

**EURISPES: LESS WORK... MORE JOBS**  
**RAPPORTO ITALIA 2003**

*U Italiji se početkom svake godine, pod naslovom Rapporto Italia, pojavljuje opsežan dokument od preko 1300 stranica, koji daje okvirne naznake bitnih društvenih kretanja u tekućoj godini. Kolektivno djelo velikog broja znanstvenika/istraživača koje okuplja EURISPES – Istituto di Studi Politici Economici e Sociali u Rimu, izvanredna je sinteza znanstvenih uvida i analiza u složenost tekućih zbivanja kako se ona mogu očitati na makro-socijalnoj razini. Pri tome polazno je saznanje da je nekadašnja pouzdanost društvene ideologije nestala i da se procesi preobrazbe moraju sagledavati u krupnijim obrascima društvenih polariteta. Ti polariteti u kojima je sabrana i artikulirana golema građa ovogodišnjeg izdanja Rapporto Italia 2003 imenovani su ovako: Poverta – Ricchezza; Legalitř/Illegalitř; Anima/Corpo; Cittadinanza/Sudditanza; Improvisazione/Preparazione; Identitř/Differenze. Bogatstvo ažurnih podataka, preglednost i iscrpnost obavještenja o toliko širokom rasponu društvene pojavnosti potkrepljuje vjerodostojno znanstveno tumačenje, prezentirano spisateljski na jedinstven način.*

*Odlomak koji smo odabrali govori o takozvanoj Novoj ekonomiji koja se i u nas ponekad spominje a d se pri tom ne zna, ili ne zna reći, u čemu je njena novost i koga se i kako ona tiče.*

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## **New Economy = New Workers?**

The feeling of finding oneself in a historical period characterised by great changes in the dynamics of the global economy is being diffused among scholars of the social sciences, and it is a feeling that has permeated even wide sectors of public opinion. The term used to imply this transformation is the English term, New Economy, which is used almost daily and in the most diverse contexts. Since it is not objectively easy to define exactly what is intended with this expression (mainly by those who use it), it is also doubtful if it reflects the perception of a profoundly transformed and transforming productive structure, where old rules and reference points do not count anymore, or have to anyway be completed by new ones.

Along Ford's model of classical capitalism, founded on the great productive industry of goods and on economies of scale, comes an economic model, without a true and real substitution, which has already been attributed the name of Post-Fordism. In this model, the market economy appears to be highly committed to the small and medium-sized business (especially in Italy), to the supply of services, and to the use of the most recent technologies.

Production and consumption, which, in the nineteenth century was carried out for small batches, and which in the twentieth century, had passed on to mass production, now seems to consist of mass production of small batches. In this way, a business tries to reach the mass of consumers by pursuing the single buyer, and globalisation accelerates these changes. Business and labour, and demand and supply are two relationships affected by these changes in production and consumption, and both relationships are dominated by the imperative of the variability of the market. And it is from the variability of the market that the need of operative flexibility initiates.

The principle of flexibility seems to have really become the cornerstone of the on-going transformation, to the point of applying itself to the very life of businesses, with an emphasis and an acceleration of their birth-mortality rate: therefore, many more businesses are born but they persist less because they close down, are resold, transformed, create alliances, and because they merge more frequently than before.

As intuited, the outcome of the transformation is so disruptive and susceptible that it poses urgent problems in an area that highly links the economy to the human being, with his/her aspirations and rights to protection in the labour world. The change is surely evident, but the changes in progress do not always send clear and unequivocal signals.

The first evidence of change is nevertheless visible on the macroscopic level, and it is the distribution and dispersion of space and of labour. On one hand, the

number of location increases and the work place dimension decreases, in a process of atomisation and diffusion, both at the same . On the other hand, there is an increase in the types of labour hours and a decrease in the synchrony of labour hours. Therefore, there are more and more people working at unusual hours and with complicated calendars, even in the same office.

The structure of labour markets is also being transformed and it is becoming complicated, introducing elements of diversification that go beyond the already known phenomena of segmentation. In effect, it is sufficient to skim through the advertisements on newspapers, or on internet rather, to realise that a selective growth of supply is being witnessed, in terms of flux, with a limited number of employment (in fact, businesses want to hold the minimum dependent manpower), and in terms of requirements, with a growing emphasis on the quality of services. In work advertisements, there are increasingly more requests for expertise like enterprise, sociability, precision, and even sense of humour.

It is hard to fail to note how a large part of these expertise reflect specific competencies deeply rooted in the feminine social experience, such as interrelation and communicative abilities, construction of networked organisational systems, and social and sanitary assistance work. For this reason, scholars like Marco Revelli (1998) reached the affirmation that post-Fordism “introduces strong elements of “feminilization” in the work processes, starting from the input of sennts, affection, and subjectivity into work; just as Fordism placed emphasis on objectivity and made work impersonal, so post-Fordism re-personalises (...). Post-Fordism labour is highly focused on relationships and (...) is much more congruent with feminine hegemony”. From this point of view, the changes can also be understood as one of the consequences and causes of the presence of a major feminine component in the labour force. However, this level of feminine presence does not necessarily imply that full and effective parity of male and female presences will be reached, or that there will be a reduction in the strong gap still present between the male and female presences in the highest levels of the social scale.

In the labour market, a major selectivity is also being verified in the field of supply, and there are both objective and subjective reasons for this selectivity. Objective reasons can be traced to the elevation of the level of education and the rise of incomes, while subjective reasons include, the major reluctance to get married and the major attention given to status (in fact, Italians do not emigrate anymore and they refuse hard, risky, and mean jobs).

Hence, the equilibrium of the demand and supply is more difficult to attain in any work environment: for businesses, flexibility and turnover is always more important, but the worker increasingly demands for stability and guarantee.

In addition, a detachment has been verified between the productive and professional systems. This detachment is readily deduced from the discrepancies

between education, training, work orientation, as well as in a persistent inadequacy and inefficiency of employment services, which is explicated in the delay of computerisation and decentralisation processes.

