securing a livelihood (IAW); “work as a secondary component of the identity” (CEE); work as social integration (IAW); I like what I do and personal relationships are central (CIS); work as a meaningful activity (MTA PTI).

Finally, the goal of identifying in the interview material a number of central organising dimensions, enabling the researchers to access recurrent or repetitive patterns of relation to work was an extremely important part of the work in this work package.

For some teams this meant organising broad typologies based on pre-defined concepts, which resulted from previous analysis of the literature and were used as guiding notions for approaching the empirical material. Of these, the distinction between a *pragmatic, or instrumental*, attitude towards work and a *subjective or expressive* one was very central. A *subjective or expressive* relation to work is defined as one that implies that work is a major source of identity and people are engaged in a search for meaning where the workplace plays a relevant role and self-development and meaningful functions are central. On the other hand, engaging in an *instrumental or pragmatic* involvement with work means that the person considers work as essentially important for providing material security, and issues of revenue dominate patterns of relations to work.

This organising dichotomy is present in an explicit form in the Belgian report, and also in the Portuguese and German ones.

For other teams, the research strategy was instead more oriented for the search of emergent categories. This was the option of France, Italy and Hungary, and these teams ended up arriving at the emergent notion of “centrality of work” as a main organiser of their material. The French team examines the centrality of work by looking at how it is expressed in time consumed at work and centrality for identity construction. For Hungary the organising axe was “work -between a source of joy and identity and a nuisance”, and Italy prefers to use the notion of the “meaningfulness of work” for a person’s life.

On the whole, of course, the emergent notion of the “centrality of work in a persons’ life and regarding identity construction” is not independent or un-related to the pre-defined opposition between a reflexive *versus* a pragmatic orientation to work. This is so, because a *Reflexive* attitude to work is explicitly defined as one in which “work plays an essential role in the identity”. In this sense, although some teams examined the reflexive relation to work (Belgium, Portugal, Germany), and the others (France, Hungary, Italy) organised their analysis around the notion of “centrality of work for identity”, the dimension “*impact of work upon identity construction and development*” can be said to be the main organiser of the approaches of all the teams. The differences between them were more linked to the strategy of either choosing to analyse the centrality of work for identity construction through pre-defined categories – like the expressive/pragmatic ones – or opting for relying more on emergent categories, grounded in the data.

Finally, another pre-determined concept used by the Belgian and German teams was the notion of *life course* – standardised *versus* individualised. The Portuguese team used a similar notion: narrative structure as cyclic, progressive or regressive.

4. The quantitative approach

The quantitative approach (WP4) was designed in order to map the existing relevant surveys at national, European or international level (European Value Survey, European Social Survey, International Social Survey Programme) that give additional information on the specific issues addressed in SPReW. The objectives of the quantitative approach were to assess the existing statistical sources on these issues in the different countries covered by the consortium and to give guidelines for future surveys on this issue at the European level. It was also to carry out secondary analysis of data when it was possible and relevant.

A common structure supports the national inventories; it includes both description and evaluation. It includes a *structured description* and an *appraisal* according to the SPReW objectives:

- Structured description of the quantitative survey: brief description of the selected survey; type of initiator; objectives / motivation; target groups; main issues covered by the survey; summary of results; sources.
- Appraisal of the selected initiative: complementarities with other survey schemes; originality of results; uses of the results (by whom, for which purposes, at which level); identification of specific questions that seem “innovative” regarding the SPReW concerns.

The purpose was not to be exhaustive but to point out interesting initiatives at the level of each country.

The analysis is organised in four blocks:

- The first block provides comparative quantitative data for each country included in the consortium. It supports a comparative understanding of the results of the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

- The second block gathers the national inventories of quantitative surveys according to a common structure described above (comprehensive description and appraisal of selected initiatives).
- The third block proposes a similar overview at the international level, including some additional data analysis. Concretely, three survey schemes are analysed: the international social survey programme (ISSP); the European values survey (EVS); the European social survey (ESS).
- The fourth block gives a transversal overview of the whole inventory, pointing out interesting input regarding the issues covered by SPReW and looking at articulations with the results of the qualitative approach. It also gives some guidelines for future research at the European level.

5. The collection of good policy practices

After focusing on both targeted qualitative and quantitative empirical information, collected through interviews and quantitative analysis in the six countries involved in the project, the empirical approach developed through a selection of “good practices” (WP5), regarding the fields investigated during the previous steps of the analysis. During and after the whole process of empirical approach, in fact, the partners have pointed out some specific policies that seem to be particularly well focused on the intergenerational approach to the social patterns of relation to work. The try is to empirically verify whether and how social, economic and cultural issues linked to the changing relation to work of different generations are dealt with in local realities, through designing and implementing specifically tailored strategies, in the perspective of a knowledge based society.

This stage of the research consists therefore of a reporting process of the descriptions of “good practices” which have been identified in each of the six countries involved. Each partner at national level has in fact prepared a structured compilation of its selection of those actions that have been found useful and congruent with the core dimensions of the relation to work for different generations.

The main purpose at this stage of the work is to take into account the outcomes of the previous steps of the analysis, but in a dimension of *transition* between research and policies. The aim is not only to assess “what has been done” in each country in order to tackle specific emerging issues: the purpose is also to find suggestions of guidelines to address policy makers and social actors.

As the whole research, also the collection of good practices at national level follows an integrated approach, which includes various dimensions of the relation to work for the different generations: in particular, attention has been paid to the working environment and the conditions of the upcoming knowledge society, as well as to the gender approach.

The integrated overview of good practices covers specific fields, and also refers to targeted policy areas.

The first field taken into account is the one regarding the relation to diverse *work components*: the selection of good practices through the different countries involved has paid specific

attention to aspects like precariousness, mobility and especially knowledge management, in particular connected to the perception of overall organisational and technological changes.

Another field of investigation for the choice of good practices regards the lifestyle and more in particular the relations between the *relation to work and family formation and structure*.

Nevertheless, the core of the selection of good practices focuses, above all, on the *intergenerational relations* at work as a mainstreamed theme. High degree of attention is paid to intergenerational aspects affecting work and employment trends; to the debate concerning younger workers and ageing workers, in terms of cooperation or conflict; to the challenges linked to intergenerational relations at work in terms of transmission of knowledge, solidarity, career patterns, perception of changes; to the forms of intergenerational relationship also outside work.

All this is framed in the overall dimension of social cohesion, in the view of work as a key element in the construction of social capital, and of the articulation of work with other areas of the life in which younger and older people build their identity.

The national partners were asked to consider as a “good practice” “the use of diverse instruments, which is generally regarded as '*practices which are good for learning*', i.e. practices which either achieve their own objectives and/or have a beneficial impact on their environment, and/or – and more importantly – provide useful learning experiences which are likely to stimulate creativity, ingenuity and self reflexivity on the part of the user”.

The choice of this definition of “good practice” responds, in this particular phase of analysis, to the necessity to target the object of the research in coherence with its purposes and aims: these consist in going beyond the scientific results towards policy relevant findings, and in addressing the potential users of research results in the concerned policy areas. As a step in the research process within the project, the good practices selected are relevant in relation with the outcomes of the national analyses carried out: in fact they have been understood as specific strategies implemented at a specific level to cope with the challenges that the partners have identified during the qualitative and quantitative research. With regards to the final aim of the whole research, good policy practices have to be “learning examples”.

Therefore, the adoption of this definition of “good practice” has been made with particular regards to the *learning dimension*, intended as the possible contribution to policy developments.

It is true that the above-mentioned definition is quite wide and can be broadly intended. This responds to the need not to excessively narrow the research ground, especially considering the different national contexts in which the research has been carried out.

On the other hand, as a previous statement, the partners have been required to make a data collection not necessarily exhaustive but more illustrative and especially well targeted to the SPReW concerns: *importance has been given to the variety of experiences more than to the extensive description or accumulation of identical practices*. This criterion is at the basis of the strict selection as “eligible” of only a part of the practices, which had been identified by the partners in a first stage of the collection.

In order to provide common paths for the selection of the good practices to all the partners, and in order to obtain comparable descriptions and results, a scheme of methodological criteria has been provided.

With regards to the *individuation criteria*, it has been kept into account that, when collecting good practices, one may gather very diverse material, such as (just as examples): governmental guidelines/interventions, legislative measures; collective agreements; company policies; awareness campaigns, events (conferences, seminars, trainings), exchange programmes, leaflets, creation of web sites, etc.

The core of the methodological and selection activity has been focused on the clear definition of the policy areas in which the good practices regarding intergenerational relations to select are potentially framed. The targeted policies can concern:

- Specific labour market policies (for example aimed at promoting younger/older people/parents employment, guidance, access to the job, increasing job stability)
- Specific education and training policies (apprenticeship, stages, on the job training, life-long learning and qualification policies; vocational training, reprise of education, re-training or reinsertion of unemployed people)
- Specific welfare state provisions aimed at fostering job security (unemployment indemnity, minimum wage/income, etc.)
- Specific collective agreements (addressing issues like recruitment, career developments etc., and/or concerning specifically targeted company services, benefits, etc.);
- Specific human resource management practices (regarding, for example potential evaluation, retaining, career planning, company services, benefits, etc.)

Partners have also been suggested to keep into consideration the existence and the implementation of policies related to demographic change and mobility (beside the life long learning). Other aspects highlighted as worth to be considered are the transversal gender and ethnic dimensions.

The most difficult issue of this framing phase has been to give borders to the means of the collection of initiatives within the selected policy areas to be investigated. As a matter of fact, it has not been easy to keep the focus on the core of the argument that this project wants to tackle. The good practices may have different levels of relevance regarding the SPReW objectives: some focus on specific age groups, others focus only on conciliation issues, others are more peripheral with respect to the key argument. The ones, which have been selected here, are those who take into account the intergenerational dimension in different social areas and *target all generations together*.

Always with regards to the *individuation criteria*, partners were encouraged to select practices identified at different levels. With specific regards to the *application and the implementation* of each good practice in exam, and the levels have been identified as enterprise level (including initiatives that can be undertaken by sectoral or local employers associations); local/regional level (initiatives taken by different actors -see below- for instance at the level of regions, consortia of municipalities, industrial districts, groups of administrations); national level.

The partners have been required to provide different examples for each level, if equally relevant in their opinion.

With regards to the time frame to keep into consideration, currently ongoing policies, recent ones (since 2000 and just concluded) and ones previewed for the next future have all been considered.

With regards to the *description criteria*, it has again been required to the partners to follow a common structure, and therefore to report, first of all, a general presentation of each good practice selected, giving an overview of the national political and contingent context, the framework in which it is collocated, explaining the reasons of the specific choice in the view of the intergenerational approach to social patterns of relation to work, and especially in the view of the outcomes of the previous steps of the research carried out at national level.

In addition, a clear description of the following elements has been required:

- the type of “initiator / policy maker”: for instance public authorities or public institutions at different level; entities exercising the political role at national or local level; with regards to the educational and training system, high schools, universities or any other kind of education providers, but also private entities; social partners; civil society including entities as women's organisations; specific partnerships; professional federations etc.
- the target groups, the addressees of the good practice: younger/older employed/unemployed, managers, women, young about to enter the labour market, associations, federations...
- the kind of tools and means used to reach the policy aim (i.e. leaflets, videos, conferences, meetings, workshops, cycles of lessons, etc.)
- the duration of the action connected to the policy (one shot event, a long time project, a permanent asset)
- whether there has been or if it has to be done an evaluation of the policy action, and through which means
- the informative sources of the policy you selected and of the actors committed in it (i.e. Official Journals, websites...)

On the basis of such a rationale, each national partner has been required to provide a 6-10 relevant national cases of good policy practices, giving privilege to the variety and the innovativeness of the experiences.

6. The participative approach: the dialogue workshops

After the large empirical approach, both qualitative and quantitative, and after the appraisal of a collection of good policy practices, the project entered in a participative stage with the organisation of dialogue workshops (WP8), both at national and international levels. Six dialogue workshops have been organised (Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Hungary and Portugal) and a European dialogue workshop.

The dialogue workshops were a step from academic research to policy-oriented research, and they contribute to the external visibility of the project at national and European level. They pursued a twofold objective:

- A participatory validation process of draft conclusions and recommendations.
- An impulse to the dissemination process of project results among policy makers and concerned social actors.

The target groups of the national dialogue workshops were:

- Decision makers or stakeholders in relevant policy areas: labour market, youth, intergenerational relations, etc.
- Social organisations: business federations, trade unions, youth organisations
- Selected researchers or study staff from advisory institutions

The dialogue workshops were linked to the process of elaboration of conclusions and recommendations.

The national dialogue workshop scheme relied, on the one hand, on a presentation of results and draft conclusions, and on the other hand, on discussions fostering the involvement of participants.

The workshop format was free, according to the experience of each partner and the respective national contexts. The minimum requirement was that a workshop lasts at least a “long half-day”, including debates and followed by reporting. “National” didn’t mean “nationwide”, but representatives of the key stakeholders in the national context.

The national dialogue workshops were organised between April and May 2008 in the six countries of the consortium. The duration of the meetings ranged from 4 to 8 hours. They were structured into two main activities. Firstly, researchers presented the SPReW project, the conclusions and recommendations (at national and cross national levels). Secondly, large periods of time were dedicated to feedbacks and discussions, organised in different ways: some partners gave the floor to experts and discutants (Italy); some organised through feedbacks in round table (France, Germany, Italy); some others organised an open debate with all participants (Belgium, Portugal, Hungary).

Summary table of the participants in national dialogue workshops

BE	FR	DE	HU	IT	PT	TOTAL
<i>Decision makers in relevant policy areas</i>						
4	4	10	-	2	3	23
<i>Social organisations: trade unions, business organisations, companies</i>						
8	7	15	4	11	1	46
<i>Researchers</i>						
2	5	5	2	8	4	26
<i>Others (NGO, Students...)</i>						
1	-	4	-	1	-	6
15	16	34	6	22	8	101

Altogether, those meetings gathered 101 participants: 23 decision makers in relevant policy areas; 46 from social organisations (trade unions, business organisations, companies); 26 researchers; 6 others (students, NGO...). Globally, all profiles were well represented.

The last participative event organised in the framework of the project was a dialogue workshop at the international level. It was a full day organised around presentation of key results of the research and reactions and discussions with key stakeholders through targeted round table. A representative audience of interested groups (round 120 persons) was also invited to take part to the discussions. It was the last test bed before the finalisation of conclusions and recommendations.

7. The cross-national comparison

The aim of the cross-national comparison (WP6) is to allow a more in-depth understanding of the relation to work through generations by examining it on the background of institutional and cultural frameworks characterising the different European countries involved in the project. The underlying idea is to compare the evidence of the qualitative and quantitative investigation in the light of the national prerogatives, focusing on both similarities and distinctions in welfare systems, labour market regulation, educational and employment policies and industrial relations can help identifying what circumstances lead to deal more effectively with different, and often competing, needs of generations at work. The purpose is to orient well-founded recommendations to policy makers, both at local and European level.

Given the aim of this step, this task consists of a comparative reading of the six institutional and cultural national frameworks to underline distinctive features, strengths and weakness of the national contexts. The comparative reading focuses on the following topics: family and welfare systems; educational systems; labour market regulation and industrial relations.

In describing the country contexts and designing a comparison perspective, the researchers chose to stay inside the institutionalist school of thought (Rubery & Grimshaw, 2003). The *institutionalists* stress on the variations within a society. In this perspective, the variations among countries in organisations reflect embeddedness of societal system. The set of institutional arrangements and societal structures can explain the differences between and within societies. Social and institutional arrangements are critical in structuring organisations and the labour markets. In this perspective, institutions are important; societies make choices and engage themselves particularly path of development or specific national trajectories. The social and institutional arrangements have interlocking and inseparable effects that generate a specific societal logic or *societal effect* (Maurice, 1989).

The researchers adopted, in flexible terms, a neo-institutionalist approach and just refer to other theories while introducing the cross-country report. For consequence, the comparison between the six countries institutional and cultural context is drawn on by means of an institutional approach to cross-cultural analysis. Some main aspects qualify this theoretical framework. Firstly *the approach focuses on diversities* rather than on convergence among the contexts and read them on the background of institutions regarded as an essential part of the social and economic organisation that may account for diversities among societies. According to the institutional view, the prerogatives of different countries can be explained through *different set of institutions and social structures in which the specific organisation is*

embedded. Labour market is a perfect example of a socially and institutionally constructed market as organisation of family, welfare support, structure to supply female labour result in shaping its dynamics. In this perspective, institutions results in conditions for specific national trajectories and also specific societal logic. According to this view, contingency and embeddedness are two key features of societal organisation and trends.

Using this theoretical stance the researchers looked at the different institutional contexts in order to highlight their specificity and to gain a better understanding of the fieldwork results, particularly, of their similarities and differences.

8. References

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Chapter 3: Synthesis of the qualitative approach

Introduction

This chapter proposes a summary of the analysis conducted in the qualitative approach (WP3). The empirical material consists of **163 narrative interviews and 18 group interviews**. In the six countries included in this report, the respondents to the individual interviews were selected in order to maximise variance regarding personal variables, such as sex, age, qualifications, and parental status. Additional societal criteria were also used in order to adjust the sample and maximise its variability: type of management and structure, occupation and sector (public versus private) were the more relevant. A common methodological design supports this in-depth empirical study. The method for analysing narrative interviews is based on a combination of collective hermeneutics and qualitative content analysis (see chapter 2).

1. Main results

1.1 Main organising dimensions of the patterns of relations to work

1.1.1 Expressive and instrumental relations to work

The main results of the analysis of the pattern of relations to work regard the demonstration of the predominance of a type of relation which makes work a central organiser of identity, time and self-development.

This corroborates the proposals and results of the research framed by the notion of post-materialist values (Inglehart, 1977; 1995). This research departs from an analysis of the current affluent societies that emerged after the Second World War, and shows how, in these societies, there is a high importance accorded to goals such as self-expression, self-development, or a meaningful life. This importance takes centre stage by over-passing materialist goals, such as security and order. In the domain of labour, this seems to be expressed in the high importance accorded to work as an opportunity for self-expression and self-development.

The importance and latitude of the *Reflexive involvement* with work is made explicitly in the Belgium, Portuguese and German cases. The three reports converge in suggesting the predominance of expressive orientations to work, although with an important degree of diversity among them. This diversity is an important point, and has led the German report to conclude that “the thesis of a double relationship to work (Pragmatic versus Expressive) remains valid, although the expressive relationship has undergone important changes” (...) the main thrust of which “is that of differentiation”. In other words, within the expressive type of relation to work there seem to be now more sub-types. This in turn may signal that the fragmentation of the category may be a way of adapting to a changing world, since the fragmentation and multiplication of meaning categories often serves that adaptive function

(Castro & Wagner, in press). Finally, in this regard it is also important to say that the struggle to achieve a balance between the two orientations seems also to be recognised by most of the reports as an important organiser of the relation to work.

The French, Hungarian and Italian reports do not resort to the same concept, but show nevertheless convergent results to some extent, by highlighting the centrality of work for so many of their interviewees, their desire to develop through work and the importance of work for identity construction. For instance, the importance of having meaningful jobs is clearly present in young cases in Italy, even if this meaningfulness is not directly determined by the content of the job. The French report suggests that post-materialistic expectations (which are close to expressive/reflexive orientations) are more and more pregnant among the younger, and writes: “we managed to identify a common basis of expectations and behaviour patterns among the young respondents: (...) attachment to work environment as a vector of the construction of identity and of social integration; strong desire for fulfilment at work; (...) valued placed on the interest and meaning of work, opportunities for learning, and room allowed for initiative”.

On the whole, the synthesis this far presented allows us to conclude that the importance of work for identity development is found throughout the reports as a very important organiser of the relation of individuals to work in our time. It is prevalent in many cases, and it is expressed by such indicators as: willingness to learn more and to invest time and effort in more knowledge, the framing of work as vocation, or cause, the framing of work as a central dimension for self-development, or the tying up of private and working lives.

Let us turn the attention now to the other side of this dichotomy, which is the *Pragmatic* involvement with work. It was found that expressiveness might be replaced by instrumentality of routine, after the first years (Germany), and that often de-investment (less centrality of work) results from an experienced and perceived gap between high expectations and reality of work (France). Sometimes it is observed that an Instrumental or Pragmatic relation to work replaces a previously expressive one, when it is a source of stability (Italy, Portugal).

The Italian report suggests that the instrumental\expressive distinction as descriptive of the relation to work may not be very informative or heuristic for their context. The report observes that: “people may look for self-actualisation in work and in other spheres of life at the same time, as do people who speak of passion when referring to work, or those who invest in and cultivate other interests outside work” (p. 271). The report further remarks that a good example of this is the fact that some instrumental elements, like money, also play a symbolic role: “money is a measure of one’s worth, an objective sign of recognition and esteem, a symbol of emancipation.”

This calls attention to the fact that all typologies are imperfect regarding their correspondence with reality, but they may be nevertheless useful ways for approaching complex issues, by helping making sense and identifying a number of central dimensions.

1.1.2 Types of life courses

It was also very clear from the whole of the analyses that other dimensions were found to co-occur with the expressive/instrumental dichotomy and were capable of altering and qualifying it.

From these co-occurring and co-constructive dimensions, an important one regards what can be called *standardised versus individualised life courses* (Belgium, Hungary), or *Institutionalised versus discontinuous life courses* (Germany), or *linear versus cyclic trajectories* (Portugal). The second term of this dichotomy refers to singular, less normative educational and employment paths and agendas, where the specificity of certain individual choices or life events does not follow the average rule, which sometimes means that ruptures were suffered, and sudden and radical alterations took place in the individuals' lives.

The impact of this dimension is not, of course, linear. A comparison across the national reports of the six countries shows convergent but also distinct patterns.

In the case of Belgium, results show that trajectories are a key point shaping relations to work in articulation with the type of involvement in work (Pragmatic or Reflexive). These two dimensions together shape different patterns of relation to work. In Germany, instrumental work orientations are present only with some interviewees who have a discontinuity in their professional or familiar life courses. In the case of Portugal, and similarly, cyclic courses associate with instability, dissatisfaction with work or organisational conditions and often with a Pragmatic involvement with work; in turn, linear trajectories in work are related to first job situations and lack of changes in professional life; and progressive trajectories seem to relate more to orientations for career development and expressive motives.

Although the French report informs about types of life courses it does not use this notion as an explicit analytical category, like the previous countries. The report reaches the conclusion that the type of trajectory seems to have a high influence on the patterns of relation to work, but this result emerges from a comprehensive analysis of the trajectories which mark the models of work relationships, and does not result from an a priori, theory guided expectation. The French report hence indicates that the type of trajectory is highly related to the level of professional involvement.

Sometimes this dimension seems to impact upon the relation to work by changing its intensity, not its direction: individualised life courses, or trajectories presenting discontinuities, seem to be often associated with a stronger accentuation of the types of relation to work that were already favoured. This means that the reflexive involvement to work may be accentuated, as is expressed in the type of relation which regards "*work as a cornerstone of identity*", identified in the Belgian report, and in a case from the Portuguese report, which Theme is "*Trying again, now with a degree - trying to still "make it" after a difficult start*". Or it may mean an also stronger accentuation of the pragmatic approach to work, as expressed in the notion of "*work as a means to earn money*", also from the Belgian report. In the German report, the ruptures in the life-course seem to accentuate also another dimension: a type of relation to work that seeks mostly social integration. In the Portuguese report, the pragmatic /instrumental orientations are more likely to be present when discontinuity in professional or family life exists or existed, a situation which may gain strength due to economic responsibilities (Germany).

A different type of discontinuity than the ones presented, but also very influential regarding patterns of relation to work, emerges in the Hungarian interviews. While the discontinuities analysed in Belgium, Portugal or Germany, although framed by societal conditions, are closely linked with individual events and options, the Hungarian case presents a major properly societal discontinuity: the change from a socialist to a capitalist organisation of work and society. In the Hungarian context, the type of life course doesn't seem to be a deciding

element for the definition of work orientation. This seems to be due to the fact that the moment of the person's working life in which socialisation and historical transition occurred has more importance and becomes a more central element. The numerous impacts of this transition permeate the whole of the interviews. Two can be stressed as central. The first concerns the fact that difficulties are perceived to be changing the values, which were considered appropriate for the work context– like solidarity – substituting them by other more individualised ones. The Hungarian report hence remarks that: “some nostalgia is felt for the times preceding the regime change when work life was more familial with more solidarity felt”; or: “Interviewees talked of a more intense community life, higher level solidarity between workers, a feeling of togetherness in the socialist organisation of work”. A second major impact of this transition regards the role of women, a topic we shall approach further on.

1.1.3 Emergent findings

Besides developing typologies and analysis based on dimensions identified in the literature as fundamental, like the Expressive-Pragmatic dichotomy above analysed, there were also important emergent findings which were not entirely and explicitly anticipated before the analyses started. Of these emergent findings, three seem to be rather central, and will be approached in the next sections.

1.1.3.1 Polycentric conception of existence

A polycentric conception of the relation to work is one where work is one of many other interests, and there is relativisation of the hegemonic value of work, refusal of extensive availability to the company and desire to preserve, through an autonomous and flexible management of time, the personal sphere apprehended as the special place for personal fulfilment. This polycentric view of existence emerged in some of the interviews in France, Italy and Belgium, not so much in Portugal and Germany. In the case of the three countries where it was more marked, this trend seems to be particularly associated with the younger generations and there are differences that result also from the type of engagement with work: for instance, in the Belgian case, there are some workers for whom work *is a cornerstone in the identity* – for these people there is an identification between life and work, and there is no space for plural interests.

Hungary is a different case regarding this point, maybe because the process of adjustment to a new type of economy is on-going: “younger people there seem to be two paths only: working a lot, which qualifies in their interpretation as careerism, or not work that much and spend more time with the family”. This implies that a bi-centric dichotomy is in place in Hungary, contrasting work and family, and the options available are not (yet) polycentric including, besides family and work, also friends, hobbies, travelling, and other interests.

1.1.3.2 Relational relation to work

The second emergent finding regards the importance of the *Relation to Others* as a major source of motivation for work, and a relevant organiser of the relation to work. The reports from Belgium, Portugal, Italy make these points very clear, and it is implicit in the Hungarian one as well. The centrality of the relational aspects regarding the individuals' relation to work is also present in the German report, which stresses the importance of social integration for some interviewees. All of this calls attention to the fact that *Belongingness*, which is a core

motive for the socio-psychological functioning (Fiske, 2004), continues to be also at the core of some patterns of relation to work, which are clearly organised around it.

The fact that we are highlighting here the *Relational motive*, as an emergent finding does not mean to imply that the literature was not aware of the importance of belongingness as an import motivation for work. The literature, as is reviewed in our State of the Art deliverable for the SPReW project, has often called attention to the *Relational Motive*, in two distinct senses: (1) as a sub-component of the Expressive relation to work and (2) as a way of expressing our need of being part of a collective. Regarding the second sense, the dimensions usually highlighted are those concerning the importance attached to a social identity, namely the one that comes by the person being defined as belonging to a certain professional group. However, what seems to emerge in some of the interviews conducted in all countries (Italy, France, Portugal, Belgium, Hungary, Germany) is also the importance of inter-personal relations in the work place as a form of maintaining a person linked to it, motivated to continue in the function, and interested in going to the workplace everyday of the week.

More than the need of being part of a social group of societal resonance, what we seem to find in some interviews across the countries involved is the need to be part of a small network of people that meet everyday or at least regularly. This is not to imply that the Relational motive in a more classical form is absent – it is not absent, and is expressed in some interviews, where people express the importance they attach to being a part of a certain professional group, and even of working for a cause related with that group (this is present in the Portuguese report, in the Belgian and the Hungarian). And it is also present in the profiles that attach a great importance to loyalty to a company, as well, a feature particularly present in the French report. Nevertheless, the fragmentation and “privatisation” of the relational motive regarding work is also a notorious dimension that emerges from the whole of the reports. This means that the relations of proximity are to some extent replacing the relations to a reference group.

For some individuals – those who suffered discontinuities in life courses (Germany) or those who consider social and interpersonal relations as a fundamental dimension (Portugal) – the relation to work is strongly shaped by relational motives. For instance the German case: “when social bonds outside work are absent or dissatisfying, perhaps even negative in nature, the importance of contacts gained through work becomes specially great. Work acquires paramount importance above all when family proves inadequate as the primary location for social bonds” (p. 163). In turn, the Portuguese report presents some cases for which the central elements of work are relational – communication, personal contacts and social bonds are very important for self, and working relations are needed for personal balance and for positive humour. This is particularly marked for the case of women workers in the middle age group, but not exclusive.

Relational dimensions also emerge as a very important source of self-fulfilment or discontent in the Italian report. In Italy the social dimension is very important for almost age groups, not only as a value in itself, but also due to the central place it takes in the working environment. There is an orientation to relational dimensions in work, which can override content of functions, since having pleasant or unpleasant working relationships can be fundamental for defining orientations towards work life. The Italian report thus remarks: “Both young and old people value the relationship with colleagues in defining work as pleasant or unpleasant, good or bad (...) Interpersonal relationships are seen by people as the main source of self-fulfilment

or discontent. The social dimension is very important for almost everyone, not only in a value in itself but also for its place in the work environment” (p. 264).

Relational dimensions also emerge as very important in some cases from the Belgian report, independently of the age group for individuals having standardised life course. Instead, and very importantly, individuals having a more individualised life course (type 2 and 4) consider social relations at work as secondary.

In Hungary, there emerged a rather generalised feeling of decreasing overall solidarity, not just in work, but also everywhere in society. “Middle-age and older generations talk with nostalgia about the socialist period, particularly about the community which formed in the factories under socialism. Nostalgia for a more united and secure work life (...)” emerges. In the same vein, in Germany, feelings of decreasing solidarity among the medium age and older groups were also signalled.

1.1.3.3 Work/Career versus Employment/Job

The third emergent dimension in the analyses of the interviews is linked to the differentiation between divergent, albeit inter-related, aspects comprising the whole experience of relating to and being a part of the *labour market*. This relationship with the *labour market* is referred to and can be marked by a differentiation between terms like: work, job, function, profession, career, employment etc. These terms all refer to somehow divergent components of that experience. Usually, whereas employment regards the structural aspect, work regards the content aspect (Belgium). This distinction calls attention to differences between aspects outside the control of the individual – constraints and opportunities – and aspects regarding the lived experience of the subject. It is however currently also remarked in the literature the importance of the notion of “career” as another dimension necessary in order to fully take into account the relation of the individual with work. This relation can in some cases be also very clearly marked by a difference between work and career (Portugal). While *work* refers to the content aspect taken synchronically, the notion of *career* includes the same ideas but projected to a future: it implies a vision of the future, and includes the dimensions of active choice and selection among possible working paths, and therefore also the notion of progress and transformation in time (Patton & McMahon, 2006).

The Portuguese report presents the notions of career as central for organizing patterns of relation to work. Some interviewees show a strong orientation for planning courses and trajectories for their working life, and engage in an active selection of sectors and in the anticipation of progression, investing time and effort in increasing their knowledge and qualifications, as a way of preparing progression. The need to do this is very clear among young people of already high qualifications. The first years of the working lives of those engaging in expressive relations to work are strongly shaped by these concerns and activities.

In one extreme case, career supplants concerns with the content of work. The person is more focused on the dimensions of projecting a future and choosing among available options than with the content of what he is doing, or with the specific competences and knowledge of his area. Prestige and revenue of the future functions that are anticipated and targeted are the ultimate goals of his relation to work.

Still regarding the Portuguese report, for people with work but no career orientations, future activities are not anticipated, there are no plans for organising their activities within a temporal framework – and so, it is often found that these are also those with a

pragmatic/instrumental relation to work. This is however not a perfect correspondence, as is always the case with typologies.

This notion of career is important, because a person can have a passionate relation to work, or an expressive relation to it, or work can be central for one's identity without the person simultaneously being focused on and oriented to the future and concerned with continuing to make and prepare choices that orient her future work in a particular direction. This obviously implies rather individualised paths and patterns of choice, precluding or limiting the person's commitment to other organisational dimensions: for instance, loyalty to a company is not compatible with the notion that one's working path should be oriented by concerns with own development and with the acquisition of both more skills and higher compensations.

Regarding the several dimensions of the relation to the labour market, it was found (in the Belgian case) that in pragmatic orientations people are more concerned with structural issues, and the notion of employment dominates, whereas in reflexive relations the substantive dimensions are privileged and work, not employment, is the central concern. In turn, when employment is the central concern, standardised courses determine that "Work is a constraint to experience positively" whereas individualised courses reveal that "Work is a mean to earn money".

In Hungary, Differences between work and employment are important; since they provide an important means for distinguish the different types of role that being a worker plays in people's life. It can assume a central concern for individual's identity - "Work as a source of fulfilment" -, and it can also play a secondary role in people's existence, but being significant at the same time - "Work as a meaningful activity". When, on the contrary, employment, and not work, is the central motivation for the person, orientations turn into "Work as a source of money".

Although not resorting directly to the notion of career, the French report highlights the importance of career as the construction of a path for a stronger individualisation in the relations to work, evidenced mainly when there is an intensive professional investment linked to a desire to develop, which implies a relationship with work focused on the future. It comments that it would be too simplistic, however, to draw an exclusive mechanical link between dissatisfaction at work and the limited commitment to a career.

Some individuals may deliberately pursue a rationale of career divestment when they are intense involved in matters outside the employee sphere – also visible in some Portuguese profiles. Here projects for lifelong learning and for higher degrees (masters and PhDs) have high relevance.

A final point worth emphasising regards what happens when people with an expressive engagement with work, for whom work occupies a central position in their lives, and who always had their eyes on the future, never ceasing to develop their careers, begin to see retirement approaching. If the strong career investment brought disruption to other spheres of life, this can be a moment of suffering, as expressed in some interviews (Portugal, Germany), but it is often a difficult moment also when this disruption is absent.

1.1.3 Patterns of relation to work and their relation with other spheres

Work and Family

The comparative analysis between the six countries regarding work and family reveals the presence of a certain gendered pattern of relation around these two spheres in the Belgian, Hungarian, French and Portuguese contexts. This effect translates a differentiating tendency among orientations for conciliation, namely: in Belgium, conciliation and time management is more central to women, just like in France, where time and mental charge between work and family are more in competition, and in Portugal, since child care and family assistance may turn into a source of conflict between these two domains. In Hungary, a new trend is emerging because a higher orientation of younger women to career is also a reflection of a general fear of losing family and societal stability. The Hungarian report thus remarks that during prompted debates during the group discussions, younger women, were “seen as pushy careerists who do not care about having a family, only about their career and success at work. It was possible for group members to imagine a different type of young woman as well but the image of a pushy careerist young woman was the most dominant type that emerged” (p. 245).

In a broader perspective, in Portugal, the younger group declares absence of conflicts between family and work, and often narratives of family support during university years and first working years emerge as a core factor for stability in their life trajectories. In Italy, the importance of family support is also very much highlighted. Moreover, also in Italy, family background (support, level of education and work status) is seen as a relevant factor for shaping attitudes and patterns of relation to work. In Portugal, again, and in contrast to younger ones, older interviewees often refer having had problematic relationships in the past due too much involvement in work. Narratives of divorces happening due to conflicts between family and work are frequent.

