



COUNTRY REPORT

SPAIN



Universitat Autònoma  
de Barcelona

## **Youth and Trade Unions in Spain: Re-building Links in Turbulent Times**

*Oscar Molina*

*Ramon Alós*

Centre d'Estudis Sociològics sobre la Vida Quotidiana i el Treball (QUIT)

Institut d'Estudis del Treball (IET)

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona



YOUunion - Union for Youth is a project co-funded by the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, budget heading VS/2013/0401, Industrial Relations and Social Dialogue. Further information is available at <http://www.adapt.it/youunion/>

The sole responsibility of this report lies with the author and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

## **Table of Contents**

### **Summary of Key Findings**

### **Introduction**

*Methodology*

### **Section I - Short introduction to the labour market position of young people**

### **Section II - Membership of young people and institutional position of youth in the internal trade union structure**

*Introduction: Trade Unions in Spain (An overview)*

*Youth membership of trade unions in Spain*

*Explaining low membership of young people*

*Young Workers in Company Level Representation Structures*

*Youth Organizations within Trade Unions*

*Youth Organizations at Confederal level*

*Youth Organizations at Regional Level*

### **Section III - Views of young people about trade unions in Spain**

### **Section IV – Trade Union Strategies vis-à-vis young people**

*Collective Bargaining, Social Dialogue and the Youth*

*Campaigns and Actions*

*Membership fees, Attraction and Retention*

*Campaigns UGT*

*Campaigns CCOO*

*Communication Strategies*

### **Concluding Remarks**

### **References**

## Summary of Key Findings

- *The precarious position of young workers in the labour market is the main factor explaining the difficulties trade unions have to organize young people. These difficulties are particularly intense in the case of young women, due the higher incidence of precariousness and the predominant sectors where they're employed.*
- *Another source of concern for trade unions –in so far as it can hinder membership- is the increase in skeptical or openly critical attitudes of young people regarding traditional trade unions.*
- *The institutional context limits the incentives of trade unions in Spain to develop organizing strategies. This, together with the particular labour market problems encountering young people, pose severe limits on their possibilities to organize young people. Trade unions in Spain are aware of this fact, and dedicate their limited resources to increase visibility –particularly among students- and develop informative campaigns, rather than to organizing.*
- *Membership of young people tends to be short-lived, as their early state work experiences, and is used instrumentally in order to have access to certain services such as legal support. This also implies a passive attitude by young members.*
- *Reduced fees for students or unemployed are conceived as mechanisms to attract, but more importantly, to retain young workers. These reduced fees help to build and/or maintain the link with the union.*
- *The analysis of interviews and official documents reveals an increasing awareness of the regional / local as the most adequate level to develop organizing and information campaigns for young workers. However, some differences are observed between the two confederations.*
- *The main motivation for young workers joining the trade union is instrumental, hence leading to adopt a passive stance. Moreover, claims of greater participation and voice within the organization are made by young people.*
- *Greater participation is pointed out as one of the keys to achieve a more active stance of young members within the union. However, it is also pointed out how in spite of direct democratic decision making in the regional youth organizations analyzed, the involvement of young people is still limited. The main reason for this is the precariousness and the fear young workers have to lose their job.*
- *In addition to rely upon participatory mechanisms, regional organizations organize demonstrations related to specific problems of young workers in order to foster greater militancy of their members.*

- *Training is also provided to delegates with a twofold objective; a) help him/her to better develop their role in company level representation structures and b) enhance the likelihood of new members in his/her company*
- *There is no explicitly formulated communication policy in the two trade unions analysed. Both have gradually introduced new technologies, including social networks in recent years, but without a pre-defined strategy. Moreover, these instruments are used in a rather passive way by the union, mostly as a mechanism to distribute information.*
- *More recently, there seems to be greater awareness among union officials of the possibilities offered by these new tools in enhancing participation of their members.*
- *Trade unions' limited resources make it difficult to adopt different approaches towards different groups of young people. There is some differential treatment with the fees, depending on the labour market situation, but no targeted campaigns or actions.*
- *The head of confederal youth departments interviewed pointed out to the regional organizations as those developing the most innovative campaigns and actions towards young people. Even though they did not refer to any specific best practice carried out by these youth organizations, they nevertheless considered them a reference and a model to be followed by all regional youth organizations.*
- *Two aspects have been highlighted by regional youth organizations as pre-conditions to increase membership:*
  - *First, a participatory organization that empowers members and gives them voice. Even though assistance and participation in the assemblies is relatively low, they nonetheless believe this to be an important dimension*
  - *Second, strengthening presence in the territory through local and district branches in order to make the union closer to the specific problems young workers have*

## Introduction

The relationship between young people and trade unions is of key importance in order to understand the future of trade unions. The ageing of European societies has also a reflection in one of the most important institutions, trade unions, whose share of young workers' membership remains very low and decreasing (Kahmann 2002). In recent years, workers' organizations both at national and supranational level are trying to address this problem with initiatives to organize young people as well as campaigns to make the union visible for this group (Pedersini 2010, ITUC 2010). This has also been the case of Spain, where trade unions find it particularly difficult to organize young people (Mari 2013, Anton 2007).

