

## D8.6 Policy synthesis and integrative report on Family and Cultural Drivers of Youth Unemployment and Adulthood Transitions

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**STYLE-WP8:**  
**Family and Cultural Drivers of**  
**Youth Unemployment and Adulthood Transitions**

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## Abbreviations

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| AT      | Austria   |
| BE      | Belgium   |
| BG      | Bulgaria  |
| CY      | Cyprus  |
| CZ      | Czech Republic  |
| DE      | Germany   |
| DK      | Denmark   |
| EC      | European Commission                                       |
| EE      | Estonia   |
| ES      | Spain   |
| EU      | European Union  |
| EU-SILC | European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions |
| FI      | Finland   |
| FR      | France  |
| GR      | Greece  |
| GGP     | Generations and Gender Programme                          |
| HR      | Croatia   |
| HU      | Hungary   |
| IE      | Ireland   |
| IS      | Iceland   |
| IT      | Italy   |
| LT      | Lithuania   |
| LU      | Luxembourg  |
| LV      | Latvia  |
| MT      | Malta   |
| NL      | Netherlands   |
| OECD    | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development     |
| PL      | Poland  |
| PT      | Portugal  |
| RO      | Romania   |
| SE      | Sweden  |
| SES     | Socio-Economic Status                                     |
| SI      | Slovenia  |
| SK      | Slovakia  |
| UK      | United Kingdom  |

# 1. Introduction

This synthesis report summarises the main approaches, analyses, and results from each of the five collaborative tasks of WP8, around the legacies of the family of origin and national contexts onto young peoples' outcomes in the labour markets. It also elaborates on their integrated contributions to the understanding of how the family of origin might affect, hindering or supporting, young Europeans' early employment and family formation. The five tasks consisted of research around:

**Task 8.1:** Work-poor and work-rich families

**Task 8.2:** Family strategies to cope with poor labour market outcomes

**Task 8.3:** Leaving and returning to the parental home during the economic crisis

**Task 8.4:** The role of parental material resources in adulthood transitions

**Task 8.5:** Family formation strategies

## 1.1 Work-poor and work-rich families

The resources brought into young people's life course by their families of origin may play a crucial role in their employment and career prospects. In the study by Berloffia et al (2015), the authors focus on household work intensity to examine its effect on young people's employment likelihood in Europe. Analysing EU-SILC 2005 and 2011 data, the study finds that a large proportion of young people (16-24) live with their parents, with a significant variation across Europe (from 50% in the North to 90% in the South); and still a significant share of those in their older ages (25-34 years: 20% in Anglo-Saxon, Northern and Continental countries vs. 50% in Southern). Those living with parents in working-poor households have a higher risk of unemployment than those with one working parent, which in turn have a higher risk of unemployment than work-rich households (in Anglo-Saxon, Mediterranean and Central-Eastern countries). Parental effects, however, are varying by country, by young people's gender and also depending on whether fathers or mothers are employed. Young people are found more likely to be employed and less likely to be in education if other members of the household were employed, next to (either of) their parents. These results confirm the importance of considering the employment conditions of all family members because all family components, and not only the parents, contribute to create a labour market network that may be successful in helping young people to find a job. Along these lines, using data from 2005 and 2011, the authors find a legacy of parents' working status during adolescence for young people aged 25-34: growing up in a work-poor household makes for a higher risk of unemployment and inactivity than growing in a work-rich household. The effect of mothers' employment status is more widespread across EU member states,

while that of fathers' is more concentrated in some country groups (e.g. Continental and Mediterranean countries). The study provides evidence of an intergenerational persistence of worklessness, with remaining gender differences.

A longitudinal focus (on people aged 16-34 over the period 2008-2011 with EU-SILC data on eight selected countries: Finland, the UK, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Poland and Slovenia) adds on the role of parents' and siblings' employment status during the crisis. Young people living in workless households are considerably less likely to be enrolled in education, i.e. they experience shorter educational careers. Conversely, they display higher probabilities to be active in the labour market: either by being employed or searching for a job (unemployed). This suggests that a higher necessity of economic resources by the family of origin might steer young people away from pursuing or completing tertiary education, hampering their long-term employment prospects.

