

Editorial **From Unemployment to Flexicurity – Opportunities and Issues for Social Quality in the World of Work in Europe**

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This special issue of the Journal, which gathers a number of papers produced in the context of a research project recently conducted by the European Foundation on Social Quality, is again devoted to the crucial policy-field of employment. Indeed, at national and European Union levels, employment continues to be the most difficult and conflict-ridden part of the social and economic policy agenda, as it has for the best part of the last three decades. There has been very limited policy success in this field, and this is clearly illustrated by the fact that the most intractable problem, that of mass unemployment, has not been solved to any significant extent.

During the last few years, some emphasis has been put on trying to define tools that would resolve the apparently irreconcilable strategies and objectives of employers and workers, confronted by new, competitive, international market imperatives – on the one side workers seek security of employment in an age when, increasingly, jobs are temporary activities which come and go according to market evolution. On the other side employers seek greater, or total, flexibility on the part of their employees – that is, the maximum opportunities to adapt their workforce to market requirements, including the ability to hire and fire, and set working hours, deployment and conditions of work freed from so-called ‘red tape’. At the same time, the situation is much more complex as employees, too, seek forms of flexibility in their working lives, in order to reconcile fast-evolving patterns of personal and family lives (with new requirements in terms of time constraints and family care) with constraints of their working life. Furthermore, it can be argued that businesses themselves seek continuity, up to a certain point, in one of their main assets: that is, the skills and deployment of a trained workforce, which indicate that some form of employment security is required in order to guarantee this continuity.

In this context, the idea of the conjunction of various forms of flexibility and security in a new employment paradigm, for which the neologism

of ‘flexicurity’ has been coined, is being used by an increasing number of research and policy-making institutions. The ILO has been using it for a while (Auer, 2000), and has been initiating a project on flexicurity which looks at labour-market flexibility and employment security in Central and Eastern European countries. Flexibility has been used as a linchpin to analyse varied employment and welfare policies in Northern European countries, such as the Netherlands, Denmark and, more recently, Germany. Especially, the employment policies in Denmark, based on a flexicurity framework, have been subject of much attention in the last five years. The so-called ‘golden triangle’ of this framework, associating the three poles of a flexible labour market with a highly protective and generous welfare and social security system and an active labour market policy programme, is therefore a ‘hybrid model’, mixing North European Welfare State on one side, with Anglo-Saxon liberal, deregulated labour markets (Madsen, 2002) on the other. The 1999 Act on Employment in the Netherlands is directly inspired by the flexicurity conceptual policy framework (a discussion of this legal initiative is to be found in Korver’s article in this issue).

Flexicurity, insofar as it would help to reduce unemployment risks and improve the quality of life of people at work, as well as contribute to the adaptability of labour within businesses, appears to be a worthy aim for employment policies – albeit one that at first may appear to be squaring the circle, and one which needs considerable further clarification. Trade unions especially are very wary of a strategy that appears to accept the inevitability of labour-market deregulation and transferring to the welfare state, in a way or another, the cost of security. This issue examines how flexicurity may be a useful way of exploring the present situation and tracing new avenues in policy-making in Europe.

1. Background

Since the social quality initiative was launched in 1997, with the purpose of integrating social and economic policies in Europe, and developing a new approach for the understanding the daily circumstances of European citizens (Beck et al., 1997), it was intended that social quality would be both a measuring rod for policy makers and a means to enable citizens to engage more closely in governance. In this context, it was from the start considered important to address the policy field of employment from the social quality perspective. A first step to studying this field has been made in a previous special issue of *The European Journal of Social Quality*. As Alan Walker put it in his introduction to a previous issue (Vol. 2, issue 2):

European welfare states were founded on the assumption of 'full' employment. Therefore unemployment has a critical bearing on welfare states and their sustainability Employment is, equally obviously, crucial to the social quality of people's lives. There is a clear link between employment and inclusion and, conversely, unemployment and exclusion. (Walker, 2000: 3)

Social policy does not only serve the interests of the economy, but needs a rationale of its own, one that focuses, for example, on the *quality* of employment in addition to its quantity. 'The central issue for European welfare states should be the impact of employment on the quality of people's lives.' (ibid: 4)

The world of work has been in a deep crisis in Europe since the early 1970s. Unemployment rose steadily and then stayed at very high levels. Indeed, although the 'official' unemployment rate in the European Union is now lower than in the mid-1990s (11.1 percent of the total workforce in 1994) it still reached 8.8 percent in May 2003 and has been increasing again since the end of 2001. This means that at least 14.3 million people are searching for a job in the EU15 zone.

There are three interwoven aspects to this crisis, which should be distinguished. The first is unemployment and underemployment: that is, the expulsion or the barring of part of the workforce from the socialised economy (dominated by the market as the regulating form). The second is simply that people are badly employed: the employment relationship is organised in such a way that considerable lack of opportunities arise, in terms of income, adaptation to new technologies, inequalities of treatment in terms of ethnic origins or gender, etc. A third aspect to this crisis is to be found in the problematic relationship between work and the rest of socialisation: both change fast, and not always in the same direction; for instance, within the family.

Moreover, the near completion of monetary union has serious implications for national labour markets, and also to social security and welfare systems, as the major part of the burden to adjust to economic trends and cycles has been shifted to these systems. Under the discipline of a central European currency, national measures (such as exchange rates, manipulation of interest rates, national debt management and financial initiatives to boost effective demand) have either disappeared or been restricted in scale and scope. On the other hand, the option of policy competition in the field of labour, welfare and social security is far from chimerical. How attractive that option will be is an empirical question. In the past few years the economic context has been favourable, so the real test for policy competition may yet come. Policy coordination, however, is the official creed of the Union, according to which employment must be integrated in the grand

scheme of constructing a competitive Europe, in such a manner that wages, working hours and conditions will serve that objective instead of dividing it. Whichever prevails, competition or coordination, the debate on the issue can be furthered only if internationally comparable data on employment systems are construed, collected, compared and judged. These data, following the European guidelines, should include those on what is called 'adaptability'. The Foundation research has chosen to focus on adaptability for several reasons that are further elaborated in two of the papers in this issue, but which are worth introducing briefly.