Youth have not always been a priority group in trade union policies, and as the analysis below will show, this is one of the reasons why they're facing some difficulties to articulate innovative strategies targeted at this group. In the early stages of democratic Spain, young people were placed in a 'secondary' position by trade unions (Anton 2007). Three main factors explain this attitude. First, the strong mobilization that accompanied the transition to democracy, where young people exhibited a high level of political involvement and commitment, led trade unions think that they could easily get them involved in the trade union without developing any specific initiatives for this group. Secondly, the main labour market problems those years were not related to the extension of precarious employment, but to the effects of industrial restructuring and the high long-term unemployment for adult men. This apparently unproblematic relationship led to adopt a passive stance towards young people and explained the lack of a specific policy / strategy for this group. Finally, a more general factor is the importance of institutional vis-à-vis organizational power resources together with some institutional characteristics of the industrial relations framework (i.e., the extension of collective agreements) that reduce the incentives trade unions have to develop organizing strategies (Detlev-Köhler 2013).

Changes in the labour market since the mid 1980s triggered an increase in precariousness for young people, hence leading trade unions to pay more attention to the situation of young workers. This shift consisted mostly in the development of campaigns and the articulation of specific demands for young people in social dialogue and collective bargaining. Thus, consistent with a revitalization strategy based on political action, institutional involvement and attempts at consolidating a two-tier collective bargaining system (Lope and Alós 1999, Molina 2005), the defense of young people's interest was also channeled through these mechanisms. However, little was done in order to organize young people. As a matter of fact, the generalized perception was that young people did not constitute a particularly problematic group from an organizational perspective. A low membership rate for young people was considered 'normal' provided the labour market and institutional context. Implicitly, there was a belief that little could be done to reverse this situation from the union side, and thus the emphasis should be placed on getting in touch with young people and inform them about the role of trade unions in the labour market and industrial relations, rather than organizing them. Knowledge of the union objectives and policies by young people, even before entering the labour market, would make more likely to join later on. This view was backed by a positive perception of trade unions as socio-political actors and their role by a majority of population, including young people.

The situation has nonetheless changed as a consequence of the Great Recession and related developments in the social and political spheres. On the one hand, trade unions' role in social dialogue has been criticized by some sectors of the population due to the little results delivered in the early years of economic slowdown (Molina and Miguélez 2013). This has made clear the limitations of established institutional mechanisms of union influence, and in particular tripartite social dialogue (Calleja and Detlev-Köhler 2013). When tripartite social dialogue has delivered some social pacts, like the 2011 tripartite Social and Economic Agreement, it has received strong criticisms from young people as well as from youth departments within the trade union. More importantly, the spontaneous mobilization, with a significant participation of young people against austerity policies and the political system, signaled to trade unions as part of the problem, not the solution for Spain's difficult economic and political context. Thus the perception of trade union's positive role in society has deteriorated, particularly among young people. Moreover, for the first time in democratic Spain, trade unions were not the main actors in channeling discontent. This role has been taken by loosely organized, spontaneous civil society movements like the 15-M or indignados (Martin Artiles and Campos Lima 2013).

The impact of the crisis, and in particular, the implications of youth mobilization and protests for trade unions has come out very strongly in the interviews. As has been pointed by several authors, trade unions as political organizations have been explicitly rejected by large parts of the civil society movements during the crisis (Durgan and Sans 2012). This reflects on the one side, the problems that 'traditional' political organizations have to build links with young people and poses important challenges for the future of trade unions in Spain. But it also shows that young people do get involved and participate in civil society movements and eventually political organizations (Izquieta and Callejo 2013) and are not indifferent towards politics and socio-economic problems. This opens new horizons in the problematic relationship between trade unions and young people in Spain, as it opens a window of opportunity for trade unions and sheds some light into the mechanisms they can rely upon in order to attract young people.

#### *Re-building links; Re-thinking Strategies for young people*

The interviews as well as the analysis of official trade union documents reveal that rebuilding links with young people has come top of the agenda and an urgent task for trade unions. The numbers of initiatives, campaigns and official statements towards this group have increased in recent years, notwithstanding decreasing resources of trade unions. However, organizing strategies appear to be even less important in this context. In addition to the institutional incentives, that limited the importance of membership as a power resource for trade unions in Spain, the need to enhance the visibility of trade unions and their role in society appears as a pre-condition to increase membership, particularly among young people. Thus there is a need to develop new power resources that have so far been paid little attention by Spanish trade unions. Thus for instance, there is a need to develop more effective communication strategies and build coalitions with those civil society movements and / or political parties that have managed to mobilize the discontent of large parts of the population and in particular young

people (McGumbrell-Cormick and Hyman 2013). Even though assessing the impact of these initiatives goes beyond the scope of this report, the analysis in this report shows the difficulties trade unions as organizations have to change long-established dynamics and adopt new strategies. But it also shows how new opportunities open up for trade unions.

The mobilization capacity exhibited in 2010-2013 by a large number of civil society organizations, has made clear how young people are not a-political. However, trade unions played no role in these demonstrations for the first time in history. Rather the contrary, as part of the political 'status quo', they were one of the targets of criticisms and attacks by this movement. According to the trade unionist interviewed, there are two main lessons to be drawn from these experiences. First, they have proved how young people's civic engagement is stronger than very often assumed. This confirms the insights provided by Morales (2005) that showed how participation of young cohorts was increasing. However, this participation was shifting from traditional ones (political parties, trade unions) towards social movements, ONGs, etc. Secondly, trade unions are witnessing an increasing detachment from the young generations. In particular, the 15M movement accused them of suffering from the same illnesses as the whole political system. This included lack of internal democratic mechanisms, corruption as well as little capacity to represent the views and interests of young generations.