Task 8.1 also draws on SHARE data (2<sup>nd</sup> wave, 2006-2007) on eleven countries (Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Greece, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Poland and the Czech Republic) to include all young people already emancipated from the family of origin. It explores the effects of the wider family structure (parents and all living siblings) and reveals that family (dis)advantages are also reproduced through their non-resident members. While the number of siblings per se does not seem to affect young peoples' employment outcomes, siblings' own employment status was positively associated with young people's chances to be employed. Thus, employed siblings might possibly guide through employment search or provide referrals or social networks that enhance young people's employment chances.

With a deeper focus on age, ethnic and gender differences in the context of the UK, the study shows that the negative effect of having been raised in a workless family (vs. a family where both parents work) is stronger for younger individuals and for non-white women, especially South Asians.

The vast array of evidence clearly and repeatedly shows the strong negative effects for young people's employment opportunities if they come from a work-poor household, considering the roles played by parents, other adults and both co-resident and non-co-resident siblings.

## 1.2 Family strategies to cope with poor labour market outcomes

To explore further the family legacies onto young people's employment outcomes, Berloff et al. (2016) analyse the early stages of young people's employment (or non-employment) career trajectories, in the phase following educational achievements or completion. In particular, they examine the extent to which young people's family background and household characteristics impact on young individuals' transitions from school to work and their probability of experiencing successful or failure paths. The authors propose a twofold definition of successful paths based on two typologies: (1) classification of school-to-work trajectories and (2) of success-failure in occupational positioning through the dimensions of skills and wage (for those who are employed within the next 3 or 5 years).

They provide new comparative empirical evidence, both cross-sectional and longitudinal, on the following effects:

- the effect of the family employment structure on young people's probability to follow certain school-to-work-transition trajectories, for those still living with their parents;
- how the experience in unemployment at the early stage of employment career reflects on the occupational conditions (pay and skill level) reached by young people, net of individual and country characteristics;
- whether experiencing unemployment, (dis)continuity in employment or the type of entered job after leaving education affect, for those employed, the characteristics of their occupation three years later;
- which employment strategies are more likely to lead to a successful employment condition;
- how family social background influences the strategies pursued and outcomes achieved by young people in the labour market.

Results from Task 8.2 support the idea that families of origin strongly stratify young people's educational and occupational achievements, opportunities, strategies and prospects in the labour market. Their influence looms large, both when living within and outside the parental household.

The period when young people left education, their educational level and the employment structure of the family of origin, all have important consequences for the type of trajectory experienced by young individuals. In particular, the authors found that those who entered the labour market during the crisis (2008-2011), who were less educated, and who lived in families where most of their members were not working, were less likely to have a speedy trajectory and more likely to experience continuous unemployment or inactivity.

Parental employment status seems thus of crucial importance in contributing to explain young people's school-to-work trajectories. It is enough to have one working household member to increase significantly the probability of a speedy trajectory, and decrease significantly the probability of being continuously unemployed or inactive. The authors also identify a stronger buffering role from working-rich households during the crisis. Young people living in work-rich households were found more protected from the increasing difficulties in entering the labour market than their peers living in work-poor families, especially males.

Further evidence is based again on longitudinal EU-SILC data (with longitudinal sample of monthly employment records over 36 months for the period 2005-2012) but restricted to five selected countries: Finland, France, Italy, Poland and the UK. The authors find that although both an early start and a continuous employment attachment are associated with more favourable outcomes (especially a higher rate of 'success' and higher paid occupations for young people above 24 years), these effects were relatively small and did not support the idea that any job is necessarily always better than joblessness. They conclude that a well-matched start at the trade-off of a lower salary (or of a longer

job search), in terms of skills level, might often be a better strategy for securing better outcomes in the longer run, especially for tertiary educated.

