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Measures of Social Cohesion: Comparative Report

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WILCO Welfare innovations at the local level in favour of cohesion

This working paper is the result of a research project entitled "Welfare innovations at the local level in favour of cohesion" (WILCO). WILCO aims to examine, through cross-national comparative research, how local welfare systems affect social inequalities and how they favour social cohesion, with a special focus on the missing link between innovations at the local level and their successful transfer to and implementation in other settings. The WILCO consortium covers ten European countries and is funded by the European Commission (FP7, Socio-economic Sciences & Humanities).

The present report has been produced with the contribution of Manuel Aguilar Hendrickson, Gojko Bežovan, Sandro Cattacin, Anna Escobedo, Benjamin Ewert, Laurent Fraisse, Nathalie Kakpo, Lara Maestripieri, Ilona Matysiak, Patricia Naegeli and Renata Siemienska.

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SUMMARY

In the present report we present the results of the second phase of the WILCO project,[1] the aim of which was to describe *how social inequality and exclusion patterns in twenty European cities have developed over the past years*. Specifically, we have looked at effects with respect to gender, age and migration in the fields of employment, childcare and housing. The findings are based on 20 *city reports collecting secondary statistical data, local literature and grey documents and interviews with privileged interlocutors, combined with interviews of 360 single mothers, young unemployed adults and migrants*. The underlying city reports are available through our website: www.wilcoproject.eu.

Our focus is on social vulnerability, which emerges from difficulties in the coordination of different resources and obligations, rather than from a lack of resources. In other words, it focuses on instability and precariousness, not on permanent exclusion or poverty in itself. Overall, while the investigations at the country level reflect general trends (examined in a previous WILCO report), there are a number of important differences between cities.

Local determinants of social vulnerability

Labour market

There are clean common trends across the cities. Almost everywhere, services have become the driving force in the labour market, although in some local areas (Brescia and Milan, Lille and Nantes, Pamplona, Zagreb) the manufacturing sector is still relevant in the overall economic structure. Flexible employment is also rising everywhere. However, *differences are dramatic when it comes to unemployment levels*. Two cities (Bern and Warsaw) show unemployment rates below 5%. Barcelona, Pamplona, Berlin, Birmingham and Lille have unemployment rates above 10%. The underlying trends are also very different. In both Spanish cities, high unemployment comes after a decade of long fall in unemployment, which went down to a historical minimum just before the crisis, while in both Polish cities, current unemployment levels constitute a reduction from dramatically higher rates 10 years ago. In most other cases, unemployment rates have changed less drastically.

The regulation and payment of "passive" monetary measures, such as unemployment benefits, remains organised and financed at the national level. By contrast, public employment services and activation policies are widely managed at the regional and local levels. *Many cities are currently experimenting with innovative types of interventions*, *new modes of provision and new types of production* (one-stop shops, public-private partnership, outsourcing, etc.), even when they are not institutionally responsible for this kind of services. Such innovations will be examined in more detail in later WILCO reports.

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Reconciling work and childcare

Recent local trends, such as the (unequal) recovery of the birth rate, various processes of inclusion of couples with children in city centres or their exclusion to peripheral areas and the variable impact of the current economic crisis on employment have led to a reconfiguration of work and childcare in the cities. Whereas social opportunities have improved, so too have social vulnerabilities, especially for single mothers.

After a long period of fertility decline, western European cities have been witnessing an *unequal but positive growth in the number of births* since the end of the 2000s. Although the prospect of a new "baby boom" remains the exception (Berlin, Stockholm), a moderate recovery of the birth rate has been evident everywhere over the last few years, even in cities with a low fertility rate (Barcelona, Brescia, Milan, Warsaw, Zagreb). This recovery is due not only to recent immigration flows and a higher fertility rate among foreign families, but also to an increased birth rate among indigenous populations.

The second remarkable and convergent European urban transformation is the *growing proportion of single-person households* in urban city centres, where the proportion of large families and couples with children has declined. Concerning lone parenthood, two groups of European cities can be distinguished: (1) cities (Barcelona, Birmingham, Bern, Brescia, Stockholm, Warsaw) where the population of single parents continues to increase, both in absolute terms and proportionally; (2) cities (Münster, Milan, Amsterdam, etc.) that are characterised by a stable proportion of single parents.

Despite substantial efforts by local governments in the 2000s to improve the number of childcare services and facilities in the majority of cities, *the shortage of affordable places and long waiting lists remain a substantial obstacle*, although to varying degrees, for families with dependent young children. *Lack of affordability, lack of appropriate childcare opening hours and geographical polarisation limit access to childcare in practice*, specifically for single mothers.

Migration and risk of social exclusion

European cities attract migrants from all over the world in large numbers. This ongoing influx and spatial concentration makes cities such as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin or Milan social laboratories of migration. These cities are challenged to cope with an increasing heterogeneity of migrants' backgrounds, claims and needs in times of scant economic resources. Interestingly, this process of diversification affects not only large cities and/or capitals such as Amsterdam, Barcelona and Berlin, but also middle-size cities such as Pamplona, Nijmegen, Bern and Malmö. The percentage of migrants in the population in WILCO's cities ranges from less than 1% (Warsaw, Płock[2]) to more than 50% (Amsterdam).

Despite the general rise of migrants' diversity, some cities or city districts may be dominated by specific migrant communities or divided along ethnical lines; the groups so defined may differ in terms of internal coherence and/or inclusion into the host country. According to our data,

[2] Please note that this percentage regards only the migrants who are registered as permanent residents in Warsaw (0.3% of the population of the city) or Płock (0.1% of the population of the city). As for other forms of residence of foreigners in Warsaw (e.g. temporary residents, students, refugees, etc.), it is estimated that they constitute ca. 9% of the entire population of the city. In the case of Płock, there are no such estimations available. It should also be noted that, if unregistered immigrants were taken into account, the share of migrants in the overall population would be relatively higher in both cities.

segregation - understood as a high degree of social homogeneity within the urban space - refers to low-income population much more than it is a typical characteristic of ethnic minorities.

Three categories of cities could be distinguished on the basis of their degree of commitment and of the policy approaches they apply. The first category is constituted by so-called "pioneers" of migration policies; it comprises major European cities such as Amsterdam and Barcelona. These cities deal with migration issues by developing local integration plans, installing migration boards including migrant organisations and negotiating networked policies among multi-level stakeholders. The cities of the second category pursue a "managed migration" that is characterised by pragmatism: they implement mainly "ordinary" migration policies consisting of obligatory welfare services and integration courses provided by local councils and third sector organisations (TSOs). Finally, the third category contains cities where migration remains a side issue that has been politically ignored so far or has rather been a specific topic of civil initiatives working beyond the official political agenda. WILCO's cities in Croatia and Poland belong to this last category; however, especially Warsaw and Zagreb become more and more multicultural, which may request a future revision of respective policy programs.

Housing distress

Housing prices everywhere have increased, leading to problems of affordability for vulnerable people. In most European cities the high levels of housing prices and rents are due to the low number of new dwellings, the growing share of single-person households, the increasing amount of young families with children who are not moving to the suburbs or outer parts of the city, the high demand in real estate for financial investment, following the financial crisis, and scarce price controlling policies. This crisis has led to lower levels of mortgage lending and a fall in housing prices in some cities (e.g. in Brescia, Medway, Warsaw, Barcelona, Zagreb), but not in all cities (this was e.g. not the case in Milan and Geneva). The main impact of the financial crisis has been the reduction in the number of transactions in the housing market. Significant numbers of families lost their homes because they defaulted on their mortgages (in the UK cities, for example), and evictions have been increasing.

In most cities reductions of public support from the national level, combined with the decentralisation of housing policy, have led to a drastic reduction of the resources available for local welfare housing policies. The demand for affordable housing has not resulted in a higher supply. The public housing stock has been privatised or abandoned in a number of cities (in Zagreb in the 1990s, in Milan and Brescia in the last decade) or its management has been externalised (like in the Medway area).

The social groups which are most affected are young people and young couples with children. The "housing careers" of the latter are very uncertain in countries without a social rental sector and without an efficient housing allowance programme.

Social vulnerability: groups at risk

Youth at risk of unemployment

Youth unemployment has risen strongly everywhere, but especially in Southern European cities. It is now not uncommon that the average duration of the last spell of unemployment be longer than the average length of the last job experience. Furthermore, in many cases, *the average length of the last work contracts experienced by our interviewees was just a few months*. This trend toward extremely short-term contracts reduces the capacity of planning for these young people, both in terms of establishing a new household and in terms of building a successful career. The current financial crisis is perceived as a catalyst of existing problems, for young people in general, and more specifically for some categories like first- or second-generation migrants (in Berlin, Bern, Malmö, Stockholm, Amsterdam and Münster) or women (in Brescia and Milan).

The level of protection varies a lot according to national laws regulating access to monetary support for atypical workers and first-job seekers. Access to local welfare agencies and income support is shown to lead to different levels of satisfaction, even when access is equal: in Birmingham and Medway, there was clear evidence of satisfaction, whereas similar support in Münster, Geneva and Berlin encountered cynicism, mistrust and indifference. In cities like Barcelona, Pamplona, Brescia and Milan, but also Warsaw, where measures of support are weaker, the young unemployed often rely on the support of their families. In cities like Bern, Malmö and Berlin, friends and partners are the most important information gatekeepers. Temporary employment agencies are generally regarded with mistrust, partly because job opportunities found through this channel seem to be of a lower level, be it in terms of length, professional content or pay. Currently *the main problem for young people at risk of unemployment is dealing with the (low) quality of their jobs and life chances, rather than the risk of being totally unemployed and excluded from the labour market*.

A *recurrent strategy to cope with their situation is the postponement of steps towards autonomy and adulthood***.** Some even take a step backwards, giving up living autonomously and going back to live with their parents.

Single mothers

The most important issue for the great majority of single mothers is to balance their work-life needs, especially in terms of combining job requirements with childcare. *Single mothers often have priority access to municipal services, yet have major problems with the adjustment of working hours to the opening hours of these institutions*. Therefore, the majority of interviewed women were ready to accept low-skilled and low-paid jobs, but which were compatible with the childcare solution they had found. An adequate work-life balance is achieved only by those single mothers who have the possibility to supplement institutional care with the support of family networks (including a varying role of the father) and, to a lesser extent, friends, neighbours and solidarity networks. The great majority of *single mothers were also strongly affected by their precarious financial situation*. In order to deal with lone motherhood, a significant number of them had to give up, or postpone, their aspirations for education or professional development.

It seems that *the life situation of migrant lone mothers may be affected by double exclusion* based on their immigrant status as well as single motherhood. Migrant women usually lack the support of family network, which is still crucial in relation to childcare needs. Lack of knowledge and language skills may also hinder them from accessing childcare facilities and other welfare services.

Migrants coping with social exclusion

Although the percentage of migrants varies greatly, almost all cities now have a noticeable cosmopolitan flavour - not only large cities and/or capitals such as Amsterdam, Barcelona and Berlin, but also middle-sized cities such as Pamplona, Nijmegen, Bern and Malmö.

In general terms, different levels of strictness in status regulation and clearness of procedures, as well as differences in the size of the grey economy, set different frames of opportunities for migrants in different countries. *Highly-skilled migrants have few problems to accept continuous residential and job changes. Vulnerable migrants, by contrast, feel like victims*. Language barriers, lack of recognition of skills, inclusion in segregated job markets are particular problems. Communities and friends are the most important path to avoid extreme exclusion situations, but they are not sufficient to guarantee inclusion.

Unemployment is much higher among non-EU migrants than among EU migrants. Furthermore, activity rates differ a lot among ethnic groups, both for men and women. In terms of the latter, EU-migrants perform as well as – and, in some cases, even better than - nationals, because work remains the driving force behind their migration. In particular, migrants perform well in self-employment and in the service sector. *The educational level of migrants is rising everywhere* because of national migration policies that both aim exclusively at high-qualified migrants and become stricter. Yet even qualified migrants still face enormous difficulties to participate in local labour markets, due to bureaucratic constraints and cultural barriers. During the last few years, irregular work among migrants has been increasing everywhere; this, in turn, has a negative impact on their residence status and housing conditions, and therefore on societal integration.

1. AIMS, METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH PRODUCTS

This report presents the preliminary comparative results of the WILCO project's third Work Package (WP3), entitled "Measures of Social Cohesion". It has been drafted by the WP coordinator, i.e. the POLIMI team (Costanzo Ranci, Stefania Sabatinelli and Giuliana Costa), with the contribution of other teams' colleagues. More precisely, the following researchers drafted one or two section(s): Manuel Aguilar Hendrickson (section 2.1), Stefania Sabatinelli (sections 2.1 and 3.1), Laurent Fraisse and Anna Escobedo (section 2.2), Giuliana Costa (sections 2.3 and 2.4), Benjamin Ewert (section 2.3), Gojko Bežovan and Taco Brandsen (section 2.4), Lara Maestripieri (section 3.1), Ilona Matysiak and Renata Siemienska (section 3.2), Sandro Cattacin, Nathalie Kakpo and Patricia Naegeli (section 3.3).