The analysis of youth departments in the two largest confederations shows a common diagnosis of the problems affecting young people and the role the trade union should play for them. However, we also detect some important differences at several levels. When we look at the organizational dimension, we see how the position of the youth departments within confederal structures differs between the two largest trade unions in Spain. In particular, the youth organization in CCOO (Comisiones Obreras) seems to enjoy from greater autonomy and influence than UGT's (Unión General de Trabajadores). However, at regional level (i.e., in the case of Catalonia) the picture is somewhat the reverse, with the regional youth organization of UGT (Avalot) having more autonomy compared to the CCOO youth regional organization (Acció Jove).

These differences have a reflection on the discourse and strategic priorities. In the case of UGT, greater emphasis was placed on improving the organizational position of the youth department within the confederation. By contrast, CCOO's youth department director placed more importance on improving communication with young people. At regional level, the main differences observed relate to the spheres of action for the revitalization strategies of trade unions. Thus in the case of Avalot-UGT, they seem to be more aware of the need to move beyond the workplace in order to reach young people. In this regard, they are more sensitive to the lessons from civil society movements during the crisis. As a matter of fact, they seem to have in mind a model closer to the social movement than the trade union. By contrast, Acció Jove-CCOO defends very strongly the workplace as the central locus of trade union action.

Finally, when it comes to communication strategies, trade unions realize of the new opportunities offered by new technologies and in particular social networks in order to reach young people. This is another valuable lesson drawn from the 15M mobilization, that showed how new forms of connective action can be a valuable mechanism for trade unions. So far, the use of social networks by trade unions and other interactive tools have developed in a non

coherent way, without a clearly defined plan or policy. Even though there are some good examples of use of these instruments by youth organizations, the general impression is that they haven't managed yet to take advantage of its potential.

The report is organized in four sections. Section one provides an overview of the position of young people in the labour market, paying attention to their increasing vulnerability and the extension of precarious employment. Section two analyzes youth membership in trade unions and explores the position of youth within the two largest organizations. The analysis is developed at both confederal as well as regional level, provided the importance the later has for young policies within trade unions. Section three then moves into the analysis of views and attitudes of young people regarding trade unions in Spain. Finally, section four enters into the analysis of trade union strategies vis-à-vis young people.

### *Methodology*

The methods used to elaborate this report have been in first place semi-structured interviews with members of trade unions. In particular, interviews have been made to the directors of youth departments at both confederal and regional level. These interviews have been complemented with analysis of trade union official documents (congress documents, statutes, campaigns, official statements etc.). Moreover, several quantitative sources have been used for the analysis of labour market position and union membership. First, the Encuesta de Población Activa – EPA (Spanish Labour Force Survey). Youth membership data has been extracted from the Encuesta de Calidad y Vida en el Trabajo – ECVT (Quality of Life at Work Survey). Finally, data on young people views about trade unions has been extracted from the Report on Youth in Spain (Injuve) as well as the Encuesta Sobre Tendencias Sociales (Social Trends Survey). Finally, an analysis of existing academic works on young people and trade unions has also been carried out. The following table contains the data about the interviews made:

Organisation	Position	Date	Place	Interview
CCOO	Director of Youth Secretariat	17 February 2014	Madrid	Face to face
UGT	Director of Youth Department	9 April 2014	Madrid	Face to Face
CCOO	Coordinator of Social Economy and Self-Employment	30 December 2013	Barcelona	Face to Face
Avalot - UGT	Coordinator of Organization	13 May 2014	Barcelona	Face to Face
Acció Jove - CCOO	Coordinator of Acció Jove	26 May 2014	Barcelona	Face to Face



## **Section I - Short introduction to the labour market position of young people**

### *The context*

Over the last three decades, the Spanish labour market in Spain has consolidated a segmented structure characterized by high levels of temporary employment (particularly among young people, women and immigrant workers), an extension of low paid jobs (and by implication of working poor), high levels of long-term unemployment (particularly for those over 45) and more recently, and increase in marginal part-time. Without entering into the detailed analysis of the causes for this, there is some consensus on the importance that labour market reforms have had in facilitating the use of these non-standard forms of employment. In particular, these mechanisms have been functional to the production strategies followed by a large number of companies, based on reducing labour costs and enjoy from high levels of quantitative external flexibility.

Temporary employment has become one of the critical divides of this segmented labour market (López-Roldán et al. 1998). Other mechanisms of external flexibility, i.e., part-time employment, have had a much more limited development in Spain, in line with other Southern European countries. On the one hand, in an economy with generally low wages, part-time employment implies very low income and is not a viable solution for many workers. Moreover, the resilience of the male bread-winner model has limited this flexibilisation mechanism to women and youth. It is nonetheless important to note the asymmetric behaviour of these two forms of atypical employment in recent years. Hence, whilst the percentage of temporary employees has decreased almost ten percentage points, part-time employment has maintained a steady growth in the crisis years. The downward trend in temporary employment can be considered to have a strong cyclical component; therefore, one would expect it to grow again once the economy recovers. However, in the case of part-time employment, there is a slow, but steady increase.