They also bring evidence that (initially) poorly paid but skilled occupations (what they termed an 'investment' strategy) could constitute an opportunity for young people that can soon turn into a successful positioning in the labour market. Instead, unskilled occupations for qualified young people ('need' and 'failure' strategies) could become an employment trap difficult to reverse in the long run.

In line with the findings from other work packages of the project, higher education seems to be a major stepping-stone to a professional job and a successful establishment in the labour market. However, Tasks 8.1 and 8.2 also show that the capacity of young people to pursue tertiary education is still strongly stratified by family social class background and household work intensity.

These findings suggest a strong familial influence on young peoples' employment outcomes. They point to mechanisms related to a more successful role of higher-class families in informing (through advice and guidance), supporting (through social networks, aspiration building, more effective guidance through the educational and employment systems) and backing-up (economic support and/or longer co-residence) young peoples' employment decisions. In Task 8.2, the authors provide evidence that the most promising career strategies often entail initial losses such as higher risks (longer or more likely unemployment) or investments (lower pay). Children from wealthier families are better equipped to face these risks. These findings are in line with, and complement, the findings from other work packages of the project focussing on the risk of mismatch by educational institutions and search methods of first employment (Task 5.1) and for the impact of unemployment duration on a successful job search (Task 5.2).

Finally, the authors reveal that, as inequalities widen, parents' ability to invest in their children's success not only remains salient but also becomes more unequal, which increases both the space and opportunity for policy intervention.

### **1.3 Leaving and returning to the parental home during the economic crisis**

Göksen et al. (2015) describe and comparatively identify the possible economic, institutional and cultural factors that take part in the process of transition to adulthood. The authors particularly focus on the interrelationships between youth unemployment and decisions to leave and return to the parental home.

The findings show that in all major European country groups the share of young adults (below age of 35) that live with their parents has increased over time. While this share is below 50% in the Nordic and Continental countries, it is above 65% in the Mediterranean and over 70% in the Central-Eastern

European and Baltic countries. The increase accelerated after the 2008 crisis, particularly in the Northern and Continental European countries.

As for gender differences, in all countries males are more likely to co-reside with their parents. Gender differences are larger in the Northern and Continental countries, even though their overall rates are much lower than those in the Mediterranean and Central-Eastern European countries. Levels of completed education turn out to be an important characteristic to explain peoples' choice of living arrangements. While more educated individuals are more likely to live independently, there are variations across countries. Even the most educated individuals in the Southern and Central-Eastern European countries are found to stay longer with their parents, whereas the difference between the least educated groups across countries is less pronounced. Across all welfare regimes, the share of co-residence has increased during the crisis. Inactive individuals are found more often living with their parents after the crisis than before.

Adulthood transitions in the form of leaving the parental home to establish an autonomous household varies highly across European countries. Southern, Central-Eastern, Baltic countries and Turkey show lower leaving rates compared to the other countries, with no relevant change during the crisis. All countries experienced an increase in the share of people returning home, except the Central-Eastern European countries, with the Southern member states witnessing an increase throughout the period in analysis.

Higher total household income seems to foster an earlier exit of young people in the Southern, Central-Eastern and Continental European countries. On the contrary, poorer parents have less means of controlling the household living arrangement decisions of their children. Higher parental personal income (e.g. from employment or pensions) relative to their adult children's personal income is associated with increased chances of co-residence in all country groups (except the Nordic and Anglo-Saxon countries, where lack of data do not allow testing for this effect). Young people's access to employment is indirectly associated with home leaving, because it seems to foster the process of family formation through which residential independence occurs. With regards to returning home, the higher the relative personal income of young people, the lower the likelihood to returning home in all country groups in the analysis. Losing a job increases instead the probability of returning home, but only in the Continental and Southern Countries. Divorce has an even stronger effect than job-loss on raising the probability to return to the parental home (results hold also when excluding the inactive). Net of these individuals and family characteristics, Task 8.3 reveals how the availability of housing and housing market circumstances strongly influence the opportunities for young adults to leave their parents' homes. A combination of high-levels of home-ownership, difficult access to mortgages and high housing prices seem a significant obstacle to young people's residential independence and family formation.