Work and other spheres

Considering the relationship between work and other spheres of life of interviewees, the comparison of the six countries shows two patterns: the first pattern, more clearly present in France and Italy, indicates a polycentric conception of life, where work is only one valorised element of identity. This pattern is especially clear for the younger.

In turn, the second pattern emerges in Portugal and Germany, and France reflecting no evidence of political commitments, trade unions or other involvements at the level of civil society. In France, when some interviewees – those who seek to find a balance between work and other spheres of life – are discussing their experience outside work, state that they made an investment only in relation to themselves, their families, their children and friends and not in relation to actions more focused on the ‘public realm. In Germany interviewees in general do not show any political commitment or serious concern with trade union questions neither do they seem to be involved in initiatives on the level of civil society. In Hungary, there are groups who search for other activities that can support their identity, but this is less present among the younger generations.

1.2 Patterns of relation to work and structural variables

1.2.1 Gender

A comparative analysis across the national reports of the six countries shows significant effects of gender regarding the patterns of relation to work. In the contexts of Italy, France and Germany, this variable emerges as more important than age: in the former case, it's only among the younger group that gender borders are less clear, while in the latter two cases it's the presence of young children which determines the differences in the orientations among men and women. This may also be true in the Portuguese context, since younger women who are at the beginning of their career show a strongly expressive/reflexive orientation to work, but as yet we do not know whether or not that will be altered with maternity. Also in Germany, it is the women without children or with adult children who have mainly similar social patterns of relationship to work as men.

In the Belgian context there are no fundamental differences between men and women in terms of relation to work, although women reveal higher orientations to reflexive patterns (self development, meaningfulness) and relations. This last result is also present among middle age women in the Portuguese sample, since they are the group who displays more relational orientations. Time is also more central to Belgian women, since managing and conciliation between family and work seems to be more important than for men. This may indicate some agreement with the first pattern referred (family and children determine gender borders), although there is evidence of a re-definition and re-enactment of gender roles in the Belgian couples.

In the Hungarian context, women who invest in their career are suffering from strong cultural and societal pressures, since they are seen as aggressive and with low orientation for family issues, and this is expressed in negative stereotypes, mainly for younger ones. Regarding men, this behaviour is considered as normal, or normative, and not seen as negative. This pattern also reflects some results obtained in the Portuguese interviews, albeit in a more attenuated form and mainly for older women: older women with strong investments in their career development report having felt conflicts at the level of family and difficulties for conciliation of career and family. However, most of the men in the same situation of strong career investment do not express any negative experiences or emotions regarding the conciliation between family and work spheres.

1.2.2 Age

Comparisons between the six countries regarding age indicate the presence of convergent patterns but also of diversity. In what concerns similarities, results show that age seems relatively independent of specific relations to work, with the exception of Germany. Nevertheless, it's also possible to identify some common specificity associated to age groups in the other countries. The most salient one is related to instability and insecurity of employment among the younger, a fact, which is considered as something to be expected for this particular group in the French sample, and also viewed as such in the Belgian context. On the other hand, this situation is a source of concerns among the older people when they think about precariousness of the younger, although they never experienced it – this result is transversal also to Italy and Portugal.

Another common pattern emerges between Italy and France, reflecting the involvement of the younger group in work, and their high expectations, but also a marked orientation to ethical and moral values within this context. In the case of France, the younger are the group who control more their working time, while Italian results report an extension in the period of stabilisation for the trajectories of this particular people.

In what concerns national diversity, the Belgian results show that age may be related to perceptions of motivation – middle age and older think they are more motivated to work than younger (cultural changes and low psychological contracts to work are pointed as causes for their lower motivation) -, and to perceptions of personal stagnation, reflecting the IT difficulties of older people. It's also this group who presents more explanations for the diversity in the trajectories of age groups.

On the other hand, distinct conceptions of organisations are associated to age in the Belgian context, with the older more oriented to communitarian principles and the younger to liberal ones (open organisations), but the quality of social relations at work emerges as independent from this variable. However, the Belgian report also reminds that age groups are not homogeneous groups regarding their relation to work.

In the Hungarian context, same age can mean different generational belonging, depending on the group, and the relation to work seems to be more related to socialisation processes, with old age being viewed as something with low valorisation. This receives societal re-enforcement from the little support old people get in Hungary by the actual social security system, with the pensions getting very low and getting lower as one turns older within the uncompensated inflation.

Germany is the only country, which reports a direct association between age and patterns of relation to work. Within this particular context, younger are marked by strong professional ambitions, are oriented to challenges, competence and quality of work. Many fear unemployment but adaptation and change are strategies for minimizing risks of situations from this nature. On the other hand, middle age shows expert knowledge and organisational skills. Routine and instrumentality have replaced some of the previous expressiveness. Chances of career progression are low and defensive strategies are a way of dealing with labour market. Finally, elder are strongly identified with their position and specialisation is an ambivalent resource – security, at the internal level, but vulnerability at a broader level. This group also experiences high work pressure and feels loss of respect.

1.2.3 Educational qualifications

Considering educational qualifications, only four of the six countries have analysed its role in a more systematised way (Italy, Hungary, France and Portugal). Among these it's possible to identify two distinct patterns, one where high levels of education have impact on the centrality of work in self's identity (France) and on expressive orientations to work and progressive trajectories (Portugal). On the other hand, educational qualifications seem to be relatively independent from patterns of relation to work (Italy and Hungary), being more related to socializing processes in the Hungarian context. Besides these patterns, it's also possible to realise that formalised education is source of modernisation and power for the younger Italian group and is a crucial factor for a second chance in less normalised trajectories, just like long life learning, in the Portuguese context.

2. Intergenerational relations

2.1 Introduction

All the teams involved gathered additional information about inter-generational relations in the work context by organising focused group discussions. The interviews had gathered some information about these relations, but all the teams felt the need to complement and extend it by conducting discussion groups focused on this issue. These groups involved, on the whole, from 12 to 25 people, and were conducted at a point when almost all, or even all, the individual interviews were completed, and the questions that needed to be more intensively looked at were identified. The syntheses that follow in the next sections are based mainly on the direct reports of the group discussions, but in some points are also complemented with material from the individual interviews.

2.2 Main concepts of analysis

The approach of the six countries regarding the analytic concepts for analysing intergenerational relations presents points of convergence, but also some aspects of diversity. In what concerns convergence, all the reports tried to identify dimensions such as: Attitudes towards generations (Belgium), narratives of different generations (Belgium, Germany, Portugal), transmission of knowledge between generations (Belgium, Italy, Germany, France), Conflict and cooperation between younger and older groups (all), competition within same age people (France, Portugal), gender and work (Hungary, France).

2.3 Denial of the importance of age

Some reports, like the Belgian, Hungarian and Italian ones, refer that the issues of age and generational relations in the work place are not spontaneously raised, that there is no explicit and unprompted reference to conflicts based on them. The German report makes the point that there is no explicit conflict of generations. In Hungary, age seems to be unspoken, but there is an expressed fear of growing old, since those who feel old complain about it. In the Portuguese context, initial denial of inter-generational conflicts was followed, in the discussion groups, by a second phase, when the elaboration of difficulties emerged, giving rise to the discussion of aspects of potential issues between generations. Also in Belgium, when the discussion groups comprised people with a more pragmatic type of engagement with work, there were clearly discourses about the need of older workers to leave and make stable jobs available for younger workers.

All of these observations might be indicating that age might be a sensitive issue, functioning in the work context as a taboo like sex, with people not always willing to debate it. However, unspoken and un-debated issues of a society are very frequently central ones for it, and this might also be the case of age in the work context.

Moreover, often when confronted with direct questions regarding the importance of age in the work context, many of the interviewees remarked that people were different because of personal reasons, and not because of their age. The Portuguese report makes the observation that this type of internal explanations and attributions do not contribute to social change (Tajfel, 1982). Social movements are largely based on a perception of the characteristics of

the situation as dependent upon a set of structural circumstances affecting a group with a common fate (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Internal explanations of conflicts are less compatible, then, with the search for alternatives and for change. So, perhaps, this denial of the importance of age may be also a form of re-enforcing permanence, and the status quo, and is not favouring an engagement with societal conditions that may bring change about.

None of what is said above is to imply that age in the work context is a direct and unproblematic synonym of conflict. In fact, age and intergenerational relations in the work place have emerged from the interviews as presenting both cooperative and conflictive dimensions, and as a very rich and multi-dimensional topic much capable of shedding light to a number of trends for the future. We will first summarise findings regarding cooperation, and then those regarding conflict.

2.4 Cooperative intergenerational relations

When set in the context of work relations, intergenerational cooperation was expressed mainly in knowledge transfer, and apprenticeship with older generations. In the French report, active cooperation between young employees and their more experienced seniors is remarked to be the most frequent situation, clearly over-passing conflict situations. In France, however, younger are less protected by the new laws, so passing on knowledge to them may be easier and less conflictive than in other countries.

The other reports are not so specific regarding which is the more frequent case in their interviews and discussion groups – conflict or cooperation. However, they all identify and report cases of cooperation, and, in particular, knowledge transfer. There are several narratives depicting close-by relationships with older colleagues or seniors when the person first entered the organisation, and identifying several dimensions of knowledge transmission. For all countries, this knowledge transfer may include: (1) informal knowledge about the history of the company and the operation of a department, which transcends formal function description, and sometimes happens informally; (2) professional knowledge of the technical and formal type; (3) practical and procedural information. Knowledge transfer is important in all these three spheres.

Another point of convergence for several countries seems to be that cooperation regarding knowledge transmission is easier when the age gap is bigger – it is shown in the reports of France, Portugal, and deducible from the German one. The Italian report also signals that the transmission of skills continues to happen more frequently and easily in more traditional sectors, such as: metal industry, construction (activities from the industrial sector, mainly).

Most countries also signal that knowledge transmission will happen more easily providing that the role of transmitter is recognised and is not seen as a prerequisite to eviction, and that cooperation with beginners is much more frequent when individuals are not overwhelmed by the stress of strict production aims (France, Portugal), or by intense internal competition (France, Portugal).

The French report also remarks that experienced employees may also consider that the return of their investment as an “integrator” of young people is too low, in view of the rapid turnover of young employees in certain professional branches. Moreover, in a climate of fighting for places, retaining a monopoly over the possession of skills then emerges for some employees

as a means of curbing the increased insecurity of their social position and neutralising the threat – objective or perceived – that the new recruits represent to their future.

Similar preoccupations are expressed in the Belgian reports, where it is observed that older employees may feel that they have nothing to teach the younger, because the younger are hired for peripheral tasks. Also in Belgium some older workers explain that current work rhythms do not leave room for knowledge transfer.

As a conclusion, the French report signals how – for fostering cooperation - the intervention of the company cannot be limited to the arrangement of the physical space and the constitution of groups with a mix of ages. Instead, the company must also contribute to creating conditions favourable at the level of everyday organisation of the activity (particularly by easing pressure) so that a dynamic of cooperation can come into play between the generations.

2.5 Potential sources and dimensions of intergenerational tensions

It is also possible to retain some aspects responsible for potential conflicts between generations in the work context, which are not homogenous when the national contexts are compared. The next sections summarise the main findings regarding 4 dimensions of potential conflict that emerged as important in the interviews and discussion groups.

2.5.1 Instability, precariousness and insecurity versus stability in work positions and in social security benefits

This dimension emerges in the reports of all the countries involved in the study. In the Belgian report, the older group manifests ambivalent statements about the differences that characterise the life courses of younger and older people: older people remark how life is easier for younger people in many regards, but how their relation to work is affected by more instability and precariousness than theirs. In sum: “older workers say that their working conditions were harder; however, this statement concerns work, not employment.” The employment conditions are clearly also seen as better for the older generation in all countries. In Italy, social inequalities between generations are seen as real, mainly in relation to the distribution of welfare contribution and professional stability. The same in France, where precariousness of the younger is a strong societal issue, that is clear in the interviews. In Portugal, concerns with precariousness emerge in connection with both the private (mainly banking) and the public sectors, due to recent reforms. In Hungary, this dimension comes enmeshed also with all the concerns of a transition to a new type of economy, and is also very much present. In Germany, although present, it does not seem to be so pregnant.

2.5.2 Accumulated experience versus formal knowledge

There are several mentions to the fact that are tensions regarding the opposition between, on one hand, those who have experience, and concrete expertise in a certain field or company, but lack formal certificates attesting that, and, on the other hand, those who enter the company possessing formal knowledge, and/or high degrees obtained in the educational system. This seems to be a central dimension of the tensions encountered regarding inter-generational relations, because normally the experienced people are older, and those with a formal diploma are younger.

In the Italian report the existence of this tension between formal knowledge and experience seems to be present: “Young people can be those who (...) are seen as more secure of themselves because they enter with a good level of education. People from the older generation experience the tension between formalised knowledge and degrees and experience”. And also: “they built a solid experience and now they are “threatened” by younger people who have titles and reach decision-making positions as soon as they enter jobs”. Still regarding the Italian situation, knowledge transmission from the part of those more experienced becomes a problematic issue because the hierarchies in skills and competencies are disrupted, with younger people with formal knowledge taking power positions. This is true especially in the service sector, either public or private, where the introduction of technologies made most of the experienced worker obsolete, although still safe in their jobs. However, still in Italy, in the public sector and in very hierarchical private organisation such as banks, the principle of seniority still counts as for the money reward and career advancement. In the service sector, both public and private, the introduction of technologies “turned the most of the experienced worker obsolete (p. 267). This finding is convergent also with the German remarks that in some branches there is a loss of importance of experiential knowledge resources, since experiential knowledge cannot be forced into certain technical systems, above all computer-based documentation.

The French report is very clear about the existence of this tension, more strongly felt in cases “when the organisational reforms occur at the same time as the arrival of large numbers of younger people, used as a kind of “Trojan horse” of modernisation”. In these cases older people may feel that they do not know anything worth passing on to their successors and may also be tempted to hold the newcomers responsible for the situation. This is also exactly the situation encountered for the Banking sector in the Portuguese interviews. Also in the Portuguese report, similar concerns and negative experiences are reported regarding the Public administration, where a reform is taking place.

Taking this issue from the other side, there are also concerns from the younger people in the organisations about the older ones discarding their suggestions despite the fact that they are experts in the issue (Portugal). Also, young people may feel insufficiently recognised when their suggestions are not appreciated in the light of their intrinsic value but invalidated on the pretext of their young age (France). The age of the young people, in this case, is interpreted as indicating a lack of credible and pertinent competences that denies them all professional legitimacy.

2.5.3 Innovation versus experience

The comparison between the six national reports shows that there is another dimension closely connected to the above one, which is also very important for organizing discourses and stories about intergenerational relationships. This is the polarity between innovation and experience. This is an extremely central dimension, widely used in every country.

Everybody converges that experience belongs to older people, while younger individuals bring about innovation and creativity. The problems regard the relative social value of each dimension. Experience is sometimes depicted as positive, but it also sometimes negatively valued. The same could happen for innovation, in theory, but in practice, innovation is rarely de-valued. This is of course linked to the fact that the values endorsed in the work place are

linked to those values, which are culturally regarded as valuable, and innovation is highly valued in all contexts.

Complaints and fears about experience being devalued in practice when contrasted with innovation are recurrent and convergent for most of the countries involved: in Hungary, it is remarked that the value of experience is declining, though not everywhere. In Portugal there are interviewees indicating that when experience is depicted as negative it is presented as a form of making people more inflexible and that being old is often understood in the organisations as meaning that one is stuck to a particular epoch and reluctant to innovation. In the same vein, the Hungarian report states, “older people were blamed for sticking to their old habits and routines, although contrary opinions were also voiced admitting the importance of the experience and competence which older people have”. The Belgian report adds that being older is sometimes described as being reluctant to innovation. In turn, the French report states that, for the older employees, the lack of recognition of the value of experience in the workplace leads to inter-generation tension. It also remarks that in companies functioning according to internal market logic, career management may lead to direct competition between experienced and younger employees to fill certain posts. Moreover, certain new strategic orientations may also result in a devaluation of the experience of the older employees, and by extension push them into adopting hostile behaviour towards the younger employees.

All of this becomes and even bigger problem when innovation is over-valued over experience. And, in fact, innovation – linked to modernisation and creativity - is seldom or never seen as something negative, and it is rather difficult to de-value it. When innovation is being debated, young are instead often depicted as bringing “new blood” – modernity, innovation – to organisations. This seems to be the case in many organisations and sectors across all countries. In Hungary, for instance, employers prefer younger people when hiring employees. In Portugal this is a very central concern of middle generation and older employees. In France it emerged too.

A finding usually associated with this one, is the linkage between IT and innovation. This connection also means more value attached to the younger group, and further differentiation between older and younger people. IT are a source of modernisation in the last decades, hence representing a source of competency that younger have acquired through formal and informal means, and related to perceptions of more power over the older. Within this particular technical context (IT), experiential knowledge loses its ground and creativity and innovation are the big value dimensions.

IT are for the older generation the symbol of all major changes that occurred in work this last twenty years: changes in organisational models with the emergence of the network enterprise, outsourcing, development of services, automation of informational tasks, codification of tasks, polyvalence, flexibility... ICT are, in a sense, the figurehead of twenty years of mutations (Belgium).

In the Portuguese report there are explicit references to the difficulties, which are present among the older people, when IT skills and changing working methods in some areas are the focus. This dimension can turn into a source of conflict within relationships between younger and older groups. There are numerous mentions in the interviews and the groups about the classical example of older people having more trouble with technological innovations, and namely with computer innovation.

Sometimes, however, innovation is depicted as “pushing in the wrong direction”, and is associated with young people attempting to climb up to the top as quickly as possible (Portugal, France).

In sum, in theory, the two poles of innovation and experience are both positive and complementary and it can easily be argued that both innovation and experience are indispensable in the work context. However, if one term of this polarity becomes more socially over-valued and desirable than the other, the potential complementarities disappear and are substituted by competition. There are indications in most countries that there is a fear that experience will be less and less valued in the future as compared to innovation.

2.5.4 Mutual stereotypes regarding age groups

Despite the generalised denial of the importance of age, in all countries there are indications of the existence and use of negative attributions and stereotypes regarding age groups. These can of course be intensively used (in times of conflict) or disqualified as un-important (in times of cooperation). They are nevertheless present and always available as a resource for times of concern and conflict. Moreover, these traits present similar dimensions across countries.

The negative traits and characteristics the older workers frequently attribute to the younger ones are linked with a lack of motivation to work (Belgium, France, Portugal). In some cases, however older workers are prepared to explain this by the high risk of becoming redundant that affects the younger (France, Portugal). Some stories also highlight the lack of initiative and concentration of the younger; and others depict the competitiveness of the younger. For instance: In the French report there are indications that some older interviewees think that the behaviour of young workers has been deteriorating since 20 years: recurrent absenteeism, inadequate behaviours, lack of professional rigour and investment, unreliability, etc.

As mentioned above, the more recurrent stereotypes about older people regard immobilism, stagnation and lack of willingness to progress.

In Hungary, generational conflicts at work are framed very much with the categories of family conflicts. One of the Hungarian discussion groups remarked that “the older generation forces her ideas about the right ways of life onto the younger generation.” This may indicate that in a country in transition, stereotypes of generations in the work place still resemble stereotypes in the family and new categories and concepts where the private and the public sphere are more clearly distinct are still to consolidate.

In Germany, older and younger generations have restricted contact in their companies and perhaps this brought less material of this type.

Stereotypes mainly concern the younger and the older generations; the mid-generation seem absent in discourses about generations, however, this latest seems to be the more critical regarding young workers. The discourse of one generation regarding another is more controversial when employment is at stake (not work). The mid age group is perhaps the one that feels more threatened by the concurrence of young workers (Belgium).

2.5.5 Competition within same age group

The final dimension of analysis emerges only in an explicit form in the Portuguese and French reports. This does not of course allow us to deduce that issues of competition between members of the same generation are absent from other countries, just that they are more pregnant in certain countries, and Portugal and France are included in this category. In Portugal, the competition between people from the same generation was described as having two main foundations: the scarcity of power positions available for members of one generation and the perceptions of having equal worth and qualifications as those from the same generation. The difficulties experienced for accepting that members of the same generation should have more power and prestige were clearly highlighted in the discussion groups, and these two factors were presented as being strong sources of conflict for people of the same generation. In France, competition is mainly present when same age peers are more experienced: “friction is more apparent between adjacent age groups – between the youngest and employees in the intermediate age group.”

3. Concluding remarks

3.1 Regarding patterns of relation to work

The above-presented overview of the six reports from the interviews conducted in Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Portugal can now be briefly summarised in the following points:

1. Unanimous was the finding of the centrality of work for identity development, as well as the importance of the expressive relations to work. People expect from work opportunities of self-fulfilment, self-development, creativity, meaning. These were somehow expected results, that were counterbalanced and qualified by a number of other findings:
 - *The fragmentation of the expressive type* – there are multiple forms of maintaining an expressive relation to work. One central force that multiplies and fragments these forms is the extent of the efforts invested in achieving a balance between work and other spheres of life. Although there are some expressive forms of engagement to work for which success in life is subordinated to success in work, there are also other types of engagement which are *Expressive*, but more balanced – here work supports self-development, as expressed in the Belgian report, or work is important, but complement other spheres, as expressed in the French report. Mainly in young workers, and more clearly in France, Belgian and Italy, this may correspond to a polycentric relation to work. In Germany and Portugal the young and qualified show strong ambitions and are very focused on career advancement, showing less attempts at balance and multiple interests.
 - *The relevance of the trajectories*: another force pushing for differentiation within the expressive relation to work are the individual trajectories. Linear and normalised trajectories are more associated with expressive relations of moderate force, and irregular trajectories, with discontinuities seem to be more associated with more intense re-investment, when re-investment was possible.
 - *The pragmatic relation to work is present*, surely, and often results from difficulties in life trajectories, with disenchantment after some years, with routine. It is also associated with expectations of early retirement.

- *The rise of a polycentric tendency?* The tendency to view work as one and just one of the centres around which existential meaning is organised seems to be raising, namely among the younger. In France and Italy this tendency was clearer.
- *The importance and the “privatisation” of the relational motive* – the relational and belongingness motive came out as extremely central, but in a more privatised form than before. This means that the need to belong and relate is not just referred to a professional group, but to a network of personal relationships in the work place.
- *The orientation to the future* as expressed in concerns with career development is also very present within the young and middle age groups engaged in an expressive relation to work. Here projects for lifelong learning and for higher degrees (masters and PhDs) have high relevance.
- *Gender* has always a role in shaping patterns of relation to work, but in some countries this role is more marked (Hungary), and in other less marked (Belgium). For the younger generation, still without children gender related issues are less salient.

3.2 Regarding intergenerational relations

Regarding now the main findings of the inter-relational relations in the work context:

- Tension appears between players who are suffering (or who are afraid of suffering in the near future) from the insufficiency or absence of recognition
- Tension is made more intense by certain management options that make unbalance the possible equilibrium between experience and innovation, and namely by a depreciation in the productive advantage of experience and a dilution of the added value of older employees
- This may increase the feeling employees have that they are considered to be interchangeable.
- This may also result in an accrued emotional detachment from work.
- This is congruent with and can be enhanced by the current focus on polyvalence and constant decision making and change of organisations for the construction of a career

Thus it appears to be necessary to inverse the usual perspective by apprehending lack of satisfaction in the workplace as a cause rather than a consequence of the deterioration of cooperation between the generations.

This may be done by:

1. Devising common organisational and team objectives as a buffer for conflicts - higher level, common goals reduce conflict between and within generations, reduce competition and increase cooperation.
2. Paying attention to organisational climate - has influence on conflict relations, on competitive pressure. Reducing intergenerational conflicts at this level demands that attention is paid to these points:
 - de-valuation of experience coupled with over-valuation of unquestioned and non-negotiated forms of innovation;

- the ways the interaction between stable and unstable contract workers are organised
 - how same-generation competition, especially for the “sandwich” generation, may be fostered by organisational rules, culture and space arrangements.
3. Introducing changes at the level of career planning may also be a way of reducing conflicts
 4. Insistence upon the need to devise fair and transparent evaluation systems is also a way to reduce conflicts.
 5. Institutional instruments for re-valuing experience and knowledge transfer and maintaining high levels of debate and negotiation of the different needs can also be ways of reducing conflicts in this context.
 6. Re-framing innovation in accordance with the big picture of the team and organisational goals, questioning the “intrinsic goodness” of innovation are also forms of dealing with conflict, both in this context and others.

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Chapter 4: Synthesis of the quantitative approach

Introduction

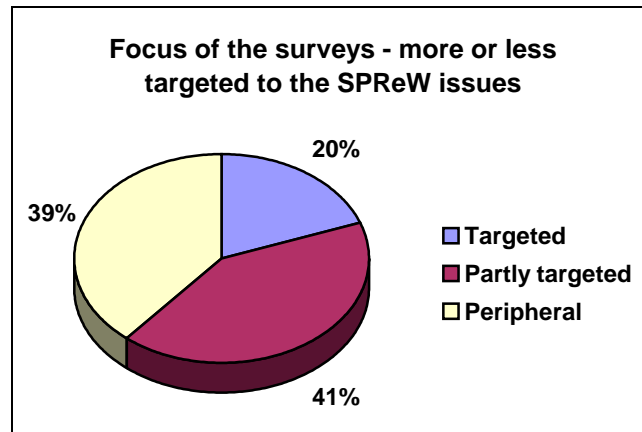
The fourth chapter consists of an overview of relevant quantitative surveys conducted at the national or regional level in all the countries included in the partnership (WP4). It also gives an overview of quantitative survey schemes conducted at the European and international levels. It provides a transversal overview of all the surveys inventoried and points out interesting conclusions regarding the SPReW issues.

An overview of this large inventory of quantitative surveys shows interesting results giving complementary standpoints to the results of the qualitative approach (chapter 3). However, all the conclusions of the surveys are not always convergent. Moreover, some issues, developed in the qualitative approach are not frequently addressed in quantitative surveys, for example the trajectories perspective and a comprehensive perspective on gender and relation to work. This synthesis gathers results that consist in interesting additional inputs as regards the SPReW concerns. A first section proposes a brief characterisation of the inventory. A second section summarises some interesting results picked up in all surveys; they are organised around five topics: the dominance of expressive orientations but without a significant role of age; complexity of integration and dualisation; relation between generations; gender inequalities and gender roles; trajectory and life course. A third section provides some guidelines for future quantitative approaches. It starts with a summary appraisal of existing international survey schemes. Afterwards, it points out some targeted inputs from specific surveys, relevant for the SPReW perspective. Finally, it suggests some important issues, not really covered by exiting surveys that should be fruitfully integrated into future quantitative approaches.

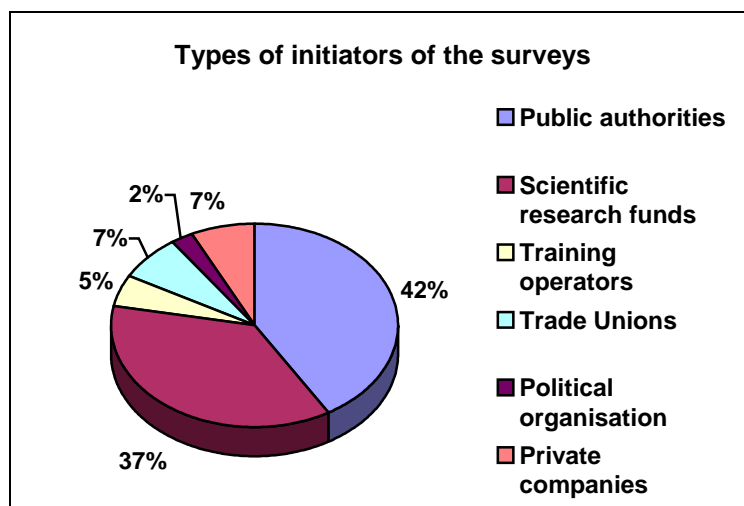
1. Characteristics of the surveys inventory

Before entering into a transversal approach of the results of the surveys, it is interesting to look at the characteristics of the inventory. A total of 31 surveys have been inventoried. We have classified them according to different criteria: the level of relevance of the survey (more or less targeted to the SPReW concerns); the type of initiator and the periodicity. Despite the fact that the inventory had no exhaustive ambition, such classification gives us some interesting feedback on the quantitative approach of the issues covered by the SPReW project.

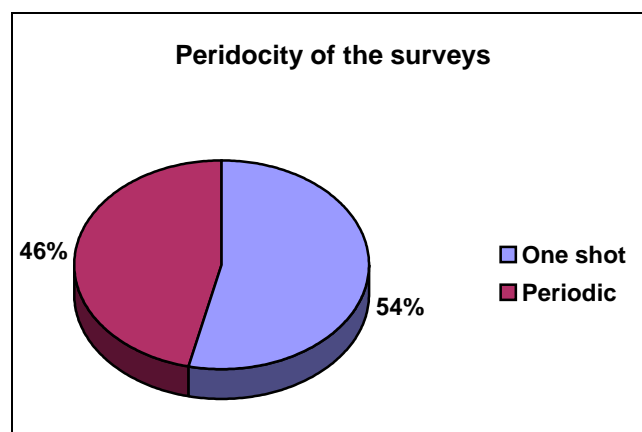
First of all, we see that among the 31 surveys: 8 are really targeted to the SPReW topics, these are mainly the surveys linked to ISSP, EVS and ESS; 17 are partially targeted, either restricted to one age group or limited to a specific issue; 16 are peripheral, this means that they are targeted to order issues but nevertheless they include some useful information for SPReW.



The main initiators of the surveys are on the one hand, public authorities (17) and on the other hand, diverse funds for scientific research (15). We have also 3 initiatives from trade unions, 3 from private companies, 2 from training operators and 1 from a political organisation.



Among the 31 surveys, 22 are “one shot” surveys, without periodical dimension, and 19 have a periodicity. These latter give useful data on the dynamic dimension of work situations. They are useful for a specific focus on trajectories that seems really important in the SPReW perspective.



It is also interesting to notice that the more targeted surveys are initiated through scientific research funds and that most of the surveys initiated by public authorities are classified in the peripheral and partly targeted categories.

We can move now to the transversal overview of results, looking at interesting additional information taking into account the results of the qualitative approach.

2. Selection of relevant results in the surveys inventory

2.1 *The dominance of expressive orientations but without a significant role of age*

Quite all the analysed quantitative surveys demonstrate the dominance of expressive orientations towards work. Most of the surveys, not all, also make obvious that age is not a significant and discriminating variable in the analysis of the relation to work.

In Germany, the value system of the youth shows overall a positive and stable direction (15th Shell youth survey, 2006). Close social orientation like friendship and family are still very popular for both genders but is accompanied by an **increased pursuit of personal independence**. Independence belongs to a nexus of adolescent values targeting individual development. Compared to 2002, in 2006 an increasing number of young people stated fear of losing their job and fear of the economic future. Strong orientation to trust and contact in the framework of personal relations can be interpreted as counter draft to the labour market, which is shaped by competition and social fear.

The research study by Anna Brake has great relevance for the SPReW project, because it deals with several questions, which are also focused at SPReW. The central question about the ambition of adolescents, which has been negatively discussed in many European countries for the last decades, is answered positively. However, most adolescents believe there are more important things in life than work. Furthermore a bigger demand for “meaning, fun and creation”, which contains an explicit change of the work orientation and supports the **dominance of expressive work orientations**.

Still in Germany, the ISSP questionnaire on Work Orientation III included questions about the respondent’s attitude towards professional life. It appears that **work orientations are only little influenced by age and generational affiliation. However, great differences can be seen between the sexes**. The expressive orientations are dominant for men and women.

In Italy, in general, employed people are satisfied of their own work (AlmaLaurea, Iard, Isfol, Ires, Left Democrats). **Different accounts of the role of age** emerge from the surveys, one of them (Isfol) suggests a higher level of satisfaction among the younger workers, another (Left Democrats) from the older ones. Surprisingly, we can notice in one survey (Left Democrats) a higher satisfaction of the younger workers with temporary contracts than those performing a permanent contract. For young people, the most important aspects on work are the self-fulfilment and relational one rather than the career.

A different vision appears if we consider people looking at the future that is connoted by a diffuse insecurity for all the workers, especially for the younger. Finally, an interesting

outcome from the Iard survey suggests a favour of the young people for a larger use of temporary work.

The Italian surveys demonstrate **identical results** with the qualitative approach conducted in WP3. Self-fulfilment and meaningful jobs are young people expectations (Iard). Lower perception of precariousness and higher satisfaction of their jobs, even if unstable, by younger people (Left democrats survey). They also come to **opposite results** with WP3. A secondary role of the variable “qualification”, related to young workers, in influencing job satisfaction is not confirmed by the surveys. By contrast, professionals and managers emerge from the surveys as the most satisfied and blue-collars as the least satisfied (Left democrats).

In Belgium, the surveys confirm the **centrality of work in life courses and personal projects for all generations**. It is clearly a factor that favours social integration, but also an important area for self-fulfilment. However, as observed in WP3, other fields are also considered as important: leisure, family and friends. In this perspective, the main fears expressed by the students (DREAM survey) are: to have no private life (37.2%), to be jobless (24.7%) and not to be at the level of the task (23%). On the contrary, only 12% are uneasy about not being recognised in their work.

The authors of the Flemish report SCV-Survey 2005 (ISSP) identified important aspects of work, which enables to describe different types of relations to work. On a general basis, they assessed that all respondents highly appreciate both “extrinsic” (instrumental relation to work) and “intrinsic” factors (expressive relation to work) related to work. They also confirm that, if there are some differences observed amongst the respondents, **age is not a significant and discriminating variable in the analysis of the type of relation to work**. In the same perspective, the TOR survey, in Belgium, identifies four clusters that define four type of relation to work among the young people. Those clusters are quite similar to the four types identified in the qualitative approach for all groups of age.

Even though the labour market situation **in East Germany** is much more critical than **in West Germany**, subject centred occupational standards are measured almost on the same level in both regions (ALLBUS 2000). **The desire for an interesting position takes on first place in both regions** (77%). Independent work was even judged a bit higher in East Germany (75%) than in West Germany (72%). The third place for East-German employees is a higher income. A significant difference comparing West Germany can be discovered: East (51%), West (32%). The big significance for income in East Germany was identified as a risk minimising strategy, after discontinuance of the guaranteed income in the GDR. The following priority is the chance for advancement and on the last place the occupational demands, orientated at the support “of others”; e.g. ,a position, that enables you to help others’ (East: 48%; West: 40%) und “a position with use for society” (East: 41%, West: 40%). Further examinations, parallel to reports for West Germany, have shown that subject centred occupational standards increase with the level of education of the respondents. East-German respondents with a lower level of education have greater priorities for the other aspects. Other surveys often identified good relations at the workplace as a motivation for women and employees over 50.

The “Turning points in life course (TPL)” study **in Hungary** found that the majority of working older people worked for money. **The proportion of people aged 46 or more who plan to work beyond retirement age is low and they are mostly motivated by financial reasons and much less by the appeal of work they carry out**. The vast majority of people

over 46 planned early retirement because of feeling tired, wanting more time for the family, deteriorating health, finding way out of unemployment, and the desire to have more free time. None of the answers suggests that the majority of older respondents consider self-realisation as an aspect of work. The results of the groups interviews in Hungary corresponded to the TPL findings: people did not see many opportunities for older people and either viewed older women who are, and who should be, caring about the family only and maybe do work around the house. That is what they do, according to the TPL survey, which found that older people spend much less time on breadwinning activities but care for the family and help with looking after children, as the definition of work for them is very likely to be different from having a paid job: they are more concerned about helping their families and growing some produce in their garden, which can also be part of the support provided for the younger generations. The findings from the focus groups, however, suggest a sharp distinction between the sexes in this regard: older women are the ones who embody traditional values, calmness and a good balance between household work, while older men represent struggle and frustration who have burnt out by the time they grew old or who may still want to continue career, which is not acceptable in the Hungarian value system.