2. Partnership for a New Organisation of Work

In the European debates on employment, a classic type of dualism, which opposes conceptually and practically two visions of the embedding of labour into socio-economic life, relates to the perceived contradictions between labour standards and labour costs. In Europe, the plea for common labour standards has traditionally been motivated by the fear of social dumping. However, high labour standards need not be a competitive disadvantage at all. Considerations on compensation for the weaker countries figured prominently in the passing of the 1989 Framework Directive on Working Conditions (European Council, 1989). It is difficult, though, to assess the contributions of the compensation offered to the weaker countries, and the 'contribution' of the expected softness in the monitoring of the obligations emanating from the Directive. However, the establishment of high standards is clearly, in itself, a competitive advantage for the stronger countries. And this implies that other aspects of labour standards (minimum wages, hours, combining flexibility in employment contracts with social security) will be adopted by Europe only if it serves the competitive interests of those stronger countries.¹ The Directive, then, is based on the notion that high standards and competitive advantage can go together, and it takes the highest level of standards (in the case of health and safety those of Sweden, followed by Denmark and the Netherlands) to set the tone of further developments and demands.

In the European context the theoretical antecedents of adaptability are sketched in the Green Paper 'Partnership for a new organisation of work' (European Commission, 1998). In this document, work organisation is defined as the way in which the production of goods and services is organised in the workplace. A new, adapting, work organisation is defined as 'the replacement of hierarchical and rigid structures by more innovative and flexible structures based on high skill, high trust and increased involvement of employees'. The reliance on the firm does not imply that policy

makers should remain aloof from the subject. On the contrary, policy makers are to,

develop or adapt policies which support, rather than hinder, fundamental organisational renewal and ... to strike a productive balance between the interests of business and the interests of workers, thereby facilitating the modernisation of working life. An essential objective is to achieve such a balance between flexibility and security throughout Europe.

The balance of flexibility and security, then, is at the 'heart of the partnership for a new organisation of work'.

Against this background, the European Foundation research project is based on analyses of the national employment situation in eight Member States and one candidate Member State, and focuses on the so-called 'adaptability' pillar of the European employment objectives. Adaptability is the most underdeveloped pillar of four, the other three (employability, entrepreneurship and equal opportunity) focussing mainly on enhancing the supply of labour, while adaptability relates to the organisation of work and labour market participation. The social quality of employment, then, first addresses the new concept of 'flexicurity' as a key domain of the adaptability pillar of employment policies. This new concept concerns the balance between flexibility and security in the labour market, seen from the perspectives of employees and employers. The apparent contradiction between the two aims can be resolved by acknowledging that labour is not merely a commodity, and cannot behave only in a strict economic sense. This paradigm shift involves a multifaceted, holistic approach of socio-economic relations in the world of work. The development of flexicurity may help cope with the far-reaching changes and transformations that affect the production relations as human relations.

The first and main objective of this project was to develop and apply the concept of 'adaptability' to Europe's labour markets, and especially to assess the tension between flexibility in working time on the one hand, and employment security on the other hand. A second objective was to examine how employment affects the social quality of the daily circumstances of citizens. This would help interpret past and present policies at the national and European level. Moreover, the adopted perspective of dealing holistically with paid and unpaid work in an integrated manner would help take new trends in women's work and in the hitherto unrecognised forms of labour – broadly called 'care work' – into account.

The Member States of the EU are expected to report annually on the progress they make concerning the realisation of the objectives under the four 'pillars' discussed above. National reports for the years 1998, 1999

and 2000 are available, as well as their consolidation into a Joint Employment Report, prepared and distributed by the European Commission. The general preference in Europe is to present the data on progress made in a quantifiable form, to identify best practices and to visualise the position of the Member States relative to best practices. This, in our understanding, points at the core of the application, and therefore the core of our research project. With this comparative research the project aimed to reduce the existing fragmentation in employment policies. Furthermore, it sought to contribute to the development of research comparability with which to address the question of adaptability, as one of the pillars of the employment policies. It also sought to stimulate the development of adequate classifications – quantitative as well as qualitative – that reflect the impact of institutions in this policy field on the quality of life of citizens, and their chances for new forms of labour and employment, and participation in political systems. Finally, it contributes to modern forms of communication between scientists from different disciplines, from all over Europe, in order to stimulate a new consistent and coherent conceptual scheme with regard to one of the main pillars of the EU's employment policies.

3. Questions of Methodology

As pointed out earlier, articles in a previous thematic issue of *The European Journal of Social Quality*, devoted to 'Social Quality and Employment' (Vol. 2, issue 2), provided useful background for the project,² and the recently published second book of the Foundation, *Social Quality: A Vision of Europe* (Beck et al., 2001), developed important theoretical points of departure for exploring the impact of technology, social and economic changes on labour markets and, especially, the participation of citizens in the labour force. But the Foundation research project has a more focussed and ambitious remit, centring on the theme of flexicurity as the most crucial policy target inside the adaptability pillar, and seeking to embed it into the social quality approach.

Another aspect of the research project was to formulate indicators to determine the nature of flexicurity, as well as its level. These indicators examine the four issues mentioned above: income security, employment relations, working time and forms of leave. The project gathered European-based data on these four indicators, in order to start the exploration of them in different Member States, and write draft national reports, which were then discussed before a final choice of indicators was made and final reports drafted. Of the nine national reports that were produced (Belgium, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Denmark, Germany, Spain and the

United Kingdom) the first five are presented in this issue of the Journal in a slightly edited form. These countries have been selected in order to provide a dynamic insight into the variety of possible balances between flexibility and security, and the relevance of their reflection on the national employment situation. Note that the four national reports not included in this issue (Denmark, Germany, Great Britain and Spain) can be found on the Foundation's Website, www.socialquality.org, as well as the original and unedited versions of the chapters and reports included in this issue.

A final step in the research project has been to aggregate the results of the national reports, and to compare and analyse the outcomes of the analyses on each of the four indicators. Most of these analyses are presented in the two articles on 'Adaptability' and 'Work Time and Time for Care'.

The Foundation's project should be seen as an exploration, for three reasons. First, European data about flexicurity indicators are not complete and the national data lack enough quality for full comparability. The data presented in this issue is already four years old, but we consider that this is not a major problem, precisely because of the exploratory nature of the exercise. In the future, it can be hoped that the construction of more comparable data on national level, in cooperation with the Dublin-based Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, will help the development of a European perspective.³ Second, the confrontation with the social quality theory is new, and therefore the results can only be – in a logical sense – tentative.⁴ Third, the specific rationale that helps articulate the first lesson of the research, and which relates to the gender question, encounters problems because of the powerful, existing, hidden propositions with regard to the position of men and women in the labour market.