Public housing policies such as housing allowances and rent-controlled or free (social) housing seem to have a considerable impact on the decision to leave and return to the parental home, with stronger effect on the decisions to leave. With the exception of the Central-Eastern European countries,

benefiting from housing allowances seem associated with a higher probability of leaving the parental home across all welfare regimes. Housing allowance also plays a role on the reverse decision: its lack seems to be associated to more frequent decisions to return to the parental home. Returners are more likely found among home-owners and private tenants.

The findings from Task 8.3 support the idea of an association between young people's and their households' resources and their decisions to leave and return to the parental home. Higher parental resources seem to facilitate adulthood transitions; whereas the consequences of unemployment and precarious work negatively reflect on young people's opportunities to establish their own families. Economic independence, promoted through employment, income support or housing allowance, is thus critical to understand the barriers encountered in the transition to independent adulthood.

## 1.4 The role of parental material resources in adulthood transitions

Family ties extend beyond childhood and loom beyond co-residence. They persist after young people reach residential emancipation and often take the form of reciprocal intergenerational transfer of goods and services between parents and children. Task 8.4 investigates the role of the family of origin on parental support through monetary transfers flowing from parents to children. Specifically, Filandri et al. (2016a) examined three distinct aspects of monetary transfers: (1) intra-household sharing of resources, (2) regular inter-household monetary transfers and (3) poverty outcomes of independent living. They provided original empirical comparative evidence based on cross-sectional EU-SILC data (including specific modules on the intra-household share of resources from 2010 and the intergenerational transmission of poverty from 2005 and 2011) around the following questions:

- (i) What is the extent to which young adults pool their incomes with other household members or keep incomes separately?
- (ii) Who are the young people with higher likelihood to receive regular cash transfer?
- (iii) What are the patterns of youth poverty across member states?

Results for the first question, the intra-household income sharing in seventeen EU countries, reveal that in households with higher income, young adults contribute less to the household budget and are more able to decide about their personal expenses. Reciprocally, the unemployed and students contribute less and have lower ability to decide over personal expenses. The authors conclude that the majority of young adults seem to benefit from co-residence when taking into account intra-household sharing of resources. This happens because of two mechanisms: parents typically have higher incomes as compared to young adults and also share a larger fraction of their incomes with other household members.

Results to the second question on regular income support to young people who have left the parental household across twenty-five EU countries, show a strong gradient across countries in the likelihood to be recipient of regular cash transfers, with Southern European countries displaying a much lower probability than others. Southern countries, however, are characterised by higher rates of material support through co-residence. There is neither a clear evidence of a gender divide nor a change over time after the economic crisis. Empirical evidence supports instead both a strong class effect and the relevance of occupational circumstances. Non-employed children seem more likely to benefit from parental income support throughout, as those from higher social backgrounds. However, the results also show that parental resources are more important than young people's needs: while in all countries (but Belgium) non-employed children have higher chances to be supported, in all countries employed children from higher social backgrounds have a similar or higher likelihood to receive regular transfers as unemployed children from the lower class. Regular cash transfers seem to be thus another, additional way in which social inequalities and unequal transmission of opportunities are being maintained and reproduced.

The third question, around the poverty risk incurred by young people aged 15-29 living independently relative to those in the parental home reveal significant changes between 2005 and 2011. In the European Union, the risk of poverty among young people is higher than population average and increased considerably during the economic crisis (from 17.9 to 20.1 per cent in the period considered), with young people from the Southern and the Northern European countries more exposed to the risk of living in poverty. These poverty rates vary largely across countries, based on differences in young people's living arrangements and activity status. Results show that, overall in the EU, the at-risk-of-poverty rate of the youth living independently (compared to those living in the parental home) raised from 10 per cent higher in 2005 to 50 per cent higher in 2011. Also, the poverty rates of young adults with low educated parents compared to their peers with highly educated parents were higher in both years: on average, the risk increased from 1.7 in 2005 to 2.0 in 2011. However, the effect of parental background seems even more important for those still living with their parents, which are over-represented among those with lower educated parents (coherently to what the authors show in Task 8.5, that residential independence is linked to parental social background and what was shown in Task 8.3, that higher parental resources favour young people residential independence).