According to the WILCO project, the aim of WP3 was to identify the national backdrop of social inequality and exclusion patterns with respect to gender, age and migration in urban contexts. This was meant to allow us to determine systematically what is specific about our chosen city cases in comparison with other cities in the same country, and thus help us refine the comparative analysis among cities in different countries.

This entailed gathering all available data about social inequality and exclusion concerning the local labour market, housing and childcare systems, as well as data on patterns of social cohesion for our chosen cities.

1.1. Selection of the cities

The first research action was the selection of the 20 cities on which the research would subsequently focus, also in the upcoming WPs. Cities were selected according the following criteria:

- in each country, one large city (a metropolis in some cases) and a middle-sized one;
- cities where some degree of social innovation can be found.

The result of the selection is shown in table 1.

Table 1 – Cities selected for the WILCO Project

Country	Selected cities	
The Netherlands	Amsterdam	Nijmegen
Germany	Berlin (Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain district)	Münster
Italy	Milan	Brescia
Switzerland	Geneva	Bern
Spain	Barcelona	Pamplona
Croatia	Zagreb	Varaždin
France	Lille	Nantes
Poland	Warsaw	Płock
United Kingdom	Birmingham	Medway area (Kent)
Sweden	Stockholm	Malmö

1.2. Research objectives and steps

As it appears from the literature review, it seems useful and coherent to focus on three levels: the macro level (country, welfare regimes, etc.); the meso level (urban/local one); and the micro level (individual one).

Accordingly, the objectives of the WP3 could be organised in three steps.

- First, we wanted to understand the main differences among cities and their respective countries. We intended to catch the common characters and the peculiarities of the selected cities and to evaluate to what extent such characters and peculiarities were explained by national features, as opposed to specific urban ones, through an analysis of the Urban Audit database. Unfortunately we could not carry out a longitudinal analysis as Urban Audit only covers a limited temporal span.

- Secondly, we looked at the structural transformations taking place in the selected cities, by analytically reconstructing the changes occurring in the demographic, economic and productive structures. The analysis tackled in particular changes concerning the labour market, the family structures, the migration trends and the housing system. Specific attention was also paid to welfare policies affecting the areas that are the focus of our project, especially at the local level, to understand what the main rising problems were and to what extent public, private and mixed interventions were able to meet the emerging needs.

  This part aimed to grasp the main drivers of social change affecting the social conditions of our target groups, i.e. the young, women, and migrants (that will be further detailed below).

- Thirdly, through an in-depth analysis, we reconstructed the social conditions of our target groups (young adults, single mothers, migrants), with special attention to our policy areas (position on the labour market, childcare needs, housing conditions). We aimed to understand whether there are local/national variations in these conditions and what the main socio-economic factors related to them are. Moreover, some attention was paid to the options that people have in order to deal with problematic situations concerning these three areas.

1.3. Methodology

Coherently, the methodology proceeded along three separate lines:

- a statistical analysis aimed at positioning the city cases within the broader context of European cities, through the exploitation of the Urban Audit Eurostat;
- the preparation of a descriptive profile of two cities in each country, focused on the demographic and socio-economic structure, the territorial distribution of the population, the structure of the labour market, the housing market, and the provision of childcare solutions;
- an in-depth analysis of specific groups, namely women, youth and migrants, who experience a relatively high risk of being at the wrong end of a social inequality index. This analysis has been carried out through 18 intensive interviews in each city (6 per target group).

1.4. Target group profiles

The target groups were defined as follows.

Young people

Our rationale here was to try and capture young adults in the moment in which they face the exit from their family of origin. We concentrated on those young adults who either have started an autonomous path and are living outside of the household of their family of origin, or who cannot do this because severely constrained by their economic conditions, and are fully hit by the consequences of precarious employment or unemployment.

We focused our analysis on the age range 18–33 years. For the 15-19 unemployment and temporary employment rates are high, but activity rates are low, because most people in this age group are still students (in most countries, compulsory school goes up to 18), and the phenomenon at stake for them is rather school drop-out.

Selection criteria:

- currently not working;
- 18-33 years old;
- maximum secondary school degree (neither university degree, nor studying at university);
- either living autonomously, out of their family of origin, or living in their family of origin because obliged to by economic constraints (in this case, interviewees should be around 30 years of age);
- a balanced gender mix.

Single mothers

The main focus in the childcare policy area, in terms of reconciling needs and the demand/supply gap (particularly for lone mothers), is on pre-school childcare, as many research results show (see e.g. Martin and Vion 2002) and as WP2 had also highlighted.

Even though we focused on single *mothers*, we tried to better understand the role of fathers as well.

Selection criteria:

- single mother with at least one child aged 4-5 years;
- separated since min. 1 year;
- maximum secondary school degree (neither university degree, nor studying at university);
- when possible, a roughly equal balance, in custody arrangements, between "prevalent" custody by the mother and "shared" custody.

Migrants

We focused on first-generation migrants,[3] while allowing room to include 1.5 generation.[4] The reason for focusing on the first generation in the migrant category is that many research results show that first-generation people are in a more disadvantaged situation than second-generation migrants, be it in terms of labour market situation, housing conditions, spatial segregation or social inclusion. Besides, newly arriving immigrants represent an important phenomenon both in Nordic and Continental countries as well as in Southern Europe. First-generation migrants share many communalities as a consequence of their recent settlement in the host country: isolation or, on the contrary, ethnic-based networks; processes of marginalisation through housing, labour market, lack of contacts with natives, etc; lack of recognition of degrees; impact of politics of citizenship, access to local welfare measures, etc. Regulation about how to become citizens differs among hosting countries; this is why we used the country of birth to select our interviewees. In most countries, having achieved citizenship entails a wider access to rights and a more comprehensive inclusion; therefore, we avoided to select naturalised citizens.

Selection criteria:

- first-generation migrants (country of birth different from the country they live in);
- been in the country for at least 5 years;
- if possible, no nationals (avoid selecting naturalised citizens);
- age range: 25-40 years old;
- maximum secondary school degree (neither university degree, nor studying at university);
- when possible, a balanced mix between people who have had their primary education in the country where they live and people who have had it in their country of origin (so-called "1.5 generation");
- if possible, people who are, or have been in the past, recipients of local welfare measures;
- a balanced gender mix.

3 Foreign-born citizens or residents who have immigrated and been naturalised in their new country of residence.
4 The term "1.5 generation" or "1.5G" refers to people who immigrate to a new country before or during their early teens.

1.5. WP3 Deliverables

Each Research Unit provided:

- two city reports (8-9,000 words each) describing the city situations. In order to have comparable information, the city reports were written following a specific template, including statistical tables;
- an excel-framed structured report on each of the 18 in-depth semi-structured interviews made with our target groups in each city;
- a short report (1,000 words) per target group and per city describing the main results of the interviews;
- a short fieldwork report per city, summarising the main features of the fieldwork, recruitment strategies, and possible difficulties.

All these materials served as a basis for the comparative analysis, the preliminary results of which are presented in this report.

2. LOCAL DETERMINANTS OF SOCIAL VULNERABILITY IN EUROPEAN CITIES

This part of the report aims to identify the main structural (economic and social) and political processes favouring the increase of social vulnerability and its concentration in our cities.

Social vulnerability takes place in the interplay among labour market, household organisation and welfare provision. It emerges from difficulties in the coordination of different resources and obligations, rather than from a lack of resources or deprivation. It results from instability and precariousness, not from permanent exclusion condition or poverty. Vulnerability is a risk situation that is open to many different outcomes, ranging from positive to negative ones. It is multidimensional, so we need to consider its transformation in the interplay of different processes and over time.

We intend to describe and interpret what the main determinants of social vulnerability in the studied cities are, to see if these determinants vary from one city to another, and to analyse the material processes through which social vulnerability is produced.

Each section attempts to look at our "areas of risk" as the product of processes that take place particularly in the cities by: disentangling, in a comparative way, the social and economic factors that have produced those risks, both at the national and at the local level; analysing the features of those conditions of risk in a comparative way (incidence, trend, concentration in specific population groups or territorial areas, etc.); comparing what local welfare policies are doing to support the persons exposed to those risks.

2.1. Changes in urban labour markets and new forms of work vulnerability

Introduction

European cities have been affected by the major changes that have deeply transformed productive systems and labour markets in the last decades. The transition towards post-industrial economy – which has concerned all Western countries - has been differentiated by national features, particularly in relation to the national economic structures and welfare systems. Nevertheless, it has also been filtered by specific urban characteristics, which contribute to define diverse patterns of tertiarisation and precarisation, as well as different impacts in terms of social inequalities and social cohesion.

European cities are more and more confronted with the social consequences of these major structural changes, and also increasingly assigned responsibilities in implementing, but also programming and even financing welfare policies to deal with such consequences.

Based on the comparison of 20 cities in 10 European countries, this section presents preliminary results of urban changes in labour markets, identifying differences and similarities and the interrelated role of different scales of regulation. The analysis tackles the role of local policies, which are challenged by increasingly complex social needs, on the one side, and ever scanter available resources, on the other side, due *inter alia* to the current financial crisis. Particular attention is paid to the way in which local welfare policies deal with the young unemployed or with people in a precarious situation.

Local trends in labour market structure and dynamic

The overall trend of tertiarisation may be observed in all the cities analysed in the framework of the WILCO project. In most of them, this means that manufacturing industries are no longer the driving sector in the local economy. However, there are two cities (Płock, in Poland, and Varaždin, in Croatia) where industry remains the main sector. However, at least in the case of Varaždin, these industries seem to be labour-intensive and low value-added manufacturing industries, which may experience a decline in years to come.

In the other 18 cities, services have become the driving force, although the degree to which manufacturing has been phased out differs. In some cities, the manufacturing sector – though no longer dominant – remains important in the overall economic structure. This is the case of Brescia, Milan, Lille, Nantes, Pamplona and Zagreb. In some cases, like Barcelona, manufacturing may not be very important in the city, but it remains significant in the larger metropolitan area. This trend of expelling manufacturing towards peripheral areas of the metropolitan regions can be observed in other cities as well, like in Nantes, where the metropolitan government also deals with this kind of programming, or in Milan, which is increasingly becoming a services' and professionals' site.

The role of the construction industry also differs among the cities studied. In Barcelona and Pamplona (Spain), in Zagreb and Varaždin (Croatia), and in Medway (UK), the construction industry plays a significant role. In the case of both Spanish cities, this is one of the factors explaining the harder impact of the crisis, as well as the previous "excess" of growth during the real estate bubble years.

While services are the main sector in all but the two aforementioned cities (Płock and Varaždin), the specific kind of services that dominates the economy differs significantly among cities. Financial and business services (usually connected to research, development and consultancy) are dominant in Amsterdam, Geneva, Nantes and Milan; they are also very important in Barcelona and Warsaw. Health, education (especially higher education and research) and public services are central in several of our cities: this is the case of Bern, Berlin, Münster, Stockholm, Nijmegen, Barcelona, Pamplona, Birmingham and Medway. These services are also very important in Geneva. The relevance of this subsector may have different meanings. In some cases, like Stockholm, Malmö, Münster or Nijmegen, it may have to do with a specialisation in advanced health, research and education. In other cities, the driving force of this subsector is public administration, either because of these cities' role as national or regional capitals (Warsaw, Barcelona, Pamplona) or due to a strong role of public services in the renewal of cities (Medway and Birmingham). Some cities, of course, show a combination of both elements.

Globalisation has increased the need for flexibility in all economic sectors, but the ways in which specific countries, cities and sectors try to meet this demand for flexibility are different. Data from our city reports highlight some of these ways. To begin with, internal flexibility does not show up well in our survey of basic labour market data. Information on temporary contracts, part-time jobs, self-employment, atypical labour relationships and so on refer basically to external flexibility. So does, to a certain extent, the level of unemployment, when it does not indicate structural exclusion from the labour market, but is rather the effect of the end of temporary/atypical contracts.

Unemployment levels vary dramatically from one city to another. Two cities (Bern and Warsaw) show unemployment rates below 5%, while Barcelona, Pamplona, Berlin, Birmingham and Lille have unemployment rates above 10%. Underlying trends are also very different. In both Spanish cities, very high unemployment comes after a decade-long fall in unemployment, down to historical minimums just before the crisis, whereas in both Polish cities, low (Warsaw) and intermediate (Płock) unemployment levels are the result of a reduction from dramatically higher rates 10 years ago. In most other cases, changes in the unemployment rates during the preceding decade have been much more limited.