### *The impact of the Great Recession*

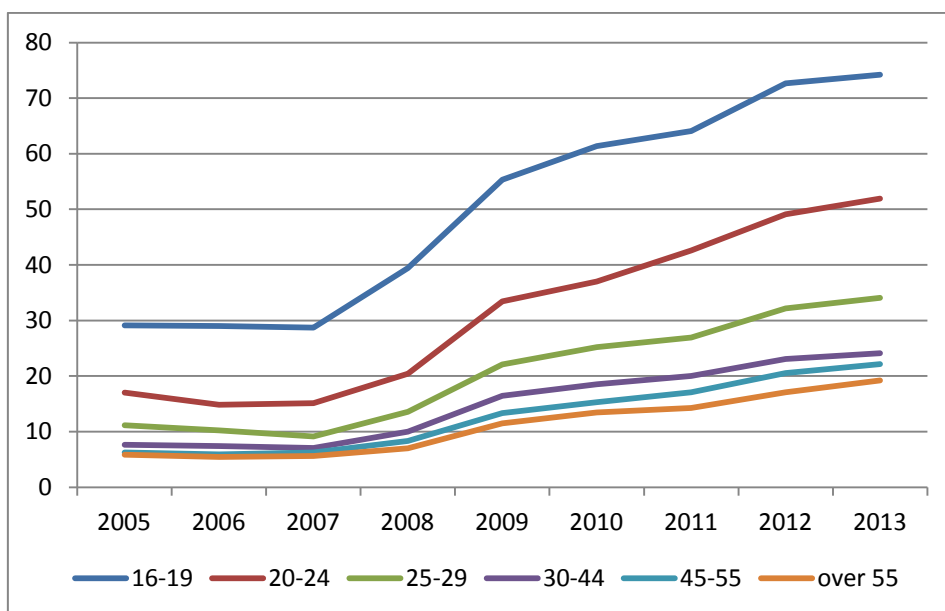
The economic and sovereign debt crises are having a particularly strong impact on Spain and its economy and labour market in comparison with other EU countries. This asymmetrical situation is the result of the structural weaknesses and imbalances of the Spanish economy and the construction-based growth pattern it has followed in the years preceding the economic crisis (Recio 2011). In an effort to cope with the economic and labour market crisis, Spain has undergone an unprecedented period of reforms, particularly from early 2010 onwards. Not only have there been many changes in labour market regulation, employment policy and industrial relations (six in a two-year period), but in many aspects these have implied an overhaul of the existing institutional edifice. The sovereign debt crisis has been a real turning point in the reform process as it has put the executive and social partners under strong pressure to introduce reforms in a short period and under a rapidly worsening socio-economic context.

The Spanish labour market has been more volatile than any other EU market. Unemployment has risen faster, confirming a pattern similar to the one exhibited in the crises of the early 1990s. Even though there was a consensus among the relevant actors that labour market developments haven't been responsive to changes in labour market, the emphasis of most labour market reforms has been placed on changing legal aspects.

One of the principles orienting these reforms has been the reduction of the duality between temporary/fixed-term and open-ended contracts. However, the approach and content of the reforms varied significantly in the period under consideration. In the first stage, reforms aimed at enhancing active labour market policies, improving internal and functional flexibility while introducing minor changes in dismissal regulation. This was the approach followed in the 2010 and 2011 reforms, whose objective was to maintain the underlying equilibrium in labour market regulation. However, the 2012 reform made a Copernican shift in the orientation of labour market reforms as it focused on firing and dismissal costs. Moreover, it also introduced significant changes in the collective bargaining framework whose capacity to provide additional protection to legal minima has been severely weakened.

Particularly worrying in this regard is the increasingly vulnerable position of some groups (ILO 2012). This would certainly be the case of youth as shown in figure 1. The concern for this group is also caused by the existence of a large number of early school leavers in the growth years. Many of these young workers now face long-term unemployment and little prospects of finding a job because of their low level of education. Women and immigrant workers also suffer from above-average unemployment levels.

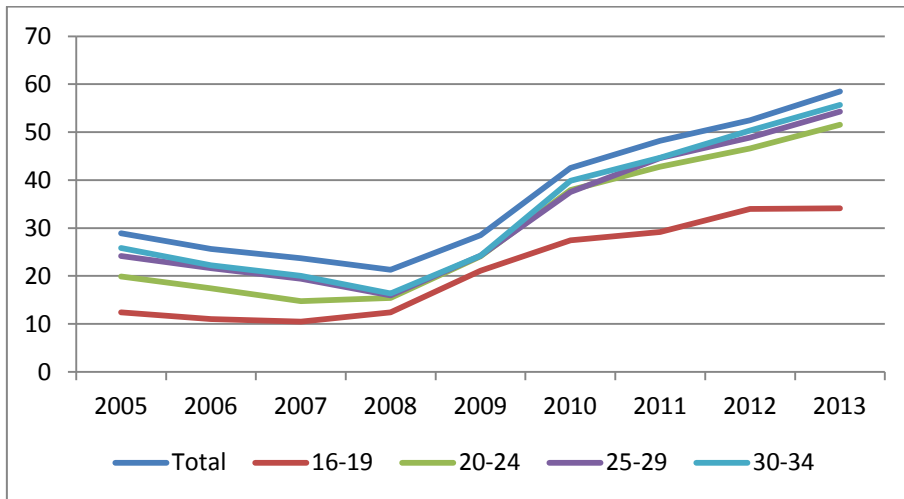
Figure 1: Unemployment Rate by Age Group, 2005-2013