## 1.5 Family formation strategies

Task 8.5 analyses the role of the family of origin and institutional contexts in mediating the effect of (un)employment status on family formation strategies among young people. Reaching an independent residence, entering a partnership, being employed and having children are seen as complementary to a wider quest of independence and speedier transition to adulthood for young people. Results revealing a strong influence of the family of origin in family formation imply that these processes are at the core of social inequalities and intergenerational mobility.

Specifically, the task has explored the following questions:

- (i) How do characteristics of the family of origin affect family formation transitions and how do these effects vary by gender?
- (ii) How does poor labour market entry affect own family formation among young people in Europe?
- (iii) How do institutional arrangements affect employment and family formation?

The first two questions were addressed by using the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) project's data for four European countries: Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and France. The third question has been addressed with data from EU-SILC 2011 cross-sectional survey (the ad-hoc module on intergenerational transmission of poverty and social exclusion, with information on family background) and Eurostat macro indicators for 2011. It explored how contextual characteristics are associated to the probability of being employed and to be residentially independent, in a partnership and to have a child, on young people aged between 25 and 34 years in twenty-nine European countries.

Results from Task 8.5 have shown (although at a lower level of generalisability due to the low number of countries in analysis) that parental background, once again, proves a strategic resource to young people in case of difficulties establishing independence with other means. It seems clearly so for childbearing: when young people are scarred by unemployment, they are more likely to delay family formation if they come from a high socio-economic status (SES) family. In general terms, having more parental resources avoids unfavourable outcomes, such as having a child when lacking financial independence. However, resources from the family background can also influence marriage timing: young men and women from low SES families tend to get married earlier.

As in the case of a lack of gender differences in regular economic support from the family, here again no strong gender differentials were found in the way in which labour market status affects family formation strategies. The authors suggest this symmetry as evidence that new generations of young women in Europe are using the labour market to gain financial independence to the same extent as young men.

Along the same lines (next to individual characteristics), also contextual characteristics point to the relevance of greater gender equality in employment. Testing how welfare generosity, housing and labour market characteristics are associated with the probability that young people have a higher or lower likelihood to be employed, be in a couple and have had children using EU-SILC data from 2011 on twenty-nine European countries, the authors found that more inclusive labour markets is the most influential trait of institutional contexts affecting employment circumstances and family formation of young Europeans. The most predictive institutional characteristic explaining cross-country differences in the situation of young people is the degree of labour market development, measured by female employment rate, with a significant effect on all outcome states (employment and residential independence, partnership and parenthood). Higher female employment rates are significantly

associated with more young people having advanced through all the steps of the process of transition to adulthood.

These results offer insights of a growing gender equality and a shift, especially for younger generations, to a double breadwinning model arrangement in families, where two jobs (and income sources) are needed, desired, or might be normatively perceived as appropriate, for family formation. With growing levels of education and of uncertainty in the labour markets, self-realisation and personal autonomy (also through gaining an independent income) might be increasingly perceived as a necessary precondition to family formation by both genders, which prompts for a clear relevance of the labour market structure, and specifically of young women's increasing participation in the labour market.

Among individuals' resources, higher education (as in Tasks 8.1 and 8.2) seems associated with widespread (though not universal) advantage in family formation. Those holding a secondary or (even more) a tertiary degree, are more frequently among those having experienced the transitions, especially towards residential independence (and to a lesser extent to partnership formation). Higher education, again, is a crucial resource both in the labour market and in family formation. However, the probability of achieving tertiary education, with its beneficial effects on employment outcomes and family formation, is itself partly mediated by the resources available to the family of origin.