In France, According to the European Values Survey, most of **French people consider work as “very important”**. The national surveys allow qualifying this result, by comparing the importance of work and the importance of other spheres. Work appears as “quite important but less important than other things (family, private or social life...)” for two thirds of the French population. **Besides, a great majority choose the family as the most important thing in order to be happy and to say who they are.** Work comes far behind the family according to the surveys “Histoire de vie –construction des identités” and “Travail et mode de vie”. Very few people declare that “work is more important than everything else” or “unimportant” according to the surveys “Histoire de vie- construction des identités” and according to the IPSOS survey. In other words, the investment at work is not exclusive.

According to the French part of international surveys, **people value the intrinsic facets of job** (work interest, autonomy) **as well as the extrinsic facets of job** (security and wages). French people distinguish themselves by higher expectations regarding the intrinsic interest of work and the possibility of self-fulfilling through work. Beyond intrinsic and extrinsic facets of job, workers value other dimensions of job quality. People in France and in Europe also express high expectation for the quality of social relations at work and the reconciliation between work and family life. Regarding these two additional dimensions, French people are more dissatisfied than other Europeans. According to the survey “Histoire de vie-construction des identités”, half of the parents find the conciliation difficult when they have children below 11 years old.

The national surveys and the French part of international surveys (ISSP, EVS and ESS) bring convergent results about the differences between ages group. When they have a job, young people attach a higher value to the intrinsic and social dimensions of work: 45% estimate the interest and the contents of work as “essential” (compared to 35% among seniors), as well as the quality of the relation with the hierarchy (41% compared to 34% among seniors) and with colleagues (50% compared to 43% among seniors), according to IPSOS survey. Furthermore, the young people have higher expectations regarding the recognition of skills used at work. The recognition is a necessary criterion for 52% of the young people (compared to only 36% of the seniors). When taking into account the difference of the structure of the population by age groups (in particular the difference in the education level), it appears that young people attach the same value to the interest of work as older people with the same level of education.

On the contrary, everything being equal, the young people distinguish themselves by higher expectations for the social dimension of work.

In Belgium, the surveys confirm observations made in the qualitative approach. Firstly, they refute the hypothesis that the new culture of the youth gives little importance to the ethics of work. On the contrary, they confirm that **work remains an important value and that the youth continue to give a high importance to work**. Some surveys (mainly in the Flemish part) even stress that the ethics of work is rather rigid and traditional among the 18-36 generation in comparison with the other age groups: “work can be fun and if you want to realise something in your life, you must work”. Secondly, **young people are realistic** concerning the fact that they have to work to earn money and to encounter material needs. Even young students consider important to make some sacrifices: reduction of the holiday time and of the time allowed to hobbies, for example. However, as observed in other age groups, they are not ready to sacrifice their family life, their couple and their social life. Thirdly, the survey about Social Cohesion in the Walloon Region confirms that **young people are more often confronted to precariousness factors**: objective and subjective poverty; unemployment and unsecured jobs; psychological difficulties (mainly young women). However, as observed in the interviews, they are also quite confident regarding their professional future even if there are differences regarding gender and educational background: young men are more confident than young women; students with general qualifications are more worried than students with technical qualifications; there is a higher fear of job loss amongst lower educational levels. Fourthly, the majority of the young people consider as **essential to have a pleasant job** giving some possibilities to earn money. Personal development and autonomy are also considered as important components of the relation to work. **Personal development is highly valued in all career models**. As a consequence, the **young people are also less loyal to their organisation** and nearly 30% of respondents aged between 18 and 24 years old considers probable that he/she will look for another job in the year to come (against 8% of the respondents older than 55).

In France, the survey “Histoire de vie- construction des identités”, work is more frequently quoted as an element of the identity by managers and intellectual professions than by the other social categories and in particular blue collar and unskilled employees. The probability of declaring “work is less important than other things” is higher among blue collars and clerks. According to the four surveys described in the French report, job satisfaction is higher among self-employed workers, managers or workers in the public sector and people in the wealthiest decile. Thus, the satisfaction is linked to the opportunity of being creative, quit autonomous in the work organisation and having a secure job. The satisfaction increases with the income as well. It should be noted however that satisfactions with intrinsic facets of job and employment security could be independent for a part of the population. According to the survey “Emploi salarié et condition de vie”, four cases can exist: (1) the ideal-type that combines satisfaction at work and employment stability, (2) satisfaction at work, but employment instability, (3) dissatisfaction at work, but employment stability, (4) dissatisfaction at work and employment instability.

2.2 Complexity of integration and dualisation

Extension in time of the integration period is a common trend that is demonstrated by all surveys. They also draw the increased complexity of integration paths, including diverse models of partial integration, and some “incapacity” to shift from a situation of informal or

precarious bonds to a situation of full employment with formal contracts and long-term duration. The surveys also point out, in a convergent way, the social basis of insecurity and dualisation processes. The labour market is experienced as a social fear with a democratisation of the risk of unemployment and a loss of belief in social policies.

Ten major factors of difficulties in the entry of young citizens into the labour market were identified in the “The Youth and the Labour Market” study, **in Portugal**: 1) inequalities of competences and qualifications; 2) gap between the educational system and the professional system (or labour market); 3) flexibility and precariousness of the labour market; 4) the under-utilisation of young people’s competences; 5) non adjustment between the new orientations towards work and the demands of the work system; 6) insufficiencies of the social support programmes; 7) asymmetries of the informal support networks; 8) the problem of work-family conciliation; 9) the distance to bureaucratic and financial institutions; and 10) the **discrimination of “certain juvenile cultures”** – which is probably based on the negative stereotype described on WP3 and that relates the younger with lack of motivation to work, lack of initiative and concentration, and a more competitive spirit.

In Portugal, results from the quanti-qualitative study (The Youth and the Labour Market) suggest that **the integration of the young generation in the labour market tends to be extended in time**. It is not only a transition from the “inactive” to the “active” state. It is marked by the earning of sufficient income allowing an independent life, whose urgency varies with the personal projects and with the constraints imposed by the social condition. **This integration also tends to increased complexity**: there are no extremes of total integration and total exclusion. On the contrary, the majority of young individuals is today in a situation of **partial integration** in semi-formal, temporary or part-time modalities. This partial integration reflects two clearly differentiated situations: a) young individuals are simultaneously integrated in improving training systems, occupying temporary jobs by personal desire or need; and b) young individuals that already finished their training path and desire the full integration in the labour market.

These considerations seem highly convergent with what was stated based on the ideas that emerged from the interviews and focus groups, in Portugal – particularly when the importance of work for identity development and its organising role of the relation of individuals to work were highlighted. Indicators such as willingness to learn more and to invest time and effort in more knowledge might be in line with what was previously affirmed and consistent with a polycentric conception of existence which, although not particularly noted in the Portuguese context, could be on the basis of these findings - Young individuals simultaneously integrated in improving training systems or occupying temporary jobs by personal desire or need might be representing a tendency for a polycentric conception of existence.

Another main concern in the integration process of young citizens tends to be, not the general lack of job offers, but **the “incapacity” to change from a situation of informal or precarious bonds to a situation of full employment with formal contracts and long term duration**. In Portugal, this problem is extended to the public sector, which was also found in the interviews at a certain degree.

In Hungary, it is not only returning to the labour market that is difficult, but entering it can also prove hard. Given the precariousness in employment experiences in Hungary, job seekers, especially the newcomers, face increasing uncertainty. Compared to previous generations, entry into the labour market was more difficult for the generation, which started

its professional career in the 1990s. This so-called “globalisation” cohort, and some sub-groups in particular, faced growing uncertainty in getting their first job. **The rise of precariousness when entering into the labour market was confirmed in the case of women but not in the case of men.** In particular, the chances of young women belonging to the “globalisation” cohort for getting into unskilled service class jobs have increased compared to previous cohorts. A higher level of education is required for entering into unskilled service jobs than for finding work as unskilled worker. Our findings in either the group interviews or the group discussions did not reveal big differences between the sexes in this respect. Most of the young interviewees (who may not be members of the globalisation cohort but precarious working conditions apply to them all the same), worked with their higher education degree in low-skilled jobs, mostly at multinational companies, which did not mean more for them than a mere income-generating activity.

In Italy, with respect to **the employment situation**, all the surveys highlight that the **unstable work** (temporary work and free lance) is **particularly spread among young people**, while it is not relevant for the more adult one. Two aspects of particular relevance come on this topic. The first is the **lack of activation of the young people performing unstable works on searching a different job** (Censis), although they declare not to like the kind of job they have. The second aspect is the **different amount of time that the generations (Ilfi) of the last century spent in the unstable work**. As a matter of fact, generations who were born from 1938 to 1957 spent the most part of their working life in permanent work, since they came into labour market in the Fordist period that was marked by permanent work and wide guarantees. By contrast, the older (born till 1927) and the younger generations (born from 1958 to 1967) spent less time in these working conditions. The difference is that the older had more concealed work while the younger had more fixed-term contracts. With regard to **the work conditions and their prospects**, some surveys (Ilfi, Istat) highlight that in Italy there are **few possibilities to make career** (for example, after 10 years 67% of workers are in the same initial employment class). Concerning the mobility between the generations, one survey (Istat) asserts that it is high (60% of people at their first job are in a different social class from their father), while another survey (Ilfi) suggests, indeed, that it is scarce, due to the importance of the parental family and the education on the individuals work career.

Surveys on mobility **in Portugal** distinguish between an **ideal type of mobility**, associated to project-based job and generator of self-fulfilling experiences and future valorisation (expressive relation and orientation to the future), and a **massive practice of mobility** associated to patronage non responsibility and generator of a strong feeling of insecurity which operates by unstructuring the future projects. The distinction derives from the nature of the job and the abundance or scarcity of jobs. These two situations may strongly affect the type of engagement with work as referred in the emergent findings of the interviews, and particularly the second situation, may act positively as a facilitator of a polycentric conception of existence conducting to long-life learning and higher degrees, or negatively as a facilitator of an instrumental relation with a deliberate disinvestment on the career. It may also affect the relation to others and the sense of belongingness.

It seems also that there is a clear **dualisation in mobility schemes** between: a) a highly privileged, creative and highly qualified segment where the mobility and informality of bonds represents an effective progressive valorisation and social and professional rising; b) a major segment where the circulation between temporary and precarious occupations does not reflect any progressive rising leaving space to uncertainty and insecurity towards the future. The

insecurity tends to be strongly structured by social factors such as social class of origin, level and qualification area, and sex. To young citizens (and their families) with more economic, cultural and social capital, the sense of insecurity is more relative, whereas young citizens with a more unfavourable background feel a strong feeling of general insecurity, becoming more susceptible for unstructured paths.

In Portugal, one particular study observed the “Middle-aged Workers Facing Restructuring and Human Resources Management Policies”, in Portugal. This study showed that middle-aged workers (45-55) deal with specific problems (and also suffer). For instance, **the legal and social mechanisms that cover the older generations are not applicable to those in the previous age group, although many of the difficulties those workers over 55 feel are already present in middle-aged workers.** The middle-aged workers are valued in traditional sectors of the economy, where their skills are crucial to companies, but when confronted with transition situations they face many difficulties. It seems that when companies face organisational changes they prefer to dismiss the older workers, including the middle-aged workers – *first in first out*. This tendency is not coherent with the traditional criteria used by employers who preferred to fire the last - *last in first out*. This fact points out a major change in the employers’ view (and stereotypes) of the importance of older and younger generations at workplace, and their potential contributions. It is also noted that the problems faced by middle-aged workers are not very different from those faced by workers with low qualifications (who also suffer). Indeed, a large proportion of the middle-aged workers are under qualified. Training and education as life-long activity are considered key-elements.

Labour market is experienced as source of social fear (HSF, Generations study, in Germany). This social fear has been disconnected from the real threat and became its own way of life. The policy of reforms of the younger generation is not considered as promising procedure to balance labour market inequalities. It can be spoken of a loss of belief in social policies. The young ones are more affected by the risk of unemployment than the elderly. A democratisation process of the risk of unemployment has occurred. The fear of being unemployed hangs over the youth’s professional integration like a Damocles sword. In all age groups at least two-thirds demand a secure workplace (Allbus survey 2006). Despite their better institutional safeguard the average and old age groups also feel threatened by unemployment. The high consent for job security shows the insecurity, which is predominant in all generations after the long years of mass unemployment.

Still in Germany, in the Generation study, tersely half of the surveyed persons expects the situation on the labour market, which is already judged to be extremely negative, to remain the same. Roughly each one out of four persons think that the situation will either improve or worse respectively. “Those extremely negative perspectives generate strong feelings of consternation and threat concerning the workplace for the individuals as well for the familial environment. Consequently 38% of the surveyed have the impression that themselves or a member of their family could be unemployed within a short time. Another 5% report to be unemployed since a short amount time. In this way more than 40% of the population are more or less affected or threatened. As expected young persons feel most threatened. They are threatened by unemployment beyond average. With respect to other family members fear of unemployment is comparably great for the elderly, while young and middle generations are worried not only about themselves but also about family members above average.

In Belgium (FTU/CSC), a little more than half of young workers don't worry about job security. One out of 5 doesn't have an opinion on this matter and about the same proportion has a rather negative position towards their job security.

2.3 Relation between generations

Most of the surveys provide little information about relations between generations. This topic should certainly be developed in future surveys. Nevertheless, they tend to confirm that age is neither a major problem nor a determinant factor to define relations to work.

In Belgium, the survey FTU/CSC gives some information on this topic. The survey questioned active workers below 30 about their perception of the older worker (>50 years). 73% considers the older colleagues as a learning source, even though they are not always available. Age-mix is considered as positive, 76% thinks it gives way to a good working environment. On the other hand, one out of 2 young workers (48%) thinks older workers adapt less easily to changes. As for tasks and status distribution, opinions are divided. 35.6% of the respondents think older workers always have the good status, but about the same proportion (39.6%) have an opposite opinion. Concerning the item "the interesting work is always for the older ones": almost one out of 4 respondents (23%) agrees but one out of 2 (52.5%) doesn't. Young workers who have known unemployment for a certain period of time have a less positive view on older worker's role regarding knowledge transfer: they are 64.6% to think *older colleagues teach their trade to the younger ones*, whereas respondents who have never known unemployment are 74.7% to share this opinion; 41.4% think *older colleagues are often available for helping younger workers*, proportion which goes up to 54.5% for those without unemployment experience. 28.4% of the female respondents vs. 17.1% of male respondents figure *the most interesting work is always for the older colleagues*. This is the only item for which male and female responses differ significantly.

Still in Belgium, the CAPA survey stresses that there are no significant social stereotypes about old workers. The consequence is also a relative **ignorance concerning age specificities**, in particular regarding older workers. For example, the risk of depression among older workers is recognised by only 10% of the interviewees when literature demonstrates that such a risk increases significantly with the age. Other problems like stress are also under-evaluated, even if the negative consequences are important. Moreover, the CAPA survey points out the importance of organisational and managerial factors.

In Germany, the 15th Shell youth survey shows, on the one hand, that the image of age is affected by respect for the accomplishments of the elderly. Here the positive relationship with their own parents significantly determines the youth view on the older generation. On the other hand, **worries concerning the future** development are evident. 70% of the youth think that the ageing society is a big or even very big problem. Despite the various positive references to the elderly still 48 % of the people describe today relation between the generations as tense. The youth's image concerning the relation of the generations is hardly accented (15th Shell youth survey). On the whole they believe that their willingness to performance will be rewarded. Only occasionally, suspicions are entertained that in an ageing society older people will be in charge of influential positions and therefore will take disadvantageous decisions for the young.

Besides many analogies, the *Generations study* shows also many differences between the generations. Compared to the total sample young people rather tend to assess values below

average, whilst older people rather tend to assess those above average. The values self-fulfilment, enjoyment, cooperation and performance are exceptional from this point of view. Those are just as important as for the average. Money, power, activity and adventure are even more important to young persons than average. The five most important values are totally agreed on by the elderly and mostly agreed on by the young. The study does not recognise polarising discrepancies between the hierarchy of values of young and old. **Value driven, cultural conflicts between the generations are not to be expected.** The elderly generally live their life in stronger accordance with values and basic beliefs than the young generation. This however does not mean that the “young from today” will stick to their weaker orientation when they are old themselves. In fact it is to be assumed that value orientation will increase with age. It is possible though that their hierarchy of values will differ from today old generation. This especially refers to values like responsibility, altruism, acquittal and moral. This development combined with concrete difference in opinions could intensify conflicts between generations and complicate compromises. At the same time, the authors identify indications suggesting that value hierarchies are being examined between generations and adjusted to the conditions of the society. For this, they hold responsible pressure by continuing economic, societal and social problems. Thereby they report levelling tendencies within the value hierarchy. The levelling mainly concerns important basic beliefs. On the other hand so far less important values gain increased importance. **No cultural polarisation between generations can be reported.** The comparison with earlier studies shows a moderate dynamics of modernisation, which is characterised by increasing individualisation and differentiation of value hierarchies in the course of time (HSF, Generations study).

The first survey in the Hungarian inventory, “Turning points of the life course” (TPL), explored, among others, the question of *retiring*, or, more broadly, *ageing*. Some aspects of the survey explored attitudes towards older people, as well as older people’s attitudes towards work. Another set of questions explored pensioners’ daily activities, including mutual help provided generally between members of the broader family and the history of becoming retired. The study concluded that **certain tension could be detected between generations in the area of work.** While younger people agree less with the statement that “the work of older people is more valuable than that of younger people due to the experience and knowledge of the older”, older people tend to agree with it. Older people also agreed in large numbers with the statement “older people have no good reputation at workplaces”. In brief, younger workers feel that older workers occupy positions at workplaces, which younger workers consider “theirs” and they also tend to assume that older people do not primarily work for money but in order not to feel ‘unnecessary’. The findings in the qualitative part of the study seem to underline the findings of the TPL survey with regard to generational tensions at work, where it was found that conflict did exist between the young and old at workplaces, but it is more likely to be interpreted as conflicts between age groups. **They are conflicts among particular persons who might happen to be young/old but who socialised under different historical periods, which affected their relation to work.**

In Portugal, the discrimination in the labour market is a reality lived and documented by the majority of the young workers, although **it seems consensual that the age category (with positive and negative effects) is not the main criterion of discrimination.** The differentiation based on the sex remains a reality with strong consequences. Others factors of exclusion are: ethnic origin, social class, residence place and lack of qualification resources (The Youth and the Labour Market). These findings are highly convergent with what was observed in the interviews and not contrary to the focus groups conclusions. Only this deeper

technique allowed making an in-depth observation of the relations between generations and showed their (probable) taboo nature.

In France, the existing quantitative surveys do not allow describing the relation between generations. However, the qualitative investigations lead firstly to getting away from a conflictual reading of inter-generation relations in the workplace. The distinguishing feature of these relations is more their ambivalence; they are far from being reduced to a conflictual dimension, as witnessed by the strength of the links of solidarity and cooperation that often grow up between the different age groups. These results in themselves question the pertinence of a managerial and media-conscious rhetoric likely to precipitate oppositions rather than identify routes for rapprochement by illustrating the cohabitation of different age groups in the workplace from the viewpoint of “generational conflict”. They also lead to demonstration of the multiplicity of relations between the different age groups by emphasising the existence of a relational aspect that contrasts with, without necessarily refuting, the highlighting in the scientific analyses focusing their attention on the meticulous decoding of the conflictual relations of power in specific productive environments.

It is not our intention, by encouraging the relativisation of an agonistic conception of age groups, to stray too far in the opposite direction and fall into a naïve, idealised vision of inter-generation relations in the workplace. As we have seen, these may occasionally take the form of distant or even conflictual relations between employees of different ages and different levels of seniority. But, and it is this second point which we would like to emphasise, the gathered data encourages us to not confine ourselves to an essentialist or culture-based approach to inter-generation tension which, through interpretative short-cuts, tends to reduce relational dysfunctions to a conflict between the generations. It appears, in fact, that the tension between young people and older people within companies is less the product of cultural compartmentalisation or conflicting values, and much more the symptom of management and organisation models that are incapable of offering employees mechanisms for recognition suited to their needs and competences and possibilities for them to consider a positive future for themselves.

This observation is not surprising if we consider, following on from A. Honneth, that “obtaining social recognition is the normative condition for any communicational activity”. Inversely, the suffering produced by a feeling of a lack of recognition hinders the inclination of individuals to enter into cooperative relations with other people.

Thus the hostility of some young people towards older people may be seen as the extension of a more general rejection of the work provoked by a painful experience of the professional environment dominated by frustration and auto-depreciation. In the same way negative, unilateral views are transmitted about young people by employees who are in a particularly precarious position professionally or whose position is threatened. The cynicism that some older employees develop regarding not only new recruits but also the company and their development within the company is probably reflected in a loss of control (Pollak, 1995) over reality linked to a feeling that their career is no longer “on the right track” in relation to their hopes or the careers of their colleagues in the same cohort.

Thus it appears to be necessary to inverse the usual perspective by apprehending lack of satisfaction in the workplace as a cause rather than a consequence of the deterioration of cooperation between the generations. In other words, relations between the generations are not an issue except in that they reveal the declining solidity of the socio-organisational system

2.4 Gender inequalities and gender roles

Obviously, most of the surveys demonstrate more differences linked to gender than to age. However, despite significant inequalities between men and women, in quite all countries, the gender divide is not considered more explicative than the generational divide.

In Portugal, a gendered pattern of relation to work also emerged from the surveys findings. The weight of female workers among the workers who enter is higher when compared with their weight in relation to workers who leave, confirming the idea of a growing participation of women in the labour market (Evolution of Rejuvenescence/Ageing of the Labour Market) – and allowing to establishment of a connection between this results and the **progressive growth of problems of work-family conciliation** that were detected in the qualitative data. It is also noted the predominance of female workers among the workers holding a higher degree, which are simultaneously those proportionally more affected by the growing unemployment.

In terms of mobility, the results show that male workers deal more frequently with situations of no mobility and of job change. On the other hand, female workers deal more frequently with situations of leaving and re-entering the labour market, giving **signs that the job transition is more difficult to women than to men** (Workers Mobility in the Portuguese Economy). This is also convergent with the qualitative findings. In turn, the male workers seem more willing to mobility. It is interesting to note that it was also this group that referred in the interviews no problems of work-family conciliation.

In Italy, the surveys also demonstrate results convergent with the qualitative approach. **Women are more educated but more precarious, worse paid and suffer a longer transition to stable jobs.** Though, the gender divide is not considered more explicative than the generational divide (Alma Laurea, Isfol, Ires).

In France, the survey “Histoire de vie- construction des identités”, work is important for both sexes at the beginning of the adult life. Gender differences are more striking after the birth of children. According to international surveys, men attach a higher value to wages and promotions. Women attach more importance to the social value of work, the possibility of helping other people and job security.

In Belgium too, most of the surveys confirm gender differences and the **determinant impact of gender rather than age**. This is true, particularly, when considering precariousness and relation to work. Firstly, women clearly appear as the more “vulnerable group” whatever can be the age. Particularly, women in the middle-age group are confronted to the risks of: objective and subjective poverty, monoparentality, unemployment, depression and social isolation. The status in employment is also less favourable for young women entering into the labour market, even if they hold higher degrees (FTU/CSC). Secondly, women are over-represented among young adults who have a flat career and among flexible peripheral workers; they are under-represented in the ascending career models. However, the surveys confirm that women have more intrinsic expectations regarding work.

The Allbus survey 2006 **in Germany** also demonstrates more differences between men and women than between age groups on the question regarding the value of work. In the 15th Shell youth survey, in Germany, **girls and young women appear still more family orientated** (76% compared to 69%), more often wish to have children (69% to 57%), more frequently get along very well with their parents (41% to 35%) and earlier leave their parents

house (33% to 24%). The genders differ concerning the relevance ranking of value orientation. **Orientation for comprehensive values is more important for girls and young women than for young men.** They rather live a challenge and competition orientated life style.

Still in Germany, Anna Brake study demonstrates that **the traditional gender role model does not find acceptance among women, while young men still possess traditional thinking patterns of the classical model.** “The traditional model of familial and occupational work division finds greater acceptance among male adolescents of all groups than among female adolescents. Especially male apprentices, as well as grammar school pupils can agree to the position that a man’s priority is to support the livelihood of his family, while the woman stays at home and raises the children. Such an attitude corresponds to the belief, that women with children cannot combine family and job.” Furthermore, it seems that the relationships between the genders differ in other European countries from those in Germany. Northern Europeans have for instance been operating consistent equal rights policies for a long time, whilst the standard of the sole male breadwinner seems still the norm in Germany. The **institutional framework**, which has been created in Germany to date, frequently requires families to be orientated in the traditional model of the male breadwinner model or to a household-based marriage. This thus creates a competitive disadvantage at work for women with children. Having said that, Scandinavian equal rights policies have only really led to changes at work, whilst in the private domain, for instance, it has only enticed men to do seven minutes more work in Swedish households (Seventh Family report).

The time span available to Germans to decide to have children seems particularly short. The German life cycle is split in three: training, then work, followed finally by retirement. Germans spend one-third of their lives in (very long) training. Then they start working. In other European countries, by contrast, it is easier to acquire initial training at a fairly young age and then enter into ongoing education, for instance after a family phase. Germany, by contrast, has a **“rush hour of life“**. Female German academics, for example, have about five years after completing their education and starting work to choose whether to have children or not. Assuming a life expectancy of almost 100 years for women born in 1970, this is a life share of 2 % (Seventh Family report).

In East Germany, the structure of work has changed since the reunification. More and more East-Germans take on marginal occupations (mini-jobs) and the number of part-time workers has increased. Part-time employment is often not voluntarily in East Germany, but because of missing alternatives (Gita Scheller). Part-time jobs in East- and West Germany are mainly taken on by older women, as well as women with a lower level of education. The experienced individualisation and improved creative freedom in West Germany means an **involuntary withdrawal to traditional female roles in East Germany.**

In Hungary, gender came up as a salient issue in the findings of the qualitative part of the study, as a determinant of the relation to work and the perception of female/male employees. The group of young female employees went through the biggest change in the 1990’s with new opportunities emerging for them. This went counter to unchanged values in Hungarian society, which appreciate strong family-centeredness in relation to women. Therefore those young women who pursue careers and for whom work is central are denounced and seen as evils. Therefore it seems that women should choose between a career and raising a child, especially given the few examples of policies supporting the reconciliation of work and family.

This is also what is suggested in the survey “Returning to the labour market: women on child-care assistance” segment of the Labour Force Survey, which found that the majority of the women in the survey felt that being an employee and having a child (or children) at the same time was a disadvantage. It is a strongly related finding that the re-employment of mothers became more difficult over time: a growing share of young women became dependent after the maternity leave ended, which may be related to the traditional roles Hungarian society holds about women’s roles. It seems that the experience of these women not being able to return to the labour market led to a re-assessment of the role of a housewife: while in 1993 and 1995 only a small proportion of those who were not able to return to the labour market wished to stay at home as housewives, this proportion grew as high as 23% by 1999. The willingness to seek employment on the part of women on maternity benefit showed strong correlation with the number of the children.

Similar issues came up in the 2002 wave (Family III) of the ISSP survey, the results of which seem to converge with what we have found in relation to gender roles: gender roles, both among Hungarian men and women, are formed mostly by tradition. Although this segment of the Hungarian ISSP survey suggested that more equal roles were becoming more accepted by highly educated men, this was not confirmed in the group discussion with people of higher education, which included men, where in fact the opposite was found.

2.5 Trajectory and life course

As pointed out in the characterisation of the inventory, only a part of the surveys can give information on the dynamic dimension of work situations and trajectories.

In Italy, as regards to the transition into adult life, **there is a tendency of the Italian young people, especially young males, to protract their stay in the parental family** (Istat), which is due mainly to economic reason. In Italy 61% of the young aged 18 to 34 live with their parents. It is interesting to notice that this phenomenon is not new but in fact it happened also at the beginning of last century (when people married late), and had alternate periods depending on the social and economic context. The age for the first conjugal union and the transition into adult life, decreased for people who were born in the 1910-1950 period, while it grew gradually from the 1950 generations on (Ilfi). Looking at the relation between education, work and parental family condition, the most important aspect is that the **precocious entrance into work** while they are still studying rewards the young graduate people more than those who begin working after finishing the university. Young people in the first group have greater chances to find stable works and higher wages (AlmaLaurea).

In Italy, the economic support of the parental family has a great influence on work of young people. Firstly, it affects their search of work, for young people appear to dedicate less time and to be less available in accepting work than adult one (Isfol). Secondly, the great part of the young finds a job through friends, acquaintances and family network aid (Iard). Thirdly, young graduate people coming from more privileged parental conditions (particularly those having both parents graduate) have lower employment rate than young with a less privileged family background (AlmaLaurea). Such statements are similar to the results of the qualitative approach. Parental family influences the relation to work, to the extent that young Italians still living with their parents are often helped to find a job by acquaintances and family network aid (Iard). By the way, they are less prone to accept any job than adults, given the economic support they receive (Isfol, Alma Laurea).

In Belgium, the TOR survey confirms that **there is still a dominant standard life-course**. The “ideal life course” of young adults is quite standard, both in timing and sequences. In other words, as we observed in the qualitative analyses, standard life courses are not significantly replaced by de-standardised life courses. However, the TOR survey does not provide any information about the possible emergence of new standards defining a contemporary life-course framework.

In Belgium, most of the young workers get their first job within 12 months even if the surveys also reveal an important gap between the Walloon and Flemish Regions, in favour of the Flemish youth. Considering entry routes to work, surveys also stress **blurring boundaries between school and work**. As observed in the qualitative survey, starting of family is often a significant event that explains changing attitude towards work.

The survey FTU/CSC, on the French speaking part of Belgium, shows that one out of 2 young workers (below 30) has already changed employer (51%), although within these 51%, almost half (48%) claims to have *always* done this voluntarily. This observation underlines the complexity of the phenomenon. Focussing on the profile of young workers while taking into account the number of job changes, shows few differences between those who never changed employer and those who changed a limited number of times (1 to 3 times). In a way, a limited number of changes belong to what could be called a “standardised” integration path. The differentiation between young workers is greater when the number of changes grow. 2 to 3 job changes seem “normal”, but additional changes reveal more fragile trajectories and the social reproduction of professional insecurity.

In France, the national surveys allow describing the interactions between the relation to work and the main events of the personal life course, such as a marriage or the birth of a child. According to the French survey “Histoire de vie- construction des identités”, **work is more frequently quoted as important by people without child**. The probability of declaring “work is less important than other things” is higher among women with children. According to the survey “Travail et mode de vie”, the importance of work as an element of happiness decreases among women and men as soon as they are in couple and above all if they have children. The national surveys do not allow describing the detailed trajectory and life course, and in particular the impact of the past work experiences on the evolution of the relation to work.

In Portugal, in the quantitative approach, trajectory and life course was linked to, or “indirectly measured by”, the **different forms of mobility**. The survey’s results showed a relatively high mobility degree in the Portuguese context. It seems however that a large percentage of the labour force had no mobility (57%) during the 1990’s. In fact, the high mobility degree was due to 43% of the labour force indicating that some workers have moved more frequently than others. Moreover, it was found that direct transitions between two jobs in two consecutive years were rare – transitions were generally made after leaving the labour market for a certain period of time, that is to say when the worker did not appear associated to any registered entrepreneurial unit for some time (Workers Mobility in the Portuguese Economy).

As stated before, the integration in the labour market tends to be extended in time. The main problem in the integration process of young citizens tends to be, not the general lack of job offers, but the **“incapacity” to change from a situation of informal or precarious bonds to a situation of full employment with formal contracts and long term duration**. This

“incapacity” is extended to the public sector. Access to jobs tends to be made in two different ways - highly formal or highly informal. In the first case, the lack of opportunities, the slowness of the processes and the lack of transparency of the tenders exclude the great majority of young individuals, especially those with urgency to get a job. In the second case, it seems that there is no mechanism of equality of opportunities, leaving to the patronage (public or private) the total autonomy to use legitimate and illegitimate selection criteria (The Youth and the Labour Market).

The formal programmes of support to the integration of young individuals in the labour market had small impact in the creation of effective jobs, although they had represented a mode of access of many youngsters to professional training (and qualifications). These programmes had a more positive impact on young people with the lower educational levels, than with higher degrees. But, the **“artificial” fabrication of professional traineeships** tended to be appropriated as forms of precarious and temporary jobs, with low wages and not contributing to the real professional integration. Due to the limited effects of the policies of formal support, the integration of young citizens in the labour market is mainly based in the **informal support networks** (that may justify the importance of the network of personal relationships at workplace referred on qualitative analysis), which is by nature a generator of several inequalities of resources and opportunities. Even in the highly qualified sectors (and in the public sector), this prevalence of the informal networks over the formal mechanisms was observed (The Youth and the Labour Market).

In Germany, the family of origin is of high importance for youth and they stick to its structures for a long time (34% of the youths aged 22 – 25 still live with their parents). In contrast **the number of young people not starting a family and children rises** (15th Shell youth survey). The transition from an industrial society towards a service- and knowledge-based society poses considerable **challenges for families**. The change in people’s life cycles, such as longer life expectancy, a higher level of qualification and a greater variety of vocational and private life stages in careers, entails major changes in family living arrangements (Seventh Family report). Traditional roles and traditional patterns of division of labour between genders, the institutional framework and the cultural perception of motherhood avoid a family friendly organisation of everyday-life. The middle-age years can be signed as “rush hour of life” – important decisions on family life and career have to be made in a very short period of life course (Seventh Family report).

The survey “getting older - staying active”, **in Germany**, shows interesting results in relation to WP3. Closely 2/3 of the respondents wish possibilities to work part time or change between work and free time at the end of their gainful life. This result contradicts the experiences with the law for partial retirement. Partial retirement is often used in the civil service or in big companies. The law enables companies and employees at the end of their working lives to choose between full time or part time occupation – the part time option is hardly engaged though. 71% of the respondents and even 82% of the 35 to 39 year-olds see an economic need to continue work after retiring. Only a minority considers the retirement as a phase of life without gainful employment. Even reaching the current lawful retirement age of 65 requires, according to a majority of the respondents, serious changes in the organisation of working structures. The harm for the health has to be reduced, the commitment has to be appreciated by superiors, the work functions have to be diversified and the weekly work time has to be reduced as well. A surprising result is the large part of respondents, who have a high priority for an improved reconcilability of occupational and private life. “Reconcilability” so far, was mainly viewed as a topic for parents with small children. **The individualisation of**

expectations and life processes has also reached the exit from the professional life. The usual relation to work also loses binding power at the end, at the same time.