Source: EPA, INE

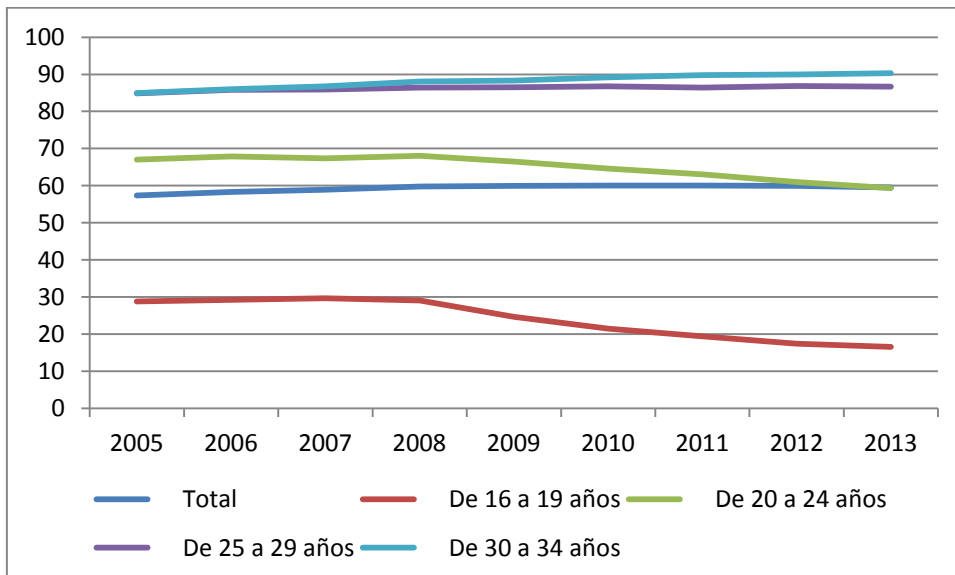
The increase in unemployment for all age groups, but particularly for younger generations has also been accompanied by an increase in long-term unemployment (Figure 2). The lowest increases registered for those aged 16-19 can be explained by the return to education or training to all those who spent some time searching for a job. As figure 3 shows, activity rates have tended to decrease for all age groups, but particularly so for the 16-19 and 20-24 ones.

Figure 2: Long-Term Unemployment by Age Groups (% of total unemployed by age group), 2005-2013



Source: INE, EPA

Figure 3: Activity Rates by Age Group, 2005-2013

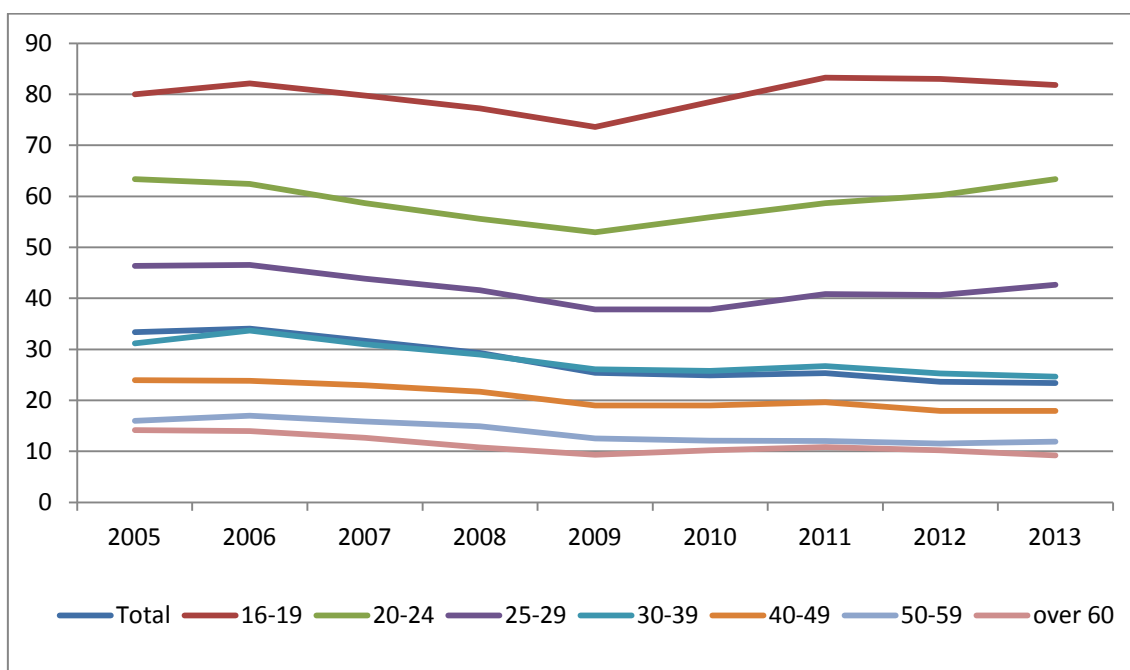


Source: EPA, INE

But the worsening position of youth in the labour market is not only related to the increase in (long-term) unemployment, but also to their employment conditions. The main source of precariousness for young workers is the high incidence of temporary employment. As can be observed in figure 4, the temporary employment in Spain has remained stable between 30-35% of total employees in the economy since the early 1990s. However, the temporary employment rate for young workers is significantly above the 35%. Thus in the case of the 25-29 age group, it fluctuates around 40-45%.

The economic crisis was accompanied by a decrease in temporary employment rate for all age groups. This was due to the fact that precisely those with a temporary contract will be the first ones in leaving the labour market in case of economic downturn. This is confirmed by the fact that by 2010, in spite of increasing unemployment, the temporary employment rate started to grow again for the younger age groups, though it has maintained a slow but decreasing trend for the economy as a whole.

Figure 4: Temporary Employment Rate by Age group, 2005-2013



Source: EPA, INE

The implications of a high rate of temporary employment for younger workers are particularly important when considering the relationship between youth and trade unions. First, high temporary employment means a high rotation and thus very little attachment of the young worker with the company and the other workers. Moreover, it has a dampening effect on productivity as it reduces the incentives by either the company and/or the employee to invest in training. Finally, it also has a very negative effect upon the income of the workers under these types of contracts. First, because the average short duration of temporary contracts

implies that young workers do not work enough years in order to have access to unemployment protection. Secondly, because the long transition from unstable towards stable employment, means that young workers will find it very difficult to have the minimum number of years necessary to have access to old-age pensions.