## 2. Policy themes

The research reports published under Work Package 8 are informative to policy making around several key aspects of young peoples' job search and insertion process, in their connections to stratifying dimensions along social background and reflections on family formation. In particular, important findings and policy implications can be drawn regarding (i) employment services and guidance for young people (ii) more gender equal opportunities in the labour markets and (iii) income support measures for unemployed and first-job seekers.

### 2.1 Employment services and guidance for young people

The findings from Tasks 8.1 and 8.2 suggest that (not only economic) family resources (from co-resident and non-co-resident members), can strongly stratify opportunities for young people, in terms of guiding them through employment paths, avoiding employment traps, gaining access to social networks, developing soft skills, acknowledging one's potentials and interests and selecting and affording educational investments. These findings suggest the opportunity for policy interventions aimed at breaking the intergenerational transmission of disadvantages, especially in Anglo-Saxon and Mediterranean countries. Results revealed that the tightened labour market conditions for youth over the crisis might even sharpen existing differences, and call for better employment services for young people.

As found in Task 8.2 (and also indicated by results of WP5), given the strong salience of early stages of the employment for later outcomes, a comprehensive investment strategy in young people's transition to employment should become a priority. Key steps would be: (1) increasing opportunities for low and middle class children, as well as for low work intensity households, to have their children pursue higher education and secondly (2) offering later guidance for young peoples' strategic planning through the initial steps of their careers.

In particular, policy interventions should be targeted to young people living in households where parents or other family members do not work. These interventions should focus both on young people's aspirations and motivation, and on giving them access to an effective service of job search.

Interventions might comprise raising awareness among parents on the importance of their expectations, guidance role, and array of options with respect to their children's educational routes (length and affordability) and potential returns. These interventions should also focus on devising career guidance, especially for young people from poorer backgrounds, to enhance aspirations and recognise and plan viable strategies towards the achievement of short and long-term career goals.

Further, an important line of interventions should aim at securing a more even access to tertiary education by family background, especially in those countries where tuition fees are high and young people are excluded from entitlement to economic support while studying, or where residential costs are an obstacle to the pursuit of higher level studies. Results from Tasks 8.2 and 8.4, reveal again family influences on the educational routes pursued by young people, with an early entry into employment for children from households with poor attachment to the labour market, and risks of higher unemployment or future employment traps. This would suggest to restrict or to monitor early educational tracking and shorter routes that do not provide flexibility in changes between career tracks.

Further, all tasks from WP8 provide empirical evidence of the strong stratifying effects of family background on young people life chances (both in the labour market and family formation). Policies and interventions should invest in educational programs (already at younger ages) to increase self-awareness about one's abilities and interests; to equalise educational aspirations and expectations; as well as to provide more broadly some of the soft-skills that better-off parents can afford to their children (this might include self-confidence, leadership, resilience, diplomacy, cooperative team-work and mediation).

Finally, providing a wider and more homogeneous access to opportunities for internships or company-based training, being it through investments in educational institutions' career-support functions as suggested in WP5 (Task 5.4) or through employment agencies, might contribute to counterbalance wealthier families' higher capacity to access these resources through personal networks. Policies should provide young people with opportunities for exchange, mentoring and guidance within mixed environments, for sharing opportunities and social networks and for making the experience of a larger array of strategies and possible outcomes. This is strategic insofar as perceptions become highly selective in closed social circles, since attitudes are being formed, and strategies pursued, on the basis of the perceived available options.