4. The Scope of the Research Project

The famous conclusion of the Lisbon Summit in June 2000 was that the key aim of the European Union is for Europe to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The motive seems quite clear. The European Union is confronted with at least three challenges. First, the challenge to incorporate the Central and Eastern states into the Union. Second, to develop its institutional form in such a way that the Union and all its Member States are able to promote the well-being of citizens. Third, at the same time, it has to address the outcomes of some fundamental transformations in economic and social relationships. Castells explains, for example, the mechanisms responsible for the breaking up of relationships on an individual level and

social level. The nature of recent transformations stimulate a ‘fundamental split between abstract, universal instrumentalist, and historically rooted, particularistic identities ... In this condition of structural schizophrenia between function and meaning, patterns of social communication become increasingly under stress’. (Castells, 1997: 3)

It is quite logical that, in order to address these three challenges at the same time, economic policies, social policies and employment policies should be connected in a specific way. The nature of this connection, which should strengthen the EU’s competitiveness in the world as well as the cohesion between its citizens, can be represented diagrammatically, in what has become known as the Diamantopoulou Triangle (after the Social Affairs and Employment Commissioner). This theme is discussed in the article in this issue by Laurent van der Maesen, in which it is argued that the social quality initiative may be a condition for understanding this relationship, and elaborates aspects of it. One of the characteristics of the social quality approach is its inter-disciplinary methodology, adopted so as to be able to give a multifaceted, holistic picture of social and economic relations in the world of work.

The second book of the European Foundation on Social Quality (Beck et al., 2001) presented new theoretical based arguments of the original definition of social quality, namely ‘the extent to which people in the European Union are able to participate in the social and economic life of their communities under conditions which enhance their well-being and individual potential’. This theory links immediately to the questions of enlargement and constitutional reform and their related policy domains. In other words, the main strategic goal of the European Union should contribute to the specific outcomes of the enlargement and its constitutional forms in order to enhance social quality.

The Foundation’s second book refers also to economic and social transformations as the context for theorising social quality. Because of the acceleration of technological innovation (especially in terms of communication and networking), relations will change fundamentally. In a technological sense the flexibility of labour will be both a necessity and an opportunity. We may notice an increase in the individualisation of work. With regard to the social dimension, the nature and structure of families is changing as well as production relations, and related norms and values have evolved accordingly. We are confronted with an increase of the so-called individualisation of human relations. Both trends can strengthen or undermine each other. The challenge to connect employment policies with (macro) economic and (macro) social policies (see the Diamantopoulou Triangle in van der Maesen’s article) refers to the necessity to cope with the consequences of both tendencies. When trying to flesh out a ‘vision’ of

the future of the European Union, the question immediately arises of the differences and similarities of social and economic approaches in Europe (the so-called European Social Model) and in the United States of America. Especially, the social quality approach underlines the necessity to formulate a positive vision⁵ and delivers theoretical points for its development. This is the reason why the President of the European Commission, Mr R. Prodi, wrote in the foreword of the Foundation's second book:

[it] places social issues at the very core of the concept of quality. It promotes an approach that goes beyond production, economic growth, employment and social protection and gives self-fulfilment for individual citizens a major role to play in the formation of collective identities. This makes the book an important and original contribution to the shaping of a new Europe.⁶

What form of employment is attractive or necessary in order to contribute to competitiveness in the context of changing economic and social conditions? This question should be connected with the plea to perceive the labour force differently (see above) as a condition for strengthening societal cohesion. The outcome of the Lisbon Summit may be seen as a logical invitation to confront new employment policies with social quality.

The report focuses on flexicurity as the core element of the adaptability pillar of employment policies, looking at the combination of secure and flexible employment in a lifetime perspective. As it is argued in the article on Adaptability, flexicurity is a difficult balance to achieve, and social innovation will be necessary to pave the way for a new balance. Later in this editorial we will refer to some good practices, in the Netherlands and in Spain, with which to illustrate opportunities for such innovation. The Project's general purpose is to connect employment policies with social quality, and, within this, to connect flexicurity with social quality. Given the characteristics of flexicurity, it would be quite logical to connect it with one of the four objective conditional factors of social quality, namely inclusion. Therefore, the final question is, how may the outcomes of flexicurity as an aspect of employment policies contribute to the *inclusion* of citizens in the production relations of their social circumstances? The authors of the report concluded, with this in mind, that social security should not merely make work pay, it should make transitions pay: from one job to another, from one employer to another, from one level of competence to another and from one combination of work and care to another. This argument is understandable bearing in mind the consequences of recent economic and social transformations. Instead of only financing the, mostly involuntary, change from employment into unemployment, social security should contribute to the often-voluntary changes in combining work and care, work and education, and work and the phased transition to retirement.

With this last remark we may revisit the earlier plea to perceive the work relations differently, especially in order to address the social transformations that are affecting them.

Employment Relations

The article reviewing the National Reports in the context of the indicator ‘employment relations’ (‘Flexible and Secure: Adaptability and the Employment Relationship’) refers at length to the European Commission’s 1997 Green Paper. The paper illustrates some of the developments in European Union employment policies, which insist on the need to strike a new balance between the interests of business and those of the workers, between flexibility and security, which may be different from the views of shareholders of private companies. These differences refer to a central question of economic points of departure. The article concludes that a major problem occurs when reporting internationally-comparable statistics, as an individual researcher can hardly have the necessary experience and knowledge to interpret the meaning of this indicator in each country. Changes in the amount of full-time and part-time employment will have different causes in different countries. The main conclusion with regard to this indicator is that high quality employment relations are of prime importance to the future social and economic health of the European Union. Nevertheless, this is currently an under-researched subject. This article concludes that different sub-indicators produce very different patterns of the quality of working conditions between countries. No EU country consistently ranks at either the top or the bottom on all the employment-related indicators. Indeed, each country encounters specific problems and policy successes, and, therefore, there can be no uniform policy across Europe that will tackle effectively all the problems of poor-quality employment relations. Social as well as economic policy makers in Europe are going to need good theoretical and empirical measures of the quality of employment relations, in order to continue to make progress within the European Social Model.