As a conclusion, the surveys overview shows many convergences with the conclusions of the qualitative approach but also some contradictory conclusions or missing issues. Quite all the analysed quantitative surveys demonstrate the dominance of expressive orientations towards work. Most of the surveys, not all, also make obvious that age is not a significant and discriminating variable in the analysis of the relation to work. They also provide consistent information on the complexity of integration and the dualisation processes. Most of the surveys provide little information about relations between generations. This topic should certainly be developed in future surveys. Nevertheless, they tend to confirm that age is neither a major problem nor a determinant factor to define relations to work. Obviously, most of the surveys demonstrate more differences linked to gender than to age. However, despite significant inequalities between men and women, in quite all countries, the gender divide is not considered more explicative than the generational divide. As pointed out in the characterisation of the inventory, only a part of the surveys can give information on the dynamic dimension of work situations and trajectories.

3. Guidelines for future quantitative approaches

3.1 Summary appraisal of international survey schemes

The module on “work orientation” in the *International Social Survey Programme* is very complete. It provides information on preferences and values as well as job situation, attitudes and behaviours. The entire questionnaire could be relevant for the analysis of social patterns of relation to work.

However, there is still a room for other questions on work in an international survey. Firstly, the questions of the “Work orientation” module are very “classical”, in particular when asking for a degree of satisfaction or for rating the importance of each facet of work. Secondly, some topics are neglected in the ISSP questionnaire whereas the SPReW results suggest that these topics are key factors explaining relationship to work. For example, the ISSP questions are focused on the current job and the current preferences. Only one question deals with past experience, but it concerns the use of the skills acquired during the past experiences in the present job. Looking deeper at past preferences and past experiences would have been interesting, even if a memory bias is possible. A life course perspective, taking into account the different work experiences, the surprises and the deception could be relevant in an international survey. This life course perspective could help understanding the observed differences by ages, namely the high satisfaction and lower expectations of older people. Furthermore, the link between work and other spheres of life are touched on through a question on the time the interviewee would like to spend in different activities (paid job, household work, time with family; with friends, to relax, in leisure activities). The last round introduces further questions on this topic: would it be possible to go outside the workplace during two or three hours for family reasons? Do you have a feeling that job interferes with family life? And that family responsibility interferes with job? However, other questions on the interaction between different spheres of life are conceivable.

The *European Social Survey* initiative is particularly interesting for the SPReW project as far as it allows asking innovative questions to thousands of Europeans. Comparing with the EVS for example, one of the major interests is the possibility of mixing quite conceptual questions (how satisfied are you in your job? How important is the security of job?) with more concrete questions (do you feel stress? Do you come back tired after work?). There is a selection of questions links to the SPReW topics on page 199.

In the core questionnaire, there is no question about the relation to work.

The rotating module on “Family, Work and Well-being” of the second round may be of interest for the SPReW project. Some questions are asked about the sharing up of housework, childcare, the working time. Regarding work, some questions asked in this module are selected (page 109).

The rotating module about the “timing of life” asks questions about when the interviewee first did different things (working, leaving the parents, marriage, child, etc.). Then some questions are asked about the meaning and perception of the different stages of the life cycle: “adult age”, “middle-age” or “old age”. The interviewee also has to express perceived norms regarding the ideal age to do different things (becoming a mother, stop working, etc.).

The two modules of the third round may be interesting as well. The rotating module about the “personal and social well-being” aims understanding not only global happiness and life satisfaction, but also satisfaction in different areas of life. Working, helping other people and spending time with the family are the main areas explored in this rotating module. Furthermore, it tries to go beyond the measure of “hedonic well-being” in order to look at the “eudaimonic” well-being, that is to say a permanent wellbeing, based on the feeling of achievement. In the area of work, some questions are selected (page 109)

Even if many questions regarding the SPReW issues have been already asked, there is a room for other questions regarding the relation to work. The different modules have been focussed on specific aspects (link with well-being, or the balance between family and work).

The merit of the *European Value Survey* is first to provide a long list of characteristics of the job, whereas the other surveys provide a shorter list. More fundamentally, it allows comparing work values and values in other spheres of life. However, this possibility is not so exploited among scholars. Several drawbacks should also be noticed. The EVS does not allow comparing work values and job concrete situations regarding working conditions, wages and type of contracts for example.

3.2 Inputs from specific surveys relevant for the SPReW perspective

3.2.1 Towards a comprehensive understanding of the value of work

Understanding the meaning of work through quantitative surveys is really a hard task. Despite the quality of many surveys, at national and international levels, it appears that it is still necessary to fine-tune this approach. The different surveys analyses give some useful inputs to this discussion.

In France, the survey of CFDT (page 65) exploited by Paugam tackles the relationship to the employment status and to the job itself. It allows distinguishing the two facets of job: the

extrinsic facets and the intrinsic facets. The whole questionnaire can be relevant for the SPReW purposes. A selection of innovative questions is suggested page 66. The questionnaire “Modes de vie” (page 67) is also very complete. With this survey, the researchers have been able to construct a typology of relationship to work. The quantitative results were completed by qualitative surveys. It allows understanding the determinants of relationship to work. Indeed, the questionnaire also tackles more objective facets of work regarding the working conditions, the vocational training, the number of hours, etc. We select the most innovative questions about the appraisal of the job, the involvement in work, the relation to other spheres of life and the comparison between different generations (page 69).

In the survey “Histoires de vie”, still in France (page 71), some questions deals with the relation to work. A question is asked to active people “at present, would you say that in your life, work is: more important than everything else; is important, but as important as other things (family, personal life, social life, etc.); is quite important, but less important than other things; is not very important”. This question is interesting because it allows knowing the place of work in the life, in comparison with other spheres of life. The wording of international surveys (for example the *European Values Survey*) does not allow such direct analysis, since the question of the importance in life is asked separately for each sphere.

The originality of the Chronopost survey (page 74) relies in particular in a set of innovative questions. For example, it tries to understand the importance of the different facets of job (stability, interesting work, etc.) with different questions. Usually, in many international surveys in particular, the only question on this subject is as follow: “what is important in a job?” But we don’t know the meaning of “important” (is it for the daily life? For choosing a job?). This survey is more precise, by distinguishing the importance of the facets for the daily motivation, for the future, etc. (cf. detailed questions page 76).

Understanding the importance of the different dimensions of work is complex and cannot be tackle through direct and simple questions. In Germany, the Generation study (page 93) suggests that a strong orientation to the social dimension of work can be interpreted as counter draft to the labour market, which is shaped by competition and social fear. Relation to money is also a complex issue identified particularly in the Italian analysis. Relation to money is not reduced to an instrumental orientation towards work; the salary is also a symbolic recognition.

Crossing different modules of the ISSP seems really interesting in contexts that are facing rapid fundamental cultural changes such as in Hungary. The relation to work can only be understood through a multiple perspective that includes work situations but also cultural changes within family and gender roles.

A distinction between the relation to work and relation to employment could be fruitfully introduced in the quantitative surveys. It appears as a relevant distinction to understand the meaning of specific attitudes regarding “work” as a whole concept including both work and employment.

3.2.2 Complexity of the experience and perception of precariousness

Experience and perception of precariousness are also complex issues that require an improved approach. Precariousness of employment could be experienced differently from one generation to another, in particular because the younger generation is more used to it.

Some German surveys indicate that the labour market is experienced as source of social fear. This social fear has been disconnected from the real threat and became its own way of life (Generation study, page 93). Compared to 2002, in 2006 an increasing number of young people stated fear of losing their job and fear of the economic future (Shell survey, page 78). The policy of reforms of the younger generation is not considered as promising procedure to balance labour market inequalities. It can be spoken of a loss of belief in social policies. Still in Germany, the ISSP module on work orientation III (Allbus, page 100) shows that despite their better institutional safeguard the average and old age groups also feel threatened by unemployment.

However, relation to precariousness seems ambiguous. The IARD survey in Italy (page 140) shows that while in general young people adverse salary reduction (like diminishing salary for productive reason) and more possibility of dismissals, they seem to be in favour of more temporary work. Both with social fear some surveys also underlines a scarce activation showed by the young people performing non-standard work on searching a different job, with the risk to remain trapped in “the illusionist waiting that this flexibility can become another thing” (Censis in Italy, page 125)

The link with work satisfaction and job security is something complex too. Some surveys demonstrate an unattended high satisfaction of their own job among less stable workers for labour contractual conditions in comparison with more secured workers. The researchers are then led to assert that sometime there is an exchange on workers opinions between labour quality and stability. The most important issue of the Left Democrats survey in Italy (page 148) seems to be this high satisfaction level on their own job expressed by the more precarious workers.

3.2.3 Importance of the gender dimension of the relation to work

Even if the distinction between men and women is present in all surveys, in-depth analyses of the gender dimensions in the meaning of work and in the relation to work has still to be developed. Gender is a key variable and many surveys reveal an over-determination of the gender factor in comparison to the age factor.

The genders differ in the values orientations. Orientation for comprehensive values seems more important for girls and young women than for young men (Shell survey in Germany, page 78).

The ISSP results in Hungary (page 115) reveal particularly gender dimension of the cultural changes. Both modules on “family” and “work orientation” are have not been explored enough. Several sets of questions are very relevant for the purposes of SPReW.

3.2.4 Understanding the role of families and socio-economic environment

The role of familial structure seems to be evolving. Data from many surveys point out a changing role of familial structures. The family of origin is of high importance for youth and they stick to its structures for a long time. In contrast the number of young people not starting a family and children rises. (Shell survey in Germany, page 78)

Surveys in Italy show similar interesting features (Istat, page 128). Firstly, the young’s people trend to protract their stay in the parental family not always for works reasons, but often for

economic motives. Living with parents concerns, in Italy, 61% of young people aged 18 to 34, and a considerable part of them has a job. According to this survey, most of the times the reason for staying with parents depends from the freedom the young have in their family that makes them feel good there. Moreover, we must consider that the family gives a great economic support to their sons, as results from the fact that 61.5% of them receive some financial help by parents. The second issue is the scarce intention of young people to leave their parental family. The majority of them declare that in the next three years they are not going out from the family house. They are in a great part the younger aged 18 to 24, but also an important share of the more adult one (about 43% of those aged 35 to 39). Leaving the parental home is prevalently connected with marriage. These young people seem to think to a parental family like a place of solidarity and helps, so they are not favourable to an early exit from the family house in the younger age. Another issue is the importance of friends and acquaintances network (and family too) for youth's access into work. Although their influence declined in recent years, compared to the last Iard reports (especially that of parental family), friends and acquaintances still are the main mean used by young people for finding a job.

The supportive role of families is complex and it has diverse effects on the relation to work of young people. Still in Italy, the Almalaurea survey (that focuses on the employment of young people holding the (superior) school-leaving certificate and the degree, three years after the degree, page 135) notices that the parental family conditions influence the employment of the young people. The graduate people coming from more “favourite” families, in a special manner who have both their parents graduates, have less employment possibilities than those who have less “favourite” families. The latter, indeed, are active earlier in looking for a job, perhaps for they don't have an economic family support.

3.2.5 Including the perspective of trajectories

The perspective of trajectories is definitively an important issue as regards the results he SPReW project. The understanding of specific situations in work and specific values orientations is strongly correlated to individuals' past trajectory. The diversification of trajectories especially among the young generation, the vulnerability of young integration in work and the non-standard combinations of positions and transitions in the life course require new approaches of working situations and attitudes at work. Some surveys provide pieces of relevant information in this analytical perspective, but it consists only in fragmented information.

The TOR survey in Belgium (page 54) is an attempt to quantify the various career models, and to relativise the popularity of “nomadic” career paths.

The Istat survey in Italy (page 128) analyses social mobility that appears to be rather high between the generations, but low within the generation. In fact, the change of social class from their fathers concerns quite 60% of people aged over 18 (maybe for reason connected with the increase of their education). On the contrary, changing the social class while working is more difficult, as results from the circumstance that only 36% of people changed the class from their first job.

The precocious entry into work while they are still studying seems to reward the young graduate people towards those who begin working after their studies, since they have more stable work and higher wages (Alamalaurea survey in Italy on employment of young people

holding the (superior) school-leaving certificate and the degree, three years after the degree, page 135). This survey analyses the link between the degree's mark and work access. The degree's mark has an inverse relation to the possibility of finding a job. In fact, people who had the highest marks in their university studies have the lowest employment rate, probably for their ambitions on work are higher and prolong its search. Finally, this specific research pointed out the fact that, as time goes on, the individual chance of stable employment increases (mainly for the growth of the permanent work contracts), as it results from the growth of the stable workers in a five years time from their previous condition. Also if we can't undervalued that, in a five years time, one third of the graduate people who were working with temporary contract (subordinate and freelance) still work with these "precarious" works.

The Ilfi survey in Italy (page 143) addresses interesting topics regarding trajectories. In the results, there are some unattended issues and not much known to the sociological research. The first is the exceptionality of the entry sequence into adult life, in particular in relation to the setting up of the first conjugal union. It was pointed out, in fact, that the peculiar matter was the age decrease only in the economic growth period after the Second World War, which caused affluence and important economic resources to the family formation. The survey proved, on the contrary, that the phenomenon of the age increase for the first conjugal union is not new in the twentieth century. The second interesting result is the increase of the possibility to pass from an atypical (temporary work) to a permanent work with the age increase, but only for men. For women, indeed, the general Italian welfare conditions and the asymmetry of the roles inside the family produce fewer possibilities when their age increase. A third interesting result of this survey is the similar phenomenon of the younger people and those born at the beginning of 1900, concerning the time they spent in the so-called non-standard work. There is the only difference that "concealed work" was higher for older people, while the younger people spent much more time in temporary work.

The issues raised by Ilfi survey that seem to be innovative and important for the SPReW project are the demonstration that, in some ways, the life courses of the younger generations born in the twentieth century are more similar with their grandfathers than their fathers. It is the case of the age to form the first conjugal union that was extended for the younger people, and nowadays is similar to that of the beginning twentieth century generations. It is partially the case of the time spent in non-standard work that is longer for both younger and older generations compared with other generations. In this case the difference between the generations is, however, the typology of the atypical work: concealed work for grandfathers, temporary work for their grandsons.

Another common issue regarding trajectories that came out of some surveys is the diffuse uncertainty of their future that young people show, which, as the researchers say, "expose them to the loss of imagination of their future."

3.2.6 Developing the intergenerational approach

The intergenerational dimension is not really tackled as such in the surveys. Most of the information relates to mutual perceptions and stereotypes. The target groups are more frequently the ageing workers and sometimes the young workers, almost never the middle-aged generation. Knowledge transmission, working methods, cooperation at work, relation between experience and formal knowledge, between innovation and experience, trust

relations, competition between generations, communication models, etc. are topics that are not addressed in the existing surveys. Only pieces of information can be collected on such issues through existing quantitative surveys.

In Belgium, the survey FTU/CSC (page 61) asks a specific question to young workers on their perception of ageing workers. The Capa survey (page 51) concerns stereotypes on older workers.

The Shell survey in Germany (page 78) gives some information on the youth's image concerning the relation of the generations. On the whole young people believe that their willingness to performance will be rewarded. Only occasionally suspicions are entertained that in an ageing society older people will be in charge of influential positions and therefore make disadvantageous decisions for the young.

The Rejuvenescence survey in Portugal (page 163) provides a comparison of attributes and qualifications of two distinct age groups – those who enter and those who leave the changing labour market. This allows an evaluation of the process of rejuvenescence and ageing in the Portuguese labour context but however; however, it gives little information on the interrelations between these groups.

3.3 Suggestion of topics for future quantitative researches

As a conclusion, the existing quantitative survey schemes at the international level provide relevant pieces of information for the SPReW purposes. They also include opportunities for additional targeted modules. We also find interesting results and options in a selection of national or regional surveys. However, at the end of this overview, it appears that some important results of the qualitative approach are not tackled. This point suggests important topics that could be tackled through future quantitative approaches.

A comprehensive understanding of the meaning of work - different questions/issues:

- The research raises the hypothesis of a fragmentation of the expressive type. There is a need for a better understanding of the meaning of instrumental and expressive relation to work.
- Money does not only refer to an instrumental attitude towards work, but also has a symbolic value, as a measure of one's values, as an objective sign of recognition and esteem, as a sign of emancipation.
- Emergence of a polycentric conception of the existence and relativisation of the hegemonic value of work.
- The centrality of work for self-fulfilment and definition of one's identity can be relatively independent from the initial qualification and the content of the job.
- Understanding the relational motivation in work.
- Possible dissimilarities between the relation to work and the relation to employment.

The gender dimension of the relation to work - different questions/issues:

- Understanding the meaning of expressivity for men and women, at different life stages.

- What are the gender borders within age groups? A hypothesis is that the gender borders are blurred among the young workers.
- Contamination occurs between man and female styles and approaches to the relation to work. Some main features of this contamination of models of relation to work are: the search for a different balance between work and the other spheres of life; changes in the centrality and meaning of work depending on the different life phases; discontinuity –as opposite to the linearity of the male-bread winner path– in the work trajectory.

Specific issues for the young workers - different questions/issues:

- There is a strong linkage between work and moral issues, especially in young people. Young people do not appear as empty of values and just aimed at self-interest and fulfilment of consumerist desires, they manifest deep sense of justice, values interpersonal relations and look for coherence between work and life as far as values are concerned.
- The quest for meaningful jobs and not just stable job emerges especially from the young workers.
- Even when work is a passion, it is one of the many passions young people have in their life: life does not revolve around work, work is merely one of the ingredients –but not necessary the main one– of identity (polycentrism in young generation attitude to work and life).
- A common desire for professional fulfilment, and differentiated strategies to deal with the lack of job satisfaction.
- “Cooperative individualism” in the work activity and everyday social interactions.
- Shortening of temporal horizons.
- Valorisation of a career model that is discontinuous and diversified but secure.

The intergenerational dimension - different questions/issues:

- Homogeneity and heterogeneity within age groups. Complexification of segmentation lines generating serious intra-generational disparities in the everyday working experience. No homogenisation and unification of generations.
- Which consciousness of being a generation?
- Perception of ages at work. Age appears as an unspoken issue. Does the non-perception of age acts as a brake to social change?
- Mutual stereotypes regarding age groups.
- Age dimension in competition? Where is the competition? Within age groups? Between adjacent age groups? Between the youngest and the older employees?
- Generation effect of co-presence of people of different ages, in different phases of their life who therefore express different needs.
- Intergenerational conflict is not explicit, yet the social inequality between generations is real (instability, precariousness, insecurity versus stability in work positions and in social security benefits).
- Often insecurity is the condition that older generation attribute to young one: old people seem to fear insecurity more than young though they did not really experienced it.

- Place for cooperation and transmission. Functions, roles and status of knowledge transfer in organisations.
- Respective status of accumulated experience and formal knowledge.
- Innovation versus experience. De-valuation of experience coupled with over-valuation of unquestioned and non-negotiated forms of innovation. Each one is associated to a specific age group.
- Role of organisational climate (business cultures, age stereotypes, lack of common cross-generational experiences...).
- Uncomfortable situation of some of those who are around forty years old and are experiencing a “sandwich effect” at work - captured between the older and the younger generations.

The perspective of trajectories

- Heuristic pertinence of an approach in terms of trajectories combined with a theoretical weakening of the predictive role of the social classes for interpreting differences in attitudes, values, and experience among workers.
- Need for a dynamic analysis of the relation to work from a constructivist viewpoint, as the crystallisation of a series of social interactions, and as the conjunction of a set of scattered elements and complex, multidimensional causalities.
- Family background is relevant. To have supportive/unsupportive parents, their level of education and work status play an important role in shaping the attitude towards work, the expectations and meanings people attribute to it.
- The period of stabilisation in the work world for young generation is extending, and it develops as a process “of trial and error” in which a number of new beginnings, detours, interruptions have substituted the one way of the linear work trajectory.

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Chapter 5: European convergence and national diversity

Introduction

The aim of a cross-national comparison (WP6) is to allow a more in-depth understanding of the relation to work through generations by examining it on the background of institutional and cultural frameworks characterising the different European countries involved in the project. The underlying idea is to compare the evidence of the qualitative (chapter 3) and quantitative investigation (chapter 4) in the light of the national characteristics. Focusing on both similarities and distinctions in welfare systems, labour market regulation, educational and employment policies and industrial relations can help identifying what circumstances lead to deal more effectively with different, and often competing, needs of generations at work. The purpose is to orient well-founded recommendations to policy makers, both at local and European level.

Given the aim of this step, this chapter consists of a comparative reading of the six institutional and cultural national frameworks to underline distinctive features, strengths and weakness of the national contexts. The comparative reading focuses on the following topics: family and welfare systems; educational systems; labour market regulation and industrial relations.

This chapter is structured in three parts. The first part identifies the theoretical approach we chose to explain the differences in intergenerational changes in relation to work and the related consequences. The second part analyses distinctiveness and similarities among institutional and cultural frameworks in the six countries along the lines of the seven elements we identified as the main objects of the comparison. The third part draws some general conclusions.

1. Theoretical approaches to cross-national comparative analysis

The purpose of the SPReW research project is to highlight the *change occurring in the relation to work, through the lens of generations* and to suggest the policy orientations to promote social cohesion. Change is likely to produce either conflict or solidarity, inclusion or exclusion, inequalities or simply differences among generations. If we understand in *which institutional conditions* the impact is more positive (or less negative), we can give useful suggestions to policy makers.

Institutional and cultural frameworks consist of a multiplicity of factors:

- demographical aspects (birth rate, maternity, age of leaving the family...);
- education and training systems (trend in higher education, university degrees, vocational training...);
- economical factors (employment structure, economical trends, enterprises size, sectoral mix, private/public mix, high-tech mix);

- welfare model, role of the family and gender issue;
- youth specific issues;
- labour market regulation (flexibility, security, unemployment provisions...);
- industrial relations systems (unionisation density per age, collective bargaining coverage);
- human resource management practices in large enterprises/multinational;
- labour policies specifically targeting young people;
- ageing workforce labour policies.

In *comparative studies*, a large number of economic and social theories try to highlight differences among countries and sometimes to create clusters and typologies of countries, based on specific cultural and socio-economic indicators. Sometimes the positioning of each country in the model may help to better understand diversities and explain the different country impact on the same phenomenon.

We have a *variety of theories* that can be used to explain differences in intergenerational change in relation to work and related consequences (intergenerational conflict, solidarity, different patterns of working...):

- as for the economic model: the theory of “Variety of capitalism” (Albert, 1991) or “Differences in coordination” (Soskice, 1989), and many others;
- as for the welfare model: “Three Worlds of Welfare” (1990) and “The Social Foundations of Post-industrial Economies” (1999) by Esping Andersen;
- as for the young people labour market regulation, the theory of “Transaction costs associated with individual relations” (Marsden, 1999);
- as for perspectives of skill/deskilling: the theory of skill upgrading (Bell, 1973), and vice versa, the theory of degradation of work (Braveman, 1974);
- as for gender issue/age: according to “Life cycles theory”, age is more conditioning for women (Wajcman, 1983).

Some other *bibliographical references* on various approaches to cross-cultural analysis supported our discussion on the comparative analysis.

a) Universalist, culturalist and institutionalist approaches (Rubery & Grimshaw, 2003)

There are different types of theoretical frameworks that are used by researchers in cross-national comparative analysis. In the field of labour market and employment arrangements, Rubery and Grimshaw propose a classification of theoretical frameworks in cross-national comparative analysis. They distinguish three main theoretical frameworks and their related school of thought: universalists, culturalists and institutionalists.

The *universalists* state the general relevance of common models of social and economic organisation whatever can be the social context. These approaches consider that there is a one best way, a best practice. They consider that the differences between countries are not fundamental differences; they only reflect “objective” economic or technological differences between societies or sectors, or political/institutional barriers to implementation of the best practice.

In the *culturalist* approaches, differences in culture are used to explain differences in organisational and management forms, differences in employment policies and practices. Culture has become an important subject of interest in international business and human resource management. However, in most approaches, cultural factors are considered as given. Workers enter an organisation with their cultural characteristics. There is few dynamic approach that try to understand how cultural dimensions are build and how they evolve.

The *institutionalists* stress on the variations within a society. In this perspective, the variations among countries in organisations reflect embeddness of societal system. The set of institutional arrangements and societal structures can explain the differences between and within societies. Social and institutional arrangements are critical in structuring organisations and the labour markets. In this perspective, institutions are important, societies make choices and engage themselves particularly path of development or specific national trajectories. The social and institutional arrangements have interlocking and inseparable effects that generate a specific societal logic or *societal effect* (see below).

b) Culture and values (Hofstede, 2001)

Many researches have tried to map national characteristics that can impact on organisational forms and work arrangements. A main reference in the culturalist approach is that of Hoofstede. On the basis of four variables, he found significant differences between countries and suggested a clustering of countries. The four criteria are: *power distance*, the acceptability of an unequal distribution of power; *uncertainty avoidance*, the extent to which uncertainty is tolerated through the development of strongly codified rules; *individualist versus collectivist values*; *masculinity* (acquisition of money, high achievement, recognition) *versus femininity* (concern for people, for quality of life). One criticism to this approach is that the identification of cultural differences (in norms and values) does not in itself provide proof that these differences affect behaviour within organisations. However, the cultural perspectives explain some differences between countries and question the validity of universal theories. A main criticism of such cultural approaches is the lack of dynamic dimension. National culture is taken as a given; there is no explanation on how norms and value are evolving and, by implication, the social and the institutional dimensions are seen as static. Other criticisms argue that there is not just one set of norms and values within a society and that for an organisation; the more important is not the national stereotypical set of values but the range of norms and values of his workforce.

c) Societal effect approach (Maurice & Sorge, 2000; Maurice, 1989)

From the *societal effect perspective*, differences in organisations, labour markets and employment policies are consequences of differences in societal logics and societal trajectories. Common pressures due to globalisation do not lead in a process of convergence but in changes in societal institutions: particular forms of response will reflect particular societal logic.

The societal effect approach tries to understand how institutional characteristics and arrangements affect a societal system. The societal effect approach has been implicated in many debates, starting with “industrial society”, than new technologies, new techniques of organising, multinational companies and globalisation. The idea was to demonstrate that innovations (organisational, technological...) were not coming and transforming previously known arrangements completely and in a convergent way. Maurice is the one who elaborated the societal approach. His research questions are based on the statement that “there is a

striking difference between what is often claimed when a phenomenon is relatively novel and what emerges after it as become more widely widespread in different societies.” Within the societal approach, some researchers have also developed the dominant country theory, which states that in every era there is a dominant model/dominant country, which others try to imitate.

d) Diversity of transnational approaches (Kuhn & Weidemann, 2005)

In the study that they coordinated in order to evaluate the experiences and challenges of transnational socio-economic research projects (which were conducted under the European Union’s social science research programmes), Kuhn and Weidemann identify three different types of transnational researches:

Type A: *Transnational research as country studies*. This type of research aims to compare national practices (e.g. measures against unemployment) with a strong interest in identifying “best practice” by extending the view across national borders. Units of comparisons are national practices that are documented in “country reports”. Researchers are involved as national experts who do research in “their” own (usually native) country.

Type B: *Transnational research as thematic studies across countries*. This type of research is driven by the interest to better understand a social phenomenon, including its moderating factors, by including a wider range of social practices. Units of comparison are deducted from hypotheses and knowledge about a social phenomenon and may rest on national categories as well as on theoretical concepts. As a result, comparisons may be based on both “national reports” and “thematic studies”. Researchers are involved as national experts, doing research in “their” own country, but also performing crosscutting thematic analyses, sometimes in sub-teams.

Type C: *Transnational research as research beyond national categories*. This type of research aims to better understand a social phenomenon by choosing sub- or meta-national units for comparison. Units of comparison are deducted according to the state of knowledge about a social phenomenon, avoiding a priori national categories. Researchers perform crosscutting thematic analyses, avoiding roles as “national experts”.

e) SPReW orientation

In describing the country contexts and designing a comparison perspective, we chose to stay inside the same school of thought, adopting, in flexible terms, a neo-institutionalist approach – as Rubery and Grimshaw (2003) propose – and just refer to other theories while introducing the cross-country report.

For consequence, the comparison between the six countries institutional and cultural context is drawn on by means of an institutional approach to cross-cultural analysis. Some main aspects qualify this theoretical framework. Firstly *the approach focuses on diversities* rather than on convergence among the contexts and read them on the background of institutions regarded as an essential part of the social and economic organisation that may account for diversities among societies. According to the institutional view, the prerogatives of different countries can be explained through *different set of institutions and social structures in which the specific organisation is embedded*. Labour market is a perfect example of a socially and institutionally constructed market as organisation of family, welfare support, structure to supply female labour result in shaping its dynamics. In this perspective, institutions results in

conditions for specific national trajectories and also specific societal logic. According to this view, contingency and embeddedness are two key features of societal organisation and trends.

Using this theoretical stance we looked at the different institutional contexts in order to highlight their specificity and to gain a better understanding of the fieldwork results, particularly, of their similarities and differences.

2. Similarities and differences among the six countries institutional and cultural contexts

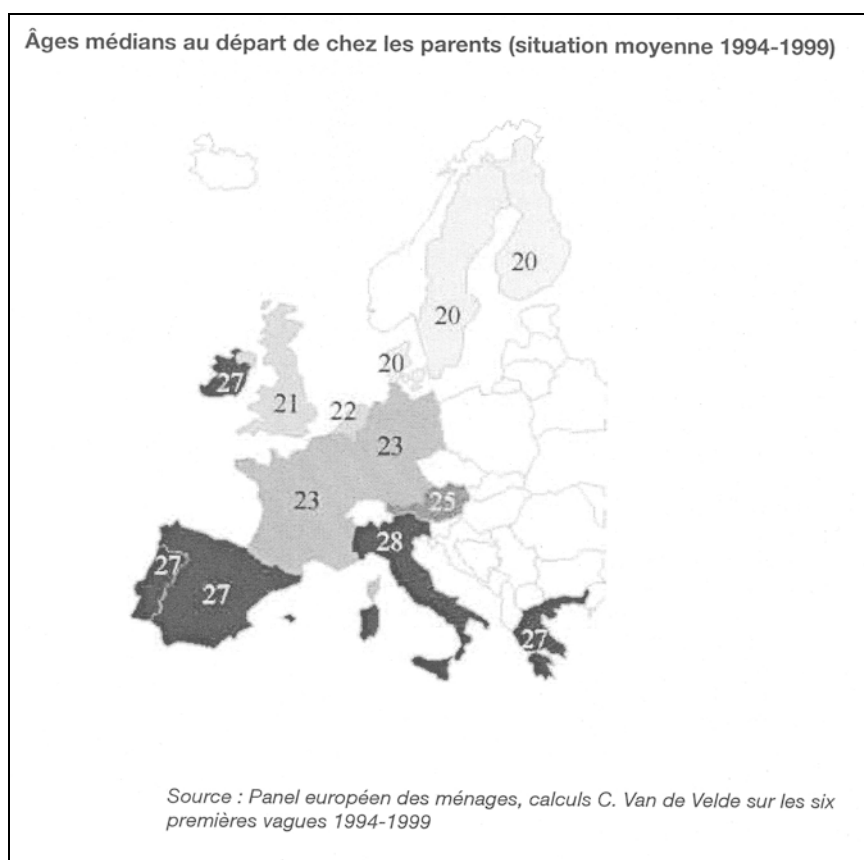
2.1 Family and welfare systems

2.1.1 Family

The European Union is facing a substantial challenge due to population ageing, which is the result of low fertility rates and increasing life expectancy. The population is expected to become much older, with a marked change in the age structure of both the overall and working-age. From the point of view of welfare systems and family change this results in the need for a definition of institutional targets that meet the different needs of different generational groups and the same individuals in the difference phases of a working life that tends to be less linear and increasingly longer.

Concerning the family structure some different variables are involved. As for the marital status, the distribution of marital status of men and women, by age group shows that Belgium, Germany and Hungary have a similar population structure concerning marital status, while Italy and Portugal are similar for the very low rate of divorce due to institutional and cultural reasons yet Portugal shows a higher marital status for all the generation. France has instead a much higher proportion than the other five countries of single men and women in the two age groups 25-49 and 50-59, but it is in doubt whether it is due to more widespread informal cohabitation or to preference for living alone.

Concerning family roles, we can observe a gap between Southern and Continental countries and a specificity in very traditional gender relation in Hungary. Countries like Italy and Portugal that share the most traditional view of family, are the countries where young people stay longer with their parents (Italy particularly). Hungary seems characterised by very traditional gender roles in the family (and also by a hard competition between men and women on the labour market: the gender gap is wider in young generations). As for Germany, the welfare system still focuses on the nuclear family: particularly, financial transfer also for schooling create dependency of young people on their parents, yet de-cohabitation age is still lower than in Southern countries (IT 28, PT 27). France and Belgium have profiles more similar to Northern European countries.

Table I - Median age at which young people live their parents

2.1.2 Welfare

Referring to the prerogatives of institutional arrangements and policy orientations in European countries, Esping-Andersen (1990) distinguishes three welfare models: liberal, social – democratic and conservative. The liberal welfare state - England, the USA, Australia and New Zealand – in which the trade-off between market and politics is “won” by the market and the state has mainly the task of guaranteeing civil liberties more than of answering to social claims. The conservative model characterises Belgium, Germany, along with France, Italy and the Netherlands, it has the form of a corporatist welfare states that intervenes more vigorously, but in most cases temporarily and for state policy reasons. Conservative welfare states are greatly oriented to wage work and social insurance. Social rights are bound to work and status, while entitlement to benefits is based on contributions and the resulting property rights. Normal employer-employee relationships and a stable family are the basis of this model. Yet, due to some specificity of the Southern countries such as Italy, Portugal, Spain, a further model, the “Mediterranean,” has been introduced to identify a welfare mostly based on: transferring benefit to breadwinner workers and not to other subjects; on intrafamilial solidarity rather than on services. The last model is the social democratic type of welfare state (Sweden, Norway, Denmark) in which more social rights are secured by the central government yet not depending on work and status, but as an outcome of citizenship. Financing is provided for from the national budget, the civil service sector performs many services and also plays a major role with regard to labour market policy.

Table II - Social protection expenditures - 2000

	DK (The highest)	EU-15	BE	DE	FR	IT	PT
Per capita in EUR							
	9384	6155	6477	7291	6954	5082	2553
Per capita in purchasing power standards							
	7754	6155	6458	7025	6748	5943	3675
Social protection benefits by groups of functions (as a percentage of total benefits)							
Old ages and survivors' benefits	38.0	46.4	43.8	42.2	44.0	63.4	45.6
Sickness, healthcare and disability	32.2	35.4	33.8	36.1	34.9	31.0	43.6
Unemployment	10.5	6.3	11.9	8.4	6.9	1.7	3.8
Family and children	13.1	8.2	9.1	10.6	9.6	3.8	5.5

Source: Eurostat - European system of integrated social protection statistics (Esspros)

In fact differences among countries welfare states tend to crosscut the three models and further distinctions within the same type emerge, as the table on welfare expenditures among countries involved in the SPREW project shows. The six countries show different inclinations in securing benefit and social insurance reflect the different models: Belgium, France and Germany are included into the conservative model; while Italy and Portugal share the Mediterranean welfare model. We lack data to identify Hungary welfare profile.

Looking at the distribution of the expenditures among the six countries, we can notice that Italy represents an extreme case: with 63% of the expenditure targeted to older people it is the only country beyond the European average (46.4%), by contrast it has very low expenditure for unemployment, family and children. In fact, except Belgium, none of the six countries provides allowance for youth unemployment. Anyway the Italian and Portuguese have the lowest expenditures for unemployed people, most of whom being indeed the younger. Still concerning family, Germany has higher transfers, France and Belgium have both high services and transfers, while Italy and Portugal—more family oriented—have the lowest services. France shows a more balanced distribution of expenditure among the different targets groups.