We do not have comparable data for non–permanent contracts for the 20 cities. Available data suggest that they are an important mechanism of flexibility in the cases of Spain and Italy, and, to a lesser extent, Croatia and France (in the French case, either as fixed-term contracts or as interim agency work). Amsterdam, Bern, Nijmegen, Berlin, Geneva, Malmö, Stockholm, Nantes and Lille have significant rates of part–time work; this kind of jobs is much less developed in Pamplona, Barcelona, Zagreb and Warsaw. Self–employment seems to be a key mechanism of flexibility in Milano and Brescia and, to a more limited extent, in Pamplona, Barcelona, Berlin, Amsterdam, Płock, Bern and Geneva.

All three mechanisms – globalisation, tertiarisation, flexibilisation – are combined in different proportions in the analysed cities. Their use also differs among sectors. In Münster, advanced sectors such as science and health care create a strong demand for temporary work, but so do call centres. In Barcelona and Pamplona, a significant part of temporary jobs are related to construction- and tourism-oriented services, although they are also found in manufacturing.

The current financial crisis impacted all groups on the labour market, but the young have for sure been strongly hit, especially in some cities (in the UK, Spain and Italy), due to the fact that a large share of them are hired on atypical contracts, the first and easiest to end at their expiry. The lack of social protection for workers hired on this kind of work contracts exposes them to high risks as far as income maintenance is concerned, and basically to dependency on their family network, particularly on their parents, especially in Southern European cities (see also section 3.1 *infra*).

A growing concern is observed about the NEET[5] phenomenon (for example in Italy, but also in the Medway area), related to the discouragement of the young due to long-term unemployment, perceived inefficiency of research actions and of both public employment services (PES) and

[5] The "NEET group" includes young people ***N****ot in* ***E****ducation,* ***E****mployment or* ***T****raining*, i.e. unemployed and inactive for reasons other than study.

private employment agencies, and dissatisfaction with the very bad working conditions offered on the market (e.g. underpaid or even non-paid traineeships) – all factors that were further exacerbated with the crisis.

Local labour policies, between activating and rescaling reforms

The last decades have been particularly dense in relation to the reform of the regulation of labour markets in European countries, with a wide deregulation and flexibilisation of working contracts; the spread of new approaches, evolving towards more active and activating labour policies (with the example of the Danish "flexicurity"); and a strong rescaling process in welfare regulation, entailing in most European countries a decentralisation of responsibilities for labour policies (Sabatinelli 2010). The regulation and payment of "passive" monetary benefits, such as unemployment benefits, remains a responsibility of the central state and is financed at the national level, but PES and activation policies are now widely managed by intermediate levels, e.g. *Province* and *Regioni* in Italy, *Comunidades Autónomas* in Spain, *Cantons* in Switzerland, etc. (Kazepov 2010). Croatia and, to some extent, Poland are exceptions among the countries studied, insofar as Croatian and Polish employment services remain highly centralised and managed by a national Ministry, although through local offices. The participation in various EU programmes connected to the entry in the EU is pursuing the modernisation of the PES system and the development of innovation.

Cities are also invested with more responsibilities in terms of social assistance, because entitlement to national or regional policies is shortened (or planned to be shortened, as in Switzerland). Economic crises, which put welfare states in front of increasing needs (and demands) and decreasing resources, tend in fact to become occasions to implement welfare reforms that aim at reducing, or at least controlling, public expenditure. Moreover, the increase in the number of atypical jobs - which do not make workers eligible for existing unemployment measures - increases pressure on social assistance programmes, which are basically managed and financed by local levels, namely cities.

For different reasons, municipalities are increasingly providing activating programmes and employment services, even if they are not obliged by the law to deal with these needs. Having built the nutshell of their employment programmes in the 1990s, many cities have now further developed them, experimenting with new forms of intervention, new modes of provision, and new types of production (public-private partnership, outsourcing, etc.). The German city of Münster is an interesting case in point, since it has applied to become in 2012 an *Optionskommune*, which means that the local level will be responsible for the arrangements of the local labour market policy and the use of the federal money (an option foreseen after the Hartz labour market reform was passed).

The efforts of cities in this field include not only inserting activating features into existing social assistance measures, but also promoting specific activating programmes (as in the Swiss cities) and even municipal services for the matching of labour supply and demand (as in Milan), especially for the most fragile profiles (as in Brescia), with varying objectives and varying results. In general terms, even when they do not explicitly target the most fragile individuals, municipal services deal with the latter - those with less personal resources, who are less attractive for PES and even less so for private matching services.

The recent trend in Nordic contexts, where the role of municipalities in this field has been an essential one ever since the 1990s, is to develop one-stop shop models, like the "jobs market squares" developed in Stockholm, in order for the unemployed to find all information, resources and interlocutors in the same place.

Where supra-municipal governments exist, these play a major role. This is for example the case of Nantes Metropolis, which developed numerous services and tools proposed by national labour market policies to local authorities in the last decade, such as the *Maison de l'emploi*, created in 2005 with a public and private multi-stakeholder governance approach.

Cities are increasingly making investments to target the young unemployed too, as they represent a particularly fragile share of both unemployed and employed. In the UK cities, this is part of a strategy introduced in 1998 with the *New Deal for Young People* (NDYP), a mandatory programme for 18 to 24 year-olds who have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for six months or more. The Barcelona Council launched in 2008 an agreement with the regional government, business representatives and trade unions for "Quality Employment in Barcelona". Among other objectives, youth labour integration is pursued, for instance through the programme "Youth with Future", which targets the unemployed under 25 who have dropped studies or have low qualification. Small specific projects are also found in the Italian cities; such projects generally have heavy budget constraints and reach small groups of users.

The establishment of networks between different actors is reported as a strategic asset in almost all the surveyed cities, as it allows to maximise resources and to create virtuous synergies between territorial economic resources and demands. Most projects are based on mixed financing sources, and entail some form of collaboration among different stakeholders. An interesting example in this sense is that of the association of entrepreneurs in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Berlin, which involves many medium-sized enterprises traditionally anchored in the district. A recent innovative project of this association, "Senior mentors", developed a new job profile of experienced facilitators, in charge of the vocational training and monitoring of young people in local companies.

New Public Management (NPM) tools have been widely used in the last two decades, and many of these municipal services are in fact entirely or partly outsourced, either entirely (as in Bern and Geneva) or partly (as in Milan and Brescia) to non-public actors, be they for- or non-for-profit.

The role of the third sector seems significant in many contexts (e.g. in Spanish, German and Italian cities – through Caritas in these last two countries), even more so in times of crisis. Cuts in the budgets for social programs, which also have an impact on training and activation programmes, also for the young, seem to be important, especially in German and Italian cities.

Also to be assessed is the extent to which sanctions, such as cuts in the payment of benefits, are used when beneficiaries are considered to fail to comply with requested self-activation. Such sanctions are reported for instance in the UK cities, but also in Southern European ones (e.g. in Milan), but the meaning and implication of these practices vary a lot according to the degree of institutionalisation and "generosity" of the interested measures.

2.2. Reconciling work and childcare in European cities

European cities are facing common changes in family and household structures: a higher proportion of women in the labour market, an increase in the number of one-person households, and an increase in the share of single-parent households.

More specific recent local urban trends, such as an unequal recovery of the birth rate (which varies according to the urban areas and the categories of population concerned), various processes of inclusion of couples with children in city centres or exclusion towards peripheral areas, and the variable impact of the current economic crisis on male and female employment have led to a reconfiguration of work and childcare in the cities. Consequently, whereas social opportunities have improved, so too have social vulnerabilities, especially for single mothers.

To what extent do local welfare policies - in particular, family and childcare policies - matter in terms of tackling these childcare problems? There are various local solutions, as well as tensions within the childcare provision system, which stem from the need to reconcile a growing demand for formal childcare with specific work and childcare needs for vulnerable groups, in a context of more or less significant local shortage of places for young children.

The comparison of local childcare policies in different European cities assesses to what extent local governance systems are autonomous and innovative in implementing childcare strategies in conjunction with national regulations and funding. Cities can also be differentiated according to whether they adopt integrated and regulated approaches to meet the increasing variety of childcare needs and services, or whether they rely on parental support and childcare that is more selective and segmented according to types of families.

An unequal recovery of the birth rate

After a long period of fertility decline, western European cities have been witnessing an unequal but positive growth in the number of births since the end of the 2000s. The prospect of a new "baby boom" remains the exception (e.g. in Berlin and Stockholm), but a positive natural increase has been registered in large (Amsterdam) as well as in medium-size European cities (Bern, Medway, Malmö, Pamplona). The birth rate is contributing modestly but positively to urban population growth, alongside factors such as immigration and attractiveness. Even in cities with a low fertility rate (Barcelona, Brescia, Milan, Warsaw, Zagreb), a recent and moderate recovery of the birth rate over the last years has been highlighted in city reports.

This recovery is not only due to recent immigration flows and a higher fertility rate among foreign families, as noted in several cities (Birmingham, Bern, Milan, Barcelona). Where ethnic statistics are available, they show that a positive birth rate among indigenous populations is also significant.

One of the explanations often mentioned for this recovery is the tendency of previous cohorts to postpone giving birth until after the age of 30 and the increasing number of women of childbearing age.

This trend potentially means more children to take care of, in a context of women's increasing participation in the labour market, continuing inequalities between fathers and mothers in terms of childcare responsibilities, changes in family structures and an insufficient number and affordability of childcare facilities.

Urban centres inhabited by a growing number of single-member households

The second remarkable and convergent urban transformation throughout Europe is the growing proportion of single-person households in urban centres, where the proportion of large families and couples with children has declined. This is not only a feature of student cities (Nijmegen, Lille and Nantes), but a global urban trend, affecting all European cities. The reduction of the average household size at the national level has an urban counterpart: a more or less important migration process of couples with children out of the city centres. This trend has to be related to the global rise of housing property prices and rent in the city centres in the last decades or to the desire to access better quality housing. It is becoming more and more difficult for middle-class couples with more than one child to access and pay for a family apartment. Urban polarisation is more than ever a question of level of household income but also of family size. On the other hand, in some cities, immigrant families find more cheap housing opportunities in cities, while some city reports also point to a new trend: part of young autochthonous couples choose to stay in the city for longer (e.g. in Amsterdam).

The family intra-metropolitan migration process points to the hypothesis of a growing distance between work and childcare places, with new constraints for parents (and especially mothers) trying to balance work and family.

The structural importance of single-parent households as a vulnerable group

The global decline in the average size of families in European city centres does not lead to a proportionally increasing number of single-parent families everywhere. Two groups of European cities can be distinguished: on the one hand, cities (Barcelona, Birmingham, Bern, Brescia, Stockholm and Warsaw) where the population of single parents continues to increase, both in absolute numbers and in proportion to the whole population, and on the other hand, cities (Münster, Milan, Amsterdam, etc.) that are characterised by a stable proportion of single parents.

It has to be noted that the notion of single parents as a statistical category is questioned in some of the city reports. The Stockholm case study observes the complexity of "the notion of 'single parents' when a growing number of parents have a kind of shared single parenthood, both in terms of bringing up and supporting the child/children." The growing importance of joint custody agreements and practices between separated parents is difficult to assess on the basis of city reports and local available data, but it is reported as an emerging trend associated to new interplays and challenges at the local level. However, there is frequent statistical evidence that single parents generally equate to single mothers, even though the number of single fathers has increased slightly in some cities (Nantes, for example). Moreover, qualitative interviews (see section 3.2 *infra*) remind us the extent to which single mothers often face a lack of support from the fathers, rather than experience strong commitment on the part of the latter to sharing parental and childcare tasks. In another context, the Warsaw city report underlines that "single mothers and single fathers, more often than other families with children, functioned in two- and multi-family households" (Warsaw city report). In Spain (Barcelona and Pamplona), this trend is also present, but mainly amongst nationals, as immigrant women, when faced with lone parenthood, seldom find the same kinship support. It draws our attention to the fact that the single mother status is not always equivalent to a one-person household, and that the mobilisation of family networks is unequal among women.