## 2.2 More gender equal opportunities in the labour markets

Both Tasks 8.1 and 8.5 provide evidence that securing better employment prospects to women (both younger and older, as mothers of young entrants) would both benefit employment outcomes for young people and favour family formation. Task 8.1, in particular, reveals a strong association between mothers' employment and later children's occupational outcomes (with speedier transitions and increased employment participations of daughters among others). This suggests to enact policies aimed at favouring mothers' employment in order to prevent more difficulties for future generations. Task 8.5 reveals that for younger cohorts in recent times, a more gender equal participation in the labour market is associated with a greater advancement in the transition to adulthood, for both genders. The authors provide evidence of the relevance of labour market structure, specifically of women's participation in the labour market, with higher female employment rate being significantly

associated to all outcome states around family formation (employment and residential independence, partnership and parenthood). These results offer insights of a growing gender equality and a shift, especially for younger generations, to a double breadwinning model arrangement in families, where two jobs (and income sources) are needed, desired, or might be normatively perceived as appropriate, for family formation. With growing levels of education and of uncertainty in the labour markets, self-realisation and personal autonomy (also through gaining an independent income) might be increasingly perceived as a necessary precondition to family formation by both genders.

As suggested in WP4, addressing gender gaps early in the life course could help avoiding later inequalities and their long-term consequences. WP4 shows that gender mainstreaming has not been systematically applied to youth labour market policies in several case-study countries. Results from WP8 support the view that anti-discrimination policies that promote gender equal access to employment and equal career opportunities, as well as conciliation policies to retain women in the labour force, such as paid leaves, long-term contracts (as opposed to fixed-term), care services and flexible working hours, might offer support to young people establishing an independent living and form their own families, while contributing to pursue the objective of a more inclusive and sustainable growth at the societal level.

### 2.3 Income support for unemployed and first-job seekers

As of now, in most European countries flexible jobs (agency work, fixed-term contracts, part-time work, mini-jobs, some forms of self-employment) risk to become a lower segment of the labour force, catering especially for young people, but unable to protect them from the risks of incurring a 'trap jobs' career, unemployment, parenthood or illness, nor to provide a secure income guarantee in old-age. Results from Tasks 8.1, 8.2 and 8.4 suggested that relaxing hiring and firing legislation without compensating with generous social protection and active labour market policies, while increasing retirement age, risks to affect young people's capacity to establish themselves in employment in a way that strongly stratifies their life opportunities according to their class of origin. In the absence of a universal income provision measure for the unemployed, children from wealthier families may bridge unemployment or non-employment more easily than others, with the economic support from their families. Especially Task 8.4 indicates that both social family background and occupational circumstances were salient in predicting the likelihood of receiving regular income support. Non-employed children were more likely to benefit from parental support throughout, as are those from higher social classes. However, parental resources seemed stronger predictors than young people's needs: in all countries employed children from higher social backgrounds had a similar (if not higher) likelihood to receive regular transfers as unemployed children from the lower class.

Further, rises in unequal access to employment and income for households would jeopardise lower classes young peoples' life chances and opportunities. They would also, at the country level, increase further losses in productivity (with a tremendous loss of productive potential) and increase the

pressure towards more passive income support measures. Alternatively, they would unevenly strain families who have to compensate for retrenching welfare and increasingly fragile markets.

A growing use of temporary contracts (relaxing hiring and firing regulations) in the absence of strong and universal income support measures may increase young people's turbulence in the initial steps of their careers (by increasing unemployment overall duration and 'need' strategies, resorting to 'failure' strategies or informal work). It may also increase their dependence on their families of origin, stratifying further their destinies on the basis of their social background, and worsen their prospects of a successful employment outcome in the longer term.

These findings suggest harmonising benefit systems to include young people, since segmentation of the labour markets, prolonged turbulence and informal work can easily become traps for those young people in need of gainful employment. Redistributive policies aimed at supporting the income level of the lower class, especially during non-employment, either through a universal system of unemployment benefits for young people unrelated to the previous contributive history and/or housing allowances, could readdress these inequalities. The analyses from Tasks 8.4 and 8.5 support a measure by which government social protection programs ought to guarantee regular cash transfers to poor young adults in periods of non-employment, conditioned either on active job search or on participation in ALMPs.

### 3. Bibliography

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