Income Security

The review on the indicator ‘income security’ (which is not reproduced in this issue) first points out that, until about ten years ago, flexibility and security were seen almost exclusively as a contradiction. This led to an understanding of security as a hindrance to improving flexibility. This view changed with the acknowledgement that labour is not merely a commodity, therefore it cannot behave in a strictly economic sense. At least some kinds and measures of income security become a precondition for improving flex-

ibility. With this in mind, the combination, namely flexicurity, could be connected with the social quality initiative as well. One conclusion is that all measures of income security, aiming at backing flexibility, must offer possibilities in order to make people's *discontinuous* work biographies compatible with *continuous* income biographies. Thus with respect to the enforcement of flexibility, all those social political measures which substitute or partly substitute wages are important. With regard to the National Reports, some trends may be discovered: first a slow but steady increase in flexibility; second, the number of part-time workers and of atypical work increase almost everywhere; third, where the levels of unemployment are high, there is no clear tendency towards increasing duration of individual unemployment. An increasing number of people become confronted with the problem of a discontinuous work biography in general. Systems of social security in most countries are not sufficiently prepared to cope with this problem.

Working Time and Forms of Leave

The reviews of the National Reports on the two indicators of working time and forms of leave have been edited in one article in this issue, 'Working Time and Time for Care in Europe', as they cover interrelated issues. One of the conclusions about the indicator 'working time' is that when comparing flexicurity arrangements, and the job security and social security of flexible work forms among European countries, we first are confronted with the ambivalent nature of the economic adaptability of companies and workers. Especially with regard to arrangements of working times, the question is how much economic flexibility and how much social security are involved in these practices? Flexibility of working times increases the power of employers over the work hours of their employees, either by extending the available working time of their personnel, or by extending the flexible labour pool; the authority and control of the employer with respect to labour input and the standard labour time are also involved. A high degree of flexicurity of employees with respect to working time would include a combination of:

- A moderate and reduced length of the full-time working week
- A sufficient number of part-time working hours to make a living
- A low rate of temporary jobs
- A low female and youth unemployment (so a high degree of time autonomy in secure jobs).

Few countries meet these conditions, with exceptions such as Belgium and Denmark.

As far as the indicator ‘forms of leave’ is concerned, the article notes first that the traditional pattern of work life, and the associated social drawing rights, are nowadays caught in a process of change. First of all, employment is individualised. Second, the neat distinction of one period for study (preparing for work), one period for work and one period for rest from work no longer holds. Instead, periods of work intermingle with periods of study, and there are signs of a phased, instead of an abrupt withdrawal from the labour market in the later stages of one’s life, often accompanied by renewed participation in the many forms of voluntary work. The funding of educational leaves as well as phased withdrawal from the labour market can be achieved only if the system of social security and its drawing rights are adapted to the new situation at hand.

Analysing the National Reports with regard to parental leave, maternity and paternity leave, and child care, the article presents a combined index and an overall ranking of countries relating to opportunities for work leave. Finland and Denmark lead the pack, underscoring the viability of the Nordic social-democratic welfare state. The main surprise is, undoubtedly, Portugal. Its ambitious objectives mean that it surpasses wealthy countries like the Netherlands, Germany and the U.K. The article nevertheless concludes that, as often, paucity, incompleteness and incomparability of data may have had adverse effects on the results of the index.

5. A Specific Rationale and Focus: Employment and Gender

In the Foundation research project, and in the articles grouped in this issue of the journal, a specific rationale and focus soon appears, the underlying philosophy of which is discussed in Threlfall’s article in the previous issue of *The European Journal of Social Quality* cited above (Threlfall, 2000), as well as in the Foundation’s second book. As Threlfall puts it:

One of the characteristics of the Social Quality approach is its interdisciplinary methodology, adopted so as to be able to give a multi-faceted, holistic picture of socio-economic relations in the world of work. Freed from the confines of strict disciplinary boundaries between labour economics, industrial relations, sociology of work and gender relations, the Social Quality approach enables a focus on the experience of individual and group actors in their relations to ‘work’ and the broader question of how individuals earn their living through activity of some kind. (Threlfall, 2002)

She continues:

Consistent with this, the Social Quality approach is able to identify the limitations of policies that are constructed purely around the employment contract in a labour and product market of buyers and sellers. This is because such policies isolate themselves from, broadly speaking, two crucial spheres of human activity: both the wider, non-money, economy of production for use; and also the economy of care work. Policies focused exclusively on markets carry with them the potential to see individuals only as instruments – mere resources – in processes of capital investment and production, detached from their social relations and from the personal interactions taking place in households and families. Yet the ‘human resources’ of the ‘labour force’ do in fact emerge from, and are embedded in, the micro-organisations of household and family, which constitute their bedrock. A revisioning of this ‘labour force’ and of the way it functions in the employment relationship allows us to perceive the labour force differently – no longer narrowly as a collection of free agents operating in a market of buyers and sellers, but as dependants of the non-money (unaccounted) sphere of activity and of the sphere of inter-personal care-giving. Such linkages and interconnectedness cannot, in the long run, be overlooked in a holistic vision such as that which the Social Quality approach advocates. (Threlfall, 2002)

While all humans are engaged in the spheres of non-money and care-giving activities in some form or other, gender plays a central part in the division of roles for men and women in these spheres, such that most of non-money production and caregiving is done by women, and devalued by being officially labelled as ‘inactivity’. The whole edifice of society, including the functioning of the economy, rests not only on remunerated work but also on unpaid labour, more often termed ‘care work’. All households need regular maintenance work, and all people need emotional care. Traditionally this socially necessary care work has been undertaken outside the labour market and outside institutional settings such as health-care services, being performed in the household and by women. These women (and sometimes, but rarely, men) have not been remunerated for this care work and have ‘earned’ their living through dependency on a market-income earner (breadwinner), usual a male. Care work has had no official recognition, not being counted in GDP; nor is it eligible for social security benefits, or counting towards a pension, since it has been performed in the private sphere of the household. Such unpaid work is of considerable economic value to the extent that if it were not performed on an unpaid basis, someone would need to be employed to carry it out, and be paid.

In the post-war era women’s growing participation in the labour market has put increasing strains on the performance of such care work. Women developed a variety of ways to combine earning a living from employment while continuing to perform most of the necessary care work. This has highlighted an inherent fundamental inequity: men are able to have a

family without it interfering with their jobs, careers or earnings, whereas for women, the cost of having children, in foregone earnings and loss of promotion prospects, is very extensive. The challenge of the European social model is to face up to this fundamental inequity. It is society's collective responsibility to alter the imbalance in traditional social arrangements and to organise the sharing out of care work, as well as its adequate remuneration and fiscal and social recognition.