## **Section II - Membership of young people and institutional position of youth in the internal trade unions structure**

The analysis of membership and institutional position of youth in the trade union organisations will be structured in three sections. First, the membership of young people will be analysed based on the fragmented data available. This will be complemented with the study of young people in the institutions of worker representation at firm level. Thirdly, the section will also explore the position of young officials within the internal trade union structure. Finally, an in-depth analysis of youth sections within confederal and regional structures will be made.

### ***Introduction: Trade Unions in Spain; Power Resources and Strategies***

#### *The context*

Before entering into the analysis of unions' youth membership, it is necessary to discuss some general features of the Spanish trade union movement. The next paragraphs will first of all look at the origins of the Spanish trade union movement in democratic Spain. This will be followed by a discussion of power resources and strategies.

One of the defining traits of the Spanish society is the historically low levels of civic engagement (measured for instance by membership in voluntary associations) of its population compared to other Western European countries (Fernandes 2012). This has a clear reflection in the low membership of political organizations like now political parties or trade unions (Pérez Díaz 2000). There is disagreement as to the explanation for this passive attitude of Spaniards. Focusing on the most recent period, some authors argue that the years of civic repression under Franco together with the way in which the political transition took place, hindered the development of strong civic values among the population (Fishman 1990). In particular, the role of elites and organizations in managing and controlling the social mobilization that followed the death of Franco and the restoration of democracy, is given a

crucial role in explaining the weak civic engagement of citizenry thereafter (Fernandes 2012, Torcal 1995).

The trade union movement that emerged during the transition is an attenuated duopoly of two large national confederations (UGT and CCOO), along with some small professional and/or regional confederations. The General Union of Workers (Unión General de Trabajadores, UGT) was historically the dominant union confederation and managed to reorganize abroad during the Franco dictatorship with the support of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. During the 1960s some groups of workers opted to act within the limits of the law but at the margins of the Franco regime, thus creating what would be known as Workers' Committees. This strategy of militant 'entrismo' (i.e., a strategy consisting in the gradual extension of trade union members in companies as well as within official trade union structures), which faced strong opposition from the Franco government, would crystallize after Franco's death into Comisiones Obreras (CCOO, Workers' Commissions). The different ideological orientations persisted during the early years of the democracy, with the communist CCOO being more rooted at local or company level and endorsing a class ideology of industrial unionism and political confrontation, while socialist UGT followed a more cooperative strategy of political action based on concertation and participation in social pacts (Molina 2005).

The role of trade unions in this process was particularly important. As pointed out by Jordana (1996) the rapid increase in trade union membership and workers' mobilization in the early months of the transition was rapidly brought under control by the two largest union confederations, CCOO and UGT. In exchange for their role in channeling workers' discontent through negotiation and institutional participation, they were granted a strong institutional role and a detailed legal regulation of collective bargaining, including aspects such as the automatic extension of collective agreements among others. Their role in controlling industrial conflict during the transition and the process of industrial restructuring in the early 1980s, together with the institutional guarantees obtained are two of the additional arguments most commonly used to explain the low membership levels of Spanish trade unions. The first generated frustration and disappointment among workers' and led many of them to distance themselves from trade unions. On the other hand, the strong institutionalization of their role as social partners as well as in the industrial relations system provided little incentives for unions to actively seek to attract new members and follow organizing strategies.

### *Power Resources*

The specific socio-political and institutional context during the early years of the transition, determined the most important power resources of trade unions in Spain. Relying upon the typology developed by Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman (2013), we can see how trade unions in Spain rely to a large extent upon their institutional position, which remains their strategic stronghold. By contrast, on other traditionally important power resources like now the structural, associational or organizational, the position of Spanish trade unions is weakening. This would be the case for instance of associational resources, due to the low membership levels, or the organizational due to the difficulties to actively involve their members. By contrast, they have a strong mobilization capacity that by far exceeds their associational

power. Another key power resource of trade unions in Spain, the structural, is also under stress due to the downsizing of the public sector as well as the extension of temporary employment.

Thus the main power resource of trade unions is not their membership, which remains low by European standards and is particularly low among young workers, but their institutional and to a lesser degree, political roles. By the institutional role, we mean their statutory involvement in the management of some public institutions like now social security, training etc., but also their involvement in works councils' at company level. In both cases, it is the number of representatives elected in works councils' (i.e., electoral audience rather than membership) the criteria used to determine those unions having access to these institutions. If we had to judge their agenda-setting power and capacity to influence the outcome of negotiations solely by reference to their membership, we would conclude that they are very weak. However, in spite of their very low levels of density, the two main union confederations in Spain have managed to retain a significant social and political role thanks to the institutionalization of collective bargaining, their adaptation to the requirements and demands of the new industrial and economic context, and their unitary strategies of political action since the mid-1990s. Moreover, they retain a significant mobilization capacity, particularly in the public sector. Particularly important in this regard were the so-called 'Marea Blanca' (white wave) y 'Marea Verde' (green wave) in the public health and education sectors respectively. In these two cases, trade unions have played a very important role, in alliance with other civil society groups, in order to defend the maintenance of quality public provision in these two sectors. Organizational indicators in this case provide little insight into the effective power of trade unions or the perceptions other actors have of it.