In a phase where the administrative apparatus has still not developed an exhaustive answer to these problems, the spontaneous reaction of the private sector is obviously to develop new forms of work, and, in this particular instance, applying flexibility, given its apparent importance.

In this context, we get the impression that the most relevant phenomenon is the transition from a unique model of work to a plurality of models. These models are illustrated through the birth of formerly non-existent jobs, the constitution of abnormal work contracts, the use of technologically innovative tools, and through a notably accentuated diversification of work hours and methods. These models are therefore, transforming the nature of service (the quality of work) and the terms of service (the work contracts).

For what regards the nature of the service, it is possible to verify the following changes:

- a) The contents are less manipulative and more cognitive;
- b) Work is based less on assignments (tending to be no longer executed and organised in a routine, but rather, co-operative and extended) and more on competencies. The disadvantage here is that it creates less specialised and more polyvalent workers;
- c) Group organisation is encouraged (teamwork or group work);
- d) Hierarchical chains are shortened and thinned-out, losing their significance with each passage, while a single formal code for executives and employees is adopted;
- e) Organisational roles become more fluid, and at s, they may even become less important.

In the mean, new means to job accomplishment are being diffused, and intuitively, these means are related to the new technologies of communication. Work is becoming less material and more immaterial.

Until recently, Telework (working at a distance through means of telecommunication) was considered as the latest frontier in the field of communication. Today, it is already largely diffused and embraces multiple labour categories, from employees, independent workers, to managers. The distribution of work in telework can be highly differentiated, in the sense that, some people utilise telework few days a month, while others use it daily. So also the place of work becomes a very relative concept, so much so that a lot of telework is carried out in the home. To an extent anyway, telework is a concept already out-of-date (an additional confir-

mation of the high dynamism of the actual labour world), so much so that recent studies of the European Commission now talks of “E-Work”, or rather, work that is developed using new methodologies of execution (where the place of work is one of the many variables) on the distribution networks.

Equally profound, and more ambivalent, are the already noticeable changes in work contracts. These tend to be:

- a) Less employees and more independent workers. This can also be seen even in the increased operative autonomy of dependent workers;
- b) Less durable, through the growth of definite-period contracts and the decrease of indefinite-period contracts;
- c) Less standardization, as workplace contracts are already becoming more circumscribed and more diversified, to the extent of being customised.

Likewise, it is surprising how forms and modalities of para-independent and para-subordinate work are growing, rendering the conventional distinction between the subordinate employees and independent workers less rigid or less clear-cut. Between the two extremes, in fact, a continuum of positions are being created, in which it is difficult to individuate the appearance of a tertium genus, even though the “Continuous Coordinated Collaboration” – co.co.co contracts (2 million in Italy) represent to some extent, an attempt in this direction.

Finally, what is striking is the threat of new industrial relations which could modify the equilibrium conditions between the various levels of labour negotiations (in Italy, the issue of coexistence between national and businesses/territorial labour negotiations is being questioned). These new relations are simplifying, but also, upsetting sectorial origins of labour and the solidarity of labour categories. In addition, the effect of equity adjustments of national or foreign businesses that are restructuring, merging or privatising could also alter the traditional “negotiation schema”, expand profiles of labour protection, and favour the phenomena of social dumping.

In this context, even the word “labour” acquires a relative meaning. On 13<sup>th</sup> of February 1996, the New York Times wrote that “jobs are increasingly being substituted by work projects and work areas”. It happens this way in the new economic and occupational system, and this affirms an organisational model that someone (Rifkin) already proposes to call “hollywoodian”, and someone else (Mintzberg) “adhocratic”. And that is, work that has one beginning and one end, closely tied to a precise project to be accomplished, and is therefore transient.

Even without the post-Fordism model, which represents the antithetical to the Fordism model, all these labour trends seem destined to reinforcement. The Fordism model rather conserves a lot of labour aspects, making them seem rather an evolution without solutions of continuity. However, post-Fordism organizes

new labour and a new kind of worker, so much so that it has already been coined with a new expression, new worker, meaning, less busy but not for this reason less significant. This definition serves to indicate persons involved in this transformation process: these are the workers for whom work is no more organised according to classic standards. For such people, work presents original characteristics, so much so that schemas used in the past to comprehend the phenomenon are now rendered obsolete.

Not by chance, a cognitive dichotomy has been affirmation today. This dichotomy puts the so-called “typical” work (based on traditional parameters of stability, that is, fixed hours and clear distinction of roles) alongside work (in truth, it is rather a complete set of more jobs) denominated “atypical”, in a way that the dividing lines between them disappear. The term “atypical” is, in this case, intended uniquely as a reference to the modalities or ways in which the phenomenon is unravelled, and not to an hypothetical scarce diffusion of the phenomenon that appears instead to be increasing and to have a continuously increasing social weight. In Italy, atypical workers are estimated to be about 4,500,000. Therefore, the in-depth study of this new category of labour assumes a principal importance in order to accurately understand the actual society.

### **The so-called atypical work**

Approximately speaking, one could say that the typical job was (and still is) founded on a clear separation between occupation and non-occupation, between employer and employee, between work and free , and so on. Atypical work on the other hand, is more or less characterised by a marked mingling of elements that were initially perceived as antithetic. In other words, yet again, the growing flexibility of the elements of atypical work opposes the precedent rigidity of parameters. Applied to the labour world, this signifies changes in the conditions of service of work, hours, places, responsibilities, and inevitably, rights, which were guaranteed until recently.

This relativity in work conditions explains why the atypical job is denominated “flexible”, and why all those work contracts that differ from the standard fall into this concept. On the other hand, the “typical” or “rigid” job is characterised by indefinite-period contracts and by full- work hours.

In synthesis, it is possible to highlight six principal aspects of “typical” labour:

- Employer’s hierarchical superiority
- Organisational integration in the company

- Indefinite-period duty and responsibility
- Constant system of services
- Exclusivity of the work contract with only the company
- Employee's offer of available

Adding and subtracting these characteristics, it is possible to obtain the various forms of atypical work. This way, it is easy to highlight how on one side, this definition comprises many different realities, like definite-period contracts, part- contracts, ad interim contracts, temporary contracts, continuous coordinated collaboration contracts, and different types of services aimed at training (internships, training-and-work contracts, etc.), and so on. On the other hand, this definition is diminutive since it still has a purely residual character. Atypical labour is generically described as... all labour that is not typical. This goes to confirm the scarce adequacy of existing categories in building on the most recent developments of the labour phenomenon.