Although the single parents group is not socially homogenous, it is on the whole socially more vulnerable. Social vulnerability can be identified through a set of trends and indicators. First, the proportion of individuals with part-time or temporary jobs or who are unemployed is often higher among single mothers than in other population groups. With the exception of a minority of well-educated single mothers in certain metropolitan areas or neighbourhoods (for example, in Berlin), precarious working conditions are the consequences of a combination of a lack of vocational skills and job experience, discrimination in access to the labour market and inappropriate childcare facilities. Single mothers tend to be active, and in specific local urban areas, "single mothers have a higher activity rate than the mothers who live with their partner" (Bern city report). Secondly, living in a single-parent household increases the risk of child poverty. Lower income, due to part-time work or precarious jobs, is the counterpart of very constrained working and childcare arrangements. Without an additional wage in the family, social and family allowances are crucial income supports for single parents. The latter are often overrepresented locally among the beneficiaries of minimum income support (Nijmegen, Amsterdam) and of municipal social aids. Suppression or reduction of any specific national welfare fund for single parents, such as the Alimony Fund in Poland between 2004 and 2008, have strong local impacts on the daily living conditions of single parents. Thirdly, several city reports highlight the obstacles met by single mothers in obtaining access to decent housing. Provision of affordable housing is one of the most urgent problems for single mothers (e.g. in Berlin). Finding affordable housing arrangements in the inner city has become more and more difficult in some cities, and in some cases this has pushed single parents into peripheral districts (e.g. in Münster). Compared to two-parent families, single-parent families more often live in social housing districts (Nijmegen, Nantes and Lille) and in the poorest neighbourhoods. In some metropolitan areas, single mothers constitute the largest group of homeless families (e.g. in Stockholm).

Single mothers: a symbol of the reconfiguration of work and family issues in the new urban context?

One of the questions discussed in this section is whether single mothers face specific difficulties in reconciling work and family, or whether they meet, but in a more extreme form, difficulties similar to those experienced by most mothers.

Before looking at the specific barriers to work-family reconciliation related to the characteristics of local childcare systems, we can see that single mothers' positions depend on local family arrangement norms and labour market patterns.

The role of the family in childcare arrangements is more or less crucial depending on the availability and affordability of childcare institutions in the local welfare system. In Poland, extended family arrangements have become determinant in a context of very weak childcare infrastructure: belonging or not to a "two-person or multi-family households" makes a difference.

The levels of integration and discrimination of women in the labour market constitute another key point. In local urban contexts where breaking off careers (Bern) or working part-time are considered as the norm for mothers of young children in the local welfare system, opportunities to work for single parents are constrained on two levels: by employer discrimination, and by the lack of full-time care provision for young children.

Lack of childcare places for young children and of affordable facilities for single mothers prevent the latter from seeking or getting a job, and prevent them from starting to train or study. This situation can become a vicious circle, when having a job is a priority criterion in accessing childcare (e.g. in Lille).

Despite substantial efforts by local governments in the 2000s to improve the number of childcare services and facilities in the majority of the European cities studied, the shortage of affordable places and long waiting lists remain, to varying degrees, a substantial obstacle for families with dependent young children. By contrast, it is worth noting that reconciliation issues are less acute in local welfare systems providing a high level of coverage for young children. This is the case in Swedish cities, which implement and manage local childcare services under a universal childcare policy largely regulated and funded within a national framework. Differences of coverage between age groups are also significant in terms of reconciliation in cities providing quasi-universal full-time pre-school education for young children between 3 and 6 years old. These quasi-public pre-school systems can be more or less centrally managed and funded, such as in French cities (Nantes, Lille), where *écoles maternelles* depend on the Ministry of Education, or they can be the result of regional and municipal decentralised governance, like in Barcelona and Pamplona, also combined with state coverage, as in Milan and Brescia.

The global shortage of places puts social groups and different types of family/household configurations in competition locally for access to a scarce common good. In this context, access criteria and their local interpretations in the local childcare system are a decisive factor in tackling social vulnerability. In many of the cases studied, single parents have priority access to municipal childcare facilities (this is e.g. the case in Barcelona, Milan, Brescia and Nantes). However, this does not guarantee getting a place, because of possible conflicting priorities in the interpretation of different criteria. In some cities (Lille, Birmingham), municipal and childcare services tend to give priority to the children whose both parents are working, rather than to children of an unemployed or inactive single parent. In this case, the local priority in access for dual earner families can prevail over prevention of child vulnerability or specific support to single parents.

Unintended competition for childcare facilities and child-related benefits seems to be locally more or less intense, depending on the degree of dominance of public supply and the degree of fragmentation of childcare provision. Priority access as well as regulated and affordable fees for single parents are generally applied in municipal childcare providers. Private, for-profit and individual childcare services often remain inaccessible to single parents. Several city reports also describe a current significant development of private and commercial kindergartens and childcare services (in Münster, Warsaw, Milan, Brescia, Bern) as a result of the structural gap between demand and supply (Barcelona, Pamplona) but also of certain outsourcing processes within public provision (Milan) or of a market-driven approach (Nijmegen, Amsterdam). This diversification of services is not always well regulated by local institutions (Barcelona) and private providers are not considered everywhere as a stakeholder in an integrated local governance of childcare issues.

On the one hand, the development of private childcare provision raises the question, in many European cities, of the affordability of childcare for single parents. On the other hand, it paves the way for more diverse developments, attempting to meet a broader range of specific demands or demands for more flexible services and to coordinate new forms of welfare mix regulation. In Nantes, Lille and Birmingham, families with low incomes do not have enough resources to pay for a child-minder, which remains an important childcare solution locally.

Reduction of fees, vouchers and tax credits for single parents do not always compensate for the increase in fees planned by private providers (Birmingham) or the deteriorating situation of low-income families in a crisis context (Barcelona). In the Dutch context, "since private full-time childcare services are very expensive, many single parents have no choice but to work part-time."

In addition to exacerbated affordability issues, the inappropriate opening hours of childcare provision constitute another common obstacle met by single parents in accessing childcare services in cities. In a context of development of precarious employment on the local labour market, more and more available jobs proposed to low-skilled workers have atypical hours and require very flexible childcare arrangements (Berlin and Brescia). As a result hereof, single parents are often precluded from applying for jobs demanding availability in the early morning or evening or during the weekend (Birmingham). In this respect, the lack of appropriate childcare opening hours is sometimes presented by local employment offices as one of the main obstacles to integrating single mothers into the labour market. Looking for a job with working hours compatible with the opening hours of childcare services constitutes a particular challenge in cities dominated by part-time places (Bern, Nijmegen, Amsterdam). Working part-time often becomes the only option for single parents, which also means a lower income, except in municipalities that facilitate the public regulation of more diverse childcare services arrangements.

Finally, geographical polarisation of childcare provision can also be an obstacle to a better local articulation of work and family. Difficulties in urban metropolitan areas can be caused by long distances between the workplace and the home, with increasing time spent on public transportation. This problem is more serious for single mothers in cities with unequal coverage levels according to area or district. The absence of social infrastructures in new neighbourhoods (e.g. in Warsaw) and the prohibition on redistributing places among districts or municipalities in the same metropolitan area (e.g. in Berlin) make access to childcare opportunities more dependent on where parents live.

In conclusion, the review of the WILCO project city reports indicates that local childcare policies are important to facilitate the reconciliation of work and care in families with small children, and particularly important to counteract the higher social risks faced by socially vulnerable groups such as lone mothers. Childcare policies facilitate social cohesion in two ways: they prevent processes of social exclusion, but they also attract and retain families with young children, which in turn contributes to better balance the age structure composition of cities, which is also a component of social cohesion. Particularly in the present context of economic crisis, the possibility to preserve family networks or cooperation amongst divorced partners is crucial. Local regulation of a large pack of services, benefits or public/private facilities (ranging from access to nurseries to family counselling, parental leave supplements or social assistance schemes) really makes a difference for families in local European contexts.

2.3. Migrants in European cities and the determinants of their social exclusion

Introduction

European cities attract migrants[6] from all over the world in large numbers. This ongoing influx and spatial concentration makes cities such as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin or Milan social laboratories of migration. These cities are challenged to cope with an increasing heterogeneity of migrants' backgrounds, claims and needs in times of scant economic resources. Therefore, cities are frontrunners of migration policies, and they often develop innovative blueprints for welfare societies as a whole. The comparative study of 20 medium and large cities in 10 European countries allows us to analyse determinants of migrants' vulnerability in local welfare systems and to scrutinise approaches to pursue social inclusion. By evaluating socioeconomic data and social backgrounds of first and first-and-a-half generation migrants, a preliminary analysis of migration effects in the fields of housing, childcare and employment across European urban contexts has been developed. It is shown that cities may be vibrant localities, where migrants become integrated as users and co-producers of social services and where communities of *de facto* outsiders get strengthened. On the other hand, effects of segregation and difficulties attached to migration (e.g. linguistic, cultural and bureaucratic constraints), accelerated by welfare retrenchments, may turn whole districts into homogenous but deprived zones, in which inhabitants are treated as second-class citizens, who lack access to decent houses, work and appropriate social services. According to WILCO's empirical data, the social inclusion of migrants depends largely on local opportunity sets, comprising service arrangements and trust-based relationships with local institutions, service providers and third sector organisations (TSOs) and, additionally, migrants' overall competences to make use of these recourses. In a nutshell, cities can be described as ambiguous places, where migrants can become a part of a loosely integrated and cosmopolitan urban migrant society but may also be imprisoned in an environment that accelerates a social downward mobility.

This section is divided into five parts. First, we define the legal framework in which the analysis takes place by giving an overview of national migration regulations applying to migrants in the cities studied. Secondly, we develop an understanding of migration and social inclusion with reference to European cities. Thirdly, drawing from empirical research that has been done in the WILCO project, migration composition and trends with regard to the analysed cities is presented. Taking the data into account, the fourth part deals with the issue of social vulnerability and analyses the consequences stemming from the economic crisis. Concrete migration policies in selected cities make up the fifth part, leading to the question of the extent to which cities may be frontrunners of innovative blueprints for social inclusion.

National frameworks of migration regulation

The recent rise of interest in the local level turned cities into hoped-for saviours, able to meet societal challenges such as migration. Along with the insight that "*place matters*" in the generation of social cohesion, cities obtained "new regulatory autonomies" (Kazepov 2005: 32). As we will show, cities are testifiers for and innovators of social inclusion policies. However, in the field of migration, cities' leeway is constrained by national frameworks of migration regulation. The latter clarifies migrants' legal status and therewith their civic and social rights in

[6] In this section, we use the term *migrant* very broadly, meaning not only foreigners who, for any reason, recently arrived in a host country, but also settled and often naturalised citizens with a so-called "migration background".

the respective host country. With regard to WILCO's ten countries, entailing two non-EU member states, differences concern refugee and asylum issues and citizenship regulations.

What are the main features of the national migration regulations that are relevant for our study? In the recent past, a trend towards the homogenisation of regulations took place. Convergences exist primarily regarding new measures to improve migrants' integration into the culture and value sets of the host country. Practically, migrants ought to "demonstrate their desire to belong" (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010: 18). Requirements to obtain a residence permit or become naturalised range from a rather simple "language test" in Spain to signing a so-called "integration contract" in France. On the one hand, a tougher rhetoric on migration issues (for a critical summary, see *ibid.*) demonises "multiculturalism" as a discourse that brought along serious structural social distortions (e.g. segregated neighbourhoods, rising levels of criminality, evident social exclusion, dependence on welfare). On the other hand, the public call for increased integration efforts on the part of migrants themselves fits well with dominant welfare discourses on social investment and welfare users' self-responsibility. In practice, in France, Germany and Switzerland, "long-term dependence on social welfare may block access to a secure residence status or to naturalisation" (Koopmans 2010: 3), while in all other WILCO countries welfare recipients are not *a priori* excluded from naturalisation processes. Depending on the country, application for naturalisation is possible after 5 to 12 years of legal residence. In Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the UK, marriage to a national simplifies the procedure. Virtually, regional authorities' discretion plays a major role, especially in countries with strong sub-national levels (e.g. Germany and Switzerland), but also in France, where local prefects may have a say on naturalisation applications.

Procedures of granting "citizenship by origin" (*jus sanguinis*), though no longer the exclusive norm across Europe, exist in all WILCO countries but differ enormously in their design. For instance, in some countries (France, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain) applicants must merely be born to an *original* citizen of the respective country to receive citizenship rights, while in others (Germany, Poland, Switzerland) procedures - often only possible until a certain age - require arduous tasks such as declarations and/or registrations by migrants applying for citizenship by origin. However, the actual impact of citizenship by origin regulations within national migration frameworks depends on the intertwining with "citizenship by birth" (*jus soli*) rules. Once more, the latter differ widely among the studied countries, ranging from simple absence (Italy, Spain) to "automatically" obtaining citizenship, through requirements combined to the citizenship or legal residence of the children's parents. All WILCO countries, with the exception of Germany, provide naturalised citizens the option of dual citizenship.