In the absence of what has been termed 'social citizenship' for women and carers generally, some carers currently attempt to reconcile the contradiction they are caught up in by engaging only in part-time work (while others bear the strain of both full-time paid labour and care work). This form of employment is now increasingly popular with employers as well as those with care responsibilities, and is growing faster than full-time employment. This raises a fundamental issue: remuneration from part-time work is, by definition, insufficient for a person to live on, since normally only if a person devotes all their working time to the same job do they earn a 'living wage', supposed to be sufficient to keep them. The EU has also responded to the challenge posed by this gendered contradiction surrounding necessary yet unrecognised care work.

In debates on aspects of flexicurity two propositions are evident. First, in order to make a 'normal' career a full-time paid job is a condition. Second, women are most often responsible for the care of children, and elderly parents. The conclusions are quite clear. First, because of the second proposition, it will be very difficult for women to have a 'normal' career: men dominate production relations. Second, women are saddled with a double responsibility. These types of evidence are culturally based on and refer to human relations in the past. All National Reports demonstrate that both propositions are effective, implicitly or explicitly. They contradict the outcomes of recent social transformations. This contradiction prevents the key aim of the European Union as articulated during the Lisbon Summit in 2000 and will be especially important in the context of the enlargement of the European Union.

This contradiction is of extreme interest with regard to the enlargement of the European Union. What happened in the recent past in order to cope with the collapse of state socialism? According to Barbara Einhorn, in Central Europe some structural mechanisms are applied. The need to ameliorate working conditions got irretrievably lost. She noticed some years ago that:

Rather than humanising the social relations of production for all workers, they [the main actors in the political institutions] promulgated compensatory protective legislation. This emphasised women's reproductive function

rather than their productive capacities, thus entrenching the worker-mother duality. It is not surprising that women are now reacting in such disparate ways to current economic and ideological pressures pushing them out of the workforce. (Einhorn, 1993: 114)

In her recent study, Zsuzsa Ferge presents her conclusions about the preparatory work for the enlargement of the European Union. The connection between economic policies, social policies and employment policies – the heart of the matter of the European social model – is not a point of departure. She says:

The implicit model for Central Eastern Europe, which in many cases is dutifully applied, is different from the ‘European model’ as we knew it, and in many respects close to the original World Bank agenda. As a matter of fact high officials of the Bank do present the developments in Central-Eastern Europe as a social policy model to be followed by the current members of the Union. The weakening of the European model in the member countries may antagonise their citizens who may then use the accession countries as scapegoats. If the EU members do not follow the monetarist recipe the gap will grow between East and West. (Ferge, 2001)

This neo-liberal recipe stimulates the commodification of labour and prevents responding to the broader question of how individuals may earn their living through activity of some kind.

In this context it is of interest to recall Laura Balbo’s assumption from some years ago. She wrote:

As in the past, adult women are primarily responsible for survival and reproduction. But what is peculiar to the present situation is that in order to accomplish their tasks they are expected to relate to a variety of service agencies, from the bureaucracies of our welfare state to the ‘helping’ professions, to voluntary and self-help groups. In particular, as to the provision of personal services, though it is a fact that state and market have enormously increased their share, this is not to be seen as merely transferring tasks from the family unit to other service-delivering institutions. Most services require a lot of extra work, in order for personal needs to be met in the basis of market or state services. (Balbo, 1983)

More recently Marina Calloni concurred with Laura Balbo when stressing that:

The daily life of women seems, therefore, to have become harder and more stressful than in the past. Traditionally daily life has been based on the conviction that the physiological reproductive power of women can be ‘naturally’ identified with the consequent duty of the daily reproduction of life (care of children and the household). Nowadays this conventional conviction has

acquired new features. In the 'neo-extended' family (adult children who live at home with their parents and partners) women have to work more hours than before, having continuing responsibilities over the years and having to mediate conflicts arising from members of the family having different forms of lifestyle, belief and needs. Consequently women have to deal with differentiated forms of inter-generational caring duties (including children, parents and grandchildren) and do not necessarily receive support from public services. (Calloni, 2001)

The Foundation research project, as shown by the first three articles, has contributed questions and policies related to this issue. It proposes new indicators that would express an *inclusive approach* to economic activities, by representing these as a spectrum of activities ranging from study, to unpaid work, to minor, part-time and full-time employment as well as job seeking. For even if the economic and fiscal recognition of unpaid care work are very problematic, its statistical representation, that helps make it socially visible, is far less difficult.

In the article 'Flexible and Secure: Adaptability and the Employment Relationship' it is pointed out that between 1995 and 2000, women's employment increased by 6.2 million jobs, compared with the 4.3 million additional jobs filled by men. However, employment growth was strongest for women in part-time jobs, whereas many of the new jobs filled by men were full time. In every European Union country there are higher rates of temporary employment amongst women than men. The causes for this, mentioned by Calloni, should be taken on board when discussing the social quality of employment relations and employment policies. Furthermore, the same article shows also that different sub-indicators produce very different patterns of the quality of working conditions between countries for women.

The article 'Working Time and Time for Care' concludes, as could be expected, that flexible and informal work patterns, such as part-time paid work and unpaid household work, are still mainly practised by women. In most European countries these are nowadays the most widespread forms of flexibilisation of the labour force. During times of economic upsurge women are mobilised to fill the extra vacancies, while in recession times they are easily dismissed, mostly through the practice of temporary contracts. With respect to the economic involvement of women as the main flexible workforce, adaptability is high in the Nordic countries, and above average in Britain, The Netherlands, Portugal and Germany. Spain and Belgium score below the EU-average of labour participation of women. In these countries women have a high participation rate in unpaid household work. In terms of flexibility of the female labour force, the Netherlands stand out with the highest degree of part-time work and temporary jobs of women. Britain, Spain and Germany are above the European average, but

the female labour flexibility in the Nordic countries and Portugal is below average. Social security through labour participation of women is high in the Nordic countries and Britain. Denmark and Britain also show the low-est rate of women in temporary jobs, as most women have regular jobs.

In the same article, the discussion about ‘forms of leave’ concludes that the growing female contribution to the world of paid employment has not been compensated by a parallel growth in the discharge or care tasks and duties by men. The fair distribution in the actual responsibility for tasks of care is swiftly developing into the touchstone of an adequate and civilised system of social security and social drawing rights. Today, such distribution is not fair at all. To an important degree, of course, responsibility for care is embedded deeply in cultural beliefs and practices. As these impact directly on people’s long-held expectations about the behaviour of self and other they are not likely to change overnight. Indeed, even though many people today would support a more equal division of care tasks, it will take sustained efforts over the long term to translate the relatively new social view on parcelling out everyone’s fair share of responsibilities into practice, and thus, in solidly held new expectations. In a sense, then, the development of social security arrangements that ease the participation of both women and men into work and care is the easier part of the job.