In order to more accurately define atypical labour, one could attempt a classification within the atypical labour itself. This can be done by adopting the objective aspect on one hand, which is the applied flexibility of the work, and it is more or less limited by duration. On the other hand, classification can be done by adopting the subjective side, which is relative to the worker, with specific reference to the maturation of accrued social security rights. This is the result of the following schematic table:

Table 1

CLASSIFICATION OF ATYPICAL LABOUR CONTRACTS

Duration of Work	Hours	Social Security Rights			
		Whole	Reduced		
		Employees	Employees	Independent (*)	
Permanent	Full	Full- Temporary work <sup>(b)</sup>			
		<i>Full- Work-from-home</i>			
		<i>Full- Telework</i>			
	Reduced	Part- Temporary work			
		Solidarity Contract			
		<i>Part- Work-from-home</i>			
Temporary	Full		Full- Intern-ship <sup>(c)</sup>	Full- Continuous collaboration	
		Training-and-Work contract			
		Full- Definite-period Contract	<i>Full- Appren-ticeship</i>	Full- Occasional Collaboration	
		Full- Temporary work			
		<i>Full- Work-from-Home</i>			
		<i>Full- Seasonal Work</i>			
		<i>Full- Telework</i>			
	Reduced				Part- Continuous Collaboration
		Training-and-Work Contract			
		Part- Definite-period Contract	Part- Intern-ship <sup>(c)</sup>		
		Part- Temporary work	Social Utility Work <sup>(d)</sup>	Occasional Col-laboration	
		<i>Part- Work-from-Home</i>	Public Utility Work <sup>(d)</sup>		
		<i>Part- Jobs- from-Home</i>	Professional-Level Entry Schemes		
		<i>Part- Telework</i>	<i>Part- Appren-ticeship</i>		

(\*) For independent workers: the distinction between permanent and temporary work contracts, and between full and part contracts is a matter of fact and not of rights.



(<sup>b</sup>) Deals with workers who engage in a continuous work relationship with a temporary work agency, which foresees also the payment of indemnity in the periods of inactivity.

(<sup>c</sup>) In internships, the distinction between full and reduced is a matter of fact and not of rights.

(<sup>d</sup>) There are no social security rights in the case of Social utility work (LSU) and Public utility work (LPU).

N.B: The texts in italics highlight work contracts partially characterised by atypical elements (for example, in the way work is done, in the relatively innovative character of the work, and/or in the duration of the job).

Source: Istat.

Istat also foresees a fourth level of classification, which is based on the nature of atypical contracts. According to this criterion, a contract is defined as atypical “in the strict sense” of the word, when it is implied in the type or in the form of the contract. It is instead a “partially atypical” contract when the atypical characteristic is in the way work is done, or in the duration of work, or in how innovative it is relative to the labour market in Italy.

Work-from-home, telework, part- definite-period, seasonal work, and apprenticeship contracts are all classified as partially atypical work contracts.

The existence of these forms of contracts in Italy indicates the presence of a double market: one formed by young adults with medium-high professional capabilities, for whom flexibility represents a transitory phase for access into the labour market; the second market constitutes, vice-versa, all those people who consider flexibility as synonymous to precarious, and who accept these forms of engagements because they cannot obtain “better” ones (Isofol 2000).

A look at the recent employment figures in Italy shows how atypical work is a phenomenon of relevant importance and in continuous increase, constituting already about 10% of work contracts.

Table 2

OCCUPATION IN ITALY, BASED ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

April 2002

Absolute values in thousands

Forms	North	Central	South	Total
<b>Standard</b>				
Full- independent/autonomous work	2,675	1,081	1,603	5,359
Full- employment with indefinite-period contracts	6,501	2,586	3,463	12,550
<i>Total Standard</i>	<i>9,176</i>	<i>3,667</i>	<i>5,066</i>	<i>17,909</i>
<b>Non Standard</b>				
Part- independent/autonomous work	250	97	98	445
Part- employment with indefinite-period contracts	630	205	144	978
Full- employment with definite-period contracts	393	178	392	963
Part- employment with definite-period contracts	147	72	230	449
<i>Total Non Standard</i>	<i>1,420</i>	<i>552</i>	<i>865</i>	<i>2,837</i>
Total number of workers	10,595	4,219	5,931	20,745

Source: Eurispes' elaboration of Istat data

From a statistical point of view, the analysis carried out on the classification of atypical labour emphasises the initial suggestions: the amplitude of the classification opens a vast scenario, and the difficulty of quantitative analysis. All this does not fail to affect the relative labour legislature, making it rather complex and fragmented. However, the economy of the Country is aware of importance of flexible work, and it was a point included for implementation, as foreseen by the National Action Plan for Employment 2000.

The following tables attempt to trace an outline of atypical workers, subdivided according to the main types of contracts, and to provide, where possible, a trend of the last five years (Ministry of Welfare and Confinterim, 2001).

A notable number of workers are concentrated above all, in the part- and the continuous coordinated collaboration work types especially. Apprenticeship con-

tracts are second in number, and training-and-work and temporary contracts (this latter is in rapid expansion) come afterwards in number. The Professional-level entry schemes and social utility work contracts registered decrease in the last two years.

*Table 3*

**ATYPICAL WORKERS, SUBDIVIDED BY TYPE  
AND HISTORICAL SEQUENCE**  
Years 1996-2000 (first semester)  
Absolute values in thousands

<b>Atypical Labour</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>
Apprenticeship	284	273	341	419	436
Training-and-work Contract	374	390	403	369	316
Professional-level entry schemes	-	-	-	19	11
Social utility work	-	-	137	145	126
Temporary work (*)	-	-	22	194	472
Co.Co.Co. (contributors)(**)	839	1,048	1,265	1,272	1,800
Part- work	-	-	-	1,034	1,094

(\*) Estimate for all of 2000.