Migration and social inclusion in European cities

Migrants' "super-diversity" (Vertovec 2010) in terms of multiplicity of migration channels, statuses and integration outcomes challenges European cities' capacities to manage migration flows and migration's potential impacts, be they positive or negative. In reality, being a migrant takes many different shapes, ranging from being a refugee or asylum seeker to being a low-skilled "guest-worker" or a highly qualified foreign specialist. Migrants' status makes a difference in terms of their residence or work permit, access to welfare benefits and actual living conditions and often also regarding the generosity of local authorities dealing with "strangers". On the other hand, the migrants' diversity that can be observed in urban spaces, including not only the needy but also well-educated and intercultural skilled people with high aspirations, opens up a perspective on unrealised potentials, such as the empowerment of migrants as mentors and assistants for other ethnic groups in the locality, or the deliberate revision of public services according to a diversity-sensitive orientation of the city council. Such a broad and open understanding of migration and migrants fits also to "differences in the urban space" (Cattacin 2009) causing differing degrees of social inclusion. Cities are multilayered spaces where historically grown spatial features coexist and overlap with global trends and developments. If we conceive cities as fragmented and unequal "opportunity structures" (Murie and Musterd 2004), social inclusion becomes a gradual and dynamic condition for its diverse citizenry. Often a certain city district functions as an entry-point where migrants arrive, feel safe and easily meet peers. In this respect, "homogeneity may help" (*ibid.*: 1454) migrants to develop their life plans in a new environment. After the phase of settlement, migrants' respective degree of social inclusion becomes more and more differentiated – the continuum ranges from regular employment and social security entitlements to a situation of an endangered residence status and provisional housing conditions. Recognising such "widely differing statuses" (Vertovec 2010: 88) amounts to describing social vulnerability as an ambiguous - and not inevitably hopeless - condition, where migrants are partly included and partly excluded and where coping strategies depend on several factors. Keeping WILCO's twenty cities in mind, migrants' extent of social vulnerability in the urban space is shaped by the following determinants:

- the cities' (and countries') historic experience with migration flows and emanating concepts of social inclusion;
- the strength and diversity of the local economy and its patterns of access;
- the social-spatial and networked policies carried out by local authorities and tailored to districts and neighbourhoods with multicultural inhabitants;
- the plurality of non-profit organisations and grassroots movements providing services and support for newcomers;
- migrants' socio-economic background;
- migrants' individual attitudes towards their social vulnerability and their capabilities to use given support and opportunity structures.

Migration composition and trends in European cities

<u>Composition of migrant populations</u>

The "super-diversity" mentioned earlier is reflected in many of the WILCO cities, where migrants' countries of origin are getting more plural. In almost all cities, migration has a noticeable cosmopolitan flavour, with migrants from up to more than 180 different nations. Interestingly, this process of diversification affects not only large cities and/or capitals such as Amsterdam, Barcelona and Berlin, but also middle-size cities such as Pamplona, Nijmegen, Bern and Malmö. The percentage of migrants in the population in WILCO cities ranges from less than 1% (Warsaw, Płock[7]) to more than 50% (Amsterdam). In order to obtain a sharper image of each city's composition of migrants, numbers alone are not very helpful, though; a further differentiation with regard to migrants' group dimension and the size of the city is necessary (for an extensive discussion, see Schiller and Çağlar 2011). More fine-grained analysis helps to understand city-specific patterns of migration and (changing) "pathways of migrant incorporation" (*ibid.*: 9). For example, such an analysis may help to unveil Birmingham's "constantly changing cultural mix" among its 10% of non-British inhabitants, Milan's (share of

[7] Please note that this percentage regards only the migrants who are registered as permanent residents in Warsaw (0.3% of the population of the city) or Płock (0.1% of the population of the city). As for other forms of residence of foreigners in Warsaw (e.g. temporary residents, students, refugees, etc.), it is estimated that they constitute ca. 9% of the entire population of the city. In the case of Płock, there are no such estimations available. It also has to be noted that, if the unregistered immigrants were taken into account, the share of migrants in the overall population would be relatively higher in both cities.

migrants: 16.4%) special attraction to Philippines, Egyptians and Chinese people or Bern's large and highly skilled German minority, which makes up a fourth of the city's share of migrants.

Despite the general rise of migrants' diversity, single cities or city districts may be dominated by specifics migrant communities or be divided along ethnical lines, with ethnical groups differing in terms of internal coherence and/or inclusion into the host country. Here, social-spatial factors such as density and migrants' distribution within the respective city come to the fore; hence effects of segregation may also occur in cities with relatively low migration quotas (e.g. Medway or Płock), due to a problematic clustering of illegal migrants or missing policy programs for concerned neighbourhoods. For "old migration countries" like Germany, Switzerland and France, which attracted so-called "guest workers" from a few recruitment countries (e.g. Turkey, Italy, Portugal, Morocco) in high numbers from the 1950s onwards, today's diverse mixture of migrants is still a new feature, which may slowly change public opinions on migrants. In these countries indeed, images of migrants persistently depict them as a fairly homogenous and poor-educated group that is doing unpleasant work. By contrast, relatively "new migration countries" such as Spain (where the share of migrants in the population increased almost sixfold between 2000 and 2010) and Italy seem to enter directly into the globalised age of migration; cities such as Barcelona or Milan mirror the whole world's population in a nutshell. Furthermore, in new migration countries, family reunification is increasing, while it is getting stable in old migration countries. And as the EU enlargement continues, other countries, which were traditionally affected by emigration (e.g. Croatia and Poland), are becoming attractive for future migrants themselves.

<u>Trends in the housing and labour markets</u>

Relating migrants' diversity in European cities not only to their countries of origin but also to other criteria such as their level of education and their living and employment conditions should be a natural matter-of-course. However, against the backdrop of migrants' status as guest workers in Western Europe, the recognition of differences among migrants is a novelty; it may help to detach migration from social problems such as segregation and unemployment. As data from our cities demonstrate, reasons for migration are manifold, including paid jobs (even with low salaries) in the host country, marriage and family reunification and refuge and asylum. The question of where migrants settle within a city highly depends on these contextual factors. As Cattacin (2009: 253) put it: "Aggregated neighbourhoods can (…) be the starting point or the end point of migrant's history". According to our data, segregation - understood as a high degree of social homogeneity within the urban space - refers to low-income population, rather than being a typical characteristic of ethnic minorities. Spatial concentrations of ethnic minorities were only reported in Amsterdam and Milan, and only a few hot spots are concerned in both cities. However, with an eye on migrants' overall housing conditions, our data show two significant differences in comparison to autochthonous. First, within all cities, migrants are much more often tenants – and, logically, much more rarely owners - than nationals. Affordability problems are evident and can explain these convergent patterns for the cities that we have analysed. Secondly, in almost every city, migrants live in worse and/or more expensive conditions than nationals, and discriminatory surcharges can be observed (Eumc 2005). As a result, migrants increasingly enter the social housing markets in cities, though significant differences exist among the various cities analysed. In some cities, the issue of "migrants in the scarce social housing stock" has just entered the public local agenda; in others, it has long been – and remains - at the centre of it, with various political consequences and engagements/disengagements.

Any comparison between migrants' employment situation in WILCO cities is limited by huge differences concerning the features of the local labour markets and migrants' level of education. For example, a city-to-city comparison of Geneva and Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg (a district of Berlin) seems inappropriate, due to very different opportunity structures and groups of migrants in both cities. Indeed, at first sight at least, Geneva's international labour market, attracting predominantly global elites, has little in common with the working opportunities for migrants from Turkey in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. However, similarities become visible if we pay special attention to non-EU migrants: we can then observe in both cases a clientele that competes for precarious jobs in the tourism and gastronomy sectors and often sees their only chances in self-employment or rather in the foundation of start-ups. Reports from cities in Sweden confirm migrants' uneven opportunities on different local labour markets. For instance, in Stockholm, African migrants, mainly paperless asylum seekers, find only irregular jobs on grey markets – when they find any job at all.

A key finding of our study is that unemployment is much higher among non-EU migrants than among EU migrants. Furthermore, activity rates differ a lot among ethnic groups, both for men and women. In terms of these rates, EU-migrants perform as well as nationals and, in some cases, even better, because work remains the driving force behind their migration. In particular, migrants perform well in self-employment and the service sectors. Another finding is that the educational level of migrants is rising everywhere because of national migration policies that are both aiming exclusively at high-qualified migrants and becoming stricter. However, even qualified migrants are still facing enormous difficulties to participate in the local labour markets, due to bureaucratic constraints (e.g. problems of getting foreign certificates accepted) and to cultural barriers to work in certain fields (e.g. the public sector). Furthermore, the economic crisis may setback the integration process in countries and cities where residence permits are attached to jobs. As we show in the next section, in the last two years, the economic and financial crisis affected proportionally more migrants than nationals.

Social vulnerability in times of economic crisis

Data from WILCO cities provide evidence that, among low-income groups, migrants are particularly concerned by the economic crisis:

- the crisis affected mostly migrants from ethnic minorities aged 25-49 (Medway);
- among migrants, irregular work is increasing everywhere; and having no regular job often has a negative impact on migrants' residence status / housing conditions and therefore on their societal integration;
- migrants' investments in housing units, which are already lower than nationals', are further decreasing;
- the credit crunch had a proportionally higher negative impact on migrants, in terms of access to property in the housing market and in self-employment/little economic activities.

How do cities respond?

Principally, cities - *qua* distinctive "contextual environments" (Carmel and Cerami 2011: 14), challenged by different migration compositions and claims of inclusion - cannot easily be clustered. Losses of local explanatory power seem inevitable. Therefore, any attempt of categorisation has to be sensitive to each city's uniqueness. The latter concerns foremost local interactions between welfare institutions and stakeholder coalitions, resulting in "differential inclusion open for different migrant groups" (*ibid.*: 1). However, three broad categories of cities could be distinguished, on the basis of their degree of commitment to migrants' integration and of the policy approaches regarding issues of migration that they implement.

The first category includes so-called "pioneers" of migration policies and comprises major European cities such as Amsterdam, Barcelona and Berlin, which have in common not only a high number of migrants but also a cosmopolitan self-image. Birmingham can also be labelled as a pioneer, due to its extraordinary dedication to issues of migration. Cities in this first category deal with migration issues through developing local integration plans, installing migration boards including migrant organisations and negotiating networked policies among multilevel stakeholders. In practice, cities labelled as "pioneers" pursue different mixes of self-developed approaches and city-specific designs.

The cities of the second category pursue a "managed migration" (*ibid.*: 5) approach that is characterised by pragmatism. There, migration is primarily treated as a challenge to be overcome by "work-to-rule" solutions but without designing significant own innovative strategies. Cities in this second category implement mainly "ordinary" migration policies, consisting of obligatory welfare services and integration courses provided by local councils and third sector organisations (TSOs). However, even though they do not have their own conceptions of how to respond to migration locally, cities such as Milan and Brescia have partly "reworked" the design of obligatory services by linking integration tasks (e.g. language and citizenship courses) to tailored information on the welfare, health and education systems.

The third category contains cities where migration remains a side issue, which has been politically ignored so far, or has rather been a specific topic of civil initiatives working beyond the official political agenda. WILCO cities in Croatia and Poland belong to this category; however, especially Warsaw and Zagreb are becoming more and more multicultural, and this evolution may require a future revision of their respective policy programs.

2.4. Housing distress: the role of local markets and local policy

The basics of housing

Housing is a complex good with both capital, consumer and social investment functions. It is constructed to last for the very long term, and this means that the supply of housing available consists predominantly of the existing housing stock. High production costs mean that only a very limited number of dwellings are added to that stock – on average just a few percent - each year.

An important question is how increases or decreases in the market value of dwellings are passed on: to whom, and over what time period. The occupant and the owner of a house can be - but are not necessarily - the same person. Where the dwelling is the property of an individual homeowner, the resident shares directly in the increase (or decrease) in its value. When a property is owned collectively, the range of possibilities is greater. If the sum paid by the individual for using the property is independent from any changes in the value of the property, capital profits can also be used to maintain the collective property and make new investments. At the collective level, the capital function can thus be translated into an arrangement that provides maximum security of tenure or cross-subsidisation of tenants.

These basic characteristics of housing can potentially lead to a variety of institutional arrangements. Comparative housing research has often focused on the issue of tenure, i.e. the organisation of ownership and consumption rights. There are major differences in the structure of tenure among European countries. Though home ownership has now become the principal form of tenure almost everywhere (except in Switzerland), there are still significant differences in how dominant it is. In the Southern and Eastern European countries, it is overwhelming (e.g. around 80% in Croatia and Italy).

In general, efforts are made to subsidise the costs of housing for families at the lower end of the socio-economic scale, but the shape taken by such subsidies differs strongly among countries. In Northern and Western Europe, there still tends to be a sizeable stock of social rented housing, which represents around 15-30% of the market. This is a part of the housing stock that is subsidised directly. In other countries, social housing is non-existent or amounts only to a very small proportion of the housing stock, in effect rather an extension of social security than a significant element of the market itself. In other countries, such as Switzerland, private rented housing is subsidised to make it accessible to low-income families. In transitional countries (Poland, Croatia), the field of housing is a patchwork of local housing programmes. In various countries, finally, access to home ownership has also been encouraged through tax incentives.