6. The Dutch Part-time Economy: An Example of Good Practice

The article on the Netherlands by Korver identifies an important trend in the realm of labour law, signalled by the new need to design security arrangements in a lifetime perspective, and at the same time to transform flexibility in employability. A turn towards ‘reflexive labour law’ (Rogowski and Wilthagen, 1994) can be identified: the pivotal position of the *employment* relationship is weakening in favour of a *participation* relationship, the latter combining a lifetime perspective (including a system of social security geared to the need to make transitions pay) with an emphasis on employability. The traditional employment relationship is a relationship in which the employing and the work organisation coincide. The new employment relationship may well surpass the boundaries of one organisation and, indeed, it may typically involve two or more. In the case of two such organisations, the easiest to grasp, the employing organisation (say an agency such as Randstad) and the work organisation are distinct and are connected through markets rather than hierarchies.

Thus, a development is that of the employing organisation lending its own employees. In that case, the employee remains an *employee* of the

lending organisation and is a temporary *worker* in the borrowing organisation, the actual workplace. Private employment agencies fit this type of employment relationship, of course, but the phenomenon is not restricted to them. At the level of branches and sectors we see the same developments, whether by pooling workers, by posting them or by other mechanisms cutting the direct connection of employer and work environment. Data on the number of people processed by employment agencies only partially capture all of these movements and therefore underestimate the actual magnitude of the relevant transfers and transitions. So, even if the temporary employment agency is the classical instance it does not stop there. Other forms of labour exchange (pools, posting and borrowing personnel, etc.) are important as well.

This type of flexible employment relationship is not limited to relatively unskilled workers or to new entrants in the labour market. For training purposes, for example, and also for purposes of recruitment and selection, flexible relationships in which the employing organisation may serve a series of client organisations, such as in a branch or sector as a whole, may prove expedient. For training purposes we find many branch and sectoral funds, often geared to a collective bargaining agreement or, as the case may be, these funds become the subject matter of a so-called 'specific collective bargaining agreement'. In the case of recruitment and selection it often turns out that the demand for labour is more easily predictable at the sectoral level than at the level of the individual companies within the sector. Then, given that not all companies will need labour at the same time, a rationale exists for pooling resources, and even for creating a specialised employing organisation, distributing and allocating labour over the member companies. Such an employing organisation, of course, may also try and extend its field of operation into the realm of training and education. And, in fact, they are doing so.

The share of flexible employment relations has gone up, then, during the 1990s, although at the end of the decade the growth in flexible relationships came to a halt. The reason quoted most often in this respect, is that the tightness of the labour market has forced the employers to try and retain their employees. Both for men and for women the Netherlands, though, is in first position in terms of part-time jobs. The large share of female part-timers is remarkable, reflecting the typical Dutch compromise for working women and the balance they are assumed to strike between working and caring.⁷

The organisational dissociation⁸ of employment and work has advantages of scale and scope. The scale advantages are obvious, in particular in circumstances where labour demand is subject to unpredictable shifts at the company level. But the scope advantages may, in the end, prove to be of

even more significance. Employment is an information-intensive industry, and problems of information impact – including problems of agency, moral hazard and hold-up – are always nearby. Forms of consultation, including collective negotiations, are one option to tackle such problems, specialised agencies are another. The need for such agencies is, if only for reasons of life-time employability compared to life-time employment, on the rise. One may speculate on the question of how far agencies of this kind are the appropriate units to organise employability, an activity that they themselves do not eschew.⁹

Such agencies will assist in search activities, both for companies and for employees, and they will assist in matching demand and supply, with training and education explicitly included. Our projection is that arrangements to combine work and care, again, will often surpass the company level, thereby enlarging the market for intermediary organisations and mechanisms. The scope of such agencies, in the form that we know them, is, indeed, widening. Private employment agencies, for example, initially restricted their activities to the provision of temporary workers but today their activities include posting, recruitment and even selection, training, reintegration and other tasks in the field of managing human resources. Labour pools do likewise, as do the public employment services. Of course, there is no one uniform trend in the identification of the actual employing organisation: there is, as yet, a hard to categorise blend of formats rather than the clear and unequivocal emergence of a new format and the consequent waning of the old.¹⁰

In this connection it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the relatively new Act on Flexibility and Security, effective in the Netherlands as of 1 January 1999. The objective of the Act is to contribute to a new equilibrium in the labour market, characterised by a mutual enhancement of company flexibility (read: adaptability) and employee security (read: contractual clarity). Employment agencies, in the indicated broad sense, are assumed to be employers. Employment organisations as well as employers generally are also confronted with the ‘burden of proof’, in cases of doubt as to the exact nature of the relationship¹¹ and of the number of hours involved. On other scores, also, the security of employees, in particular of employees in temporary relationships, is strengthened; the most important among these being clauses that forbid the mechanism of the ‘revolving door’: an endless chain of temporary, fixed-term contracts. Gains in employee security are matched by gains in organisational adaptability. Dismissal procedures have become somewhat easier – and especially faster – in the Netherlands.¹² Indeed, the Act does not prejudice any specific pattern of employment relationships. The Act recognises that both two- and three-party employment relationships are viable, that flexibility and secu-

ity are interdependent, and that three-party relationships need, if they are to continue to flourish, an adequate match of flexibility and security.

7. Flexicurity and Social Quality: Further Issues

Below some illustrations will be made of the opportunities offered by the exploration of social quality in connection with flexicurity. As pointed out in Laurent van der Maesen's article, the angles of the Diamantopoulou Triangle (economic policies, employment policies and social policies/cohesion) cannot be connected directly, an intermediary is required. Social quality functions as such an intermediary. Examples from the various countries included in the research, and relating to this argument, underpin its attractiveness.