(\*\*) Estimate of social security contributors for 2000.

Source: Eurispes' elaboration of data from Inps, Confinterim, and Ministry of Welfare (OML).

Table 4

ATYPICAL WORKERS, SUBDIVIDED BY TYPE  
 AND HISTORICAL SEQUENCE  
 Years 1996-2000 (first semester)  
 Percentages changes

Atypical Labour	Var. 96/97	Var. 97/98	Var. 98/99	Var. 99/00
Apprenticeship	-3.9	24.9	22.9	4.1
Training-and-work Contract	4.3	3.3	-8.4	-14.4
Professional-level entry schemes	-	-	-	-42.1
Social utility work	-	-	5.8	-13.1
Temporary work (*)	-	-	781.8	143.3
Co.Co.Co. (contributors)(**)	24.9	20.7	0.6	10.1
Part- work	-	-	-	5.8

(\*) Estimate for all of 2000.

(\*\*) Estimate of social security contributors for 2000.

Source: Eurispes' elaboration of data from Inps, Confinterim, and Ministry of Welfare (OML).

With regard to the continuous coordinated collaborations, it should be noted that there are cases of people registered in the Inps (National Institute of Social Insurance) social security fund (it requires an annual contribution of 10-13% of total earnings for a period of 35 working years for maturation) who do not pay their annual contributions, because, perhaps in the mean, they changed work activity, or for other motifs. This inherently means that not all registered persons are effectively working in a continuous coordinated collaboration manner at a particular . For this reason, it seemed more suitable to present the values, which were provided by Inps, for only those people who effectively deposited social security contributions during the year taken into consideration. These values are obviously inferior to the total number of registered people. Estimates have been made for the year 2000 because the Inps data on effective social security contributors provides for up to year 1999.

People working with the continuous coordinated collaboration contract made up 4.2% of the total number of workers in 1996 (bearing in mind the possibility of distortions related to the double counting of workers who are not well identified). This type of workers exceeded the threshold of 6% during the three-year period

taken into consideration (6.6% based on the estimates for 2000). The increase from one year to another did not follow a regular progression, but it was certainly slowed down by the institution of the Inps social security fund.

The success of this type of atypical contract will depend on the decisions taken regarding social security and fiscal contributions: an increase in the required percentage contribution for pensions, for example, could encourage people with occasional collaboration contracts to elude payment of the pension contributions. In addition, if these types of collaborators perceive that they will not be able to enjoy the rights derived from the contribution deposits, they may prefer private pension forms instead.

Another contractual genre that is increasingly gaining success, particularly among women, is part- work. Bear in mind that part- work can be horizontal (working only few hours of the day) or vertical (full- daily, but only during some periods of the week or month or year).

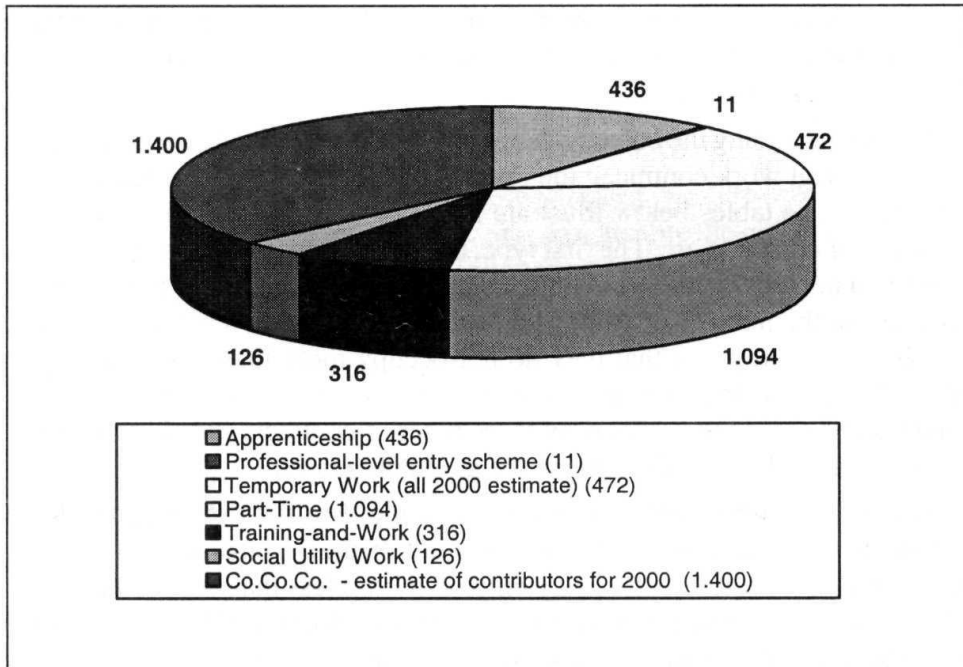
According to Istat, they were about 1,636,000 people working part- in 2000, with a percentage increase from 1999 of 58.2%. In 2000, part- workers reached a quota of 7.8% of the total number of workers (always hypothesising that it pertains to persons only engaged with this type of contract and with only one job each). It is highly probable that if the various types of part- contracts were subject to lower fiscal burden, or at least proportional to the full- ones in the same sector, the amounts of supply and demand for work engagements would increase notably.

*Graph 1*

ATYPICAL WORKERS, SUBDIVIDED BY TYPE

Year 2000 (first semester)

Absolute values in thousands



Source: Eurispes' elaboration of data from Inps, Confinterim, and Ministry of Welfare (OML).

Let us pass on to examine the condition of atypical workers, particularly the apprenticeship and training-and-work contracts. This latter formula registered a decrease in the previous years (data up to the first semester of 2000) probably also because of the European Union's decision of 11-05-99. The Union deemed concessions for people above the age of 25 years (29 years for first-degree holders), contrary to the normative of the European Union. It sustains that this training-and-work system of contracts only constitutes government aid, which is damaging to free competition since, by doing this, the cost of labour for Italian companies is

notably reduced (our Government presented an appeal, but a decision is still forthcoming).