The way in which access to housing is facilitated or made more difficult affects not only the dynamics of inclusion or exclusion, but also which actors are prominent in the housing field. In countries with strong social housing segments, social landlords – who tend to be overrepresented in large cities - are significant players in urban regeneration and social innovation. By contrast, homeowners are a scattered mass of individuals that are less easily addressed collectively, except through fiscal or regulatory means. In addition to direct financial or regulatory interventions, there are many ways in which the nature of and access to housing are influenced by local conditions. Economic and political considerations can fuel (sometimes unnecessary) bouts of housing constructions. Property prices in cities can create unhealthy dynamics of spatial exclusion and empty properties alongside high demand. Public and private spaces affect each other in complex ways.

Recent trends

In a brief analysis of the housing data collected for the twenty European cities in the WILCO project, we will focus on the main convergences and divergences among them, starting from market trends. The last decade will be remembered as a period of boosting of the housing market in Europe. From the beginning of the millennium until at least 2006, dwellings stock, prices and transactions grew significantly in the cities included in the WILCO project, although along different trends and with varying magnitudes.

These are the main findings:

- housing prices increased everywhere, both for renting and for buying. Prices grew by more than 60% in most of the WILCO cities;
- in most European cities, the high level of housing prices is due to the low number of new dwellings, the growing share of single-person households, the increasing amount of young families with children who are not moving to the suburbs or outer parts of the city as opposed to the past and finally the high demand in real estate for financial investment, following the 2008 financial crisis;

- the threshold of entry into the rental market (guarantees and anticipated payments required by owners from tenants) is increasing for everybody;
- affordability ratios declined almost everywhere. The case of Barcelona is the most evident: in the considered decade, the average income grew by about 30% while housing prices increased in average by 140%, and even by up to 300% in many parts of the city;
- in some cities, we are witnessing competition, in the lower segment of the housing market, between low-income families and specific populations such as university students (Münster) or young professionals and tourists (Berlin), with clear crowding-out effects;
- temporary accommodation and housing is problematic in most cities with highly competitive markets, as for example Milan;
- as known, prices in the housing market depend on many factors, such as the quality of the area in which the dwelling is located, its distance from the city centre, its age and material situation. Prices vary quite a lot among different city districts, but at different degrees among cities: in Medway, prices in the most expensive district are 98% higher than prices in the cheapest district; this figure reaches 148% in Warsaw and 168% in Milan. These variations are quite modest in Brescia (30%) and in Plock (15%);
- the housing stock of cities increased in the considered decade, although with different speed according to the city considered. Among the analysed cities, only Geneva has known a *status quo* from this point of view: housing shortages and high prices did not change the orientation of maintaining the existing stock at its current level, which pushes aspiring residents to settle down in the outskirts of the city or in adjoining municipalities. Zagreb, on the contrary, is characterised by a very high increase in its housing stock in these years;
- the gentrification of inner districts is quite evident in many cities, such as Berlin, Münster or Milan;
- specific problematic issues emerge at the very local level. For example, the issue of unoccupied private dwellings emerged only in Milan; the low-quality level of private offer in the rental segment emerged in Birmingham, where more than 50% of dwellings do not meet minimum standards; overcrowding is reported as an evident problem only in Zagreb;
- in the case of Eastern European cities, the housing problems are also related to the specific post-war history of this region. After the Second World War, the communist governments in Croatia and Poland nationalised many private real estate properties, which were then used as municipal flats. Nowadays, the former owners or their descendants have a right to apply for the return of the lost property or its compensation. It creates serious tensions between private owners and tenants, who are usually old people with small pensions, who cannot afford the rent rates introduced by the "new" owners.

Even though tenure data are not always available at the local level (census data are quite old and refer to the beginning of the decade in most cases) and each country/city uses different indicators to analyse it (the tenure status of dwellings *versus* the tenure status of families, for instance), there is empirical evidence that:

- cities differ from non-urban contexts in that they show relatively higher levels of rental tenancy in comparison to the metropolitan areas and to regional or national profiles. This can be considered as an indicator of the housing market's adaptation to a dynamic economy that attracts much more high and medium-high profile temporary

workers and students than other areas, as it is the case in Milan, Brescia, Berlin, Barcelona and Lille;
- the first part of the decade (2000-2006) has been a period of large access to owned housing, resulting in high personal and public debts.

The impact of the economic and financial crises has been quite different across the studied cities, although it is too early to capture the effects completely on the basis of available data:

- everywhere, there are lower levels of mortgage lending;
- in the period 2008-2009, prices fell down in many cities (Brescia, Medway, Warsaw, Barcelona and Zagreb, for example), but not in all of them. In Milan and Geneva, prices remained stable, and even increased in the central districts;
- the main impact of the financial crisis was a reduction in the number of transactions in the housing market, because of the credit crunch that hit families and enterprises in the 2008-2010 period;
- significant numbers of families lost their homes because they defaulted on their mortgages. This was for example the case in Medway and Birmingham, and this is related to rising rates of unemployment;
- evictions (and especially eviction for arrears) are increasing in many cities, like in Zagreb, Milan, Brescia, Stockholm and Barcelona.

Housing as a welfare good

These trends affect the position of housing as a welfare good. Housing as a fundamental determinant of people's welfare plays a crucial role in strengthening social integration and social cohesion. Decent housing can ensure participation in community life and empower people to enter the labour market. An efficient housing policy can help to weaken (but not to remove) the links between poverty in terms of income and poor housing conditions. Yet it has long been considered as the "wobbly pillar" of the welfare state (as coined by Torgersen), due to the increasing dominance of market forces and private ownership.

In most European countries we have observed the shrinking of the role of public agencies in the provision of affordable housing; incentives to ownership; the slackness of public regulation of rentals; the privatisation of the public housing stock; and the switch from policies that supported the supply side of the market to policies that support demanders in their housing needs. This process, combined with the decentralisation of housing policies, has led to a reduction of the resources devoted to local welfare housing policies, be they implemented through cash or in-kind interventions.

The collected data at the city level is consistent with this trend as:

- the demand for affordable housing has not resulted in a higher supply. Lille is the only city where the number of social housing units has increased, albeit not at the pace of demand. In Berlin, for example, a city traditionally rich in social housing resources, the federal state cut down its financial support for social flats and land prices are rising; as a result, investors are prevented from starting real-estate projects aiming at the lower price segment of the housing market;
- waiting lists for social housing exist everywhere, and families usually have to wait for years in order to get a public dwelling. Moreover, the number of applications is 3 or 4 times higher than the number of available dwellings;

- economic eligibility criteria to enter the social housing segment (especially the public one) are becoming stricter everywhere, which implies that this resource will be increasingly targeted at deprived people, even in cities (such as Nantes) where traditionally social housing policies were not focused exclusively on low-income or fragile households;
- the public housing stock has been privatised or altogether abandoned in a number of cities (in Zagreb in the 1990s, in Milan and Brescia in the last decade), or it has been externalised in its management (like in Medway);
- rental values grew everywhere and have not been followed by increases in housing allowances, which thus cover a diminished share of housing costs;
- local policies have little room for manoeuvre in cities where the public housing stock is modest. In many cities public housing allocations are centred on urgent cases. In Birmingham, 35% of allocations of council homes in the last years were to homeless families (urgent situations); in Milan, this figure reached 50% (against less than 10% in Brescia);
- according to the collected data, social housing rates in cities follow national trends;
- in countries/cities without social rental programmes (Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Poland, Croatia), home ownership is less affordable for first-time buyers, even for those belonging to the lower middle class. In such circumstances, the cities of Brescia and Zagreb have developed a "third housing market" providing incentives for first-time buyers;
- the number of households applying for local housing allowances (be they locally financed or stemming from central policies) is growing.

Effects on socio-economic groups

The recent economic crisis has largely worsened the housing situation of vulnerable social groups. Impacts of the economic crisis on housing policies, to varying extent, are evident in all countries.

Young families indebted with expensive housing loans for expensive flats, in a situation of labour market instability and decrease of real income, are faced with life challenges of mortgage payment and securing home ownership status (this is especially true in Poland and Croatia). A special case in this regard are young families who have bought very expensive flats using housing loans in Swiss francs, and who now find themselves in trouble because of the increase of the exchange rate of the Swiss franc. On average, a monthly instalment of such loans increased by 60%.

Privatisation of the social housing stock, to varying extent, has been on the agenda in all countries. The reduction of investments in the social rented sector has made social housing waiting lists longer – there are less affordable rented housing to meet the increasing demand. The rent increase in the private rental market has exacerbated the existing problems of affordability. This has resulted in the rise of evictions noted above; an increased number of homeless people in larger cities and fewer means to address this issue are a trend in Southern and Eastern European cities.

The social groups most strongly affected by the crisis are young people and young couples with children. Housing problems of young people are evident in Northern and Western Europe, where it is common to leave the parental home earlier than in Southern and Eastern European countries. Housing careers of young couples with children are very uncertain in countries without a social rental sector and without an efficient housing allowance programme. In Poland, increasing housing problems of the young generation have forced the latter to leave the country. Households that belong to low-income groups, who should, in fact, be eligible for social rental housing, are socially excluded from decent housing in countries where home ownership has become the principal form of tenure. Social groups of singles parents, families with disabled persons, older people and students are affected by the current crisis in different ways.

Migrants and families with a migration background are more and more present in social housing dwellings, especially in countries (such as Italy) and cities that are relatively newly exposed to high migratory flows. This group, and especially those who have recently arrived, have been seriously affected by the current housing crisis. Housing problems of internal migrants (Poland, Croatia) are escalating in larger cities.

Vulnerable social groups affected by the current crisis have additionally suffered from social segregation (very often on the basis of ethnicity), overcrowding, substandard housing conditions and a lack of housing maintenance. In Poland, for example, part of the housing stock is not habitable or physically safe for a normal life.

3. SOCIAL VULNERABILITY IN EUROPEAN CITIES: GROUPS AT RISK

The aim of this part of the report is not only to describe the main features of our specific groups at risk, but also to show what the main individual and social impacts of such situations are. Being at risk does not mean social exclusion or permanent poverty, but a condition of fragility in which the probability of exclusion and poverty is very high. The outcomes could be, and actually are, different from individual to individual: becoming excluded or severely poor, getting better off, or being in a state of permanent fragility for a long time.

Thus the following sections aim to:

- identify what the main processes bringing about these conditions of vulnerability are (changes in the labour market and spread of precarious employment and unemployment; fragilisation of families and increasing difficulties in the work-life balance; problems of social cohesion as a consequence of the growth in migration flows);
- identify how these processes are configured in different ways and reach different levels of intensity in our cities, and try to understand why this happens;
- analyse this situation of vulnerability, by showing that this is different from being in very hard conditions, and show opportunities and constraints that are associated with these risk conditions;
- comprehend the agency of people at risk: their perception, strategies, options, capabilities;
- understand the spill-over effects of specific risks and the actors' reflexivity, i.e. their capacity to understand their own conditions and to develop their own strategies, involving also other aspects of their life;
- understand what is the relation of people who deal with these risks to local policies and services.

3.1. Experiencing precariousness in European cities: the young between risks and opportunities

Outline of the interviews

This report presents some preliminary results from the analysis of interviews of young at risk of unemployment in the 20 European cities involved in the WILCO project. Interviewees were selected according to the following criteria:

- age between 18 and 33;
- being currently unemployed or in truly precarious employment conditions;
- either already living autonomously or still being in their parents' household because of severe economic difficulties, due to their employment conditions;
- having a maximum educational level of ISCED 3, or 4 at the most (neither university degree, nor studying at university).

The sample was made up of 121 persons, 6 for each city (plus 1 test interview carried out in Milan) - 50 women and 71 men, with an average age of 24 years old.

Among the interviewed people, 73 were already living outside their original family; they had either created their own household, or they were living with friends or roommates.

Regarding their last work experience, 85 of them had been temporarily employed, 19 were hired on a permanent basis, and 9 were working without a contract.

The following analysis investigates how the different forms of socio-economic integration (Polanyi 1978) - redistribution (public welfare), market exchange (for-profit provision) and reciprocity (family and primary networks), as well as forms mixing these principles (third sector initiatives) - contribute to shape the framework of resources and constraints within which young people in precarious conditions move. In this frame, the analysis focuses particularly on education as the key factor to activate social mobility.

We shall also consider that, in most cases, our interviewees are confronted with precariousness (Pugliese 1993), rather than with unemployment (meaning the absence of work). Precariousness covers a *continuum*, ranging from standard employment to unemployment, through a complex grey zone composed by fixed-term contracts, episodes of occasional jobs, part-time occupations, internships and training and education initiatives.