But there are other 'non-traditional' power resources like now the communicative / collaborative, coalitional / collaborative and the strategic / logistical, where Spanish trade unions are also comparatively weak (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman 2013). Regarding the moral or communicative resource, trade unions in Spain have been together with left-wing parties, the most important voice in defense of the welfare state, public health and education, pensions as well as working conditions. However, their participation in some labour market and old-age pension agreements that were heavily contested by large groups within the unions have had a negative impact on their legitimacy. Moreover, as pointed out by one of the interviewees, their institutionalization has created the image of the trade union as part of the public administration apparatus, which as a consequence has little capacity to defend and promote the interests of the most vulnerable groups in society.

Regarding the collaborative or coalitional power resource, trade unions in Spain have also struggled to establish strong permanent links with other civil society organizations or social movements. In the late 1990s-early 2000s, trade unions and the social movement against the Irak war joined forces and organized several demonstrations against some of the policies of the second Aznar government. However, this experience proved to be short-lived. The difficulties in reaching stable strategic alliances and / or coalitions became apparent during the great recession, when the indignados or 15-M movement became the flagship movement against the austerity measures implemented since 2010. These movements have maintained a critical approach towards trade unions, which according to them, are part of the old political

apparatus that should be transformed. In its 10<sup>th</sup> congress, CCOO stressed the need to 'create new alliances with youth associations, particularly with student associations more sensitive to trade unionism, but also with any group present in social movements' (point 670, Action Program 10<sup>th</sup> confederal congress).

Finally, when it comes to the strategic or logistical power resource, it is important to observe how the low membership levels have always imposed a limit on the economic resources of trade unions. This means they have relied on the public resources corresponding to their representation capacity, measured by the number of representatives in works councils. Moreover, there have recently been some scandals concerning the management of resources, and in particular, their use in training courses. These cases, together with previous ones in the early 1990s, have increased the perception in public opinion of mismanagement of public resources as well as state-dependent organizations. However, it is also important to acknowledge that their role in the negotiation of collective agreements covering the majority of companies and workers, requires them to have the necessary resources to carry out this task.

### *Policies and Strategies*

It is important to understand the power resources of trade unions in Spain because their policies, and in particular those targeted towards young people are to a large extent determined by these resources. In particular, the revitalization strategies followed by the two largest union confederations in Spain have to a large extent been shaped by their institutional position and organizational characteristics. This has hindered the development of other power resources or capacities, as is the case of coalitional one, but also of the communicative and logistic. Moreover, it has left trade unions somewhat less receptive to changes in the social, economic and political context. As the analysis of strategies towards youth people will show, the development and implementation of more effective policies and actions aimed at reaching young people and organizing them, has been limited due to the strong organizational and institutional path dependency. Thus for instance, the lack of a strong strategic interest in recruiting until recently, means that the repertoire of initiatives and knowledge available to develop organizing strategies towards young people will also be limited, as the evidence presented in this report clearly shows. Similarly, the strong links with political parties until the early 1990s converted them into their natural allies and as a consequence provided fewer incentives to look for the support or form coalitions with other socio-political organizations. As a matter of fact, the traditional ties with political parties are the reason for the rejection of and criticisms to trade unions by recent civil society social movements (Köhler and Calleja 2013). Moreover, as the interviews made clear, regional union youth organizations of CCOO and UGT maintain strong links between them, but collaboration with other social movements and / or trade unions (for instance the anarcho-sindicalist (CGT) are much less significant.

This does not mean trade unions are stand still or left without strategic room for maneuver. As this report shows, several lines of action are being taken in order to address some of many challenges lying ahead, including the organization of young people. However, these initiatives



are to a large extent conditioned by the institutional and organizational legacies and will take time in order to deliver some results.

In this context two main strategies have been identified in union leaders' discourse regarding organizational change and the need to reach youth people. The first one, aiming to strengthen the connection between the union and society, promotes a modernization of structures, working procedures, communication strategies and services offered to new types of workers and specific groups, paying particular attention to youth. The second strategy, worried about the lost of influence and negative attitudes towards unions in a hostile economic and ideological context, aims to reinforce the traditional union working class identity; and -at the same time- tries to guarantee the unions social influence by operating in the institutional arena. The analysis shows how union leaders conceive these strategies conflicting and find it very difficult, as the case of youth people will show very clearly, to find mechanisms to articulate the two (Martínez-Iñigo et al. 2012).

When it comes to the central issue of youth membership and organizing strategies, the evidence shows how organizing strategies targeted towards young people are not a top priority for trade unions. This does not mean trade unions are indifferent about membership of young workers or that nothing is made in order to increase young affiliates. There are campaigns aimed at this, including the existence of lower fees for young unemployed and/or students. However, in a context characterized by limited and decreasing resources as well as deterioration in the labour market position of young people, trade unions perceive there are too many obstacles to overcome. The interviews show how their main concern at the moment is to make them visible among this group and inform them about their role in defending their interests through collective bargaining. This is considered a precondition for increasing future membership.