The apprenticeship contracts too have lagged pace, but are nevertheless growing in absolute terms. The apprenticeship contract has an instructional aim, so much so that only structures that allow the apprentice (maximum 24 years old) participation in training initiatives outside the company, can take advantage of the tax concessions. These initiatives can either be directly relative to the profession, like the technical and scientific professions, or can be of a transversal character, like the reinstatement or recuperation of linguistics, mathematics, or management and economics knowledge.

Before examining the boom of temporary work, let us briefly observe two other types of atypical work contracts: the Professional-level entry schemes and Social utility work. The tables below illustrate how typically regional the characters of these types of contracts are. The first type, the Professional-level entry schemes, is declining in net total value, while the Social utility work contracts have continued to increase in the number of employed units. What is more, these are two sectors of minimal weight, given that they do not occupy more than 200,000 people in total, and that they do not reach 1% of the total amount of employed Italians. It should also be noted the existence of these types of contracts ended in the biennial of 2000-2001, and they will therefore be gradually erased.

Concerning temporary workers, we provide data for the year 2000, collated from the examination of 47 companies out of the 51 engaged in this type of employment (in absolute terms, they employ a little less than 400,000 persons in total), while the estimate provided by Confinterim relates to all the 51 companies (hence the value is higher, reaching 472,000 units). Temporary work makes up only 2.2% of the total amount of employed people in Italy, but what is striking is the velocity with which the supply of temporary labour increased from 1997, the year the law was approved. In 1998, the number of people employed in this sector was 22,000, which means that in the triennial of 1998-2000, the percentage increase was 204.5%.

Bear in mind that, with the decree of 1999, recourse for accidents in the workplace for temporary work contracts was prohibited, particularly in the case of risky jobs. Also, in 2001, a bilateral Fund was created for the training of temporary workers so as to guarantee supply of highly qualified temporary workers, and, if possible, to subsequently favour the development of the sector. In addition, based on the data furnished by Confinterim, it has been demonstrated that temporary work favours the development of stable employment. In fact, it sustains that after one or more assignments, about 23% of the people working with this type of contract were employed indefinitely.

Let us briefly examine the relationship between men and women within the different contracts in this specific case, as against that of the total number of people employed (the data and estimates are relative to 2000). On the general level, women make up 36.8% of the 21,078,000 people employed. This percentage is quite similar to that of the training-and-work contracts (34.5%), and also to the percentage of temporary work contracts (38%). While the proportion of female workers increases in the case of apprenticeship contracts (about 40%), the value is even higher for continuous coordinated collaborations (42.8%) and social work (47.6%) contracts. Apart from the social work contracts, which are -based, the estimation made for continuous coordinated collaborations corresponds to the success that this type of labour had among female workers. Part- work also finds major favour among women, and it is a sector in which female workers make up a good 80.8% of the total (884,000 women out of 1,094,000 persons).

Based of the main types of contracts, it is easy to note the geographic distribution of atypical workers observing the following table below. Absolute values for employment in Italy are also presented here (it should be noted that the data from Piemonte and Valle d'Aosta appear to be unified within national statistics).



Table 5

**ATYPICAL WORKERS, SUBDIVIDED BY TYPE, REGION, AND TOTAL  
NUMBER OF EMPLOYED WORKERS**

Year 2000 (first semester or otherwise specified)

Regions	Total employed in Italy (2000)	Apprenticeship	Training-and-work Contract	Professional-level entry schemes	Social work	Temporary work (2000) 47 of 51 companies	CoCoCo (registered by 2000)	Part-time
Valle D'Aosta	1.823.000	1.481	968	2	28	1.873	5.409	2.833
Piemonte		43.350	25.754	184	2.121	56.586	142.600	96.911
Lombardy	3.875.000	83.273	68.391	108	828	121.959	428.541	252.974
Liguria	596.000	12.461	4.688	1.393	1.460	5.862	53.051	37.417
Trent. A.A.	419.000	11.071	5.090	0	64	5.315	45.353	27.571
Veneto	1.940.000	65.013	25.469	235	767	44.741	177.566	125.862
Friuli V.G.	480.000	12.855	7.646	42	190	10.543	52.260	32.350
Emilia R.	1.773.000	52.351	31.757	175	611	35.050	180.265	102.749
Tuscany	1.424.000	39.652	17.589	477	1.608	16.838	149.249	87.854
Umbria	323.000	9.805	6.294	492	1.120	9.018	30.021	15.999
Marche	591.000	20.876	5.719	114	1.002	8.830	52.128	31.434
Lazio	1.916.000	17.282	34.439	2.416	9.959	31.514	198.298	91.104
Abruzzo	448.000	8.927	10.350	143	3.328	11.410	31.394	18.446
Molise	108.000	1.251	2.832	258	946	952	6.990	3.931
Campania	1.559.000	10.385	17.834	809	28.820	9.590	90.260	48.674
Puglia	1.212.000	23.285	25.035	1.094	10.842	21.157	77.841	35.233
Basilicata	185.000	1.510	3.178	441	3.296	2.285	11.580	4.865
Calabria	541.000	2.555	3.260	1.527	9.683	852	28.313	16.201
Sicily	1.350.000	13.453	10.216	989	45.230	3.154	90.510	41.082
Sardinia	1.350.000	4.955	9.626	594	3.886	1.758	45.710	20.972
Total	21.078.000	435.971	316.135	11.493	125.789	399.287	1.897.339	1.094.462

Source: Eurispes' elaboration of data from Inps, Confinterim, and Ministry of Welfare (OML).

Limiting our observation only to absolute values, there is a high number of employed people with apprentice contracts in the Lombardy (83,273) and Veneto (65,013) regions, without leaving out Emilia Romagna with 52,351.

## **The Regulative Framework**

Understandably, the legislation on atypical labour has had a major development in the past recent years. However, some types of contracts that are now under the atypical labour category were already regulated in the past, like the apprenticeship contract, for example, which became regulated for the first time in 1955 with the law n.25, and was subsequently modified by other regulations. These regulations constituted an ideal starting point for an articulated passage, now concluded with the law of 24<sup>th</sup> June 1997 n.196 (the so-called “Pacchetto Treu” – Treu Package) concerning flexibility and active policies for labour. The package also introduced the compulsory training of apprentice workers by their employers.