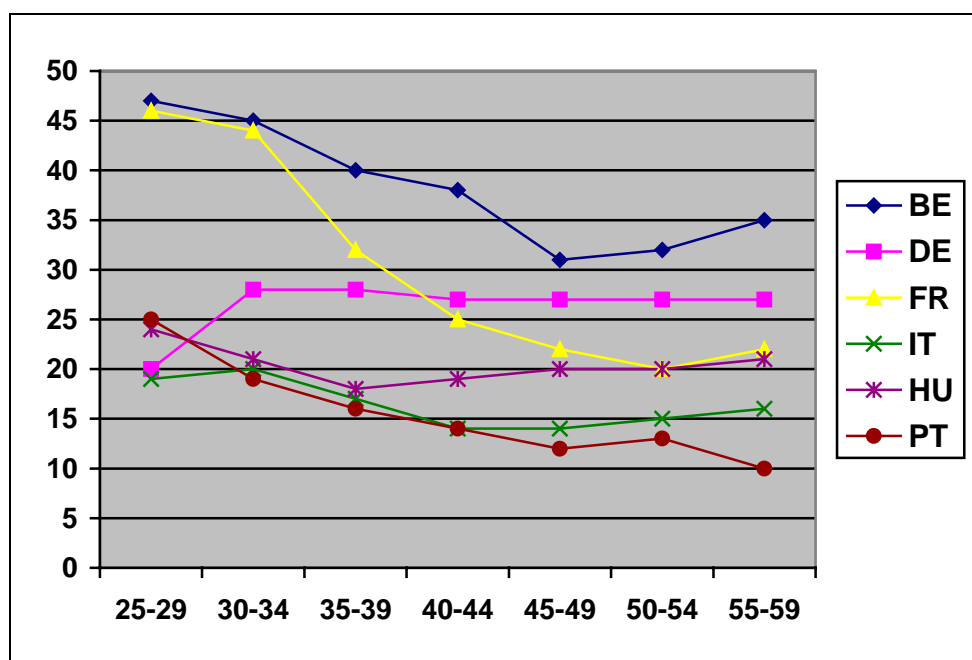
A possible outcome of the welfare system distribution may be that unbalance in the welfare distribution together with deregulation of the labour market risk to weaken the “pact” between generations, yet not necessary the intra-family pact: where unbalance is higher just intra-family solidarity can work (Italy).

2.2 Education

The last decades have been characterised by a considerable increase in the participation in tertiary education for all the European countries, at the same time, since 1999 Europe engaged in the so called “Bologna process” which aims at the establishment of a European area of higher education where mobility of people, transparency and recognition of qualification,

quality and European dimension in higher education, as well as attractiveness of European institutions for third country students are fostered. Speaking of the increase in the participation to high education, the number of students enrolled in tertiary education more than doubled between 1995 and 2004 in Greece, Hungary, Iceland and Poland, and increased by more than 50% in the Czech Republic, Korea, Mexico, Sweden and Turkey. Despite the general positive trend, differences among countries persist, as proved by the following table, and in some cases they are the result of the different impact of European policies on the particular institutional and cultural context.

Table III - Percentage of population that has completed tertiary education (isced 5-6) / age, 2006



Source: Eurostat - Labour force survey

As for the six countries, according to the table, Germany presents a stable distribution of tertiary education among all age groups, while Belgium and France show a sharp increase in the percentage of people who completed tertiary education moving from the older age group to the younger one. Despite the improvement in their education performance, the percentage that completed tertiary education grows as we move from the older to the younger age group. Italy and Portugal have the lowest percentage of population that completed tertiary education. Italy shows particularly low performance among the group aged 25-29. Yet this weak performance of Italy be in part explained by the only recent introduction of the reform of high education, which constitutes an incentive to complete the undergraduate curricula since it reduced from 4/5 to 3 the years needed to obtain an undergraduate degree (laurea) was introduced only recently: as it is observed, graduation rate tend to be higher in countries where the programmes have a shorter duration (OECD, Education at Glance, 2007).

Concerning the link between employment rate and education, despite in the table above we can observe a general trend of higher education coupled with high employment rates, the situation is so diversified depending on the age group and on country we are referring to that we cannot talk of a direct correlation between employment rate and level of education.

Particularly, looking at the age groups, we can observe that over 25 years there is a strict connection between higher education and higher employment rate, especially for male population. But as for the medium and low education, the situation appears more diversified depending on countries: in Italy the medium-graduated men show the lower employment rate, even lower than for the Italian women in the same age group and educational level: 58.8% vs. 66.8%. While in other countries the rate decreases over age, in Italy and Portugal it increases for men (IT: 88.2%, PT: 84.8%) and keeps stable for women (IT: 66.9%, PT: 79.0%). Low-graduated employment rates is variable among countries: among men, the lowest in Hungary, the highest in Portugal and Italy; among women, the lowest in Italy, Hungary and Belgium. Here too, there is a deep gender gap. Low-skilled women's employment rate is below 50%, except in Portugal, France and Germany (beyond 40%).

For young people between 20-25 the situation is again quite heterogeneous. Germany and Italy are the two opposite extremes: Germany has a very high employment rate for high graduated young people (four out of five work), Italy has a very low one (one out of five). Anyway in countries, as France, that has a faster growth in tertiary attainment, as shown in table I, we have a close to zero or negative growth in unemployment

For low and medium-skilled young people, the entry into the labour market seems easier in Germany than in other countries. In several countries, employment rates of young low-graduated is better than for medium-graduated. In Portugal, employment rates of low and medium-graduated is generally higher than in other countries, mainly over 25 years.

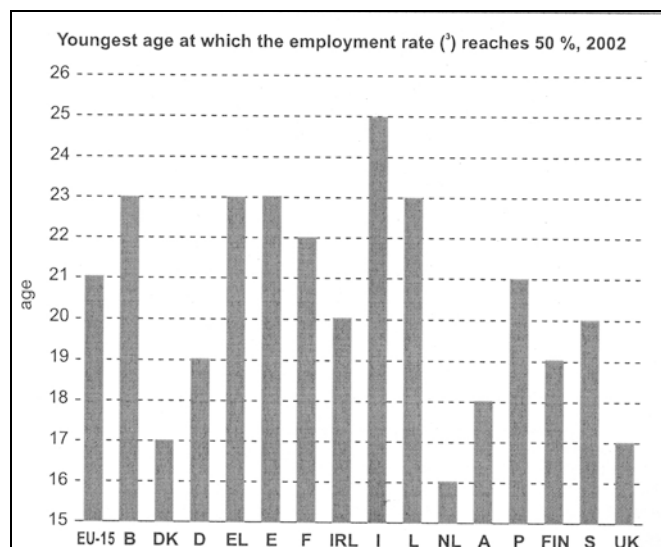
Differences among countries also relate to internationalisation of the tertiary education, while places like German and France are major destinations of international students, differently from Italy, Portugal and Belgium.

Concerning the relation between socio-economic status and attainment in higher education, large differences among countries emerge: in France, Germany and Portugal students from a family that completed higher education are twice as likely to be in higher education too, Italy occupies a mid-way position.

From education to work

The transition from education to work is a sensitive issue as all over Europe. Despite the fact that young people enter labour market with higher qualifications, and that their population is decreasing, the young newcomers meet the main difficulties in finding good quality jobs. The main problem for young people is work instability and less favourable economical conditions. Between 2000 and 2006, there was a slight decrease of youth employment (from 22.6 to 22 millions) and unemployment (from 5 millions to 4.6 millions), and a decrease of the young people activity rate. The general trend of young people performance in the labour market is positive: employment and participation decreased mainly because of the extension of the education path, while unemployment decreased.

A good indicator of the transition to work takes place in different countries is the youngest age at which the employment rate reaches 50%. The following table shows that the two extremes are Germany, where at the age of 19 one young person out of two works and Italy where the same percentage is reached at 25 (it is the "lowest performance in Europe).

Table IV - Employment rate and age

Further important differences among countries are linked to the education and training system structure, which does or does not support the transition from education to work, or more in general allows stronger or weaker integration between education and work.

2.3 Labour market regulation and industrial relations

2.3.1 Labour market regulation

In Europe young people between 25 and 29 show higher activity rate, while the activity rate of young between 15 - 25 decreased since 2000, from 45.9% to 44%. This difference is read as the effect of youth aged 15-25 longer permanence in education. As a matter of fact, young people between 25 and 29 are “significantly more affected by unemployment” (Eurostat, 2007). Still, notwithstanding the scarcity of the resources - in 2006 young people were the 18.5% of EU-27 working-age population - the quality of their job condition is lower.

Italy shows common trends in young workers conditions, but the phenomena are more stressed. Actually, Italy has a youth aged 19-24 unemployment rate of 21.6% (19.1% men, 25.3% women) — four points over the European average — which still constitutes an improvement compared to the past: in 2000 young people unemployed rate was 31.1% (27.6% men and 35.4% women). As for the young people aged 25-29 unemployment rate decreased from 17.5% of 2000 to 11.6% of 2006. As we can see, the decrease in the unemployment rate in Italy is more marked in youth age 15-24, but the percentage of youth 15-24 not in education is 10 points lower in our country than in the rest of Europe (about 17% versus 27%). It is important to underline that one year after leaving school the unemployed rate of youth aged 15-24 is among the highest in Europe. In Italy it is still higher than in the rest of Europe the percentage of early school leavers (about 25% versus 15%) who have the lower secondary education and are not attending further education or training (Eurostat, 2007). Furthermore, Italy has the highest percentage of school leavers aged 15-35 who are affected by job mismatch: 47% of young people work outside the field of their education.

Belgium as well is characterised by a quite low activity rate of young workers in comparison with other European Countries. In 2005, young workers (15-24 years) registered an employment rate of 26.6%. Unemployment was high among young people between 15 and 24 (21.5% compared to 7.6% for the 25-49 age group and 5.3% for the 50-64 age group), and particularly for youth with a low level of education (29.6% for young people having only lower secondary education, compared to 19.4% for those having completed upper secondary education and 16.4% for young people with a higher education degree). In 2004, 39384 young people aged less than 25 years were unemployed for more than one year. This figure represents 51.4% of job seekers under 25 and includes slightly more women (51.5%) than men (INS, 2006). Regional differences concerning youth employment are significant. The employment rate of the workers aged 15-24 years is 24% in the Walloon Region, only 20.8% in the Region of Brussels-Capital and 35.1% in the Flemish Region. A comparison between unemployment rates reveals more contrasted situations: 32% in the Walloon Region, 32.2% in the Region of Brussels-Capital and only 12% in the Flemish Region. The youth insertion in employment is quite fast for a majority of young people. Between 15 and 29 years, students are progressively replaced by workers, particularly after 25 years. However, according to the Belgian Labour force survey (INS, 2006), 8% of the young people aged 15-19 years are neither students nor employed (this group represented only 3% in 1995). 19% of the young people aged 20-29 years are in the same situation. It concerns, in the same proportions, unskilled young people and qualified young people. 24% of the young people are always looking for a job, one year after they leaved school. 10% are not active. Moreover, many observers show that the way young people enter the labour market has a great influence on their future trajectory (OECD, 2007).

In Germany, in comparison to other countries, young persons at the beginning of their working life traditionally profit from the dual vocational training system and are more rarely affected by unemployment than their peers in other countries. The German labour market has lost this lead. In 2005 the unemployment rate among young persons in Germany scarcely differs from that of the comparative countries in the euro zone (Deutsche Bundesbank, 2007). At the same time the employment rate of young persons in Germany dropped between 1995 and 2005. (Deutsche Bundesbank, 2007)

In Hungary as a result of the shrinking of the labour market after the change of the regime (as many as 1.5 million jobs were cut in the course of a couple of years), unemployment became massive throughout the country. Most affected by this on the one hand were the oldest segment of the population in active age, which was closest to retirement, and the youngest one on the other hand, which only entered the labour market or were about to enter it. The former was forced to leave the labour market sooner, while the latter had to postpone entry into it. While prior to the regime change almost every school-leaver was able to get a job, in the beginning of the nineties unemployment rate was 27-33% in the age group 15-19 and 14-17% in the case of 20-24 year old. Unemployment remains one of the youth's main problems even today.

For older workers in general for all countries, employment rate starts decreasing for this age group, but there are some gender differences and country differences, particularly the rate is lower in Belgium and Italy and the difference between man and women is less important in France and Hungary.

As for Europe general trends, notwithstanding the recent increase in older people employment (a rise of 7 points for people aged 55-64, compared to an increase of 2.3 points for the whole

working – age population) it is argued that too many workers leave the market at early age, considering the longer life expectancy and the negative impact of this exit on the welfare state (the average retirement age is 65). From this perspective Italy is less an exception that one may expect. Though, if the standard retirement age in Italy is 65 and early retirement at present does not go beyond 57, the system has always been characterised by measures facilitating the earlier retirement in the public sector and encouraging it as social buffer, during restructuring and downsizing processes in the large industrial groups.

Also for people aged 55-64 employment rate in Italy is about 10 points below the European average (32% versus 42%). Their activity rate is among the lowest in Europe (35% versus 50%), which can be partly explained with the low participation of women aged 55-64, and with the relatively early age of retirement. As a matter of fact Italy is a sort of extreme case of the European general trend with regards to the women aged 55-65 employment rate that is very low (21%). This phenomenon is probably also linked to the specific feature of the welfare model that still requires the contributions of grannies for the childcare.

It is not surprising that age discrimination in Italy is not a high priority given the protection targeting older workers both while employed and when retired. Older workers are the most extensively represented by collective bargaining and by institutional arrangements, and they are the group who is impacted less in case of economical crisis (Eiro, 2000). Moreover recent labour reforms aimed to reduce the traditional rigidity of the labour market while they changed the entry system, did not touch at all the exit one, keeping all the traditional protection of workers against dismissal.

In Germany, at the end of their working life employees are exposed to higher risks than at middle age. The employment rate of older workers (55 to 64 years of age) is very low, i.e. 39.2% of the resident population (2004), while the OECD average was 50.9% (Funk, Seyda, 2006). The comparison with Sweden and New Zealand, which attained rates of over 70% in 2005, shows a considerable lag (Thode, 2006). The unemployment rate is stable as compared to 1995 at a level of 12% and thus significantly higher than the comparative figure of 1.5% (Deutsche Bundesbank, 2007). Both in comparison to the OECD and the EU-15 countries Germany displayed the highest unemployment rate for persons between 55 and 64 in 2005 (Dietz, Walwei, 2007).

In Belgium in 2005, the activity rate of older people was one of the lowest in Europe (28% of the population aged 55-64). It corresponds to respectively 12% (for men) and 16% (for women) below the OECD average rate. Moreover, the employment rate of women aged 50-64 is nearly twice below the employment rate of men. At least, the unemployment rate among people aged 50-64 is very low: that means that more than 75% of the jobless old workers are not available anymore for employment. In Belgium, the legal age of retirement is fixed at 65 years, yet as in the case of Italy the phenomenon of older workers low activity rate is strictly linked to the chance for old workers to receive a complementary income and becoming inactive before the age of retirement. Such dispositions explain the low rate of activity of the aged workers in Belgium and the Federal government is presently considering their reform. Whereas the effects of aging are still to come, Belgium – like many other industrialised countries – is facing serious problems in financing its social security system. Due to demographical reasons, the Flemish Region will be primary concerned by this issue.

In France the activity rate of older workers is as well low as in Italy and Belgium (in fact Germany and Portugal appear to be the only exceptions). Here the gradual rise in the duration

of retirement premiums to 40 years in the private sector (1993) has not led to any increase in retirement age, as it is showed by table III. The large majority of persons reaching 60 over the last ten years finished their studies before they were 20, which enabled them if they had paid their premiums continuously, to retire on the full rate at 60. In addition, 154,000 of them benefited in 2004 from the possibility, available under pension legislation, of leaving work between 56 and 59.

Portugal is characterised by the second higher activity rate for older workers, although the early retirement pension is lowest among the six European countries (55%), there is a percentage of active population in the older age group of 62.7% versus the 43.1% of France.

Some overall remarks can be draw in the specificity of the six countries concerning the employment in different age groups looking at the tables below on the activity rate and exit age. As we underlines the differences in the activity rate among the six countries of the SPReW project are linked to institutional contexts. In the age group 15-24, the country differences in activity rates are biased by the differences in length of studies and mainly by the differences in student jobs: the activity rate is high in countries where students often combine part-time or occasional paid work with their studies.

Table V - Activity rates of men and women, by age groups (1996-2006)

	Gender	Year	BE	DE	FR	IT	HU	PT
Age group 15-24	Men	2006	37.4%	52.9%	42.2%	37.8%	30.1%	46.6%
		1996	36.7%	53.6%	37.9%	43.2%	39.6%	50.9%
	Women	2006	31.9%	47.6%	34.6%	26.9%	23.4%	38.7%
		1996	30.8%	47.1%	32.7%	33.7%	29.6%	44.3%
Age group 25-54	Men	2006	91.9%	93.8%	94.2%	91.3%	86.5%	92.9%
		1996	92.4%	93.0%	95.2%	90.3%	85.7%	93.1%
	Women	2006	77.0%	81.4%	81.7%	64.3%	72.9%	82.7%
		1996	68.5%	73.9%	77.8%	54.1%	68.2%	73.7%
Age group 55-64	Men	2006	42.7%	64.0%	43.1%	45.0%	43.1%	62.7%
		1996	33.4%	54.6%	36.6%	45.7%	28.9%	64.6%
	Women	2006	24.6%	46.6%	38.0%	22.5%	28.2%	45.1%
		1996	12.9%	33.3%	27.7%	15.2%	10.7%	36.0%

Source: LFS EUROSTAT

In the age group 25-54, all countries are characterised by a gender gap in activity rates: the activity rate of women is much lower than men, and particularly low in Italy. In Hungary, the activity rate of men is lower than in all other countries.

The age group 55-64 reveals large discrepancies among countries. The activity rate of men is low (about 40-45%), except in Germany and Portugal (over 60%). The activity rate of women is still lower, differing from a factor 3 between Belgium and Hungary on the one hand, Germany and Portugal on the other hand.

The decrease in the participation on the labour market among young people between 15-24 is linked to the longer education paths, the difference is especially evident in Italy where the

recent introduction of the reform of higher education shorted the undergraduate degrees from 4/5 years to 3 providing incentive to stay in education long enough to graduate. As for the increase of active population in the age group 45-64, the data are quite homogeneous among the six countries of the SPReW project, due to a general European policy aimed at extending the permanence in the labour market.

Table VI - Average age of exit from the labour force

		BE	DE	FR	IT	HU	PT
Total	2005-2006	60.6	61.9	58.9	60.2	59.8	63.1
	2000-2001	56.8	60.6	58.1	59.8	57.6	61.9
Men	2005-2006	61.6	62.1	58.7	60.5	61.2	62.4
	2000-2001	57.8	60.9	58.2	59.9	58.4	62.3
Women	2005-2006	59.6	61.6	59.1	60.0	58.7	63.8
	2000-2001	55.9	60.4	58.0	59.8	57.0	61.6

Source: LFS EUROSTAT

As the table above shows, the average age of exit is close to 60, except in Portugal where men and women stay longer on the labour market. Concerning the age when retirement is entitlement,

Table VII - Age of entitlement to early retirement pension, 2006

BE	DE	FR	IT	HU	PT
58	63	56	57	varies	55

Source: Our elaboration on LFS EUROSTAT

Despite the debate on the need to increase the retirement age, among the OECD countries Portugal is the only case in which has a significantly higher actual exit age (63.1) despite the early retirement would be allowed since age 55. The second higher actual exit age is in Germany (61.9). By contrast the other countries have earlier average age of exit which confirms that among the reason for low employment rates of older people in Europe there are early retirement schemes, together with social security benefits and disability benefits, used by both employees and employers as exit routes from the workplace (Employment in Europe, 2007).

Flexible working

The data of the Labour Force Survey provided interesting insight into the relation between flexible work and age, particularly flexible work appears specially linked to extreme age groups. Generally speaking flexible work (part time, temporary work, atypical work) increased during the past ten years.

Concerning temporary work, its share among young people is particularly important in Germany, France, Portugal and Italy, less in Hungary. This is due to different reasons, from the frequent seasonal work in Italy and Portugal, thought the frequent use of short-term contracts in Germany and France, to the high proportion of young people in interim work in Belgium. It is important to underline that temporary employment account for 50% of young people employment in the two countries where young people employment rate is higher than

the average, Germany and Portugal. In Portugal, Italy and France, temporary work results still important in the mid-age group, especially for women.

Part time is unequally distributed among countries and among age groups. It is high in Belgium, Germany and France and very low in Italy and Hungary. It mainly concerns women, especially in the mid-age and older group, in Belgium and Germany, while it is higher for younger women in France, Italy, Portugal. In the latter countries part time seems more linked to precariousness. In Belgium and Germany where institutional arrangements allow (or constrained) older workers to reduce their working time, part time increased among older men in last ten years. In general, between 1996 and 2006 part time increased in all the six countries but France and Portugal. In Hungary it does not constitute a relevant phenomenon of the labour market.

Concerning distribution of atypical working time (shift work and week end work), the proportion of older workers is lower than of other age groups for all forms of atypical working time and in all countries. In Belgium and France, the most service-based economy among the six countries of the SPReW project, there has been a sharp decrease in shift work.

2.3.2 Industrial relations

Trade union density rates, which in the 1970s increased in most developed industrial economies, are now declining, according to a recent analysis. At the same time, union membership levels are **particularly low among young workers**, while a greater proportion of union members currently consists of older and retired workers.

In a study on unionisation in 12 of the EU15 Member States (excluding Portugal, Greece and Luxembourg), union membership resulted rising by 6.8% between 1970 and 2003, while in the same period union density declined by 11.5%. Different trends can be explained by the fact that union membership includes also non-working members. Since union density rate can be considered the best indicator for evaluating union strength and influence and workers appreciation of union policies, these data suggest that the position of unions is actually potentially weaker than what might be ascertained by looking at membership figures alone. Consequently, although the union density rate is twice as high in Europe than it is in the United States, the study notes that these rates “may be expected to converge”. It tentatively suggests that there are “structural, cyclical and institutional factors at work” that have contributed to the decline in union density (Visser, 2006).

Factors which have contributed to a reduction in union recruitment and strength in the most European countries, include: international competition with increasing globalisation; rise of service sector employment; slower growth rates combined with a decline in government employment through privatisation; rates of long-term unemployment; use of flexible employment contracts; lower inflation in conjunction with tighter monetary policies. However, legal rules, labour market institutions and other specific institutional factors are connected with higher levels of union density. For example, in some countries – among which Belgium - union involvement in the administration of unemployment insurance contributed to an increase in union density and membership rates. Thus, the accepted presence of unions at the workplace – as for our project, it is the case of Italy and Germany but not, for example, of France - the coordinated nationwide bargaining and the presence of tripartite consultation may also correlate positively with union density.

As seen in the table below, a relevant union density decline affects three on four partner countries (Belgium gets ahead for involvement in insurance administration). We do not have data for Portugal and Hungary.

Table VIII - Trend in union gross* density. Four of our partner countries (%)

* including non-active members

	Belgium	France	Germany	Italy
1975	51,9	21,7	34,6	48,0
1997	52,9	9,9	27,1	36,8

Source: Ebbinghaus and Visser, 2000

Latter Visser's study concludes that one of the most important factor – together with gender – is age: in general, **European unions currently mainly consist of older members** and a sizeable proportion of the reported membership of European trade unions is located outside the employed dependent labour force: some 17.2% of members are retired from the labour market. With regard to young workers, the study shows a decline in union density among these workers. However, the data do not provide enough evidence to determine whether this decline is related to changes in the labour market – such as the growth in flexible and temporary work among young workers, which makes it more difficult for unions to organise these workers – or if it reflects a lower demand for unionisation among younger employees. Either way, however, the data point to union membership being more focused on older than younger workers.

Another study focusing on a European country outside our partnership (Great-Britain), examines union membership profiles over time by age cohort and concludes that successive age cohorts have steadily declining probabilities of being union members (more clear for male cohorts) and that the relationship between age and union participation is due in large part to the changing labour market experiences of cohorts born in later periods (Disney, Golsing, 1998).

3. Concluding remarks

Cultural and institutional contexts have a relevant impact on at least two aspects that are related to the **issue of intergenerational relations at work**:

- The *social construction of generations* (and their specific features).
- The *character of the relations among generations*, i.e. the balance of power among them, the potential of conflict or of solidarity, which they hide.

The first aspect considers the relevance of **institutional factors** like the education system, the family, the labour market regulation, the welfare state model, the type of capitalism in **drawing the boundaries among generations**.

From this point of view, for example, we can observe that almost everywhere in Europe a major protection of labour in the second half of the twentieth century and the maximum of the development of welfare systems in the same period – which consolidated a generation of highly protected, strong and collectively represented labour force - have probably been the

origin, after the world petrol crises, the welfare state financial crises and the consequent end of Keynesian policies all around Europe, of the coming of a new, more exposed to unemployment generation of workers at the beginning of the eighties (the so-called X Generation).

Similarly, the increasingly higher participation of women to the labour market in the same period was the reason of a sharp generational transition from a one-career generation to the dual-career generation, with different priorities, aims and needs.

More recently, the necessity of welfare systems to pay pension provisions to a more and more large population rather than spend money in other social directions, together with the impact of the globalisation on Western economies and the increasing preference for flexible labour markets of most European governments, are producing a generation of more precarious, less collectively represented, less socially protected workers (shall we call them the Y Generation?).

The second aspect - the influence of social institutions specifically on the **relations among generations** – is more close to our project purpose. Although the influence, with few differences, has probably been the more or less the same all over Europe, we may have more suggestions for the results of our research considering each country separately. Only in a comparative way, in fact, we can explore specific cultural and social diversities of each environment and the different impact they are producing in the balance of power among generations in the domain of work: job security, quality of working life, wage, career, etc. This evidence will allow us first to highlight at which conditions social conflict among the generations – or just simple tensions at workplace – might potentially arise and, secondly, to better understand which institutional environment and policies can, on the contrary, foster a greater solidarity and social cohesion among different age workers.

From this point of view, in each country, indicators to be taken into consideration and policies which can be considered favourable to a good balance between generations and fostering the best generational cohesion are:

- demography trends and policies aimed at keeping *a balanced birth rate over time*, in order to maintain a right equilibrium between the State expenditure for pensions and the social security contribution coming from employed workers (while actual longer life expectancy and low birth rates are changing the old-age dependency ratio and threatening the generational justice towards younger generation);
- employment trends and labour market policies aimed at keeping *a stable activity rate among age cohorts*, both through a balanced flexibility in entries and exits (to prevent the dualisation of the labour market) and incentives aimed at hindering the market trend to prefer central-age more productive workers or at confronting company strategies aimed at dismissal of the more expensive older workers;
- structure of the education system and policies aimed at a better *transition from school to the labour market* for young workers, at increasing the *employability* of the whole workers or at facing *skill obsolescence* of older workers (since all these factors contribute to an equilibrated composition of skill competences among workers of different age);
- dimension and composition of welfare expenditure and policies aimed at a balanced distribution of provisions – both money transfers and services – addressing the *different*

life cycle needs: youth unemployment and transition to work, reconciling work and family commitments, supporting layoffs and reduced income, etc.

Yet, also **cultural aspects** are likely to produce a relevant impact on the relations among generations. First of all, the *organisation of the family and its role in the economy*: household management, cohabitation, caring of family members, distribution of employment opportunities, internal redistribution of income:

- a tradition of centrality of the family in the economy, together with poor welfare provisions to young people, compel the families to prolong cohabitation and financial support to their young members (by consequence, both economic autonomy and marriage and procreation time are delayed)
- a culture of centrality of the family in the care-giving, together with little public or market services for families, orient older women workers to renounce to paid work for taking care of their old parents and of their grandchildren

Secondly, *different gender roles in the family and in the parenthood*: they have important consequences, for example on the middle-age female participation in the labour market, on the gender and age distribution of part time jobs, on the company management of career path.

Among other social and institutional factors, one of the most relevant is *industrial relations institutions*: collective bargaining coverage, union membership, trade union presence at the workplace, trade union influence on public opinion:

- high union membership among old workers is likely to condition union policies and collective bargaining towards the maintaining of older workers benefits at workplace (secure employment, seniority rules) and generous social protection, especially the state expenditure for pensions.
- union involvement in the unemployment allowance administration is likely to promote union joining also among young workers.

Given this framework of analysis, we can try to interpret the situation in our countries and also to give a kind of **“measure of the risk” for the social cohesion** coming from possible future conflict among generations.

From the analysis of the different national institutional contexts, major unbalances in the power of the three generations on the labour market resulted:

- In countries where a political economy oriented to liberalisation is prevailing, the *middle generation* (and particularly men) – which is the most productive - is going to be the preferred one by employers. Referring to Albert’s analysis of the variety of capitalism (1991), US and UK – but none of our partners countries – should have the higher probability of this kind of unbalance. Anyway, the increasing reduction of State intervention in the labour market (the so-called “deregulation”) may arise this risk – towards the other generations, of course – also in some of our countries, especially Italy, Portugal and Hungary. In a more creeping way, also in the others.
- Anyway, *mid generation women with family commitments* are especially at risk in those countries where both money transfers and services to families are poor (Italy and Portugal). Whereas in other countries, like Germany and to some extent also France,

where relevant transfers to families are provided but public childcare is still scarce, 30-50 years-old women are often compelled to part time working.

- *Younger workers* are likely to be particularly disadvantaged in those countries, where:
 - the state expenditure is more favourable to pensions and/or the unemployment expenditure – which can be considered a proxy of the financial support to younger workers – is particularly low: among our countries, this is especially the case of Italy and of Portugal;
 - during the nineties some flexibilisation of hiring, or an overall deregulation of labour market, has been introduced, which had the consequence of the increase of precarious job especially among youth: this is more or less the case of all our countries, except Germany;
 - the union density is particularly higher in the elder age cohorts (which can be argued by the progressive lowering of unionisation over time), as in Germany and Italy but less in Belgium (where young people still join unions) and in France (where unions are traditionally less strong than elsewhere in Europe, so they have less incentives to protect the only group of older workers). No union data available for Portugal and Hungary.
- By contrast, *younger workers* enjoy more *advantages* in those countries where:
 - the educational and vocational systems – and especially the transition from school to work – are better coordinated: this is the case, first of all of Germany, followed by France and Belgium.
 - youth unemployment allowance is provided: the only country among ours is Belgium that looks as the most supportive one towards the young generation.
- The situation of *older workers* can be observed by two different points of view:
 - as average, at present they don't look particularly at risk in our countries, given the persisting early retirement provisions in most of them (Hungary, Germany, Italy, Belgium; whereas Portugal recently entered a new perspective). So far, this policy succeeded in compensating the loss of skill and related productivity of old workers (together with the promoting youth employment). While, from now on, it is not going to be acceptable both for Lisbon employment rate targets and for the increasing demand of continuing to work coming from old workers and retired people.
 - from an individual point of view, old workers are more at risk of job losses and income reduction in those countries where the natural erosion of their skills is less balanced by continuing vocational training programmes. Among our partners countries, Italy, Portugal and Hungary show the lowest share of participation of 55-64 years old workers in further education in Europe: around 4% vs. the 43% of Sweden (Eurostat, 2005).
- Yet, *future old workers* – the middle generation of nowadays – are likely to be more disadvantaged than the present old generation everywhere, because they will experience the raising of retirement age with its obligations. Anyway, they are expected to be luckier in countries with a more balanced demographical trend and a higher younger employment.
- In the end, the *role of the family* in the re-distribution of the social protection through the substitution of the “external” solidarity among generations with an “internal” one, is well

known. Looking at some of our countries – like Italy and Portugal – where a balanced social re-distribution is still lacking, we can just say that it works. Even in containing the potential conflict among younger and older people. Nevertheless, the price is difficult to be measured!

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Chapter 6:

Overview and appraisal of relevant policy practices

The chapter six is based on the analysis of a collection of policy practices in the field of youth, employment and ageing policies that have an intergenerational perspective and that can be learning experiences (WP5). The purpose of this research task is to support the transition between research results and policymaking. This overview of policy practices and orientations has been made at the national and the European levels.

1. Intergenerational and generational issues through the collection of good practices: general overview

The analyses conducted so far by the national partners following a qualitative approach have underlined a series of elements, which characterise the intergenerational relations at work. These elements include both aspects of cooperation and positive interaction between generations and, less often, aspects of tension.

The same elements of cooperation and tensions have been kept into consideration also in this phase of the research. The practices individuated at national, local and company level often respond to the necessity to find an answer to some of the questions raised during the qualitative analysis, where, beside the individuation of the main characteristics and issues affecting the intergenerational relations at work, it has also been possible to draw some possible positive solutions to those issues. This constitutes a confirmation of the learning potential of such a collection, in the view of a research conducted in the perspective of concrete policymaking.

The research of good (policy) practices at national level has been characterised by a series of findings, which may lead to general considerations.

On the one hand, a general attention to **demographic and generational issues** connected to the working life has emerged. Institutional and private actors, as well as organisations, both at private, national or international level, consider age management as an important issue. The national reports and collections of good practices underlines in particular that, in the last years, almost all the Governments, facing the demographic change, have settled several policy initiatives towards the increasing of occupational, economic and social integration as well from the age point of view. These processes, most of the time descending from policy frameworks set at European level (declined through the Lisbon strategy, the European Employment Strategy, Guidelines for Employment, but not only), in certain cases, and even if not always directly, tackle generational issues connected to the relation to work.

Nevertheless, even the most general interventions have to take into account a high degree of **fragmentation** of the labour market and as well as of the working society. The outcomes of the research of good practices carried out at national level reflect this fragmentation and its influence on the drawing of possible solutions to occupational and social issues under the generational point of view. In fact, most of the practices individuated appear as mostly

disconnected from the intergenerational perspective, and tend to consider age management policies mainly from the standpoint of one age group.

Another aspect of fragmentation is revisable with regards to the gender perspective, whereas specific initiatives only take into consideration women employability and the particular conditions of the female working population.

As a matter of fact, in consequence of this deep fragmentation, in almost all the countries and both at national, local and company level, it has been much easier to identify good practices which are separately addressed to specific age/gender groups and their particular conditions with respect to the labour market. On the contrary, policies and other initiatives concerning at the same time different working generations and genders and, in particular, both the younger and the elderly workers have been more difficult to individuate, due to an objective minority of intergenerational practices with respects to the ones targeted to specific age/gender groups.

Moreover, from the analysis of the national reports on good practices, it is possible to say that the high level of fragmentation not only makes difficult to find common solutions in order to manage relations among different generations and genders at work. The engaged interventions, proposed in the view of such a high level of differentiation, might risk to produce perverse effects, more favourable for one generation, but with consequent disadvantages and growing level of segregation for other generational or gender groups. Stigmatisation of age groups appears more and more as a threat both for social cohesion and for efficiency at the work place. This conclusion therefore supports the necessity to increase, where possible, intergenerational approaches which take into account several interests at the same time, in an integration perspective.

