

# Giovani e lavoro oggi. Uno sguardo sociologico a una situazione a rischio

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Labor market “flexibilisation” has been proposed as an adequate response to economic challenge and as a requirement for economic and occupational growth. It further has been argued that “flexible forms of employment” would not only foster employment but could also help women, in particular, to positively combine work and family life. As one route towards more flexibility, many European countries opted for a specific model: the “partial and targeted” labour market deregulation, increasing so-called “non-standard” employment relations while leaving the regulation of already existing employment relations largely unchanged. Italy is an example for this strategy of “deregulation at the margins”. In this paper, which draws on the results of a larger research project including the work of several persons, we investigate the ongoing process of labour market “flexibilisation” and its consequences both at individual level and for social inequalities. We do so by looking at individual occupational, economic and demographic careers in a longitudinal perspective. We demonstrate how the specific form of “flexibilisation” in Italy led to strong cleavages in society and to a further segmentation of the labour market, thus accumulating risks for specific types of employment on younger cohorts (and women). The second part of the paper focuses on the social consequences of “non-standard” employment substantively enlarging the usual perspective limited to labour career prospects. We extend the view on economic and demographic consequences enriched by information on current family life and general well-being. We report evidence showing that non-standard employment too often fails to function as a springboard to a successful employment career but rather acts as trap. Consequences are not limited to occupational careers, but, especially in Italy where employment is often the only connection to welfare entitlements, may have far reaching negative consequence also for the private and family life. This point is even more relevant as the higher employment insecurity of atypical work contracts is not, like it was argued by some, compensated by higher economic rewards. On the contrary, the usually lower wages in precarious jobs are even combined with poorer working conditions. We show that precarious employment in fact has negative externalities on the general well-being and the family life and of both (young) men and women and, moreover, that the current employment situation critically incises on future family plans, especially for women. Methodologically we rely on event history and panel models to cope with unobserved heterogeneity problems using data from the Indagine Longitudinale sulle Famiglie Italiane, Eu/It-Silc, and the new Istat FSS-2009, supplemented by information from the ECHP and the European Social Survey.