The most straightforward exploration of the above-mentioned connection can be found in the Project review on Denmark (not reproduced here). The authors, Hvid and Hussain, conclude that socio-economic security depends on whether one belongs to one of the core groups of the labour market. Only people belonging to a core group with a strong representation at company level, with good opportunities for vocational training, and secured against unemployment, have high socio-economic security. Therefore empowerment in the Danish labour market is fundamentally based on the collective system of bargaining. At the same time, though, the collaborative system can be the basis for manipulation and adaptation to external goals and interests: 'The official collective will can suppress individual needs and priorities. Sometimes the official collective will expressed by for instance shop stewards, is manipulated, and perhaps formed by the external goals of the firm.' (Hvid and Hussain, 2002) In terms of inclusion, the collective systems in Denmark give those who belong to the core good opportunities for self-realisation. On the other hand those who do not belong to the collective systems are excluded. That, especially, is a reality for those who have no or only a weak relationship to the labour market. This also accounts for cohesion: again, those who are organised obtain a certain degree of collective identities, whereas the non-organised do not.

In the actual analysis of employment one important aspect of social quality is missing. This is shown by the differentiation of two approaches for quality made in the Spanish report, not reproduced in this issue (Gonzalez et al., 2002). On the one hand there is the competitive approach to quality of the European Commission, related to its strategy for competitiveness. In official documents on employment and social policy (Green Paper and White Paper) it is formulated as 'high' or 'good' quality jobs. The core characteristics of such employment are creativity, innovation and high level of

proficiency. Some of the dimensions are job qualification, flexibility and gratifying task content, but also participation and social acknowledgement. On the other hand there is a more subjective approach to employment quality. This covers the dimensions and characteristics of a job that are more valuable to the people. According to the Spanish report, the question whether 'people do really want flexibility, adaptability, qualifications and lifelong training in their lives' has not been asked. Moreover, the meaning of these dimensions can also vary in different social and territorial settings.

Therefore, this second approach to quality would offer the 'possibility to be sensitive to different social meanings for similar facts in different context'. The Spanish Report delivers a relevant example of this point by using household as a framework for evaluating the social impact of employment quality deficits, measured in individual terms. This adds an aspect to the analysis by showing that also family can offer security and complementary resources to individuals. Threlfall (2002) argues that the social quality approach does enable a focus on the experience of individual and group actors in their relations to employment and the broader question of how individuals earn their living through activity of some kind.

Another related issue identified by some national reports concerns the existence of what can be considered as a kind of dual labour market. Indeed, according to the Belgian Report, the traditional risks associated with employment appear to remain, whereas new individual needs are formulated and even fulfilled. Many of them are still related to the life cycle, others are determined by the needs of the economy, or the need for self-fulfilment, or a symbiosis of both. The socialisation of those new needs illustrate the dawn of a better and better welfare state, but can they be to the detriment of the existing, traditional welfare state, that may be entering a twilight zone. The Spanish report points out the actual meaning of the competitive approach of quality used by the European Commission. It states that it is not clear that the strategy for developing quality in employment is directly brought about by economic competitiveness and technological change. This raises the question of whether it is a viable strategy at the European level. Will all Member States profit equally from this strategy in economic and social terms?

In the Spanish report two different scenarios in Europe are predicted. On the one hand 'countries with high standards of working conditions and strict labour regulation may introduce flexibility, with an economic logic, through new organisation models, as the way to improve competitiveness (flexicurity strategy: flexibility + quality)'. On the other hand, there would be 'countries (and peripheral branches) where we can find a high level of flexibility, but an insecure flexibility', questioning the need for introducing new organisational models. They would not have any incentive to go over

to the quality road, as the insecure flexibility costs are externalised (to individuals, families or to the public sector) and the economic achievements are relevant as well. In short, the Spanish report concludes, this results in an increasingly dual labour market at both national and European level. ‘Some countries have made the *precarious employment as one of the central issues for their competitiveness strategy*. And this strategy becomes a vicious circle that thwarts even the reformers’ attempt to improve employment (and social) quality’.

The popularity of the ‘flexicurity’ and the ‘transitional labour market’ concepts shows the growing interest in combining work and family life, as well as other aspects (e.g. lifelong learning). Some predict that the ‘passive’ welfare state will be replaced by an ‘active’ welfare state, in which the institutions need to be adapted, not just according income but also labour time. This approach does not focus on the transition between different phases. Instead it underscores the combination of several spheres of daily life. This raises the question, is a transition from taxing income to subsidising non-activity needed? This seems to be a solution inherited from the traditional strategy of reducing the labour supply in times of massive unemployment. In the future this may lay a heavy burden on the welfare state, as the inactive part of the population will keep growing. Others see an argument for the redistribution of jobs and active working time behind the ‘transitional labour market’ notion when the equilibrium appears to be disturbed. The Belgian example shows that the reduction of insurance contributions for low skill and low wages has the most positive effects on job creation for poorly qualified people, among others. The reason is that there is a substitution between the high qualified and low qualified before crowding out has taken place. Another argument for rebalancing the distribution is the stagnation of the total labour volume in combination with an increasing labour force. Additional arguments are the dramatic need for increasing labour-market participation and the possibility of replacing subsidised forms of non-activity with new forms. Nevertheless, this depends very much on the room in the national budget for new measures.

There are some other specific topics with which to underpin the urgency of the exploration of flexicurity in connection with the social quality approach. For example, the article on Finland by Kosonen and Vänskä starts with an important remark:

There are two, quite contradictory views of the Finnish working life. On the one hand, the Finns are a hard-working people, and almost all adults (both men and women) participate in paid employment, usually full-time. Thus, Finland is and has been for a long time a ‘work society’ par excellence. On the other hand, according to many studies and interviews, workers are

stressed in their work places or have difficulties to fulfil new requirements, and pre-retirement is more than usual.

We suppose that the connection with far reaching changes in production relations (acceleration of technological innovations and application) and social relations (for example changing role of families, increase of mobility, demographic revolution) should play an enormous role. But new demands from companies seem to be important as well. We concluded that in the year 2000 the majority of workers (56 percent) in the EU reported having to work at high speed for at least a quarter of their working time. Men were slightly more likely to have to work at high speed than women. Furthermore, a quarter of EU workers have to work at high speed all the time. In Sweden, more than a third of workers said they had to work at high speed all the time. With regard to women, not high speed but the double responsibility (see the gender question) causes damage to the objective and, especially, the subjective conditional factors for social quality.

8. The Road Ahead: The Position of the Family, the Gender Question and the Balance between Working Life and Living Conditions

The Foundation research, and the articles in this issue, clearly call for a new paradigm about work in society. The situation in the EU at present calls for a new and integrated vision on the joint development of its economy, society and intellectual and cultural resources. Of course, the present context of adaptability – and even adaptability in a reduced form only – is much more modest than such a vision would necessitate. On the other hand, adaptability is a subject not separate from it either, as we have touched upon in many wide-ranging topics. Indeed, the focus on the flexicurity aspects of adaptability touches upon many vital aspects of the grand vision, laid down in Lisbon, about Europe as an inclusive knowledge society.