The abovementioned remarks emerge quite clearly from the national reports, which have been provided by the partners of the project. The fragmentation of the labour market as well as of the society in general in almost all the countries imposes policy makers to address specific initiatives to age groups. Problems regarding **young population** and their difficulties in entering and staying in the labour market are perceived as particularly sensitive issues. Most European countries have developed dedicated programs to support youth employment and action plans that “incorporate many different strategies and initiatives to increase employment, to reduce unemployment, to increase skills and qualifications, to raise the participation of young people in vocational training, and to improve the relation between knowledge and the skills needed by the economy”.

These strategies represent congruent answers to a sense of precariousness and insecurity towards employment, which commonly affects younger generations, as, clearly emerged in Belgium, France and Italy.

In France, the research of good practices has underlined two facets of the problems affecting young generations: on the one hand, the insertion of students in the labour market, connected to the fear of diploma depreciation; on the other hand, the recuperation of disadvantaged young people, who may have known school failure and poor family background, who are trapped in a vicious circle of unemployment and dead-end jobs.

In Italy, the policy approach realised by the central State towards the young generations related problems is more recent. The reasons are revisable in the characteristics of the Italian Welfare Regime, where the role for the family is of crucial importance. The family generally

supports for a long time their children to find a job, and offers financial and psychological support to the unemployed – whereas the unemployment benefit provided by the welfare system not always exists, or are very low. The State usually intervened only when the family was in strong difficulties. This meant that the subjects that this Welfare regime has strongly protected and still protects was and is the adult worker head of a family (mostly a man, the typical male breadwinner model of family) rather than the young people which found in their families the principal supporters. Generally, the realisation of some interventions have been delegated to the family and to other social actors; if some public intervention and policy measures have been planned, they have been realised more at local level by the Municipality. The new attention paid to the problems of the young generations is due to a general and structural change of the labour market, which has been made more flexible by a series of legislative interventions. This flexibility, not always accompanied to the necessary aspects of “security”, nowadays affects the young generations in terms of precariousness and instability of the employment. In the last years, also thanks to the European policy frameworks, huge national reforms started supporting specifically young people: for example, facilitating access of young people to employment, and also trying to stabilise the employment (for example trying to convert more and more non standard contracts into stable and standard contracts); developing and making good use of the skills and training of young people (support education for young people with study grant and scholarships); trying to foster creativity and the consumption of cultural merit goods of the young people (tax deductions for creative entrepreneurial activities for people under 35 years).

In Hungary, which is still dealing with a long period transition due to the change from the communism to the capitalist economy, employment policies targeting young workers are of key importance, given the unemployment rate among younger people. As a result of the shrinking of the labour market after the change of the regime (as many as 1.5 million jobs were cut in the course of a couple of years), unemployment became massive throughout the country. Most affected by this on the one hand were the oldest segment of the population in active age, which was closest to retirement, and the youngest one on the other hand, which only entered the labour market or were about to enter it. The former was forced to leave the labour market sooner, while the latter had to postpone entry into it. While prior to the regime change almost every school-leaver was able to get a job, in the beginning of the nineties unemployment rate was 27-33% in the age group 15-19 and 14-17% in the case of 20-24 year olds. Unemployment remains one of the youth’s main problems even today. As much as 42.7% of the inactive segments of the age group 15-29 have never had a permanent job. The proportion with regard to the inactive population, which does not pursue studies in the same age group is 45.1%. In general, young people are badly paid and only with difficulty do they find jobs that suit their qualification, except for an exceptional managerial and IT stratum. The largest number of employment policies targeted to young generations can be found on national level. There are fewer, but still quite a lot on regional level, connected to the main issues, especially for the Eastern part of the country, to create jobs and retaining skilled workforce, dissuading them to move to the most advantaged areas of the country, the West and the region of Budapest, attractive because of the potential to provide high level education and employability in the public administrations. In general, company level initiatives, not only regarding youth policies, are instead very few and based on a case-by-case attitude. Every company has its own way to approach age management, which is dealt directly by the owner or the manager in charge, on a personal basis, and only few multinational companies are introducing a change of mentality bringing up principles of corporate governance, for

example with regards to young female working population with family care duties (young children).

In Portugal, employment policies targeted to younger workers derive from National Plan for Employment 2005/2008 (PNE), which founds a set of good policy practices – in line with the EU recommendations at national, local/regional and enterprise levels. One of the goals consists in a renewed commitment in the creation of jobs for young people and decrease of young people's unemployment, especially the one of graduates. In this scope, one of the measures reported regards a national programme which proposes the insertion of young graduates for the innovation of SME's. In turn, concerning young people, the Proposal for the Reform of the Active Employment Policies, assumes that to increase youth employment and combat youth unemployment the strategy should include: 1) Initial qualification of young citizens; 2) Exemption of the Unique Social Tax (TSU) payment in the contracting of young workers; 3) Fiscal incentives to the creation of jobs for young people; 4) Support for contracting young people; and 5) Professional traineeships.

In 2005 the unemployment rate among young persons in Germany scarcely differs from that of the comparative countries in the euro zone, but at the same time, the employment rate of young persons dropped between 1995 and 2005. In comparison to other countries, young persons at the beginning of their working life in Germany are more rarely affected by unemployment than their peers in other countries. They traditionally profit from the dual vocational training system, based on the main features of training and practical work experience in a company (lasting no longer than three and not less than two years) combined with school education in vocational schools funded and controlled by the government. Company-based training represents the core of the dual vocational training system in Germany. The dual system was subject to great pressure due to the tremendous structural transformation after the turn of the millennium. Companies cut back their supply of traineeships enormously. Especially young men with low-level school-leaving certificates are at a disadvantage. The government took the place of the companies and greatly expanded the so-called transition system, with programmes that differ according to federal state. A common feature of all of them is that they are intended to improve labour market opportunities, but not to pave the way to a certificate of qualification. They include measures offered by the Federal Employment Agency that are aimed at eliminating the deficits of the applicants for a traineeship; vocational schools that do not provide a vocational training certificate; year of vocational preparation or year of basic vocational training". The state-organised system merely provides training without any market value.

The national partners have found several practices regarding de-taxed labour of young inexperienced people, for example, or providing not well-regulated initial professional trainings for students, which do aim, in their intentions, at facilitating the entrance of young people in the labour market providing them with first professional experiences. The problem with this kind of practices, however, is that sometimes they do not actually produce virtuous results. They sometimes also offer companies the possibility to use low paid workforce, easy to replace at the end of the favourable period, or introduce young students in a mixed scheme of work and study which constitute neither a genuine occupational situation nor a profitable period of education. The risk is to feed a vicious circle of passage from a "facilitated" form of not genuine employment to another, which rarely is actually useful to the young, and on the contrary stigmatises their situation of precariousness and exploitation.

With regards to **policies related to older workers**, the national reports again stress that they are treated separately and independently. In particular, in Italy they are approached at national level as a consequence of the structural changes of the labour market of the last years. Whereas a high level of protection was accorded to adult workers in function of their role of main source of financial income for the family, from the Seventieth of last century on, with the first oil shocks and the widening process of globalisation, many transformation occurred at different level: economic, social, cultural, technological, political, demographic. So after the Eighties of the last century until today, the “adult workers just over 40 years old”, even with high level of education, have easily been victims of redundancies. Nowadays, they are part of a “social vulnerable area”, and, once expelled, they experience strong difficulties in re-entering the labour market, unless they are support by specific policy practices. From the Eighties of last centuries a strong policy intervention to support unemployed people or long term unemployed and a first awaken of the public opinion how to combat the ageing of the population took place. The policies combating the process of the ageing workforce are increasing at all the levels although they have still a long way to go before becoming a top issue of the Italian political agenda. The not only national policies to support older workers and combating the ageing of the work force can be synthesised in the following four policy area: employment services have build an *integrated system of different policies* – guidance, counselling, vocational training, accompaniment – for the re-insertion in the labour market; many different type of working contracts incentive the re-entering in the labour market of older workers such as the divided work, the new part-time, the new apprenticeship, the insertion contract, the work project; the creation of professional funds and funds for life long learning help to value the professional competences of older workers and to avoid the obsolescence of their skills and abilities and to support their employability.

In Hungary, as far as older workers are concerned, the company level definitely fails. Although there are several methods to promote older workers’ employment and to make use of their potential, companies most often do not use them. Introducing telework could be one way; however, only 5% of the companies provide this option. Another practices quite developed is part time work, among private and public sector companies with more than 50 employees: 65% of them employed part-time workers. This kind of work organisation is particularly preferred in education and public health, where the number of older employees is higher; 15% of the employees aged over 45 years in these sectors are employed in part-time jobs. The problem of employment of the age group of around 60 or beyond is even more complex. As early retirement was an escape route for many groups trying to avoid unemployment looming as a result of the economic changes following the regime change, therefore the proportion of the population on disability pension increased significantly, resulting in a very high rate of inactive population. However, the government is planning to undertake a reform of the disability pension system and to modify the official retirement age, limiting and regulating early retirement options. However, a lower retirement age was not experienced as a problem for most groups of Hungarian society as they did feel the desire to continue working after retiring. Except for some highly educated groups, who work partly or mainly for self-fulfilment, those who continue to work beyond retirement age are in a real need of the income gained from it. Poverty or at least the need for additional incomes, made many older people work. In many cases they found jobs outside their original occupation or profession with their knowledge not being up-to-date any more. They filled the bulk of positions like night guards, ticket collectors, museum guards etc. This has significantly changed by now as those activities are carried out by younger people specifically trained for these positions. Nonetheless, the need for the extra income above pension has remained; the

positions waiting for these people are disappearing. The Government plans to cover these needs with a reform of the pension system.

In Germany, at the end of their working life employees are also exposed to higher risks than at middle age. The employment rate of older workers (55 to 64 years of age) is very low, 39.2% of the resident population (2004). At the end of working life, early retirement currently plays a declining, though still a major role.

In Portugal, in the recent Proposal for the Reform of the Active Employment Policies of August 2007, one of the considered as “fundamental lines” is “to increase employment and combat unemployment of older workers”, in accordance with the National Strategy for Active Ageing. In this proposal the measures to be implemented are: the exemption of the Unique Social Tax (TSU) payment in the contracting of elderly workers; the support for contracting of elderly workers (to be created); a Programme of Senior Volunteering. If during the Eighties and Nineties, the way to deal with the young generations’ unemployment was to facilitate or even encourage the anticipation of retirement (in the view of those perverse effects mentioned above, favourable only for one age group, but disadvantaging another), currently the employment policies are changing. Employment of older workers has started to be seen as an important variable in the sustainability of Social Security, for instance, but it is mostly absent in the media and good practices related with the older generations were not easy to find.

At the legislative level, a Resolution of the Ministry Council nº141/2006 stated that to reinforce the incentives to active ageing through a new national strategy for active ageing and adopting flexible mechanisms for the retirement age (65 years) is a main objective. Moreover a Basic Law of Social Security (law nº4/2007, 16 January) declares that the law can consider measures of flexibility of the legal retirement age to have the right to pensions through mechanisms of reduction, or introduction of bonus, in the case of anticipation or postponement of legal retirement. And there will be a reinforcement of incentives to active ageing through a new national strategy for active ageing and the implantation of flexibility in the retirement age favouring long contributing careers. In October 2006 an agreement, obtained by the Economic and Social Council - the permanent commission of Social Agreement, took place between the government and social partners, around these new directives about retirement, the calculations of pensions and the protections of long contributing careers. But all of these changes are too recent.

Some remarks regarding the **gender perspective** as emerged by the collection of good practices at national level. As mentioned above, it seems that the fragmentation affecting the approach towards generations is present also with regards to the gender perspective. It seems that younger workers, as well as older ones, are not gendered. The relation to work and gender are not treated in connection, whatever can be the policy level. The gender topic has been developed along several directives both at European level and at national level in terms of equality policies, but a real integration with intergenerational issues is still not developed. All policy practices dedicated to women are in the area of conciliation, with no real correlation to any other topics such as relation to work, generations or others. Women problems in their patterns towards employment, and consequent policies or practices, do not usually consider the generational aspect, while are still mainly only connected to childcare and family roles. With regards to this aspect, revisable in every country, the Hungarian introduction to the collection of good practices contains outstanding information. A salient outcome of our research in WP3 was the hostility expressed towards those young, self-realising young women who try to build a professional career. The perception of the group of

young women underwent significant changes, as new career paths opened up for them, in the face of the mentality of Hungarian society which continues to hold that women's real task is at home. Hungarian society is very family-friendly on the level of rhetoric. Family represents a very important value. Women managers, therefore, are continuously confronted with the expectation, which they try to live up to: starting a family and having children. However, they receive very little support for this. This is the reason why several good practices regarding policies, which help women in reconciling their careers with their family lives, have been laid a special emphasis.

2. Good practices focusing on the intergenerational dimension: analytical overview

Being the above an overall overview of policy practices which have been highlighted in some of the national reports, it has to be underlined here that in the SPReW perspective, it was important to focus on the dynamics of relations between generations and to point out innovative practices that take into account more than one generation together. So, within the broad range of practices dedicated to specific age groups (mostly youth and aged workers, seldom the mid-generation), we have tried to gather examples tackling interactions between generations and that therefore regard more than one of them together.

As already mentioned above, it was not an easy task to identify concrete examples that focus on the intergenerational dimension. This difficulty not only reflects the high level of fragmentation of the working society, it also feeds the impression is that this is an emerging issue. *Awareness activities are taking place, at the public and private level, but, however, this awareness building is not yet highly concretised in projects.* Thinking generations together seems to be a new topic, both in the public and private spheres.

This impression is clearly stated in the Belgian collection of good practices. Confirmation to this view are available in almost all the other reports, where the partners have faced the lack of good practices addressed not only to the younger rather than only to the older workers. Italy reports that in the last years more and more attention has been paid to dialogue between generations and mutual support, in view of fostering the entrance of young inexperienced people in the labour market, the maintenance at work of older employees, and their exit from the labour market with a social recognition. But these practices are still not much developed, and, as in most of the other countries, they mostly focus on the field of the transmission of knowledge. Intergenerational relations do not represent a topic discussed nowadays in Hungary; therefore only practices related to one generational group per time are available.

From the methodological point of view, we have gathered those practices, which are mostly related to the intergenerational dimensions, and we divided them in two different clusters.

The first cluster files the practices, which are targeted to more than one generation at the same time. It is remarkable that the mutual exchange always regards young and old generations: the mid-generation does not take part to these practices. This cluster has been sub-divided into four sub-groups, in which the good practices have been classified on the basis of the issues tackled. The first one regards practices of **awareness building** as a first step in order to face and solve the problems that may arise from the confrontation of different

age groups at work. In the other three sub-groups we have classified the good practices which are more related to organising dialogue and cooperation among generations, in the view of fostering **knowledge transmission, job integration and good relations** between generations at work.

The second cluster, always in the same view, gathers those practices, which are mostly targeted, to the older workers, but always in the view of the intergenerational collaboration.

We also have to specify here that **the absence of a classification of practices on young generation is due to the fact that all the policy practices dedicated specifically to young workers do not really present any intergenerational perspective**. Moreover, some practices dedicated to the integration of young workers have been rejected because they were in contradiction with the SPReW results. This point will be developed under point 7.

Beside the classification we have introduced above, based on the aims pursuit under an intergenerational perspective, the policy practices reported in the following pages can be analytically described also with regards to their “internal” characteristics, which regard their initiators, level of implementation, extension and target groups to which they are specifically addressed.

Some of the policy practices have been **directly implemented at company level**. This common ground of implementation might function as a possible criterion to analytically describe their contents. The policy practices briefly schematised in the table below have had a *direct impact within the companies*, as have been *directly developed within them*. Such a schematisation is important in order to be aware of what actually happens within the companies, which are the main intergenerational features and issues to be faced and the paths and approaches in order to deal with them.

The “**identity**” of the **initiator** is an important element to analyse. In some cases, as it is possible to see in the table below, the initiator is the company itself (as for *Accor* in Belgium and *Somague Engineering* in Portugal). This means that in certain cases the company managements have realised that intergenerational related matters are part of the everyday life of the company, and have to be dealt with in order to improve internal relations, as well as productivity. This kind of initiatives actually represents the expression of a need arising directly within the company. Nevertheless this need is not only expressed by a direct and lonely involvement of the company managements. In fact, beside the direct initiatives of single companies, the other practices developed at company level have been initiated following a collaboration between social partners, by employees’ and employers’ organisations acting together, which have found a common ground of action. The Italian practice (*Mec - Lab*) lies on a sectoral collective agreement, involving companies at a very local level. In other cases, company level practices have been set and implemented with the help and the coordination of “third” bodies constituted by managements and employees associations, as it is the case for the two German examples. The French practice, finally, have been initiated by a public agency which has found the collaboration of a huge industrial group.

With regards to the contents and the aims of the practices strictly targeted at company level, one of the practices focuses on the management of intergenerational issues in general, with the aim of improving the relations at work (*Accor*). For the other practices, it seems that the main ground on which the intergenerational relations at work may more specifically be dealt

with consist in the one regarding knowledge, skills and competences. Within this ground, there is a polarisation around two main features.

The first one is represented by age management: in fact, three of the practices listed below have been filed within the second cluster. They deal with the necessity to face the progressive ageing of the workforce: the idea behind consists in making a resource out of it, in terms of evaluation of competencies and capabilities, valorisation of the experience and integration with the new younger generations. Even if these practices mainly regard the older generations of workers, the intergenerational perspective clearly arises in the view of their correct and proactive collocation within the company, considered as a whole, in which integration and cohesion are fundamental. And in fact, it is true that, in some cases, the practices directly involve older workers, whose competencies have to be assessed, updated and valorised, who need to be trained, motivated and promoted in a view of proactive exploitation of their experience. But in other cases the direct beneficiaries of the practices are the company managers, who really need to learn and develop new approaches in dealing with the generational features connected to the workforce ageing, who will have to match the different characteristics and exigencies of the different age groups present in the company.

The second common ground on which good practices have been developed at company level is represented by the *transfer of knowledge*. These practices represent a step further with respect to the assessment and the evaluation of the competencies of the older workers, and a possible fruitful way to utilise them in relation to other age groups. Diagnosis of the knowledge transmission processes, individuation of good practices, exchange of knowledge from more experts to young, evaluation of the competences of the other group are the main instruments which have been used in order to develop a facet of the intergenerational relations at work which seems to be one of the most prolific.

Policy practices directly implemented at company level

Policy practice	Type of initiator	Level of implementation	Extension	Target group	Aim	Tools
<i>Accor: “Intergenerational diversity: we can really do better together”</i> (BE)	Private initiative (Accor Belgian HR department)	Company level (Accor Company)	(National) Belgium	Managers and middle managers of the group	Improving relations at work (high age polarisation)	Information sessions, training programmes, publications concerning intergenerational diversity
<i>“Mec - Lab” – new horizons for workers over 45 years old in the mechanical industry of Bologna</i> (IT)	Social partners in mechanical industry sector	Company level (mechanical industry sector)	Local (Bologna, centre Italy)	50 older workers over 45 years old both men and women	Support workers over 45 to maintain, valorise and ameliorate skills and competencies	Personalised and specific vocational training courses, based on skill analysis

<i>Somague Engineering</i> (PT)	Private initiative (Somague, private national company, construction sector)	Company level (Somague Engineering)	National (Portugal)	Workers over 45, but also young workers to coach	Valorisation and exploitation of age and experience	Age management related practices: coaching sessions; performance evaluation; training; top management involvement and belief
<i>A firm optimising knowledge transmission in the Lorraine region</i> (FR)	Lorraine's ARACT, regional unit of the National Agency for the improvement of working condition	Company level (European leading group in steel products)	Regional (company located in Lorraine)	350 employees of which 60% aged 50 and over, two thirds leaving the company in 2010, and new young workers	Knowledge transmission between generations	Diagnosis of the knowledge transmission processes; individuation of good practices; their implementation
<i>Transfer of knowledge into a non-profit organisation</i> (DE)	Management and employees associations, as well as the employees of the "Lebenshilfe Bremen e.V."	Organisation level	Regional	450 employees, women ca. 60%, men 40%, both young and old	Knowledge transmission between generations	Mentoring; exchange of knowledge from more experts to young; evaluation of the competence of the other group
<i>AQUA_mark: Good policy practices for companies and employees in small- and middle-class businesses</i> (DE)	Agency mark GmbH in the city of Hagen, an official, operational and individual advisory service from demography consultants, executives from health insurances, Chambers of craft and employees associations	Company level: small- and middle-class companies (250 employees)	Regional (Mark region)	Management	Age management, implementation and systematisation of staff-development strategies (focus on both sexes employees over 40 with no training in the last 10 years threatened by unemployment)	Assistance to management; advisory services on life-long learning and personnel development;

Two more practices involving enterprises have been individuated. Another angle under which it is possible to classify the policy practices individuated by the national partners of SPReW, consist in considering the **type of initiator**. The characteristic of the examples reported in the

following table is indeed the particular type of initiator, which is *technically private* for both of them. Nevertheless, the *non-profit organisations* in question, for their characteristics, their components and their aims, can be collocated at an intermediate level between the public and the private ones. As for some of the practices schematised above, also the ones below represent the outcome of fruitful collaboration among different subjects, with several and often complementary specificities. The approach privileged by these initiators, which are mixed and various, follows a more transversal perspective. The practices have a wider ground of implementation, involving more companies and more levels at the same time – study, research, projections, potential. The aim is common, promoting entrepreneurship, in the general view of fostering job integration. But if in the above-mentioned practices the main issue was represented by age management, and the attention was mainly focused on the older generation, in those below the problem of youth employment seems to be tackled here with a certain degree of specificity. The entrepreneurial initiatives are meant to be targeted to young people, even with the support and the guidance of the older.

Policy practice	Type of initiator	Level of implementation	Extension	Target group	Aim	Tools
<i>Project AUDAX - support and promote the entrepreneur spirit mainly in family companies</i> (PT)	AUDAX, non-profit association of academics with strong connection with the entrepreneurial sphere, many of them integrated in important companies	Scientific, academic and entrepreneurial communities	National	Entrepreneurs of any age and individuals involved familiar businesses.	Study, support and promote the entrepreneur spirit, the systematic innovation and the sustainable self-employment and entrepreneurship	Promotion of research, training, consultancy
<i>Wallonie entrepreneur</i> (BE)	Wallonie Entreprendre, a non-profit organisation launched by entrepreneurs willing to contribute to the economic redeployment of the Walloon Region. Supported by the Walloon Union of Enterprises.	Potential “companies”	Regional (Wallonie)	Young entrepreneurs with a defined project of investment	Support emerging projects with an economic and a job creation potential; support knowledge transfer and sponsoring activities between established companies and young entrepreneurs with a defined project	Evaluation and sponsoring of projects; integration of emerging companies in local economic networks

Other practices implemented at company level provide a “*mixed*” type of initiator. In the ones briefly schematised in the table below, the initiatives can mainly be defined as *public*. Nevertheless, the participation of bodies and subjects that are considered as private in certain countries, gives the measure of the “contamination”, which is a positive factor, by the private

initiative, arising mainly from the employers' and entrepreneurs' side. Regional public institutions, provincial public authorities, Municipalities, Chambers of commerce, tourism, agriculture and industry, educational institutes (schools and universities) collaborate with employers' organisations, associations of enterprises, private consultancies, single industrial companies. The practices are implemented at regional level, showing a high degree of connection between the collocation of the actors involved and the territory. With regards to the type of initiators, a remarkable element is represented by the absence of the employees' organisations, whose intervention, if there has been any, has not been reported.

The first two Italian practices are designed to the clear aim to promote self-employment and the creation of new entrepreneurial activities, aimed at the integration of young people in the labour market, in the view to create youth employment opportunities. The intergenerational component is given by the method, which represents also an aim itself, they follow to pursuit this goal: the transfer of knowledge, experience and know-how, which is again a recurrent positive theme, from the older experienced entrepreneurs. The project "*Mothers-daughters*" also presents, *unicum* in this collection, the gender component.

The two following practices are more aimed at gathering and sharing positive experiences in the implementation of age management strategies, to retain older workers and to profit of their experience as "teachers" of the younger generations.

Policy practice	Type of initiator	Level of implementation	Extension	Target group	Aim	Tools
<i>"Mothers-daughters" mentoring in Tuscany for the start up of new female entrepreneurship</i> (IT)	Tuscany Region, Sector of Social Responsibility and Equal Opportunities, and Unioncamere Toscana, employers' organisation	"Potential" company	Regional (Tuscany, Centre Italy)	10 mother-daughter couples: one expert mother-entrepreneur the "mentor" and one young starting daughter the "mentee"	Support of the public and private institutions for the start up of a female enterprise; Knowledge transfer at entrepreneurial level	Mentoring, training, counseling about entrepreneurship
<i>"Hand" project – traditional and ancient professions for new employability in Basilicata Project "MANO"</i> (IT)	Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Artisan, Agriculture of Potenza, private consultancy companies, public Municipalities, Chamber of Tourism	Company	Regional (13 Local authorities of the Basilicata Region, Southern Italy).	30 employed young people in precarious jobs and/or unemployed ; older workers with an traditional – ancient profession near to be become pensioners or near to	Raise employability both of the young and the older workforce expelled from the labour market picking up and recognising, redeveloping and giving new social recognition to the traditional professions.	Inter-generational exchange and transfer of ancient professions

				close their activity	professions.	
<i>Vuurtoren45+</i> (BE)	Network of enterprises and public organisation: Chamber of Commerce of West Flanders, local member of VOKA (association of the Flemish employers' organisations); support by provincial public authorities; University of Leuven	Company	Regional (Bruges and the coastal region)	Employers and employees, enterprises; human resources managers and training managers in companies within 30 partner companies or organisations	Gather and share positive experiences in the implementation of retention policies for ageing workers (Cluster 2)	Training packages for employers and employees, at the enterprise level; virtual network (online forum) and a physical network (periodic meetings) of concerned workers and stakeholders.
<i>Knowledge pool 50+</i> (BE)	Chamber of Commerce of West Flanders AND co-funded by ESF; Provincial industrial high school; Randstad Interim; VOKA (Flemish federation of enterprises); Four industrial companies: Proviron, Bekaert, Thermote & Vanhalst, Deceuninck Plastics)	Company	Regional and local (West Flanders)	50+ experienced workers, volunteers,	Find out how aged workers can be better integrated in work, both in a profitable way for the companies and in a satisfying way for themselves. Give older employees an active role in the transfer of explicit and implicit knowledge by giving them a role of "experts" and trainers	Long term training in knowledge transfer; making older employees become "experts" and trainers for their younger colleagues

Other policy practices individuated have been initiated and promoted by public bodies and institutions, intended in the widest sense (i.e. public organisations, foundations, research institutes). The table below offers an overview of the policy practices, which have been promoted at different levels, which have in common the **public intervention** as a starting point.

The first two practices listed have in common the aim of raising awareness on intergenerational issues. The interesting feature here is represented by the level of implementation, and the target groups. On the one hand, in the Belgian case, the aim is pursuit

involving different social actors as well as researchers and practitioners, in order to open a wide-open debate on the topic. In the case of Hungary, the target is represented by companies of any size and sector, which are therefore involved in an awareness process that they did not initiate but in which they play a key role.

Also the other practices involve the company level as a ground of implementation. The extension, mostly national, seems to be, in these cases, the feature, which also differentiates the public initiatives from the above-mentioned ones. The aims are mixed again: the promotion of new approaches to age management is present; the question of job integration, in particular the creation of job for young workers, profiting of the experience of the older ones, is treated as well. A new approach is adopted by the Hungarian awareness raising policy practice, which considers the issue of the reconciliation of work and family life, which mostly affects the young generation. The concern for low skilled young facing the difficulty to enter and stay the labour market is also expressed by the public initiators.

Policy practice	Type of initiator	Level of implementation	Extension	Target group	Aim	Tools
<i>Ageing population and intergenerational relations</i> (Be)	Public initiative (King Baudouin Foundation, independent public benefit foundation)	National	National (Belgium)	Researchers, practitioners, actors from the civil society, social actors, public authorities, citizens	Support a better understanding of intergenerational issues through stimulation of public debate	Thematic seminars; financial support of a think-tank, studies and projects aimed at better intergenerational relations (i.e. cooperation, reciprocity, mutual knowledge)
<i>Family Friendly Workplace award</i> (HU)	Public initiative (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)	Company	National (Hungary)	All employers in Hungary, regardless their size or field of operation	Collect information about and evaluate policies to promote reconciliation of work and family, existing on a company level across the country	Awarding companies which promote family-friendly working environment
<i>The mentoring scheme of young people towards employment</i> (FR)	Public initiative (Network of local agencies (missions locales, ML) and the advisory, information and	National, regional, company	National (France)	Young low skilled below 25, facing discriminations or difficulties in entering the working life	Tackle young people's difficulties (due to low skills, social background, discrimination based on age and origin, lack of social capital and	Personalised help and guidance of young people given by voluntary and unpaid "mentors" (parrains) who are still working or

	guidance centres)				network); help them in finding a good job or a training scheme, and staying in the firms, thanks to mentors who can share their work experiences and networks	who are retired
<i>Fund for professional experience</i> (BE)	Public initiative (Fund for professional experience depending on Federal Ministry for Employment, labour and social dialogue (SPF Employment), directorate “Humanisation of work”)	Company	National (Belgium)	Ageing workers (45+)	Improving working conditions of 45+ workers, encouraging initiatives allowing to acquire new experiences, or to enhance the value of their professional experience; ease the transfer of experience between generations at work; make the workplace more attractive for older workers; encourage companies to be aware to the elder’s working conditions	Subventions to concrete projects on ergonomic and organisation adaptations, to improve the ageing worker’s work conditions, on demand of the companies
<i>“Start again after 45”</i> (IT)	Public initiative (Piedmont Region, with the financial support of the ESF)	Company and organisational	Regional (Piedmont, Northern Italy)	70 employees over 45 years old employed in 12 organisations based in Piedmont Region	Implement new organisational culture and new hr management, to emphasis and ameliorate the professional competencies and abilities of the older workers	Meetings and trainings with hr managers, counselors, older workers; diagnostic actions on age management; planning of better actions;

As final remarks, we can say that the collection of good policy practices made by the national partners, shows that it is possible to tackle the same issues and pursue the same aims at different levels, obviously with different approaches. The main issues considered assume, in fact, several connotations and the solutions are tackled in varied ways depending on the level of implementation and the type of initiators.

The description in depth of the policy practices will allow a complete overview of the initiatives enacted. At this point, it is possible to briefly summarise the different aspects of intergenerational relations that the practices treat.

Age management is a theme, which is, tackled at all the levels and by all the initiators, as a consequence of the demographic change which affects the whole society. At national level, initiatives aim at the implementation of a new organisational culture, at assessing, emphasizing and ameliorating the professional competencies and abilities of the older workers, in order to facilitate their personal recognition and to benefit of their experience and know-how. The company approach seems to be more practical. Not only older workers are targeted: target groups are constituted also by human resources management representatives, who need to develop and apply new approaches and decisions with regards to the older generation. In those practices, which have been initiated by public subjects, the problem is also faced under the point of view of the research, of the comprehension of the mechanisms connected to age management, of the awareness raising in order to spread the knowledge acquired and the good practices.

Youth related issues are tackled under the double perspective of integration in the labour market and retention on it. Private initiatives tend to treat the problem of youth unemployment and scarce integration by promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship. The support of more experienced and aged workers seems to be fundamental. At company level the integration of young people seems to be pursued by knowledge transfer models. Within public initiatives, the issues connected to the youth situation gain also a familiar dimension, whereas public practices encourage companies in setting family-friendly models of work organisation. Another concern of the public initiators is represented by the difficulty of low skilled and discriminated young people to enter the labour market. The “mentoring” scheme is proposed as a solution, valid, by the way, also at company level.

The **gender perspective** is almost absent.

3. European framework and actors for intergenerational policies

In the view of connecting the research carried out so far with a conscious and proactive policy making, it is not possible to ignore that employment themes related to generational and intergenerational perspectives have been approached within the policy making at European level as well. Moreover, it has to be remarked that several of the national policies that we have presented above have been designed in the view of the implementation of policies fixed at European level, to which the Member States are committed.

The policy practices that have been individuated at this level can *mainly* be reconducted to two fundamental *policy frameworks*, interrelated and connected, which have marked the last decades of European policy making in the fields of employment and social cohesion.

The first one is represented by the Lisbon Strategy and to all the policy interventions derived from it. In particular the economic and the social pillar come into interests as far as the first one provides the intention to make of Europe the most competitive, dynamic knowledge-based economy; and the second one designed in order to modernise the European social model by investing in human resources and combating social exclusion.

Another element has to be considered, though, and as an important aspect to be integrated and mainstreamed in all the occupational and social policies designed in the framework of the abovementioned economic and social strategy over the last years: the demographic one.

Over the last 50 years, in fact, Europe has seen much economic and social progress, and an increasing of the life expectancy of its citizens. This increased lifespan certainly represents a good achievement, but, at the same time, it poses main questions for individuals, families, social systems. These questions have to find responses within the occupational framework, and in deep changes in social policies. Moreover, the ageing population and the low birth rate, have to be combined with a series of economical, occupational and development exigencies deriving from global changes, which even more impose the European Union to re-shape family, occupational, social security, social cohesion policies, all in the light of what has been named “the demographic challenge”.

The different perspectives involved in these policy frameworks, the economic, the occupational and the demographic ones, have been object of several policy interventions, which tackle, from time to time, one issue more than another, but always showing a certain link among the different elements. In particular, the demographic issue has recently been integrated in the relaunched Lisbon Strategy (2005).

Several actors have intervened in the topic on the European scene. Each one has approached it in a different perspective, as it is normal, given that it can be considered as related to different policy fields. The political actors, in particular the European Commission and Council, but also other stakeholders, as social partners and civil society organisations, have all taken part to a debate that, from the same starting point (the demographic datum) has been then developed following different thematic lines connected to employment. The point in common, in spite of the differentiation of actors and of thematic approaches, seems to be represented by the necessity to better investigate and face the consequences of these demographic phenomena within the European economy, labour market and the European society in general.

With specific regards to the scope of the SPReW project, it has to be bared in mind that the demographic perspective does not exactly correspond to the intergenerational one that we mean to investigate. And, with regards to the Lisbon Strategy, it is not even the lonely perspective in which generational aspects treated in the view of social cohesion can be framed. Nevertheless it is a fact that the demographic challenge has justified a series of interventions in different fields, so that nowadays we can say that it is within this perspective that several policies *also* involving generational and intergenerational aspects have been undertaken.

As a matter of fact, the generational perspective at European level has often been considered in the light of the demographic change. And, on the other way round, as far as our research is concerned, keeping into account the way of facing the demographic issue has meant, more specifically, has meant to consider the generational data connected to it.

This remark also justifies the fact that sometimes, in carrying out and reporting the results of the research, reference is made both to the *generational* and the *age* aspects. In the results submitted so far regarding the national realities, it has often been underlined that the two concepts – *generation* and *age* - can not always be used as interchangeable. At the European level this happens, and we have to take it into account.

3.1 Selection criteria: difficulties and choices

The task of individuating *inter-generational* policies and initiatives undertaken at European level, aimed at fostering the social cohesion through enhancing better relations between generations at work, has been not easy. The complexity of the research was due, at a first stage, to the not always direct approach to the generational (and even more to the *inter-generational*) perspective we mean to investigate, and to the nature itself of the policy instruments enacted at European level.