Temporary work in Italy was officially introduced by the 196/1997 law. This type of labour underwent subsequent growth in Italy, and extended to the construction and agricultural sectors (Finanziaria 2000), and finally, to the public sector (agreed framework of 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2001).

In the complex legislative framework of labour, consider also, the debate developed on the Smuraglia law in the precedent legislature. The law was aimed at extending a series of rights, regulated by the Statute of Workers, to para-subordinate work contracts (which includes the continuous coordinated collaboration contracts). It included, among others, the right to training, to safety in the workplace, and to greater protection regarding pension and medical care.

Likewise, it is necessary to cite the actual debate underway, which was initiated from the book, “Libro Bianco sul Mercato del Lavoro” – Reality of the Labour Market, of the Minister of Welfare, Maroni, concerning the reform of Employment services, of part-time work, and of other aspects of the active policies, and which led to the approval of the bill 848 at the House of Deputies on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2002. It is also necessary to mention the increasing legislative commitment to regularising and regulating undeclared and concealed labour. In fact, many very different kinds of atypical jobs are connected to these negative labels, which surely include many cases of abuse and exploitation of labour, just as there are freely chosen and honest works done under these labels. Unfortunately, this is something not contemplated by the law due to its incomplete understanding of the phenomenon.

The European Union’s legislation has equally contributed a lot to the modernisation of our laws regarding work. This is true especially for what regards

part- work, which is regulated by the CE n. 51/1987 regulation, applied in Italy with the D.L.vo. n. 61 of 2000. The regulation introduces some functional tools for higher flexibility (including the “elastic clauses”, useful for easily modulating work shifts, and “supplementary work”, which allows for the possible articulation of employees’ work on spans higher than that agreed upon in stipulated contracts), and permits the application, in this particular case, to the Public administration. Of recent, under the European Union’s effort, yet again, the D.Lgs. n. 100/2001 has partially modified the regulation, introducing measures aimed at an additional increase of flexibility.

What is worth noting, is the role of the local reality regarding training-and-work contracts, where the law 407/90, modifying the precedent regulation, has introduced regional support. This law is to be subsequently completed by law 451/94.

Finally, there is no existing law specifically for the continuous coordinated collaboration contracts (co.co.co.). While article 409 of the Civil Code outlines principal characteristics of the Co.Co.Co., there is no legal text defining its characteristics and limits of its application. This is also due to the difficulties the above-mentioned Smuraglia law met with.

However, it is in fact, the experience of the Smuraglia that continues to sustain the doubt that the application of the flexibility principle to the worker may be interpreted, in the actual application, into illicit strain of his/her rights, which have been guaranteed by law up until now. Notwithstanding the fact that the labour market necessitated the present change in course, we should generally ask ourselves what consequences (positive or negative) there may be for those who are personally involved in it.

### **Debilitated labour?**

The transition in course in the labour world is undoubtedly potentially destabilising because it can endanger the achieved social compromises, and even unhinge the conventional images of security and equality in Europe. The very nucleus of social relations, which, in the second half of the twentieth century had been close to the place of work, has now moved towards the labour market, where more frequently now than before, the commitment of today and tomorrow is decided. Nevertheless, this should not steer us into only recognising the difficulties involved in the transformation, but should instead direct us to recognising the surely existent opportunities that transformation offers.

It cannot be denied that the proliferation of new forms of labour and new professions increase the possibility of the individual in finding employment consistent

to his/her aspirations. The increase of the existing variables of labour creates a more ample context for creativity and for personal achievement too. In this way, human resource can be optimised and allocated in an efficient manner, and for categories particularly endangered by unemployment, like young people or low-qualified workers. For such groups of people, it becomes easier to enter the labour world, through part- work, or temporary work, or apprentice work, and so on.

On the other hand, it is easy to sense the negative sides of this plurality of labour models, which implicates their relative growth, and is reflected in the proliferation of temporary employment. If the professional identity becomes temporary, it may also be easily ignored, and this could result in the denial of the individuality of the worker, making him/her modular instead – an interchangeable and contingent component of work. In this context, it becomes almost natural to assert oneself of the new forms of “capolarization” – new forms of exploitation (Joly, 2000), and the re-emergence of the so-called crummy jobs (mean, inferior quality, short-lived; Girardi, 2001), which are moreover, frequently reserved for a growing percentage of foreign immigrant workers.

This way, aspects of uncertainty, over-work, and stress emerge. With the application of flexibility to work hours and the decrease of the pure distinction between work and free , there is an increase of professions involving constant availability on the part of the individual. In theory, these types of professions implicate the possibility of being called to give one’s services, at any moment during the 24 hours of the day. This is the situation, for example, of the help-desk and in general, of all those who supply service related to technical support and emergency. In this case, if people are to recognise the positive aspects of a highly efficient job, which is absent of work-hour constraints (since it is always accomplished the moment it is needed), it is however evident the high risk of stress. Such people find themselves increasingly unable to have real disposable free .

It is also due to the verification of phenomena like the number of work-hours in the lives of individuals. During the last ten years, there has been a constant decrease in the number of work-hours in the lives of individuals, but today, that number is on the rise again (it is estimated that the number is at 100,000 hours per the average work life of 35 years; this is about the same number indicated by statistics relative to the generation of the Thirties). In reality, it is likely that in the future, the average number of work hours in the life span of a person will be maintained within contained limits. This will not happen through the reduction of work hours, but instead, by the frequency with which single individuals will change jobs, which will inevitably generate periods of frictional unemployment. Though there will be intervals of no work, they will not be for this reason, periods absent of tension.

Already today, work (or the lack of it) is the first cause of stress in the world – 54% of the cases of stress is attributed to it. The risk of loosing one’s job, co-

upled with a distressed sense of insecurity, has contributed to the increase of the phenomenon of over-activity without a precise sense (or of “presenzialism” – to be present at the workplace even when it is unnecessary, happens when people remain in office even in the absence of work). The consequence of the phenomenon of activism in itself is over-work which pertains to a high percentage of the employed population, as is highlighted by the following table.