Stuck in a grey zone

Regardless of the cities or countries where they live, European young people currently in unemployment are aware that their lack of education is one of the most crucial factors that prevent them from being fully integrated in the labour market. This lack of education can result from two processes: in the most fragile cases, these young unemployed dropped out of school before achieving full professional competencies, which makes it quite difficult for them to access qualified jobs. In the second case, their professional qualification seems inadequate for the labour market's requests, either because the school was not able to really prepare them practically for their desired jobs and/or because the segment of market in which they would like to work is shrinking or in crisis.

In most cases, however, these young people's condition cannot be really considered as a standard unemployment condition, but rather as a grey state of weak integration in the labour market: their working biographies are discontinuous and precarious, while their stories are made of episodes of unemployment that are followed by occasional jobs, temporary contracts, failed efforts of starting apprenticeships experiences or university. Quite often unemployment is the result of the expiration of a temporary contract.

As we can see from table 2 below, it is not uncommon that the average duration of the last spell of unemployment experienced by our interviewees be longer than the average length of their last job experience; this is for example the case in Barcelona, Birmingham, Zagreb and in the Medway area. Furthermore, in many cases, the average length of the last work contracts experienced by our interviewees is just of a few months, as in Nantes, Brescia, Zagreb and Medway. This extreme short term challenges the planning capacity of young people, both in terms of leaving their family of origin and establishing a new household and in terms of building a successful career.

Especially in Southern European cities (Pamplona, Barcelona, Milan and Brescia), the deregulation of temporary contracts implemented at the national level over the past decades has resulted in highly precarious profiles of the most fragile young. In most cases, anyway, our interviewees have earned salaries below the minimum level (in those countries where the latter is fixed by law) and their strategy consists in cumulating several jobs at the same time to get a decent income.

In some cases, however, the discouragement has won over the young's motivation: the "NEET" epithet (see note 5, page 14) has been used to describe the situation of young people who do not pursue any activity: neither in work, nor in training or education, nor actively searching for a job - basically just waiting for the day to pass by, sleeping and in social isolation. Sometimes this results in cynicism: some of the young interviewees take for granted that the state or their family will pay for their basic expenses, independently of their will to get really involved in the job market. In the Italian cities particularly, interviewees have expressed wide dissatisfaction with the way politics at all levels (do not) consider them, tackle their problems and involve them.

The structural situation linked to the economic crisis has worsened the condition of those with the most fragile profile. In fact, the current financial crisis is perceived as a catalyst of a situation that already appeared as disadvantageous for young people in general, and even critical for some categories, as for example the first- or second-generation migrants (as emerged in Berlin, Bern, Malmö, Stockholm, Amsterdam and Münster) or women (as happened in Brescia and Milan).

Table 2 - Average last wage compared with national minimum wage (Eurostat), average length of last job experience and average period of subsequent unemployment in our sample

Country	Cities	A.V.	Last unemployment spell (months until interview date)	Last work contract's length (months)	Last wage (euro equivalent)	National minimum wage level[1]
SE	Malmö	6	9	9	-	-
	Stockholm	6	10	8	2,000	-
NL	Amsterdam	6	7	20	1,100	1,435
	Nijmegen	6	10	9	398	1,435
UK	Medway	6	20	5	-	1,084
	Birmingham	6	15	7	-	1,084
DE	Münster	6	20	-	800	-
	Berlin	6	11	9	1,300	-
FR	Nantes	6	5	2	885	1,365
	Lille	6	12	6	919	1,365
CH	Geneva	6	3	11	2,727	-
	Bern	6	9	9	944	-
IT	Brescia	6	11	11	850	-
	Milano	8	8	16	648	-
ES	Barcelona	6	15	4	658	748
	Pamplona	6	7	17	725	748
HR	Zagreb	6	20	5	599	380
	Varazdin	6	12	17	368	380
PL	Plock	6	15	29	356	347
	Warsaw	6	18	24	316	347

N.B: Preliminary analysis, based on partly provisional data.
[1] *Source*: Eurostat Database, second semester of 2011.

The role of public welfare

Different levels of "generosity" of welfare systems, both at the local level and at the national level, have direct consequences for the actions of young people at risk of unemployment. In fact, being involved in programs of orientation, counselling or coaching or being helped by monetary subsidies allows the young to look for a job that corresponds to their aspirations, rather than just having to accept the first available one; this reduces the precariousness of their situation on the market and the general instability that they perceive.

In fact, their precarious condition may be eased by the intervention of public regulation: most of the WILCO cities have municipal orientation services and welfare interventions that either add up to national, regional, and/or provincial ones, or fill in the gaps of the latter, contributing to prevent the young at risk from descending in the condition of working poor.

In cities like Birmingham, the Medway area and Bern, the possibility to access local welfare agencies and to receive income support help the interviewees in their basic expenditure and in getting active in the labour market, so the satisfaction among them for the support received is quite clear. One would expect to observe a similar situation in Münster, Geneva and Berlin, but it is not the case: even though the support received is quite similar, interviewees are not really willing to participate in programs, and interviewers report an attitude of cynicism, mistrust and indifference. Actually, it looks like people in these three cities are getting involved in those services mainly to receive support for their basic expenses (the entitlement to which is conditioned on their participation).

In Swedish and Dutch cities, all interviewees receive a kind of benefit that varies according to their actual occupational or personal condition; quite often, when a benefit expires, they are allowed to apply for another one, of a different type, that might be less generous, but still prevents them from falling to a zero-income level. In order to be entitled to the various kinds of benefits, they are obliged to be active in job centres; the evaluation of job centre programmes vary, and in some cases interviewers report mistrust on the part of interviewees about these procedures.

In Southern European cities (Barcelona, Pamplona, Brescia and Milan), where national measures of support are also comparatively weaker, local welfare agencies mainly support the young unemployed by providing information, labour market orientation services and courses for job seekers (learning how to write a CV or a motivation letter, how to search for vacancies, how to prepare for a job interview). Quite often, this encourages them to re-enter training, in the hope that a better qualification will improve their chance to get a better job on the market. In these contexts, people do not really receive income support linked to their unemployment condition, in particular if they are looking for their first job, or if they have only had precarious contracts that do not make them eligible for unemployment benefits. Thus, they quite often rely on the support of families for their expenditures, even though their parents and siblings are rather often unemployed as well, and sometimes living on welfare. The same happens in Warsaw and Płock: interviewees are basically following individual strategies and they are not involved in any programme, nor do they care about getting involved in any programme.

Relying on primary networks

Family and primary networks play a relevant role in supporting the young, but both the contents and importance of this support vary according to the context.

As one could easily predict, families are the most important actor in Southern European cities, thus making up for the limits of the welfare system in supporting the young at risk of unemployment. Their intervention is crucial in terms of financial support for the young to cover their basic expenditure (both for young people who postpone the passage to autonomous life and for those who already live by themselves). Even the wider family network may be fundamental in some cases, with young people living with grandparents or other relatives or family friends, or receiving money from them, in a sort of intergenerational income pooling. However, the family support is not limited to monetary help; it also consists of giving information about job-seeking and orientation on the labour market. The importance of families as a gatekeeper for information might also lead to a distorted situation, in which nepotism and "personal ties" – rather than capacity and skills - become factors that increase chances to be employed, as it happens in Croatia and in Italy. In some cases, in fact, mothers and fathers of young at risk of unemployment have experienced long periods of unemployment too, have a weak profile in terms of education and integration in the labour market or severe illness that prevents them from being active. A risk of inheriting weakness on the labour market is observed here.

However, families are not the key actors in the primary networks of our young interviewees in all cities: in Bern, Malmö and Berlin, for example, friends and partners are the most important information gatekeepers, because they actually hold the right contact networks to get involved in the market. Quite often, the help of peers (via cohabitation, for instance) also allows interviewees to be independent from their families, even if they are currently unemployed.

When the young rely primarily on individual strategies to find a job on the labour market, as in the cases of Birmingham and Geneva, primary networks are not really considered as strategic in finding jobs, but individual activation becomes the key factor.

Mistrust towards the market

For one or two decades, depending on the country, temporary agencies have been considered as one of the most important labour market intermediaries, which help to reduce the gap between demand for and offer of jobs. However, the interviewees in our sample show a quite widespread mistrust towards these agencies, often based on previous unsuccessful experiences. As they operate on the market, in fact, agencies may prefer to deal with profiles that are desirable for employers, which is not always the case of the most fragile people we interviewed. This might explain why this channel is not reported as successful among our interviewees, together with the fact that job opportunities found through this channel seem to be of an ever lower level, both in terms of duration of the contracts (which are of a short or very short length) and in terms of professional contents (which is poor) and pay (which is low).

The market still retains a certain appeal in the training sector, for instance in Brescia and in Milan, mostly related to the access to specific professional qualification: some of the Italian young, for example, are willing to invest money in private training agencies in order to access qualification that might improve their situation on the market. Quite often, interviewees are unsatisfied with the public offer of training courses, as in their opinion these are too basic to obtain real professional qualification and ill-adapted to the labour market's requests. This might be related to the fact that recent cuts, due to budget constraints, have reduced the public supply of training courses.

Individual strategies are quite common among our interviewees: Internet facilitates the individual agency and many young people are looking for their desired job and for information on the labour market through the web. Moreover, the ideology of individual success is still playing a major role in some places; this is for instance the case in Geneva, where the presence of an extremely rich transnational class of advanced business workers makes the young – continuously confronted with this kind of status and achievement - quite reluctant to apply for social services, since this is perceived as a signal of individual failure.

Emerging findings

The analysis carried out so far in the context of the WILCO project highlights that, in the current situation, the young at risk of unemployment have to deal with the low quality of their jobs and with poor life chances, rather than with the fact of being totally unemployed and excluded from labour market.

Although what emerges from this preliminary comparative analysis is only partly coherent with taxonomies of welfare models, the national and regional levels of labour market and welfare regulation seem to be more relevant in this field than in other ones. As a matter of fact, municipal welfare systems act more as a sort of protection against the instability beyond the labour sphere, rather than being effective in actually reducing the mismatch between demand and offer on the job market. They undertake actions such as helping people cover their basic expenditures and reducing the descent towards extremely precarious situations, as in Nantes, Zagreb and the Medway area, for example, where the interviewees' contracts only last a few months on average. Yet, in some cases, their role is reduced to simply counselling, with a view to orienting the young through labour market opportunities; this is particularly true in Italian cities. Families and peers intervene in supporting the young when services are not able to meet their demands and needs - giving information, but also economic and emotional support. In Southern European cities, the important support provided by families and peers helps to explain the tendency of the young to put off creating new households, and the stronger dependency of the young on their parents' help, also after they have left their parents' household.

Education is still considered as the key factor for accessing permanently the labour market, even if not all the interviewees are aware that their unstable condition might be caused by their weak professional profile. Many of them are actually involved in new educational projects in order to improve their chances of being hired in better positions. In some cases it is the suggestion of coaching and counselling operators to use the months of unemployment to get trained or re-trained, so as to be better equipped and more competitive once the economy starts to recover.

Yet, training often has a cost that the young unemployed cannot meet. For instance, paying for a driving license, that would undoubtedly represent an asset on the labour market, is often out of interviewees' league in Milan, but also in Stockholm and Malmö.

Some interviewees also mention the fact that they would be more motivated to invest in training if they were employed, not only because they would have more money, but also because they would be able to immediately apply what they learn in training courses in their job, thus learning more. This would also reduce the risk to invest in a field that could not be the one in which they may find a job in the future.

A recurrent overall strategy of the interviewed to cope with their situation is the postponement of steps towards autonomy and adulthood (leaving their parents' household, starting living in couple, getting married, having children); some of them even take a step backwards, giving up living autonomously and going back to live with their parents (e.g. in Spain).

Even more widespread is the severe reduction of expenses. This means not only renouncing to everything that is not indispensable, but also incurring debts to cover basic expenses (utilities, dwelling rental, car insurance etc.).

In general terms, in almost all the WILCO cities, young interviewees express clear feelings of distress linked to their situation of precariousness and/or unemployment. Such feelings include anxiety, sadness and loss of confidence and self-esteem, leading to and being reinforced by difficult family relations and health problems (e.g. depression, obesity).

3.2. Meeting the needs of lone mothers: role of state, civil society and private safety nets

The number of married and cohabitating women who get divorced or split up has increased significantly in most European countries. Nowadays, lone mothers experience major challenges produced by contemporary European welfare states, including changes in popular welfare legitimacy, social trust and social cohesion, "old" and "new" risks. Growing population diversity and new gender roles are additional factors modifying expectations and behaviours. Combining theoretical perspectives and public opinion on the welfare state, on the one hand, and the real situations of interviewed lone mothers in different countries, on the other hand, we sought to analyse the patterns adopted by lone mothers to cope with their situation. Lone mothers are in a position of both givers and recipients of various services and support offered by the welfare agencies that exist in the surveyed countries and cities, by civil society and by private safety nets.