The difficulty has not exactly been due to a lack of interventions regarding this topic. In fact, in the last years the attention to the demographic change related issues have increased, and they have been considered as affecting several points of the social and occupational agenda of the European Union and of all the connected activities. A major problem has regarded the fact that many European level policies *might* involve the generational perspective, but seldom tackle it lonely and directly. They mention it as a point to keep into consideration within the widest policy frameworks and the most diverse contexts, and reference to it is often connected to exigencies of completeness and mainstreaming.

On the one hand, this is more than comprehensible: the European Union policy making bodies and all the subjects at European level act at different title following very well determinate priorities, and, for the most, in a perspective of *coordination* of lower levels at which policy implementation is finally realised. The policy instruments, in particular – but not only - those enacted by the institutional actors, therefore require a certain level of generalisation, aimed as they are at coordinating in a certain direction more than at directly regulating in details certain policy areas (the occupational and the social ones in particular). Within wide and often general political contexts and frameworks of intervention, fixed at the higher political level, the topic of “generations-at-work” is often tackled as an instrumental issue.

On the other hand, it has been not easy to isolate, among many references to the issues connected to work and employment, those who are more relevant and better targeted to the scope of the SPReW project. Therefore a huge part of the work consisted in individuating generational related policies, which have been treated within different and broad contexts.

Another difficulty has been represented by **the huge number of policy makers and possible initiators of good policy practices, which are active at European level**. The initiators in question might be first of all institutional, the EU decision making bodies and institutions, as the European Council, the European Commission, and all the General Directions responsible for different policy areas, but also social partners and civil society organisations.

As a matter of fact, very “prolific” authors of policies which interest the intergenerational relations are the institutional ones, and this is one of the reasons why several practices reported herein under have been initiated by them, and, in particular, by the European Council and monitored and developed by the Commission, within the scope of its competencies. The importance of these policy practices is outstanding: policy making at this level should involve

the respect of what has been stated in all the collateral and lower levels, with direct impact, for example, on the policy designing of the Governments of the Member States, but not only. Policy making at this level obviously impress directions to the whole activity within the Union.

Other important actors are the social partners organisations, active at European level, and in particular the trade unions. But also research centres and civil society organisations have a role, within their field of interest, in the development of good practices, that, from time to time, might regard intergenerational issues connected to work.

Following the above-mentioned remarks, we had to surrender to the objective impossibility to report all the European level interventions, undertaken by the several subjects, which somehow consider the generational perspective in employment and social fields. We decided to focus only on those practices enacted with the aim of fostering a better social cohesion through enhancing better relations between generations and age groups at work. Therefore, we have selected those practices that, within different contexts, pursue a better integration between generations at work, and do it even *instrumentally*, though having been specifically designed to tackle broader and more general aims.

The criteria on which we based our selections are several, and respond to the exigency to frame the generational relations as treated at European level within **different employment related contexts**.

Starting from what is considered as the broader of the contexts in which we tried to identify generational related approaches at European level, it is not possible to ignore the main framework established by the EU decision-making bodies, which is represented by the Lisbon Strategy, developed through the European Employment Strategy and the Employment Guidelines. Within these wide ranged milestones of the EU policy, the generational approach has been underlined as of relevant importance. In particular, in the view of the goals of reaching full employment and more and better jobs, within an overall perspective of economic growth, policies aimed at active ageing and greater youth employment, as well as more occupational chances for women, have been promoted. The importance of quoting them here does not only reside in a conceptual necessity to provide a **general framework** of the EU policies with regards to employment, social protection and social cohesion connected to occupational but also generational features. It is also given by the impact that these EU policy directions have on the overall activities of the different stakeholders involved at European level and on the policy planning of the national governments. This policy practice represents an outstanding example of how the generational issues have been approached at European level, as a mainstreamed theme which assumes relevance under several points of view, within the objective of economic, occupational and knowledge growth to which the whole European population, regardless its age, should benefit.

More specifically, as mentioned above, one of the most important issues treated in the last years is represented by the **demographic challenge**. The necessity to face the demographic change and the ageing of the European population in a proactive and constructive way has been object of mainstreamed approaches in several policies that regard employment, occupational, educational features. In particular the European Commission, on a Council's mandate, has addressed the issue in generational terms, with the specific objective to promote "a new solidarity between generations". The EU policy approach with regards to the demographic change has developed, through the involvement in the debate of several actors,

in terms of *transforming the challenge into an opportunity* not only for achieving economic and competitiveness aims, but also for improving the level of employment in Europe and the working conditions of workers and citizens of different generations. In particular, promoting solidarity within generations responds also to the exigency to include women in the labour market, and to develop family policies among the Member States aimed at strengthening intergenerational solidarity by encouraging a better response to the needs of families with regards to childcare and dependency care and a more balanced distribution of family and domestic responsibilities. Through the emphasis placed on equality between men and women and equal opportunities more generally, the Lisbon Strategy constitutes a suitable framework of support for the development of national family policies.

Within the same context of the demographic challenge, another practice has been reported here, initiated by another important European level actor, the trade unions organisations confederated at European level in the European Trade Union Confederation.

A correct and cohesive approach to employment in a generational perspective is revisable also in the context of the **fight against discrimination** based on age. It represents another aspect of improving cohesion between generations and fostering social integration. A good policy practice in this view is definitely represented by a piece of legislation applied at European level. We have reported a piece of European hard law, the Employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC. This practice has been chosen as particularly effective, because capable to have a direct impact in the fight against age discrimination within the Member States and, as a consequence, at the workplace level.

With more specific regards to the promotion of **equality** in the field of employment, EU initiatives have been undertaken in order to finance projects and different kind of interventions aimed at promoting cohesion between generations in relation to employment. In the framework of the European Employment Strategy, and with the specific aim to develop its four pillars, the Community initiative EQUAL has been launched in 2001, in order to finance, within the framework of the European Social Fund, projects carried by transnational development partnerships, implemented within the Member States at regional level. In this framework also the implementation of gender equality and balance of working and private life have been tackled. In particular, in their reports on national policy practices, the Portuguese and the Italian partners have underlined as remarkable some projects implemented under the EQUAL Community initiative set at European level.

The above-mentioned initiative, but not only, is important also with regards to the context of **education**, as a vehicle to support intergenerational learning on the workplace. One of the aspects treated within the context of equality, the validation of formal and not formal skills acquired in the course of the working life, is particularly relevant also in the view of promoting **Life Long Learning**, in order to ensure a better and constant growth of the workforce. This step of recognition of certain capacities is important under several points of view, in the European perspective of a knowledge based working society. The context of the education all along the life course represents in fact another ground on which intergenerational relations can be developed in a proactive and positive way. As the national practices also underline, knowledge management constitutes a meeting point between older and younger workers on the workplace.

Another transversal thematic area, which presents a strong intergenerational connotation, is represented by **social protection**. The demographic change, the continuously increasing

ageing of the working population and the not always “illuminate” social protection policies enacted in several Member States so far, have led to serious concerns on the sustainability of the current pension systems. The aspect is transversally taken into account in almost all the policy practices we have analysed, as a possible source of tensions within generations. In fact, solidarity between generations could be jeopardised if the burden of ageing had to be carried by the younger population, decreasing in number and economic strength. Remedying this situation is one of the priorities of the new pact between the generations. The policy approach is in the sense of designing new social protection policies and systems aimed at ensuring a *fair intergenerational balance*.

Looking at all these practices as a whole, some general remarks with regards to the outcomes of the research from the specific point of view of the *intergenerational* approach, can already be drawn. As for the national practices, we tried to focus on the ones specifically referred to intergenerational issues. Nevertheless, apart a normal degree of generalisation within the European level policies, in our research we also registered that, even when the generational issue is directly tackled, a certain degree of the **fragmentation** encountered at national level through the analysis of the good practices, is revisable also at the European level. A differentiated approach targeted to specific age groups seems to be necessary, in consideration of the different approaches to employment of older and younger workers, who may suffer a lack of social recognition for different reasons. Therefore it has been immediate to individuate policy initiatives targeted either to the young or to the older workers, as the instrumental policies for active ageing and youth employment. Nevertheless, some policy instruments set in order to implement the overall objectives in all their specific features and aspects involve practices addressed to different generational groups at the same time. It is the case of some policies within the life long learning framework, of policies enacted through financial initiatives as for EQUAL, more specifically tackling the need to increase mutual integration between generations and develop intergenerational paths of cooperation and cohesion. This consideration, and an *integrated view* of the policy contents and aims, will show that the European level policymaking pays a huge attention to the intergenerational dimension.

Under this point of view, as far the **gender perspective** is concerned, almost the same consideration made for the good practices analysed at national level is valid also at the European one. The issue is particularly sensitive and there are series of initiatives of the most diverse kinds (EU level policies, EU hard law pieces of legislation, social partners agreements, awareness raising campaigns...) all aimed at increasing the participation of women to the labour market, conciliate work and private life, grant them equal opportunities and equal treatment with regards to employment, fight against gender discrimination in the most various and sophisticated forms. Nevertheless, the generational dimension is not always clearly connected to the gender dimension. The generational perspective lacks of gender approach also at European level. This outcome is particularly worth to be kept into consideration for the importance of the European level policy making, as this is capable to impress a boost to the investigation of the gender related issues in an intergenerational perspective and in the adoption of adequate measures to increase social cohesion within the working society also under this point of view.

The selection of good practices at the European level will propose a way into a set of relevant policies regarding the SPReW issues. This way into those broad and complex policy instruments will point out the dimensions that frame the intergenerational issues in the area of work, at the European level.

A last remark is worth to be made in this introductory methodological section. The national policy practices have been described following a certain scheme, which will be taken, into consideration also for this section of the paper. Nevertheless, the complexity of describing highly structured, tentacular and interconnected policies, the number of actors involved, the huge quantity of outcomes, which often develop only at the national level, will not always allow such a schematisation. In particular we will provide an analytical description of the policies taken into consideration for each context, and then we will deeply describe the policies in question.

3.2 Policy practices at the European level

The selection imposed by the complexity of information and data available at European level, and, above all, by the exigency of coherence with the scope of the SPReW project, brought us to individuate policy practices within different contexts. However, all these contexts at EU level are strictly interconnected and follow common lines of development, along the necessity to grant economic growth and, at the same time, to ensure the realisation of a certain kind of social model based on employment as a key feature in order to establish solid social cohesion.

The **broader context** in which almost all the policy practices we have individuated can be framed is represented by the **Lisbon Strategy**, declined in a series of policy steps and mechanisms through which the objectives fixed in 2000 and relaunched in 2005 have been pursued. The aim to reach full employment by 2010 and to create more and better jobs, making of Europe the most competitive knowledge based society have to be considered as the point of reference for all the related and more detailed policy initiatives which regard employment and social cohesion at the EU level. The European Union, as an economic actor on the global scene, has a series of economical achievements to pursue by keeping into account the investment in human resources and the overall social aspect. In this framework, the generational and the gender perspectives represent fundamental features in order to achieve the growth of the employment rate, and, as a consequence, a greater productivity and social cohesion. The demographic datum, in fact, and the one regarding the female employment indicate that it is necessary to involve older people and women into the labour market¹, also trying to better integrate European youth in a process that necessarily assumes an intergenerational connotation. From a generational point of view, the European Councils fixes the objectives to improve employability and encourage a voluntary raising of the retirement age in keeping with the reality of longer life expectancy, facilitating a gradual transition from full activity to retirement and promoting the active participation of older people in public, social and cultural life so as to achieve the objective of active ageing. The approach widely adopted by several Member States to facilitate older workers' retirement in order to create new jobs for young people has been overpassed, also in connection with the necessity to face the consequences of the demographic ageing in the light of the social protection system. The integration of the two generations at work has been shaped under a different perspective. A return to sustained and sustainable growth requires greater demographic dynamism, improved social and vocational integration and fuller utilisation of the human potential embodied both by the older generation and by European youth. To this end, the European Council of Brussels in 2005 has adopted the European Youth Pact. With regards to women, the aim is to give them the possibility to be part of the labour market as much as possible: providing proactive

1. Lisbon 2000, , Stockholm 2001, Barcelona 2002

child care solutions should allow the female employment rate to increase beyond their family duties.

Starting from the overall objectives fixed in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy, we have therefore analysed those features that more specifically regard the generational and the *inter-generational* approach. The **European Employment Strategy**, and the texts produced by the European Commission offer a significant overview of the level of attention, which has been paid to the integration of different generations within the labour market, in the contexts of the economic and occupational growth, which keep account of the demographic change. It is true that several communications and working paper regard the labour participation of different age groups², following the directions of the Councils drawing the Lisbon Strategy. Interventions in this phase mostly regard only one age group per time. In particular, from the Stockholm European Council of March 2001, and the Brussels one in 2005 on, promoting active ageing and young people's full participation in employment and society seem to be primary concerns. In the view of the demographic change, the impression raising from the analysis of the key documents of the EES has to do with a general concern of the young people facing the increasing ageing of the European population. The European Commission, bearing in mind that it is necessary to operate generational policies in employment and social inclusion, also states "Young people will have to bear the growing cost of an ageing population, which calls for an intergenerational response"³. Nevertheless the policy making has kept into account all the concerns and has tried to promote common goals in order to reduce as much as possible perverse and negative generational impacts.

Therefore, on the one hand with the **Employment Guidelines** and, on the other, and even more specifically, with the Communications on demographic challenge, the EU response to these concerns is more and more focused on the intergenerational management of the workforce, on the promotion of a life-cycle approach to work, on more investment in human capital, on a better conciliation of work with family needs, on a stronger accent on long life education and training systems, and, moreover, on the consideration of the gender perspective, in the view of strengthening integration and growth. Also the aspect of the social protection is considered as a ground of possible tensions within generations: the perspective adopted aims at creating sustainable and equal pension systems specifically designed to share the consequences of the changing demographic situation and ensure a fair intergenerational balance. In fact, solidarity between generations could be jeopardised if the burden of ageing had to be carried by the younger population, decreasing in number and economic strength. Remedying this situation is one of the priorities of the *new pact between the generations*.

The specific **demographic approach** offers more details on the intergenerational perspective adopted by the EU decision-making bodies, also because it represents a more practical one. The working programme addressed by the Council and the European Commission *via* the Communications connected to this issue⁴ should be developed not only in the specific guidelines that govern EU policy making: it is mainly addressed to the Member States who should try to harmonise their occupational and employment political plans in line with the EU guidelines provided by the Commission, but also to the other actors on the European level.

2. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/key_en.htm

3. Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society, COM(2007) 498 final, http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/pdf/youthcom_2007_en.pdf

4. Key documents available on line
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/demographic_challenge_en.htm

The importance of the demographic change has deserved so far quite a number of interventions by the Council and communications by the European Commission, which are interesting also with regards to their proactive way of development as far as the policy making process is concerned. In fact, with the Green Paper "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations", the Commission fixed the terms of the debate on the demographic issue, also opening a consultation to different subjects, calling them to express their points of view. Beside the policy practices expressed in the documents, the EC also decided to organise a major political conference on demography to support the debate initiated by the Green Paper. The conference brought together ministers, members of parliament, social partners, NGOs and independent experts with the aim of exploring some of the answers to the many questions posed in the Green Paper. The debate focused on the policy responses that are needed in areas such as family policy, work life balance, active ageing, migration and integration, role for the EU to allow our societies to cope with demographic change in a successful way. The final result of this policy process keeps into consideration the views of those who have taken part to the consultation: another communication has followed, as an integration of the contributions of all the participants to the consultation, which expresses an evolution of the perspective from *challenge* to *opportunity*. The demographic approach has recently (2007) seen a further development with the Communication "Promoting solidarity between the generations". The Communication stresses that national family policies have to respond to the needs of families as regards childcare and dependency care and a more balanced distribution of family and domestic responsibilities. This will lead to a better quality of life for all, as well as a situation, which is more conducive to the fulfilment of family plans. Moreover, by facilitating female labour force participation, modern family policies will contribute to growth and employment. The Communication also set and explains how the Commission will support the European Alliance for Families as a platform for the exchange of good practices and research. In the forms of the European political debate, also the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee have expressed their opinions on this last policy development.

An interesting complement to the EU approach to the demographic challenge and connected intergenerational issues has been enacted by the European Trade Union Confederation, which has realised a project aimed at investigating the generational management within trade unions affiliated and has drawn some guidelines in order to try to smooth the difficulties and foster social integration with regards to employment. The project is interesting because social dialogue, intended as the exchange of views and the designing of specific proposals and solutions by and between the social partners, within more general and public policies or not, can definitely represent a fundamental tool for the development of proactive and targeted measures which bring to intergenerational cohesion.

Strictly connected to the Lisbon Strategy objectives, the European Employment Strategy and the principle of equality at work, the **financing Community initiative EQUAL** tackles a series of topics connected to the intergenerational perspective. In particular EQUAL has promoted the creation of transnational development partnerships, which have enacted projects, initiatives and actions in a number of thematic fields, defined in the context of the four pillars of the EES and following discussions with the Member States. The intergenerational dimension comes into interests in the actions in the field of *adaptability*, meant to be realised promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market, supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to

structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies. Therefore, trying to provide comprehensive responses to ageing, EQUAL has financed a series of actions aimed at developing new ways of dealing with age management and at supporting the intergenerational learning to balance the workplace, in the view of a multidimensional approach towards age, drawn upon a variety of methods and a holistic approach, which comprises several facets. Another thematic field fixed in the EES and developed through the Employment Guidelines and EQUAL regards the Equal Opportunities for women and men, which involves reconciling family and professional life, as well as re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation, supporting services, reducing gender gaps and fostering job desegregation. With regards to the gender issue, nevertheless, we have to repeat here what has already been mentioned above: we encountered a lack of generational perspective applied to the gender issues.

More in particular on the ground of **education**, the Lisbon Strategy and the EES provide that, in general, the education through all the course of life should offer learning and training opportunities tailored to target groups at different stages of their lives: young people, unemployed adults and those in employment who are at risk of seeing their skills overtaken by rapid change. These overall statements have been translated in a series of initiatives in order to provide, for example, IT education to older workers, a higher level of formal education to the young, and other activities which are targeted to specific age groups of workers. We have analysed here a particular aspect, which involves an interesting intergenerational perspective, linked to the informal and non-formal learning. It is widely underestimated, or lack recognition, in contrast to formal training, while, when employees and employers are unaware of employees' informal skills, both employees and businesses remain underdeveloped. This particular aspect has been considered also at the level of the **Life Long Learning programmes**, and, more in particular, by the “**Education and training 2010**” integrated programme supporting the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy in the fields of education and training. This particular aspect of the educational strategy is interesting in the perspective of the intergenerational relations, in order to smooth the tensions and foster better integration: whereas a frequent opposition between the diploma of the young employees and the experience of the older ones has been registered, giving a diploma to the older workers it can facilitate mutual recognition.

The last aspect considered regards the legal instruments that the EU has adopted in order to ensure an effective employment equality, which also keeps into account the generational/age datum. Therefore we reported as a good practice the **EC Employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC**, which responds to the need to tackle age discrimination on the work place. The legislative practice is addressed to all the Member States who are obliged to uniform their internal legislation in line with it. Furthermore, the law principles and the rights of all age workers are potentially continuously precised and updated by the action of the European Court of Justice, whose interpretations of the application of the directive and whose decisions represent an actual integration of the written legislation.

Analytical description

Context	Policy Reference	Intergenerational aspects	Target subjects
General Employment Framework	Lisbon Strategy EES Guidelines for Employment (2005-2008 / 2008-2010) Active ageing Youth Pact Social protection issue	Objective of full employment and more and better jobs; raising of the older people and women employment rate; age management and incentives for older workers to stay longer on the labour market; integration of young people in the labour market; better conciliation between working and private life to increase women participation in the labour market; investment in human capital, through long life education and training for all the age group to increase adaptability. Promoting solidarity within generations ensuring sustainable and equal social protection systems.	Member States Governments National and EU level stakeholders
Demographic challenge	EC Green Paper “Confronting demographic challenge: a new solidarity between generations” 2005 Responses to the consultation European Conference EC Communication: “The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity” 2006 Forum on Europe's demographic future Demography report EC Communication: “Promoting solidarity between generations” 2007 European Alliance for families EESC opinion on the 2007 communication EP resolution on the demographic future of Europe	Fronting the demographic challenge increasing employment rates, supporting youth, women and older employment; combining work and life-cycles; setting concrete support for families; ensuring sustainable and fairly balanced social protection systems; promotion of a new pact between generations.	Member States Governments EU level and national stakeholders Companies
Demographic challenge (ETUC)	Demography and the labour market: a challenge for the unions 2007	Assessing the results of social dialogue in age management; driving forward the mindsets of employees, employers, trade union organisations and the public authorities notably with regard to the opportunities to establish quality demographic policies: the quality of the involvement in the workplace, the quality of work through a person's active life, the possibility of choosing to extend active working life.	ETUC member organisations (as well as public and private stakeholders)

Equality	EES EQUAL Community initiative (2001-2003 / 2004-2007)	Developing new ways of approaching age management and supporting intergenerational learning to balance the workplace, in the view of a multidimensional approach towards age; gender equality and balance of working and private life	ESF beneficiaries, organised in transnational development partnership
Education	EES LLL programme Education and training 2010 EQUAL	Investment in human capital Validation of formal and non-formal skills acquired in the course of the working life, in order to foster mutual recognition among generations.	Member States
Fight against discrimination	Employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC	Hard law rules in order to prevent and fight unjustified forms of age discrimination in employment preventing certain age groups from fully participating in the labour market; establishment of a general framework for equality in employment, occupation and vocational training.	Member States

Through the analysis of all these linked and complementary policy practices, it is possible to draw some conclusions with regards to the paths that are followed at European level in order to foster social cohesion within an intergenerational perspective. Having regard to the intergenerational approach, *observing these policies from a wide angle, considering them as a whole*, it is possible to recognise that their attitude is definitely in the sense of realising social cohesion through the conciliation of the exigencies of the different generations at work. It is possible to ascertain the strong connection between the economic and social objectives, and the fact that social cohesion definitely relies on an intergenerational approach. From the most general and *directive* policy to the most specific one, the European policy making in the theme of employment shows that it is not possible to ignore the demographic change and that the challenge has to be transformed into *opportunity* for all the generations. And indeed, at the most general level, increasing employment for all the members of the society, even through targeted policies, means to provide *social recognition* for all the subjects, for workers of all age groups, regardless of their age and gender. The fight against youth and female unemployment, as well as the promotion of active ageing, mean *decreasing intergenerational tensions* for example ensuring sustainable responsible social protection systems. And the EU strategies aim not only at *more* jobs, but also at *better* ones, always in the view of the demographic situation, which involves increasing chances of social recognition for workers and more social cohesion. Within the EU strategies, it means promoting the *right* employment situation for younger, older and female, through a responsible flexibility able to ensure everyone that work will be conciliated with the personal needs and the life-cycle exigencies. For all these intergenerational objectives, *investing in human capital*, again at every age and for any gender, represent *the way to adapt* workforce to the needs of the changing demands of economy and labour market. But not only. Adaptability, reached through a continuous education process along the working life, also ensures workers to find a working place that better suits their own personal needs, in a perspective of humanisation of work, and provide them an active place within the society, contributing to the general growth and cohesion.

Considering all the European level policies as a whole, therefore, is necessary not only because they are strictly interconnected and linked, but also because this is the only way to correctly appreciate the overall intergenerational purposes they foster, in the view of a better social cohesion.

4. Conclusions

The exposition of the good policy practices at national level and the identification of relevant frameworks and actors at European level carried out above means to offer an overview of the approaches and the consequent actions undertaken in the field of intergenerational relations at work. The overall aim of this report has been to provide information with regards to the initiatives adopted within the labour market in order to foster greater social cohesion through the improvement of integration among the different generation.

This last feature seems to be an urgent goal to pursuit, linked to the necessity to face the progressive ageing of population. Over the last 50 years, in fact, the increasing of life expectancy of European citizens, certainly representing a good outcome of much economic and social progress, at the same time has posed main questions for individuals, families, social systems. The ageing population and the low birth rate, have to be combined with a series of economical, employment and development exigencies deriving from global changes, which even more impose the European Union and the Member States to re-shape family, occupational, social security, social cohesion policies, all in the light of what has been named “the demographic challenge”.

The different perspectives involved in these frameworks, the economic, the occupational and the demographic ones, have been object of several policy interventions both at European and national level, which tackle, from time to time, one issue more than another, but always showing a certain link among the different elements. If we look at the European level policy making as a whole, we notice that the demographic, the economic and the occupational issues have been approached in an integrated way. This means that the different policy initiatives are strictly connected and inter-dependent. Therefore the choice of adopting the *intergenerational relations as fil rouge* in the selection and description of the policy practices made above, has not only been due to the focus of our report. This is actually (one of) the perspective(s) adopted also by the European policy makers. Policy initiatives have been undertaken in different contexts, but the main point of reference has always been the creation of a new, greater *solidarity between generations*, in order to transform the demographic *challenge* into an *opportunity*.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to ignore a certain degree of **fragmentation** of the labour market and of the whole society. This circumstance, more evident at national level, often brings at addressing diversified policies more specifically targeted to age and generational groups, following the different approaches and difficulties that workers of different age and gender might adopt and encounter with regards to their access and permanence in the labour market.

Keeping into account the above-mentioned fragmentation, in this conclusive section, we will try to give an overview of the policy initiatives in a more generation-targeted perspective. The

effort will also be in the sense of linking the European level policy making with the outcomes of the research at national level.

The overall framework is fixed within the Lisbon Strategy, defined in its “policy declinations”, the European Employment Strategy and the Guidelines for Employment. The general objective consists in making of Europe the most competitive, dynamic knowledge-based economy; this also involves the modernisation of the European social model, by **investing in human capital** and combating social exclusion. These goals have to be achieved, following the European policy framework, by pursuing full employment, or, at least, **more and better jobs**. In line with this aim, **raising the employment rate of older people and women** is the first and main step to make. Nevertheless it is not possible to ignore the situation of **younger workers**, who seem to face great difficulties in entering working life, especially if they are low skilled or educated, in facing a growing level of precariousness, and in conciliating work with private life (especially if they are women and have children).

With specific regards to **older workers**, their retention on the labour market and their re-entrance in case of previous exclusion represent the main features. Specific **active ageing policies** are promoted at European level. The strategies to be adopted are in the sense of a dynamic, *life cycle approach*, which tends to *maximise each person's capacity*, also through *preventing the erosion of skills* throughout adult working life and providing always higher and *adaptable skills*; improving *quality in work* to provide a safe, attractive and *adaptable work environment* in order to persuade older people to participate in the labour market over his or her whole life cycle. The challenge is to enhance the employability of those currently aged in their 40s and 50s. In this sense, Member States in particular are called to update and revise their occupational plans: parties concerned, beside the national, are also regional and local organisations. Not only, also the social partners at European as at national level, are called at supporting the active ageing policies with targeted actions which could be enacted within concertation, collective bargaining, companies.

Older workers still represent one of the largest target groups for raising employment. There has been recent progress in encouraging active ageing strategies especially through restricting eligibility conditions, while compensating for particularly demanding or hazardous jobs, by increasing incentives to work longer for employees (BG, AT, FR, ES, DK, PT), by enhancing work opportunities for older and particularly disabled workers and by improving working conditions and providing opportunities for skills upgrading and retraining.

Furthermore, the revised European Employment Strategy considers as a priority the need to **delay retirement**. In 2003, the European Commission argued that a radical policy shift away from early retirement is necessary and that part of the challenge consists in ensuring that a higher proportion of those currently aged 55–64 years stay in work. Member States that need to make particular efforts, having made slow progress so far, are Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece and Italy ⁵.

Another fundamental practice, which is valid also for other age groups, is represented by **lifelong learning strategies**, in line with the intention to invest in human capital, through long life education and training, in order to increase **adaptability**. Trends show a correlation between employment and participation to lifelong learning, especially with regards to older

5. More specific figures are provided at page 111, with regards to the feedback information on the implementation of the EES

workers. At the national level, both public⁶ and private initiatives aim at increasing the level of learning of the older workers. In particular, within the practices initiated at company and private level, personalised and specific training and courses, based on skill analysis, assessment of the competences⁷, consequent adaptation and positive exploitation of the elder's experience have been registered.

However, the level of adult participation has remained stable or has even decreased in most of the Member States since 2004. Participation levels are particularly low in Southern European countries and in most of the new Member States. The lowest participation rates throughout the EU continue to be those of older workers.

The European level offers good examples of lifelong learning measures aimed at adapting the ageing workforce to the labour market exigencies – and the other way round –, among the others, within the Community initiative EQUAL. In line with the empirical experience, the European level has also specifically addressed the policy of the **recognition and validation of non-formal and informal skills**, as a way to motivate older workers and understand the real value, which they might have gained during their working life. National qualifications frameworks in line with the European Qualifications Framework are being implemented or developed by the majority of countries with a view to facilitating international mobility as well as the transition between different education and training sectors. They are an important means for ensuring flexible learning pathways which are also facilitated by many countries setting up *systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning* (AT, BG, CY, CZ, EE, ES, IT, LT, LV, LU, PL, RO, SE, SK, UK) while such systems already exist in others (BE, DK, FI, FR, IE, NL, PT, SI). The challenge here is to move from experiment to full application of such systems in national qualifications systems, including in access to higher education.

In the view of a greater equality of opportunities and conditions, EQUAL tackles the **prejudices** connected to the aged workforce. At national level, initiatives aims at the implementation of a new organisational culture, at assessing, emphasizing and ameliorating the professional competencies and abilities of the older workers, in order to facilitate their personal recognition and to benefit of their experience and know-how. Public policies tend to increase the **awareness** on the demographic related issues, which might affect the integration of the aged workforce. Studies, research, setting up of networks for the exchange of good practices in age management have been promoted. In this sense also private bodies and companies have taken part in processes aimed at gaining consciousness of the issues as well as of the possibilities connected to the aged workforce⁸.

The practical approach of the Community initiative EQUAL also aims at promoting **new organisational approaches**: valorisation of the experience gained throughout the working life, in-depth assessment to capture tacit knowledge, development of learning platforms and discussion forums to spread good practices, coaching and training, tutoring and mentoring schemes, are the policy measures that have been supported under this funding initiatives and that have produced positive outcomes, capable to be transferred and replicated. At the national

6. Fund for professional experience (BE)

7. Knowledge pool 50+ (BE), Vuurtoeren45+ (BE), Mec - Lab – new horizons for workers over 45 years old in the mechanical industry of Bologna (IT), Somague Engineering (PT)

8. Accor: Intergenerational diversity: we can really do better together (BE), Ageing population and intergenerational relations (Be)

level, the research of new organisational approaches appears clear looking at the contents of the policy practices, which have been developed within private and specifically company initiatives⁹. The approach seems to be more practical. Not only older workers are targeted: target groups are constituted also by human resources management representatives, who need to develop a new culture and apply innovative decisions with regards to the older generation.

Last but not least, a **European legislative framework** in order to fight discrimination based on age has been designed, and Member States are obliged to transpose the European directive into their national legislation. Even if the wide definition of discrimination based on age should regard all generations, both the European directive, and the national legislation and jurisprudence show that the group, which is most at risk in this sense, is represented by the elder.

The European policy makers also have to tackle the serious issue of the integration of **young people** in the labour market. Social exclusion of young people carries high social and economic costs and needs to be prevented. While overall conditions for young people in Europe today are positive – freedom and security, prosperity, longer life expectancy –, there is increasing concern about high rates of child poverty, poor health, school drop-out and unemployment among a too large number of young people. There are more opportunities to learn and participate but less established pathways. Moreover, young people will have to bear the growing cost of an ageing population, which calls for an intergenerational response. The challenges young people are facing today are complex and diverse. Within the framework of the Lisbon and the EE strategies, the European Commission, on request of the European youth organisations, have stipulated the **Youth Pact**. It sets a series of policies and aims at **improving education, training, mobility, vocational integration** and social inclusion of young Europeans, while facilitating the **reconciliation of working life and family life**. In particular it recommends Member states to specifically set and monitor policies for the sustained integration of young people into the labour market, in the context of the **mutual learning programme** on employment; to improve the situation of the most vulnerable young people, particularly those in poverty, and to initiatives to prevent educational failure; to encourage young people to develop **entrepreneurship** and promoting the emergence of young entrepreneurs¹⁰.

Increased efforts to fight youth unemployment are reported by many countries. Policy measures are pursued along 4 axes: through improved vocational education and training pathways (AT, BE, LU, EE), specific guidance and pathways for at-risk school leavers (BE, FR, DE, LU, SI) and specific contract schemes with a training component (LU); through intensified and personalised guidance and job-search support (PT) and creation of employment pathways (MT); through reduction of employers' social security contributions (BE, ES, HU, SE), tax promotion for apprenticeship places (AT, FR), wage support for recruitment of long-term unemployed (DE); through strengthening the conditionality of social or unemployment benefits (CZ) and reduced taxation of students' jobs (FR)

However, as far as youth unemployment is concerned, all these measures combined have not given excellent results, so far: only about half of the Member States have seen an

9. Start again after 45 (IT), AQUA mark: Good policy practices for companies and employees in small- and middle-class businesses (DE), Somague Engineering (PT)

10. At page 111 national feedback on the policy development in these senses and the outcomes in the different Member States are provided

improvement in youth unemployment between 2000 and 2006. In 2006, young people still remained exposed to unemployment more than twice as much as the overall work force.

Despite these not positive outcomes, practices have been implemented at national level. Private and public initiatives tend to stimulate job creation and integration for young people through **entrepreneurship**¹¹. **Education and learning systems** have been created in the Member States in order to raise the knowledge level of the youth, in order to **prevent early school leaving** and in order to improve integration opportunities of those young who are disadvantaged for other reasons. However, there are still 17.5% of young men and 13.2 % of young women leaving school with at most a lower secondary education. Only six Member States have reached the target of no more than 10%.

Personalised **help and guidance** of young people, especially low qualified, given by older workers represent an intergenerational element which seems to foster youth integration: **mentoring systems** are promoted both at public level, in function of counselling on vocational attitudes, and at private level, in order to improve the know-how and the integration within the company¹².

National measures have been undertaken as well in order to facilitate the access to the labour market also of those young people who are highly qualified. In some cases they propose either de-taxed labour for young inexperienced people, or for even educated young without working experience, or not well regulated initial professional trainings for students, which should, in their intentions, facilitate the entrance of young people in the labour market providing them with first professional experiences. If these schemes can be reconducted to a **genuine training-on-the-job**, with appropriate accompanying measures, they do represent good practices. But, on the contrary, they are an unjustified extension of the integration paths for educated and qualified young, which should be pursued differently. In other cases represent a mixed of study and work which is not profitable for the young but only for the companies, who can dispose of an almost endless low paid workforce looking for an opportunity.