*Table 6*

### THE MAP OF WORK AND OVER-WORK IN ITALY

Year 2002

Estimates – Values in thousands

Position in the Profession	Employed	Over-workers
Regulated Labour Market:		
Dependent/Autonomous workers (employees)	14,600	1,500
Independent workers	6,750	2,700
Total workers in the regulated labour market	14,600	1,500
Co.co.co. (continuous coordinated collaboration)	2,000	1,000
Temporary workers	250	75
Managers, of which:	1,200	600
Executives/Top-managers	300	200
Management staff and Managers	900	400
Undeclared Labour Market		
Full- workers	3,400	2,400
Part- workers	2,250	-
Total workers in the undeclared labour market	5,650	2,400
Regulated and Undeclared Labour Market	27,000	6,600
Volunteer Work:		
Total workers non-retributive (volunteers)	4,000	800

Source: Eurispes.

The Eurispes estimates demonstrate a division in the labour market: only a little more than half of employed people benefit from the traditional security of dependent workers. Over-workers instead, are verifiable in any professional category, both

among those who operate in the regulated economy, among undeclared workers, among financially remunerated workers, and also among volunteer workers. The only variation is in the percentage measure: from the table, we can deduct that over-work is twice as much in the undeclared labour market than in the regulated labour market (approximate incidence of 40% against 20% of the cases, for a total average of about 25%). Full- undeclared jobs present an amount of over-workers (about two thirds) similar to those of executives/top-managers. Likewise, the amount of over-workers among those under continuous and coordinated collaborations and among managers, are similar too. The lowest amount of over-workers registered relates to the regulated dependent employees, which happens to be the most excellent form of “typical” work.

Similarly, if the supposed erosion of hierarchical barriers in work places (the team approach, which involves the construction of more intense social relationships between top-managers and employees, as well as the abandon of formal dress and behavioural codes) has the undoubted advantage of constructing a more comfortable and gratifying professional environment, it also presents some risks. In the first instance, in fact, the shift of work relationships from the formal sphere may constitute the assumption that the worker can be requested to work beyond the allowed limits or limits set by law. In the second instance, it can, with an apparent paradox, favour cases of social outcast or illicit strain. It is not surprising that phenomena like mobbing appear to be a dominant reality in the recent years (this however does not obviously imply that cases like these were not verified in the past).

There is less execution and more co-operation in work today, even if not all of work is less executive nor is co-operation is higher everywhere. In addition, today, more decisional autonomy is often given to dependent employees, and companies' hierarchical structures are often being substituted with the team approach, though naturally, this does not mean that assignments and the specific weight of an employee becomes the same as those of a top-manager/executive.

So, the classical division between who occupies roles with responsibility and who instead has subordinate duties can be simply substituted for a polarisation between stable workers and fluctuating workers (the couple “core workers – contingent workers”) who operate in the same company, maybe even in close contact for long periods. In this way, the new work environment is prone to suffering a lack of solidarity within the professional communities. This lack of solidarity may be the effect of different labour protections, in the modes or the tools used. It may also be from risks of uncertainty of work contracts, which were previously more stable, and which, in Italy, had an ample base for expansion in public and para-public work.

Similar considerations can be made for the diffusion of new work technologies, and in particular, for telework. Telework presents the following indisputable advantages:

- Verifiable productivity in as work is absolutely on individual-basis and gives the individual responsibility;
- Availability of adequate space and tools at home, which allows for a largely autonomous organisation of work ;
- Positive orientation of the family and individual which allows for trial of work from home. An orientation that helps to find an equilibrium between work roles/engagements and family;
- Improvement of work quality; Though there is a lower social component, which is retained by many people as fundamental;
- Possibilities of engaging personnel with health or family problems, since many of the discomforts/inconveniences related to extra-domestic work are nullified.

Along with these advantages, the disadvantages arise. Since the teleworker has no superiors or defined work-hours, very often, he/she finds that they also have no work-hour limits. This way, telework carried out at home frequently becomes non-retributive over. In this case, work and free are unclear, so much so that the second is substantially nullified for the other. The main danger for this type of worker is represented by a paradoxical form of auto-exploitation. Another feeling experienced by those who adopt telework is the sense of frustration related to the functioning of the multiple technologies involved, which are frequently as complex as they are potential – from the possibility of connection with the various peripherals, to the difficulty of some programs, from the richness of the internet, to the difficulty of accessing the information it contains. The consequence of all this is the spread of anxiety, dissatisfaction, and the overload of psychological and physical engagement. The causes of stress from telework are undoubtedly manifested in alienation and in difficulty to communicate, and these are tied to different factors principally concerning auto-evaluation: motivation, gratification, frustration, and learning.

In absence of a dynamic working climate, telework is certainly a completely particular and complex situation. It is however difficult to deny that telework could represent a way of work alternative to the traditional way. Telework is therefore, a possibility to take into consideration for those who want to change work or way of working.

The transition in progress generates insecurity and inspires pessimism, even among well-balanced people, because the change in work is profound, fast, and it seems to be going towards shores that were unthinkable as of yesterday. We come from a century where sociologists studied in depth, the oppression caused by monotony and repetition. Today instead, they have to study the anxiety generated by variability and uncertainty. Stress leaves, supplanting frustration. The symptom

was boredom yesterday. Today, the symptom is frenzy. In the past, many workers suffered because of monotony, equalisation, and the standardising of tasks, today they suffer because their tasks are quickly changing, quickly growing, and quickly evolving.

In the *Folla solitaria* – Lonely Crowd, David Riesman described the Nineteenth century pre-Ford as an era of the self-directed individual, and the Twentieth century Taylor-Ford as the era of the other-directed individual. Today, the continuous dynamism and the desire to arrive at a production as differentiated as possible, in order to satisfy the different needs of every client, brings post-Ford to re-propose the model of self-direction again. But this, it is heavily conditioned by the requests of the consumer. This means more creative work, with fewer constraints and more opportunities, but also, with more responsibilities and larger risks.