The Foundation research approached the theme of inclusion on two issues: one was the gender issue, and the other the question of individualised participation in the labour market. Both, of course, are related. The gender issue can serve as a template for most of the issues that have to be resolved for achieving a competitive and socially inclusive Europe. Much remains to be done: the country reports, including the five presented in this issue, clearly show that women still face many of the disadvantages that centuries of subordination have produced. In a formal sense, equalities have been proclaimed and achieved: equal civil and political rights stand out among them. As for social rights and opportunities, the position of women in society

needs strengthening. Much remains to be done in terms of employment relations and opportunities; in terms of control over time and quality of jobs; and in terms of career continuity and career perspectives. There is, certainly, nothing new in this observation. On the other hand, in a society that stresses the importance of the active and individualised participation of all, asking for everyone's contribution has its preconditions, and these may well get to the heart of employment and employment relationships.

Individualisation, in the view of the authors of the articles, is definitely not identical with the waning of the family, or with a lower societal status for the family. Rather, it could be argued that families, where and when confronted with new challenges and new time frames, deserve more attention than ever. The household, then, is as important as the individual for the study and measurement of time budgets and constraints, for the distribution of household tasks, and care for relatives and family members. Whereas a research tradition is at least partly established in relation to income studies and statistics, a similar attention for tasks and times is badly needed.

Finally, in the context of the 'knowledge economy', a crucial issue concerns the balance of working life and living conditions. The knowledge economy and society asks for durable, long-term participation of its citizens. Two catchphrases come immediately to mind in this respect: 'employability' and the 'balance of work and life'. Employability demands effort from societies, as represented by its governments, by institutions and organisations, and by the citizens themselves. The EU countries have set ambitious targets for more: more extended and more continuous education, on and off the workplace. Alongside budgets and expertise, these call for forms of consultation and cooperation between representatives of governments, employers and employees, and the educational institutions as such. Some of these are already in existence, others will have to be forged.

A major problem here is undoubtedly the distribution of costs and benefits (the 'hold up' problem as economists have it), and the dangers of a two-tier society, leading to or invigorating a dual labour market. Answering the problem may well require a loosening of the ties that bind one employee to one employer. If lifetime employment, that is, makes way for lifetime employability, and if all interested parties take that message to heart, there is little point in quoting statistics on the length of the average employment relationship. There is a point, though, for acting on the knowledge that the typical employee will change employment every once in a while, not for reasons of having become unemployed, but for reasons of competency and development, that is, for reasons of employability. More study, therefore, is needed on the problem of balancing the interests of individuals, organisations and whole societies on productive transitions over the whole range of the relevant labour market.

Durable participation cannot be achieved without a healthy balance of working life and living conditions. We have been focusing on the balance of work and care. The topic, however obvious it would seem to any neutral observer, has so far hardly been the object of official attention, let alone of care and study. It was a 'feminist' concern and it took the change from looking at gender as a matter of women, to gender as an urgent matter of mainstreaming, before the issue was taken seriously. This has only occurred during the last decade, and it will come as no surprise that most EU countries are finding it difficult to tackle the problem, including the question of the distribution of responsibilities between policy actors – whether governments, employers, employees, pension funds, or city and regional authorities. Many governments have taken first steps, yet there has been little systematic action to adapt to this new world of work. Here, if anywhere, research is needed; not, however, to postpone action but to initiate it, monitor it and keep it moving.

New empirical work on this topic is now required to develop robust variables and indicators that can be translated directly into tools for both policy makers and citizens.¹³ Such work will help the European Union to reconcile the goals of competitiveness and quality, and provide a way to begin to accommodate the social models of the accession states into the European Union.

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Notes

1. The concept of a Europe of 'variable geometries' is an example: where the interests of the stronger countries coincide, and the weaker cannot be cajoled into compliance of one sort or another or are simply not needed, blocs within the Union may form.
2. The production of this thematic issue had especially been supported by the Department of European Studies of Kingston University, London, with substantial and editorial input.

3. The Dublin-based Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and the Amsterdam-based European Foundation on Social Quality are discussing forms of cooperation in the near future.
4. A year after this research on flexicurity was launched, the European Foundation on Social Quality started its *Indicators Social Quality* network, thanks to the support of the European Commission. DG Research accepted the Foundation's application in June 2000, and the network of 16 scientists from 16 expert centres in Europe started its work in October 2001.
5. The Foundation's second book refers extensively to Bauman (Bauman, 1999: 8). He calls for a positive concept of ideology: the name of ideology has been assigned to the cognitive frames, which allow various bits of human experience to fall into place and form a recognisable, meaningful pattern.' (ibid: 118)
6. See note 2, Foreword in Beck et al., 2001.
7. The Netherlands have been characterised as the only 'part-time economy' in the world.
8. One can consider this as a special case of looking upon organisations as networks instead of as unitary actors. It may be argued that forms of contracting out, subcontracting and even internal contracting follow the same logic. These, however, are in a different legal regime, at least in the Netherlands.
9. Professional Employer Organization is one tag, used for the hiring organization, Professional Agent Relationship, used for the employee, another. Services such as child care provisions, education, etc. are explicitly included (see Junggeburst, 2001: 1–35).
10. See Huiskamp et al., 2002. The three contracts are: the traditional employment relationship, the collective bargaining agreement and the impact of newer developments such as work-and-leave arrangements.
11. For example: if the relationship is intermittently continued, when does it become a regular employment relationship? And for how many hours?
12. As can be gauged from the OECD 1999, *Employment Outlook 1999* (Paris, pp. 60–61, Chart 2.1), where it shows that between the late 1980s and the late 1990s the Netherlands hardly changed in terms of employment protection for regular employment, and became more flexible for temporary employment, leading to an overall judgment of more flexibility in the late 1990s than a decade earlier. As a whole, this conclusion fits the Dutch experience, but the signs – at least in terms of the Flexibility and Security Act – should be reversed: more flexible in terms of regular labour, less so in terms of flexible labour. The decision of the OECD to lump hiring and firing together, presumably, is responsible for this result.
13. The European Foundation has been taking the first steps towards such development through its cooperation project with the Dublin Foundation on the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in order to elaborate European-based data, and the launch of the Indicators of Social Quality Network; a task of the network will be to connect the research of indicators on flexicurity with indicators on inclusion.