Another ground on which European youth needs to be supported by specific policies is the one regarding the **reconciliation of working and family life**. At European level policies have been proposed to reach the goal by **sharing the responsibility between partners**; particularly by **expanding the child care network** and **developing innovative forms of work organisation**. The European Commission has addressed a specific communication to the Member States and to all the stakeholders at national and European level in order to create measures facilitating young people in having a family and holding a job at the same time. Within EQUAL the problem has been studied and faced with respect to policies which can be developed in particular within small and medium enterprises, which normally claim that they cannot afford the costs to respond to the flexibility needs of the young parents with children. The experience has proved that efforts at organisational level are possible, feasible and financially sustainable. Companies have been supported in introducing full-time hours over four days, periodic home working and telework, combinations of long and short days and working longer hours over a defined period to accrue non-working blocks of time. Those

11. Project AUDAX - support and promote the entrepreneur spirit mainly in family companies (PT), Wallonie entrepreneur (BE), "Mothers- daughters" mentoring in Tuscany for the start up of new female entrepreneurship (IT), "Hand" project – traditional and ancient professions for new employability in Basilicata Project "MANO" (IT)

12. The mentoring scheme of young people towards employment (FR),

banked hours could for instance be used during schools holidays or family emergencies. Results were very satisfying, especially for female employees. And not only: practices involving flexibility of the working hours, for example, could also be transferred to other age groups (i.e. older workers who need to adapt their working commitment in the light of their personal exigencies). At national level, public interventions aim at collecting information about and evaluate policies to promote reconciliation of work and family existing on a company level across the country¹³. Other practices, for example at company level, have not been reported. This also mirrors the situation as it has been monitored by the European Commission that, creating the European Alliance for Families, aims at increasing the number of good practices through a continuous exchange, as much still has to be done in this sense: in fact, the issue of reconciliation between work and private life is gaining some impetus in Member States, mostly through the commitment to improve the provision of childcare facilities (AT, DE, EL, LU, NL, PT, UK). However, many Member States are far from reaching the childcare targets and most do not even refer to them in their national strategies.

The ground of reconciliation of work and family life is the only one where specific measures seems to be foreseen also to support **female employment and permanence on the labour market**. The European data in this sense are discouraging, as a consequence of the scarce attention that has been paid so far to the gender related issues within the labour market.

The most effective practices to foster both youth and elder integration in the labour market seems to be the ones which also present the **highest level of intergenerational integration**. Beside education through the all life, which is a common ground both for older and young worker, the assistance and the **transfer of knowledge** from the older is the most effective way which has been experienced in order to provide guidance and training to the young, positively exploiting the know-how of the elder. At the European level, EQUAL has proved the effectiveness of tutoring and mentoring schemes that support the flow of knowledge between generations. At national level, these kinds of practices have been initiated both by public institutions and by companies¹⁴.

Another ground on which **intergenerational solidarity** seems to be necessary, in order to achieve social cohesion, regards the **social security systems**. In the last years the European Union policies have recommended Member States to revise the social protection schemes in order to make them sustainable and fairly balanced between the young generation, still at work, who will not be easily replaced, given the low birth rate, and the older one, which is growing more and more, and presents increasing necessities of care and assistance. Several Member States have already addressed specific measures, which foreseen the creation of private and complementary pension funds, in order not to exploit public finances too much, and not to raise the contribution rates. Other policies aim at discouraging early retirement. But the most effective measure definitely consists in raising the employment rate of the older workers and their permanence on the labour market.

13. Family Friendly Workplace award (HU)

14. A firm optimising knowledge transmission in the Lorraine region (FR), Transfer of knowledge into a non-profit organisation (DE),

Conclusions:

Perspectives for a good management of generations at work and pathways for more social cohesion

Introduction

This last chapter suggests conclusions and recommendations (WP7). It proposes a summary of key results confronted to different institutional frameworks. The recommendations result from a process of discussion and validation of intermediate conclusions through a set national dialogue workshops, in each of the six participating countries, and through the round tables at the final conference.

1. Generations at work: the evidence of the research

1.1 The change of relation to work: how does generation matter?

First of all, from the empirical evidence we can try to assess the relevance of the “generation” variable for the SPReW issues. As a matter of fact, different generations face diverse historical contexts, i.e. a different mix of socio-economical opportunities and constraints and cultural frameworks. Moreover, they have to share labour market opportunities with former generations: there will necessarily be losers and winners... Anyway, how exactly the “generation” matters, in changing work orientations?

From the SPReW results, we observe that other variables (gender, education, socio-professional groups, economic development, institutional contexts) may overwhelm the effect of the “generation” variable. Particularly “gender”, which has a strong influence on the place that work can have in one’s life. “Age” is also an important variable; young people have a more expressive relation to work. The SPReW results are consistent with major surveys, which analyse attitudes towards work, such as the European Value Survey (EVS), the European Social survey (ESS) and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP).

However, historical and cultural differences among *age groups* do exist, as the surveys show. They result from:

- the wealth development, which increases post-materialistic orientations (relevance of the content of work, polycentric attitude towards life, control of working hours, etc.);
- the important increase of tertiary education the last decades, which is linked to increased expressive orientations as well;
- the Information Society, which creates a huge digital divide between last generation and the others;
- the increasing individualisation in the building of identities, which also affects attitude towards work, in the direction of more search of autonomy, self-development self-fulfilment;

- the deregulation of labour markets, which increases job precariousness;
- the women’s employment revolution, which raises the problem of work-life balance and at the same time questions gendered working models.

How far these overall phenomena contribute to create *generations*? In a strict sense, according to Mannheim, “generation units” are a production of historical events: “individuals who belong to the same generation, who share the same year of birth, are endowed, to that extent, with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process”. They are shaped in opposition to the previous generations, they become social movements and agents of change through a process of political self-consciousness. In this sense not all the age groups are generations and not all the countries have the same generational boundaries.

In a broader sense, almost everybody agree in considering the relevance of institutional factors – like the education system, the family, the labour market regulation, the welfare state model, the type of capitalism – in drawing the boundaries among age groups or generations.

From this point of view, with some secondary diversities in the different countries, we can identify three generations of workers being currently at work: people born before the end of fifties, people born between this date and the end of seventies and people born after this last date.

In fact, in the second half of the twentieth century, almost everywhere in Europe, an increased protection of labour and the development of welfare systems established a generation of highly protected, strong and collectively represented labour force (the so-called baby-boomers generation).

Later on, following two world petrol crises, the welfare state financial crises and the end of Keynesian policies all around Europe, at the beginning of the eighties, emerged a new generation of workers, more exposed to unemployment (the so-called X generation). In the same period, the hugely increasing participation of women to the labour market was the reason of a sharp generational transition from a “one-career generation” to the “dual-career generation”, with different priorities, aims and needs.

More recently, the necessity for welfare systems to pay pension provisions to a larger population, together with the impact of globalisation on Western economies and the increasing preference for flexible labour markets, produce a generation of more precarious, less collectively represented, less socially protected workers. They are currently defined as the generation Y or the millennial generation (sometime they are called the baby-loser generation).

1.2 Three generations at work: a balance of weakness and strength for each group

Although other variables intervene in shaping the relation to work, from our interviews and focus groups generations results to be “objectively” quite differentiated.

With few differences among countries, generations are diversely positioned on the labour market:

- Young people (< 30) are more exposed to precariousness and unemployment but they benefit from a positive educational and digital differential.
- The adult generation (30 to 50) usually enjoys a stable position in the labour market but is more exposed to the difficulties related with keeping together career expectations and family care. The position of adult women is especially critical.
- The elder generation (> 50) – when it is still at work – enjoys the best wages and security and the highest representation by trade unions but they are the most exposed in case of company restructuring because of deskilling.

Moreover, different generations also show different cultures and expectations towards work.

- Young people (< 30) ask for more social protection and higher income but also for more freedom and opportunity for self-development.
- The adult generation (30 to 50) asks for social and company support for reconciling work and family but also for life-long learning measures in an ageing-worker's perspective.
- The elder generation (> 50) asks for recognition of experience but also for the an improvement of working conditions.

1.3 The quality of intergenerational relations: neither a real conflict, nor a true solidarity

The main objective of the research was to analyse the relations between these three generations, in order to highlight evidence of existing or potential social conflicts. A very rough conclusion on this point is that it does not really emerge a “perception” of conflict among generations from the opinion of most interviewees. Actually, from the interviews and focus groups, we find many arguments to sustain the contrary or, at least, to minimise the issue.

First of all, “age” looks like an “unspoken” issue: although workers were questioned several times on the topic of relation with other generations, most of the interviewees did not appear really interested in this subject. We wonder if “age” and “generation” might represent a kind of taboo (like gender).

Secondly, there is no full awareness of belonging to a generation: in the biographies, a clear perception of a social or cultural boundary among generations is seldom highlighted. This applies also to the younger generation of workers.

Thirdly, other factors, which produce other belongings, appear more relevant as determinants of group cultures at workplace: being a woman, being in a qualified profession or hierarchical grade, being an employee of a well-known organisation...

Moreover, in some countries younger people do not even share the same workplaces as the elder ones. In most large companies, due to early retirement plans, the elder generation is missing. At the same time, young people are more likely to stay in more qualified tertiary jobs. Then, especially in some professions a real face-to-face among generations does not even take place.

Anyway, the research point out, “objective” differences among generations are confirmed by the empirical evidence, as far as working conditions are concerned. Then, we should consider the possibility that more awareness of generations may initiate social conflicts in the future. From this point of view, the research interest is directed to understand which group is more likely to be conflictive in future.

1.3.1 The relations between the two extreme groups

The two extreme groups seem to face an identical problem, since both lack a fair recognition at work. From one side, young people feel undervalued as for their education. They frequently complain about low wage and precarious jobs, despite better education and higher ICT knowledge in comparison with the older. From the other side, old people feel undervalued as for their work experience. Above all, they fear about losing their job because they are aware that companies are not going to consider any longer the result of many years of learning-by-doing as a real resource. As a matter of fact, old workers often face difficulties in finding a new job, as a consequence of the level of their wage.

The topic of “experience” has been much questioned in the project. In general terms, it appears that the value of experience has been largely retrenched over years, both as a consequence of technological change and also as a value itself (actually, the value of “innovation” scores much higher in the work culture).

Anyway, between these two extreme groups a certain amount of tension is evident. The reasons may be:

- a kind of incommunicability in the approach to work, due to a diversity in the mix of competencies and especially in the “languages” (digital vs. analogical, global vs. local...);
- the changing meaning attributed to work in different economic and social periods, where different work values are prevailing: young people often don’t agree with old workers’ centrality of work, while the old ones complain about apparent young people disaffection to work;
- the psychological distance between ages: young workers appear both more cynic and more passionate towards work, while old workers often solved the cognitive dissonance between attainment and expectations telling their work story as a success history.

This evidence suggests that misunderstandings are both a matter of age and of generations.

1.3.2 The mid-generation: the most invisible but the most problematic in the future?

Except for some countries, like Italy, where a relevant number of workers above 30 years still experiment precariousness, the mid-generation (30 to 50) is the most likely to enjoy security benefits, stable jobs and good wages. Nevertheless, they often feel threatened both by the increasing deregulation of the labour market (their perception of the precariousness risk is even greater than the one of younger workers who directly experiment it!) and by their lack of new skills in comparison to younger workers. From biographies and focus groups, they appear a bit envious both of their older colleagues, who still enjoy early retirement schemes and of the younger ones, more at ease in the digital and flexible society.

From the point of view of the SPReW project, the quality of their skills, their position on the labour market, their attitude towards work are important issues. In fact, they are going to be soon the ageing workforce and equitable and sustainable policies for ageing workforce have to be created referring to them.

Moreover, for the work-life balance issue, the mid-generation is the most exposed one. The mid-age group is concerned by family building, carrying of children and often also carrying of elder parents. From this perspective, adult (30-50) women appear to be the most critical inter- and intra-generational group.

1.4 The change of relation to work in an intergenerational perspective

1.4.1 Are young people different?

On the issue of differences among generations through the dichotomy “instrumental” vs. “expressive” orientation towards work, different considerations among partners emerged.

From all empirical material, it appears impossible to distinguish the generations according to a specific emphasis on instrumental and/or expressive dimension of work. At the same time, attempts to create precise classifications result poorly effective and difficult to be considered statistically representative due to the limited dimension of the sample of interviewees.

Anyway, some shared evidence emerge:

- both work orientations concern all generations, although the incidence of each dimension is different;
- diversity in young workers’ orientations can be either a matter of generation or a matter of age.

In general, contrary to a widespread opinion that young people are more instrumental and less interested by work, the younger generation appears as the more concerned by the increase of expressive expectations in work and post-materialistic values.

They are described as: “terrific when working with computers, brilliant at multitasking and very good at working in teams” and also “having values”. They are also the more qualified generation since history. Although they expect “too much too soon” from their job, they seem to be immune to imposed authority and they ask for mutual respect between them and their manager.

Also from the empirical analysis, the younger generation results passionate to work and it has high expectations, both materialist and post-materialist, regarding their job but at the same time it gives great importance to other things in life (polycentric conception of life). Moreover, younger people expect their work and their personal lives to work together. With the influence of technology, they perceive work and life as seamlessly entwined; they want to stay in touch with friends and families from work, work from home, have flexible hours. Then, they result less afraid about instability than the previous generations: precariousness seems to be integrated in their mind as a “normal” event.

In general, we observe that people who invested in education are more demanding and develop higher expectations of self-fulfilment towards work. These people, often young people with high degree and few family responsibility, prefer “a work they like” to “a safe job” and in they hope that in the future they will have both. According to this view, the relativisation of work is the outcome of young people greater expectations rather than of their disillusion.

What are the conclusions? Some change is occurring in the orientation to work, promoting a more expressive attitude, i.e. a greater request for self-fulfilment in work. It is not evident wheter the emerging diversity might be a “generation” effect, meaning that historical, cultural and institutional contexts make the “millennial generation” different from former ones. On the contrary, some of the changes are certainly an “age” effect: young people are always more passionate, they have higher expectations; they are more oriented to the content of work.

Anyway, neither generation nor age are the only drivers of the changes in the relation to work. Among the others drivers towards a more expressive work orientation, education and gender can be considered as the most important. Actually, both the educational level of workers (which raises attention to the content of work and self-development) and the feminisation of the labour market (women appear to be more expressive, although they are likely to change their attitude when they have a family to care) increased significantly in recent years.

1.4.2 A gender/generation effect: the contamination of gender models

Common considerations were drawn concerning the relevance of the gender variable in shaping the change between generations. One of the important evidence that has been highlighted by researchers concerns the change in the culture of the family and the increasing centrality of work-life balance issues for both male and female workers.

In a general way, the research confirms that:

- Women without children tend to have the same behaviour than men at workplace.
- Young men are (very) different from old men as for reconciling work and family life.

Could these new phenomena be considered as emerging signals of a reducing dichotomy between the male and the female models of relation to work? As a matter of fact, we could observe from one side, that many young women want to have a career; they are more competitive; they give more importance to money. From the other side, that young men – especially the qualified ones – ask for a better control on their working time and do not accept anymore to put behind their private life for work, especially when a first baby arrives.

Anyway, the “female model” is hard to die. The research points out as well that:

- women’s working pattern changes after maternity, from a very expressive to a more instrumental one;
- women in the mid-generation who have a strong investment in career have more negative experiences than men as regards work-life balance;
- work-life balance is even worsening for younger generation of women when they have to face both the persisting of strong traditional values and more employment difficulty after the de-regulation of the labour market (Hungary).

2. The influence of institutional contexts on intergenerational relations at work

2.1 A cross-country comparison on institutional contexts

In order to identify what circumstances lead to deal more effectively with different, and often competing, needs of generations at work, the research includes a comparative analysis. It focuses on both similarities and distinctions in the most relevant institutions: the welfare systems, the labour market regulation, the education and training system and the industrial relations system. The purpose is to discover which features in the institutional contexts are more favourable to solidarity among generations. The final objective is to suggest well-founded recommendations to policy makers, both at local and European level, possibly taking into consideration the entire social model.

2.2 How may social institutions affect the relations between generations?

Although the influence of social institutions has probably been the more or less the same all over Europe, a cross-national comparative analysis help to understand how cultural and social diversities are shaping the balance of power among generations in the area of work: job security, quality of working life, wage, career, etc.

This analyse allows, firstly, to highlight the conditions that can create a social conflict among generations – or just simple tensions at workplace – and, secondly, to understand which institutional environment and policies can, on the contrary, support a greater solidarity and social cohesion among different generations at work.

From this point of view, in each country, indicators and policies that can be considered as favourable to a good balance between generations and to a generational cohesion are:

- demographic trends and policies aimed at keeping *a balanced birth rate over time*, in order to maintain a good equilibrium between the state expenditure for pensions and the social security contribution coming from employed workers (while actual longer life expectancy and low birth rates are changing the old-age dependency ratio and are threatening the generational equity towards the younger generation);
- employment trends and labour market policies aimed at keeping *a stable activity rate among age cohorts*, both through a balanced flexibility in entries and exits (to prevent the dualisation of the labour market) and incentives aimed at hindering the market tendency to prefer mid-age more productive workers or incentives aimed at confronting company strategies of dismissal of the more expensive older workers;
- structure of the education and training system and policies aimed at a better *transition from school to the labour market* for young workers, at increasing the *employability* of all workers or at facing *skill obsolescence* of older workers (since all these factors contribute to an balanced mix of skill and competencies among workers of different ages);
- dimension and composition of welfare expenditure and policies aimed at a balanced distribution of provisions – both transfers and services – addressing the *different life cycle needs*: youth unemployment and transition to work, reconciling work and family obligations, giving help in case of dismissals and reduced income, etc.

Yet, also *cultural aspects* are likely to produce a relevant impact on the relations between generations. First of all, the *organisation of the family and its role in the economy*: households management, cohabitation, caring of family members, distribution of employment opportunities, internal redistribution of income:

- a tradition of centrality of the family in the economy, together with poor welfare provisions to young people, compel the families to extend cohabitation and financial support to their young members (by consequence, both economic autonomy, marriage and procreation time are delayed);
- a culture of centrality of the family in care-giving, together with poor public or market services for families, lead older active women to renounce to paid work for taking care of old parents and grandchildren.

Connected to this, the *different gender roles in family and in parenthood*. They have important consequences, among others, on the mid-age female participation in the labour market, on the gender and age distribution of part-time jobs, on the management of careers.

Among other social and institutional factors, *industrial relations institutions* is one important: collective bargaining coverage, union membership, trade union presence at the workplace, trade union influence on public opinion:

- high union membership among old workers is likely to condition union policies and collective bargaining towards the maintaining of older workers benefits at the workplace (secure employment, seniority rules) and of generous social protection systems, especially the state expenditures for pensions.
- union involvement in the unemployment allowance administration is likely to promote union joining also among young workers.

2.3 Which social model can better prevent the risk of intergenerational conflict?

According to this framework of analysis, we can try to assess the situation in our countries and also to give a kind of “*risk measure*” for *social cohesion* coming from possible future conflict among generations.

From the analysis of the different national institutional contexts, major unbalances in the power of the three generations on the labour market result:

2.3.1 The mid-generation

- In countries where a political economy oriented to liberalisation is prevailing, the *mid-generation* (and particularly men) – which is the most productive – is going to be the preferred one for employers. Referring to analysis of the variety of capitalism, US and UK – but none of our partners countries – should have a higher probability of such kind of unbalance. Anyway, the increasing reduction of State intervention in the labour market (the so-called “deregulation”) may arise this risk – towards the other generations, of course – also in some of our countries, especially Italy, Portugal and perhaps Hungary. In a more creeping way, even in the others.

- However, for the above-mentioned reasons, the *mid-generation* is experiencing both a very strong “internal” competition together with an increasing weakness in comparison to young people’s more intuitive relation to IT. Moreover they are the most pressured by caring tasks, addressing both children and old parents.
- As a matter of facts, the *mid-generation women with family commitments* are especially at risk in those countries where both money transfers and services to families are poor (Italy and Portugal). Whereas in other countries, like Germany and to some extent also France, where relevant transfers to families are provided but public childcare is still scarce, mid-age women are often constraint to part-time working.

2.3.2 The younger generation

Younger workers are likely to be particularly disadvantaged in those countries:

- where the state expenditures are more favourable to pensions and/or the unemployment expenditures – which can be considered as a substitute to the financial support to younger workers – is particularly low. Among our countries, this is especially the case of Italy and of Portugal;
- where during the nineties some flexibilisation of hiring has been introduced – even an overall deregulation of labour market – , with the consequent increase of job precariousness especially among youth. This is more or less the case of all our countries, except Germany (nevertheless even in Germany young people are more affected by flexibilisation than other generations);
- where the union density is particularly higher in the elder age cohorts (which can be explain by the progressive lowering of unionisation over time), as in Germany and Italy but not in Belgium (where young people still join unions) and in France (where unions are traditionally less strong than elsewhere in Europe, so they have less incentives to protect the only group of older workers). No union data were available for Portugal and Hungary.

By contrast, *younger workers* enjoy more advantages in those countries:

- where the educational and vocational systems are better coordinated and where the transition from school to employment works well. This is the case, first of all in Germany, followed by France and Belgium. In Germany, apprenticeship plays a key role;
- where youth unemployment allowance is provided; the only country among the consortium is Belgium.

2.3.3 The older generation

The situation of *older workers* can be observed from two different points of view:

- globally, until now, they don’t look particularly at risk in our countries, given the persisting early retirement provisions in most of them (Hungary, Germany, Italy, Belgium; whereas Portugal recently entered a new perspective). So far, this policy succeeded in compensating the loss of skill and related productivity of old workers. However, it is not going to be acceptable any longer, both for the Lisbon employment rate targets and for the increasing demand for work coming from old workers and retired people.

- from an individual point of view, old workers are more at risk of job losses and income reduction in the countries where the natural erosion of their skills is less balanced by continuing vocational training programmes. Among the partnership, Italy, Portugal and Hungary show the lowest share of participation of 55-64 years old workers in further education in Europe: around 4% vs. the 43% of Sweden (Eurostat, 2005).

Yet, *future old workers* – the mid-generation of nowadays – are likely to be more disadvantaged than the present old generation, because they will experience the raising of retirement age with its obligations. This will happen everywhere. Anyway, old workers are expected to be luckier in countries with a more balanced demographic trend and a higher employment rate for youth.

Analysing the problem of the balance among generations from the point of view of different theories, we could say that, while both liberal and Nordic countries have the (opposite) capabilities to find their own specific equilibrium. To reach an intergenerational equity, the neo-corporatist and Mediterranean countries have to change some of their traditional institutional factors. The neo-corporatist ones – Germany and Belgium, and partly France – need a change in their corporatist institutions, namely trade unions, which are requested to be more protective of other groups of workers than only the old industrial workers: young people and women. As for Mediterranean countries – Italy, Portugal and to some extent also France – where a balanced social redistribution is still lacking. In these countries, we have a redistribution of social protection through the substitution of the “external” solidarity among generations with an “intra-familial” one.

3. May a future conflict among generations occur? Implications for policies

In this section we will try to draw some concluding remarks and suggestions for policies, on the basis of the analysis of the relations among generations at work.

The project results do not show the existence of a real “perception” of conflicting interests by interviewees of different generations: areas of both solidarity and tensions have been highlighted. Nevertheless, the results show “objective” differences in the quality of work for the three generations. Then, we should consider the possibility for the future that the consciousness of belonging to a less lucky generation may initiate social tensions.

Which kind of future tensions may we expect? Which specific policies can governments and social actors introduce to improve social cohesion in order to prevent such a conflict?

3.1 Given this intergenerational framework, how policies should be oriented?

Taking into account the evidence from the research, institutional and company measures should be oriented at:

- re-balancing the *specific weakness* of each generation on the labour market (i.e. more social protection for young workers, more retraining for the elders, etc.), thus avoiding the risk of a future increased intergenerational unbalance;

- answering the *expectations* of each group (i.e. change in work organisation for young people, more family friendly policies at the company level for the mid-generations, humanisation of work for old workers, etc.);
- improving *understanding* between different age groups and fostering intergenerational cooperation at work (also through the articulation of career paths and the modularisation of the training systems).

3.2 The collection of good examples of practices aimed at improving comprehension and solidarity among generations

First, we will examine the “state of the art” of the policies experimented insofar in the five countries. The empirical data of the SPReW project include an overview of those national practices aimed at fostering the solidarity among generations at the workplace.

3.2.1 A classification on the basis of the “content”

First of all, the practices have been classified according to the issues they address and to their specific target. On the basis of their *content*, the practices can be divided into four types:

a) Awareness campaigns

These measures take into consideration the “unspoken” topic of generations. In particular, building awareness is regarded as the prerequisite to cope with intergenerational issues and transform them into an opportunity. The philosophy driving awareness campaign is: age diversity exists but may be a resource for companies and for workers. Awareness campaign can be articulated in several ways: public debates on specific self-representations of different generations; workshops with social actors to formulate concrete recommendations; financial support to experiences of integration between generations. We found a good example of this kind of practices in the campaign of the Fondation Roi Baudouin (BE).

b) Building good relations between generations at work

These kinds of measures are aimed at improving the integration at the workplace, especially in age polarised contexts. They may include information sessions at company level; training programmes for middle management; human resources handbooks for age-diversity management. We found a good example of this kind of practices in the experience of a private company, the Accor Hotels Benelux (BE).

c) Knowledge transfer between generations

These are measures regarding management knowledge for a specific age group or the exchange of knowledge between generations as the pillar of intergenerational solidarity. We found a good example of this kind of practices in the case of Lebenshilfe in Brême (DE): in order to improve communication and recognition between generations the company decided to initiate a project where young and old employees had to analyse and evaluate each-other competencies. Another interesting case is the project Mother-Daughter in Tuscany (IT), consisting in a mentoring exchange from expert women workers (or entrepreneurs) to young ones.

d) Job integration in an intergenerational perspective

These measures provide financial support to young entrepreneurs through intergenerational exchange. Some interesting cases were collected by our researchers. The Audax project (PT) aims at improving young people job integration in the case of familial enterprises. Other projects, as Hand (IT), were aimed at introducing measures for the integration of young workers in ancient traditional professions. The Wallonie Entreprendre (BE) in particular aims at fostering and sponsoring the integration of new young entrepreneurs in local economic networks, while project Missions Locales (FR) gives personalised help and guidance for young people through voluntary and unpaid mentors (parrain).

3.2.2 A classification on the basis of the “initiator”

On the basis of the *initiators*, the practices can be classified into two levels: institutional level and company level.

a) Institutional level, i.e. practices initiated by central or local governments. At this level, practices are generally focused at the following goals:

- raising citizens’, governments’ and social partners’ awareness on intergenerational issues, as in the case of Fondation Roi Baudouin (BE);
- age management, both in the case of projects targeting unemployed or deskilled over 45 years (Vuurtoeren 45+, BE) and projects for the promotion of knowledge transmission by local agencies. Good examples are: Knowledge Pool 50 + (BE) where old workers are used as experts for young workers training; Aract in the Lorraine region (FR), which analyses current practices of knowledge transfer in the companies; the German agency Aqua-mark (DE), where personalised and specific vocational training courses and consultancy for the management on how to handle age and skills development for workers threatened by unemployment are provided;
- promoting entrepreneurship among young people through the involvement of expert entrepreneurs. Good examples are: Audax (PT), Wallonie Entreprendre (BE), Mother-daughter mentoring (IT), Hand Project (IT).

b) Company level, i.e. practices initiated by company managers or under the agreement of social partners, these practices focus on the following goals:

- building good relations at the workplace between workers of different ages, as in the case of Accor Hotels (BE);
- assessing, updating, valorising older workers competencies. A good example is the project of retraining of over 45 workers in Mac-lab (IT);
- knowledge transfer from more experts to young workers sharing the same workplace. Good cases have been experienced by Somague Engineering (PT), where coaching sessions for young people are organised and employers are involved in the exploitation of age and experience; and a project of knowledge transfer from more experts to young in a no-profit organisation (DE).

Practices promoted at the institutional level are the more numerous. In most of the cases, they have been initiated by *local institutions* (local government, employment agencies, chambers of commerce, public foundations). By contrast, at the company level we found less practices

than we expected; most of them were initiated just by the management, *only few with the involvement of trade unions.*

3.3 From results to recommendations: suggestions to governments and social actors

From the analysis of a selection of good policy practices collected in the six countries that took part to the project, some general characteristics can be pointed out:

- Most practices focus on a specific age group.
- Few practices have an intergenerational orientation.
- Youth related issues are mostly addressed by practices promoting entrepreneurship, knowledge transfer from old to young workers (not vice-versa) and mentoring.
- Managing age diversity is an issue alive, though most practices just focus on matters of knowledge transmission (not on the idea of age diversity as a resource or on the opportunity of a reciprocal recognition by different age groups of workers).
- Active ageing problems – including changes in work organisation, ergonomics and flexible retirement – are not sufficiently addressed.
- Gender related issues – especially the mid-generation work-life balance problems – are scarcely considered.

To a certain extent, there is a gap between the practices collected and the evidence resulting from the empirical investigation (biographical interviews and group interviews). In particular, most practices identified have just a limited focus, namely they tend to address one specific generation rather than taking into account the relations between generations.

Moreover, the practices often show a one-way direction: they may aim at the fostering of the knowledge exchange between generations, but this exchange is mainly from the older age group to the younger one. This results in a disconnection between the practices and the emerging issues of the empirical research, such as the decrease in importance of “experience” and the growing importance of “innovation” and competencies of the young generation (IT literacy, language skills).

Then, no practices are oriented at answering young people expectations for a better quality of working life (new forms of work organisation and larger autonomy in working time and space) or to promote a better integration of adult workers with family commitments (more articulated career opportunities, services and benefits for parents).

In general, from a comparison between empirical results and the collected practices, it emerges an overall picture that conveys a certain dissonance between needs of different generations and actual institutional and managerial practices.

3.4 Distance from the European policies framework

General objectives of the European strategy for employment and work (Lisbon strategy, European Employment Strategy, EC Green Paper on demographic challenge, Youth pact, etc.) include: full employment and higher quality of work, centrality of workers preferences

and family changes, gender as a mainstream objective, active ageing and longer permanence at work, attracting and retaining young workforce, reconciliation between work and family, solidarity between generations.

If we look at the analysed practices on the background of the European institutional framework, it is important to notice that at the European level the *topic of generations* is addressed mostly throughout the following issues:

- *Employment strategy*, namely through age management and incentives for older workers to stay longer on the labour market; integration of young people in the labour market; training for all age groups in order to increase adaptability; promoting solidarity between generations to ensure sustainable and equal social protection.
- *Demographic issues*, by focusing on support to youth, women and older employment, combining work and life cycle and by promoting a new pact between generations.
- *Equality*, in particular through a new approach to age management, mutual learning among generations at the workplace, multidimensional approach to gender as a mainstream issue also in the age perspective.
- *Education*, through the validation of formal and non-formal skills acquired in the course of a working life.

The comparison with the European policy framework underlines again some distance between the European agenda and the practices initiated by central and local governments or social partners. In particular, the distance concerns the lack of measures addressing the generational unbalance of the social protection benefits (unemployment, family supports, pensions); the lack of a life cycle approach in policies; the lack of practices addressing the ageing workforce in the perspective of longer permanence at work.

3.5 Recommendations to social actors

Consistently, it is now possible to summarise the main implications of the research outcomes from the standpoint of policy making.

We did not observe a real conflict among generations, though possible tensions can be foreseen especially for two reasons:

- the objective working conditions of the last generation, in terms of employment opportunities, social security and collective representation have greatly changed;
- particularly in manufacturing, the traditional cooperation at the workplace based on everyday practice and knowledge transmission between old workers and young workers does not work anymore, due to the sharp divide occurring between old industrial skills and new digital skills.

Moreover, the research highlights that objective critical aspects exist for each generation (or age group). In particular, also the mid-generation faces specific “generational” problems (as for their harder involvement in family commitments), while the old “lucky” ones are the most exposed to company reorganisation. As a consequence, every group has different expectations as far as the quality of working life is concerned.

Then, new challenges seem to emerge and ask for social actors intervention, in order to foster social cohesion and enhance cooperation among different age groups. Central and local institutions and governments, trade unions and companies are requested to undertake initiatives and remove constraints in the following main areas:

Flexicurity

Flexicurity, understood in a socially sustainable way, is now the main means to cope with young people precariousness in employment and social insecurity. Although they do not always ask for a stable job, they need more protection during transitions from education to employment, from one job to another, during leaves for training and skill updating. Anyway, flexicurity policies will be also useful for other generations when they have to face periods of unemployment or retraining.

Organisation of work

We could observe both a certain “ideological” opposition coming from younger generation towards the traditional hierarchy-based company organisation and also towards time and space constraints and a rather “objective” difficulty to cope with this rigidity for adult workers, especially mothers. In general, companies do not seem to be aware that a big cultural change is coming on regarding the different expectations of workers in the relation to work.

Work life balance and life cycle

The balance between work and other aspects of life is not just a female issue anymore. A good balance does not only call for a new flexible organisation of work but also for services and benefits addressing parents of young children and all workers with family care obligations. Moreover to meet workers’ (especially women’s) career expectations, companies should adopt different rules for career paths, leaving employees the chance to alternate hard/less hard commitment to work in relation to their life cycle.

Lifelong training and knowledge transmission

This policy is important for all the generations. Traditional practices of knowledge transmission and valorisation of experience can be useful in some industrial or professional environments. Nevertheless, with the large diffusion of information and communication technologies, skill maintenance cannot rely anymore just on this kind of practice. Regarding the elder generation, the obsolescence of traditional skills in manufacturing and the lack of foreign languages competencies and client orientation in service sector call for specific retraining actions. Similarly, competencies of the younger generations – especially digital ones which keep changing - should periodically be updated.

3.6 Suggestions to different policy actors

Central government

Central government should introduce appropriate social security measures, in the framework of a flexicurity policy (understood in a socially sustainable way) that could ensure:

- more security provisions for youth employment, in order to protect them against periods of unemployment and low income and to provide them health and maternity rights;

- flexible retirement measures for the elderly, in order to allow them to combine less working hours with full security during the last years of career;
- good lifelong training systems and employability to workers of every generation;
- family services and benefits (paid leaves and transfers to children or not self-sufficient family members) to help workers to meet life-cycle needs and to support more balanced demographical trends.

Local governments and local institutions

Local governments and local institutions may have a relevant role in:

- organising awareness campaigns on the topic of intergenerational cooperation;
- giving financial supports to projects of mentoring and knowledge exchanges between old workers (and entrepreneurs) and young workers (and entrepreneurs);
- creating family services at local level;
- monitoring the state of the art of existing best practices.

Social partners

Employers and trade unions at the company level may have important role in:

- changing work organisation and the performance evaluation systems, in order to increase autonomy, time management autonomy, self-development opportunities for young workers;
- introducing new tools for the harmonisation of career opportunities and family care for mid-generation, especially women;
- introducing ergonomics and humanisation of the working conditions: shorter hours, lighter workloads and improvement in the workplace environment for older workers;
- contrasting age discrimination, through measures that remove prejudices against old workers;
- introducing measures aimed at encouraging cooperation and mutual knowledge exchange between old and young workers.

Human resource managers

Specific practices to be introduced by company HR managers could be:

- age-diversity management, inspired by a managerial philosophy which considers different age-related attitudes and competencies as resources and oriented to facilitate mutual understanding among different age groups;
- practices of knowledge management, i.e. assessment, valorisation and exchange of skills and experience regarding old and young workers and knowledge transmission in both directions;
- more recognition of experience of old workers, also involving them in mentoring projects;
- designing new training systems and career paths according to heterogeneous needs in different life cycle phases;

enhancing job satisfaction, especially addressing young people's expectation of autonomy, mid-generation's needs for flexible working, old generation's needs to avoid too heavy and demanding jobs.

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