### **A look into the future**

What can be foreseen in the next few years? The intersection of demand and supply of labour may become more fragmented, maybe even reaching the individual dimension. This will open new possibilities for personal achievement, allowing for choice of custom-made work, but it will also carry risks. One such risk is that of leaving the worker alone to the mercy of the employer, without associations for collective bargaining (like the unions) being able to carry out an effective role. A point of satisfaction for both sides (demand and supply) will therefore remain complicated, even where there are employment services, or where they will be conceived and organised in such a way that promotes active policies for orientation, training, and re-allocation.

A reason for this complication in demand and supply is that, on one hand, new types of employment contracts are being developed, like definite-period or part- contracts, and on the other hand, there is an increase in the inflow of immigrants from under-developed areas of the world. The complication is also due to the convoy of professions that are expanding and splitting up since the professional birth-mortality rate is very active. Therefore, although many of these professions will die, many more will be born because there will be the need not only for new abilities, but also for the traditional ones too. There will not be a net average increase in professionalism, but instead, there will be a more extended series of aptitudes and professional applications, affecting everyone from the computer scientists to the carpenters, and this extension will be made necessary by the interweave between demands and old and new technologies.

Labour is likely to continue to spread and to diversify both on the territory and on the networks, among dependent employees, among people who operate



like independent workers, and among others who operate in mixed and ambiguous conditions. It may be possible to find non-stop services everywhere and people who work at all hours of the day and on any day of the year. The formation of large groups and large concentrations of companies will not invert the trend towards the average reduction of company sizes, and this downsizing is associated to high volatility. Mobility of capital will remain higher than the mobility of people, whether employees or entrepreneurs, while the mobility (physical) of companies will remain low because of the trend towards growth for effect of “de-localisation” (growth of subsidiaries), and above all, because of the entrance of new entrepreneurs into the market.

Information and communication technologies, just like the feminilization of the labour force, will favour all processes concerned with the reduction of production processes. For choice or for necessity, more people will work through the telematic network.

There will be improvements in work conditions in the area of regulated work, and this phenomenon will also be verified in developing countries. Labour saving technologies and ergonomic designs will allow for the reduction of fatigue. Already today, atypical labour signals a lower presence of accidents, though there is still the acute problem of protection when these accidents do verify themselves. Non-institutional work is an area destined to expand parallel to the increase of undeclared labour. This happens in domestic work, for instance, where labour is insufficiently protected, but it is increasingly being substituted by volunteer activities which are anyway more protected.

Anyhow, problems will remain for workers. The first of these problems is the prospective contradiction between high “internal” involvement of the worker and the low “external” safeguard of work. As was said before, the nature of the work tends to change for the better. The carrying out of tasks will be subject to lesser constraints and will offer major opportunities, even if the increase of responsibility obviously brings an increase of risks (like the kind of risk shareholders may suffer). At the same time, the terms of work tend to change for the worse, and the increase of autonomy, with its double face of higher freedom and (therefore) higher risk, is not alienated from this tendency. In fact, the guaranteed safeguards of social legislation, union negotiation, and labour law are made less certain because of less uniformity in qualifications, less stability in work engagements, less concentration among workers, and less dependent workers. All these add up to make the traditional contractual protection more difficult.

With no new universal models and laws for safeguard and welfare, if unemployment (including people temporarily without work who are actively searching for one, and young people who are actively searching for their first jobs) in Europe should lessen, the consequences could be socially disintegrating. This means that

it is necessary to have a strong initiative from the public authority, and above all, from social partners, particularly at the level of the European Union.

There are also important socio-psychological consequences related to lower unemployment without new universal models and laws. For example, the profession exercised by a worker at a particular period will certainly continue to be an important factor of social definition, but since the profession is always subject to frequent and radical transformations during the life span of every individual, it will increasingly be less important. This is because the present profession would have to compete with those professions exercised in the past (and eventually, those that will be exercised in the future) in forming the identity of the person. Hence, through jobs, social identification will follow more fluid and more complex routes. Also, since these jobs are more personal now, there will be superimpositions and disassociations between the work sphere and other spheres of existence. All this will make for the composite identity in the diachronic sense, and it is different from the multiple ones in the synchronic sense to which sociologists frequently allude.

## **Conclusions**

It has been largely seen, in all its aspects, how the actual historical junction is marked by deep transformations in the work sphere. The common characteristic of these transformations appears that of accentuating plurality and flexibility of the work-phenomenon. Professions and jobs are increasing because new types of labour are born almost every day, without eliminating the old ones. At the same , there is the multiplication and diversification of work conditions, work manners, and work periods.

This transformation process is the inevitable contraposition of globalisation of the economy and diffusion of new technologies in communication, which are both unrestrained trends in contemporary society. It appears useless therefore, to ask if the changes in progress are to be accepted or rejected, since they represent the only possible answer to precise unequivocal stimuli from the market. The question to ask, if necessary, is how to manage these changes.

It cannot be affirmed a priori if the classical model is more alienating for the individual than the one that is being clearly defined today. In reality, almost everyone has the aspiration for change (to have new experiences, to progress in carrier and on the social ladder) and the desire for stability (certainty of one's work position and a secure income). It is obvious that this latter objective was highly protected in the past than today, while the former objective was the opposite. However, both objectives are legitimate and worthy of safeguard.

In the work context, transformations take on an increasingly faster rhythm, and this certainly imposes a renewed dynamism, which also extends to the normative and legislative sphere. Notwithstanding, this dynamism will be more in the work context than it will probably be in the normative and legislative context, where general rules to govern work contracts and to protect the rights of the worker are determined. Above all, the intersection of demand and supply on an almost individual level will remove a lot of significance from the traditional tool of collective negotiation. Also, a higher ability to adapt to these transformations will be required of the social structure and individual psychology of workers.

Maybe all this can be synthesised in the manner of a caption by saying that the new face of the work-phenomenon presents, without doubt, less certainties and more challenges. But it also presents higher potentialities for creativity and individual self-assertion, which in turn, are vehicles of a high well-being for the entire community. The diversification of work certainly reveals new roads to human progress, as long as its correct use is known.