In this section, we analyse data collected through interviews of women living in various "models" of family and welfare state: the "male-breadwinner model" (Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands), the "dual-earner model" (Sweden), the "market model" (Great Britain), the "family model" (Spain, Italy) and a post-communist mixed model (Poland and Croatia). Labour force participation, residential mobility and housing, household income, support networks, poverty and lifestyle deprivation of low educated lone mothers with small children are the subjects of our analysis. The recent economic crisis in Europe is considered as an additional factor modifying the roles of the main actors (the state, civil society agencies, private safety nets) and the relationship among them in public and private spheres, in processes aiming to meet the needs of lone mothers. We aim to verify the hypothesis according to which the crisis could facilitate the promotion of new ways of meeting these needs. The data collected in medium-size towns and large cities give us opportunities to identify these processes in different types of local communities existing in the frame of various welfare regimes.

According to the analysed data, the 120 lone mothers we interviewed share a significant range of problems and difficulties, regardless of the socio-economic context of their particular country. First of all, the most important issue for the great majority of them is to balance their work-life needs, especially in terms of combining their job requirements with childcare. The most popular solutions include institutional childcare facilities (kindergartens, nurseries, day-care centres, etc.), mainly provided by municipalities, and whose coverage thus varies a lot at the local level. Nevertheless, lone mothers often have a priority access to municipal services, in all our local contexts; consequently, the main problem for lone mothers is rather the adjustment of working hours with the opening hours of these institutions. The majority of interviewed women were thus ready to accept low-skilled and low-paid jobs, provided the working hours were compatible with the childcare solution they had found. Also, the great majority of active lone mothers shared the experience of having a precarious employment status or of being unemployed. It has to be pointed out that some work-life balance may be achieved only by those single mothers who had the possibility to supplement the institutional care with the support of the family networks and, to a lesser extent, friends, neighbours and solidarity networks. These informal types of support rarely included the fathers of the children. Due to their high costs, the services of childminders or babysitters were usually not considered as a possible option by the interviewed women. Apart from the difficulties with work-life balance, the great majority of single mothers were strongly affected by their precarious financial situation and declared to experience a sense of deprivation. In order to deal with lone motherhood, a significant number of them had to give up their aspirations for education or professional development.

As the interviews show, the subgroup of 29 migrant lone mothers may be distinguished from the other ones. The great majority of them came from African, Asian and South American developing countries or from Eastern Europe. Due to the differences in immigration flows among EU countries, migrant women were present especially among the interviewees from Switzerland, Germany, France and the Netherlands. It seems that the life situation of these lone mothers may be affected by a double exclusion, based on their immigrant status as well as on their single motherhood. Obviously, migrant women usually lack the support of family network, which remains crucial in relation to childcare needs. In the context of migration chains, the interviewees' relatives who lived in the same city were rather busy with their own work and children. In the case of migrant lone mothers who were not long-term residents in the country, the lack of common knowledge and the language barrier could hinder them from accessing childcare facilities and other welfare services.

Beyond the similarities observed among the interviewed single mothers, both in terms of life situations and of solutions chosen, childcare services offered in the studied countries differ in terms of flexibility and diversity of means. In the Netherlands (Amsterdam and Nijmegen), beside kindergartens and nurseries, childcare facilities include various day-care centres and toddler playrooms. The respondents also mentioned the services of "hosting parents", who may bring the child to/from school or day care while the mother is working. In Nantes, flexible and affordable childcare services are also provided by solidarity networks, such as "emergency childcare support" managed by the Red Cross. In the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and the UK, the demand for childcare is covered mostly by well-developed networks of public and private institutions. In Münster, there are advice centres addressing the particular problems and needs of single parents: the VAMV (*Verband allein erziehender Muetter und Vaeter*) and the *Beratungsstelle Suedviertel*. However, despite this diversity, the respondents from these countries still raised the problem of adjustment of childcare to atypical and irregular working hours; the quality of the provided services may also be an issue. The supply of childcare facilities is significantly poorer in Eastern and Southern European countries, namely Poland, Croatia, Spain and Italy. In Poland, the institutional childcare services available for lone mothers and financed to a large extent by the local authorities include mainly public kindergartens. Due to insufficient coverage, the interviewed single mothers were highly dependent on the support of their family members, and especially of their parents.

It seems that single mothers are especially affected by the changing gender roles, and especially women's roles. One of the interviewees from Switzerland stated that she felt the pressure to be involved in the labour market whereas "there are no available places in nurseries". On the other hand, the interviewed lone mothers who successfully combined work with care needs (e.g. in Sweden) expressed a sense of guilt caused by the fact that they spent little time with their children. This shows the strength of discrepancies between social expectations towards women and their own needs and aspirations. These tensions became even more visible in the context of the recent economic crisis in Europe. On the one hand, the crisis affected the stability of employment, but on the other hand, it also caused serious cutbacks in public spending on childcare. Consequently, we now face a growing demand for flexible childcare services, adjusted to individual working conditions. In the light of the conducted interviews, it appears that the economic crisis has not yet provoked the promotion of new systemic solutions in terms of childcare.

3.3. Migrants coping with social exclusion. Experiencing vulnerability in European cities

Introduction

This section aims to address migration as a factor of risk for vulnerability (Cattacin and Chimienti 2008); it is based on 120 qualitative interviews with migrants facing vulnerability in 20 European cities. We do not only discuss the major contextual variables improving chances of inclusion in the labour market and in the housing field (like the use of existing social networks of self-help), but also patterns increasing risks of economic and social exclusion (in particular legal discrimination). The interviews focused on concrete migrants' experiences (following the concept of experiential sociology; see Szakolczai 2004) and on strategies developed to face vulnerability (in particular in the fields of labour market and housing). Particular attention was given to the influence of gender and foreign origin on vulnerability. The section concludes with an account of learning processes of migrants in vulnerable situations (in the sense of reflexivity coming out of experiences; see Giddens 1991). Specific migrants' motivation to avoid failure at all costs (linked to their will to demonstrate their own value against prejudice in the host society and to their commitment to help their family and community members in their region of origin) is a particular resource in the development of coping strategies against risks of exclusion (Cattacin and Domenig 2012). These coping strategies constitute an individual challenge when they require that the migrants compromise their own values and orientations (Bassolé 2011).

Migration paths

Migration is again an urban phenomenon. Migrations flows from the rural areas to the city were only stopped in the after-world war period by the Fordist model of the diffused city. Since the 1980s, the city is back as the main attraction pole for mobile people (Häussermann 2005).

These flows have been shaped by many factors, such as the search for a better job and better life conditions, but also political and economic imbalances between countries. However, the large majority of migration flows are currently more related to pre-existing networks of economic (Tarrius 2002) and social ties (family or love; see Mai and King 2009). We can distinguish between regular and irregular flows of migration: the former entails a legal presence of migrants in a concrete place while the latter is related to a limited or even non-existing authorisation to stay (e.g. undocumented migrants). Within regular migration, we can further distinguish between situations of particular vulnerability and more stable situations of residence. In general, a small part of the whole foreign population is exposed to serious risks of exclusion and can be defined as vulnerable. In this text, we focus on the migration of people who have a regular authorisation to stay in a specific place, and on *vulnerability* in the urban context.

Our interviews highlighted that vulnerability is related to a lack of recognition of migrants' rights, social relations and identities (in the sense of Honneth 2004). One of the main problems is related to the fact that social rights are recognised only to a limited extent, which has impacts in terms of access to work, social services and housing subsidies. The lack of autonomous social organisation, or at least the limits of the latter, are in particular related to arbitrary acts of discrimination and racism which affect access to work, social services and housing opportunities. Finally, self-contempt has been reported, with resulting concerns for the self-esteem of the migrants (fragile identities and social isolation).

Vulnerable migrants in the urban context

In our interviews, three main problems are regularly mentioned as factors shaping vulnerability: a challenging access to good jobs and to social services; financial problems related to low wages; and instability in terms of housing situation.

The labour market is seen as highly selective. Only insecure jobs, unhealthy working conditions and unclear working contracts are easy to reach for migrants. Experiences of job change and exploitation and of late or non-paid salaries are reported as a factor of stress**.** An additional problem is related to the lack of recognition of the diploma received in other countries and to an insufficient knowledge of the local language.

The inclusion of migrants through precarious jobs results in low and insecure incomes, which in turn affect living conditions in different ways, depending on the city or on specific conditions. In sum, we can identify the following problems resulting from income-related problems:

- migrants have to accept precarious housing conditions and they frequently move from one neighbourhood to another, seeking low-cost apartments;
- shifts from employment to unemployment are common in migrants' paths;
- migrants accept all kind of jobs, even jobs without contract, with irregular time schedules and serious risks for health;
- situations without income lead migrants to borrow money, often on the irregular loan market. The risk of debt spirals is high and consequences in terms of vulnerability are immediate. Three reasons are often mentioned to justify these loans. First, money is needed for the daily expenditures. Secondly, some migrants borrow money to guarantee a regular money transfer to their relatives in their region of origin. And thirdly, migrants are often engaged in ownership strategies in their homeland, thus incurring various expenses.

A particular concern is the problematic access to social services or to decent housing conditions. Migrants mention discriminations, problems related to their status of foreigners and precarious residence permits as factors impeding access to childcare services or/and housing assistance. Moreover, bureaucratic procedures and the hostility of civil servants are often cited as reasons explaining why migrants relinquish contacts with social services and waive all claims for the respect of (social) rights.

Experiences of exclusion and coping strategies

The migrants we interviewed have developed diverse strategies against vulnerability and risks of social exclusion. We have identified three patterns in particular: seeking assistance in the community, looking for support in local associations and making some significant changes in the living conditions (for instance reducing daily expenses).

The migrant reference community (which is rarely formally constituted as an association) is an entry point helping the migrants to find a job, housing opportunities or support (e.g. finding a physician that speaks the migrant's language). The community is a facilitator, and it also contributes to the stabilisation of fragile identities (Cattacin and Domenig 2012). Most of the time, the community is not organised around nationality; rather, it gathers together migrants sharing similar languages or religions.

In addition, some migrants use local associations as 1) advocacy groups in case of discrimination or deny of rights and 2) a way of strengthening their position in the contacts with local social services. These associations can also be important to provide migrants with the information they need.

Finally, respondents in a vulnerable situation told us that they had lowered their expectations regarding their living conditions. Concerning housing, some young migrants chose solutions of cohabitation, and in matters of childcare, they organised a private unpaid service with other migrants.

Migrants' values and strategies are influenced by concrete experiences and challenges. The reflexivity they develop is facilitated by the urban context that enables them to experiment and change. In particular, in the city, moral orientations may be permanently renegotiated. Coping strategies are also independent of previous experiences in their region of origin. Migrants have in this sense a high capacity to handle challenges, to react quickly to risk situation and to reinvent survival strategies. Nevertheless, we have noted that failing coping strategies and spirals of indebtedness can sometimes produce extreme marginality.

Migrants and social exclusion: conclusions

Migrants are a central feature of the flexibilised and open economy. High-skilled migrants have fewer problems to accept continuous residential and job changes. Vulnerable migrants, by contrast, feel as victims of the companies that need low-paid people to survive. Flexibilisation at the top level of the economy creates richness, while flexibilisation at the bottom reinforces vulnerability. Language barriers, lack of recognition of skills, inclusion in segregated job markets are particular problems that explain unstable coping strategies and precariousness. Communities and friends are the most important path to avoid extreme exclusion situations, but they are not sufficient to guarantee an inclusion in the regular labour or housing market.

CONCLUSIONS

In the present report we have presented the preliminary results of the second phase of the WILCO project, the aim of which was to describe *how social inequality and exclusion patterns in twenty European cities have developed over the past years*. Specifically, we have looked at effects with respect to gender, age and migration in the fields of employment, childcare and housing. The findings are based on 20 *city reports collecting secondary statistical data, local literature and grey documents and interviews with privileged interlocutors, combined with interviews of 360 single mothers, young unemployed adults and migrants*.

Our analysis focussed on social vulnerability, which emerges from difficulties in the coordination of different resources and obligations, rather than from a lack of resources. Overall, while the investigations at the country level reflect general trends (examined in a previous WILCO report), the analysis presented here shows that there are a number of important differences between cities. These concern both the determinants of social vulnerability - in the fields of labour market, changing family structures and growing migration flows – and the features and experiences of groups at risk – particularly young unemployed and precarious workers, lone parents and migrants.

Given the interesting implications of the analysis carried out at the urban level, some gaps in data availability and comparability call for more efforts in data production at the local level.

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