### ***Youth membership of trade unions in Spain***

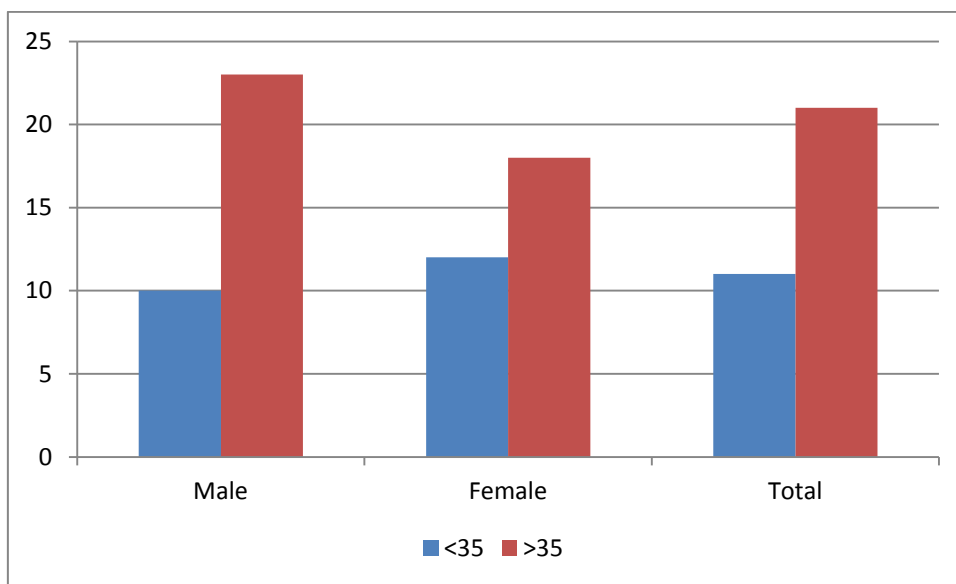
The level and evolution of youth membership in Spain has to be analyzed at the light of more general membership dynamics in Spain. As has been already pointed out, the low membership levels of trade unions in Spain are a combination of several factors: a) institutional (automatic extension of collective agreements and the use of an electoral criteria in order to determine the representativeness of trade unions), b) organizational (complex multi-level organizations with regional and sectoral federations, but with a moderate level of centralization make it difficult to develop effective organizing strategies, see Martínez Lucio (2003)); c) structural (a production system where small and very small companies are predominant and there is a strong seasonal component in important sectors of the economy); d) social / cultural (historically low levels of civic engagement in Spain).

Köhler and Calleja (2011) highlight two characteristics in the evolution of trade union membership figures in the 1999-2010 period. First, Spain is one of the few EU countries where membership in absolute numbers has increased. However, as this period also witnessed a strong record of employment creation, density has remained stable. Secondly, the composition of trade union membership in Spain has changed in the growth period preceding the economic

crisis, but very slowly. This means that the traditional under representation of some groups like now women, foreign workers or more importantly young people, remains a trait of trade unions in Spain. Increasing membership together with the maintenance of a strong role in collective bargaining and political spheres has hindered the process of organizational renewal within the union.

When studying the composition of union members in Spain, the first problem coming out is the lack of available data from trade unions. There is no publicly accessible registry and/or database providing data on official union membership levels, and when publicly available, the data provided is not disaggregated by age, sex etc.

Figure 5: Trade Union Density in Spain by age group and sex, 2010

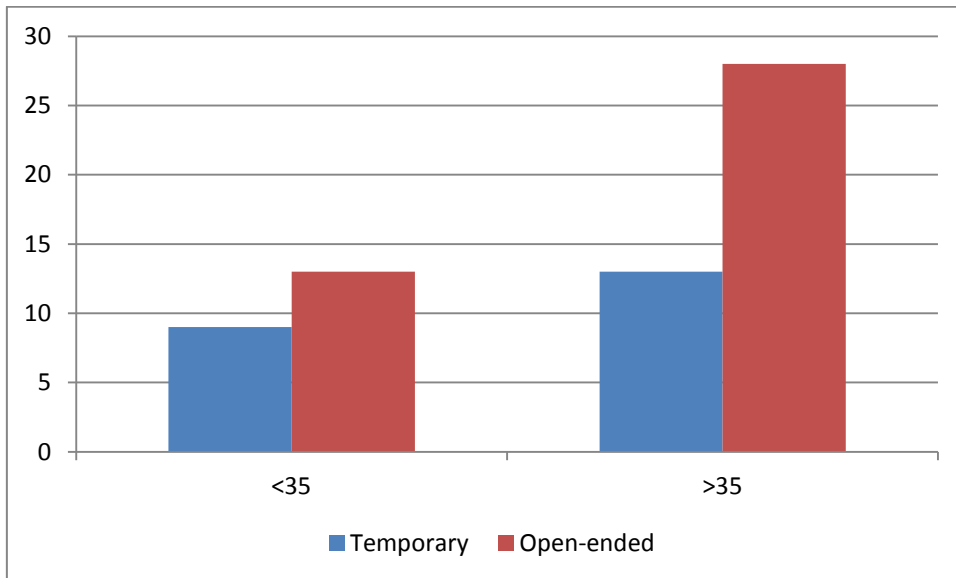


Source: ECVT (Quality of Life at Work Survey), INE

In order to fill this gap, researchers have relied upon alternative indirect sources. The first one is the Encuesta de Calidad y Vida en el Trabajo (Quality of Life at Work Survey). This survey provides detailed information about the employment conditions of the working population. Among other things, the survey includes questions on trade union membership, existence of union representation structures at company level as well as collective bargaining coverage. According to this survey, trade union density of those aged below 35 is half that of the older than 35 group. The difference is lower for women compared to men.

When we look into the differences by type of contract we find how being in a temporary contract constitutes an important factor for non affiliation to the trade union. In both age groups considered, the affiliation is lower in the case of workers with temporary contract, but the difference is significantly lower in the case of younger workers (figure 6). This means that temporary workers have always lower incentives to become union members, and the temporary contract effect dominates over the age effect.

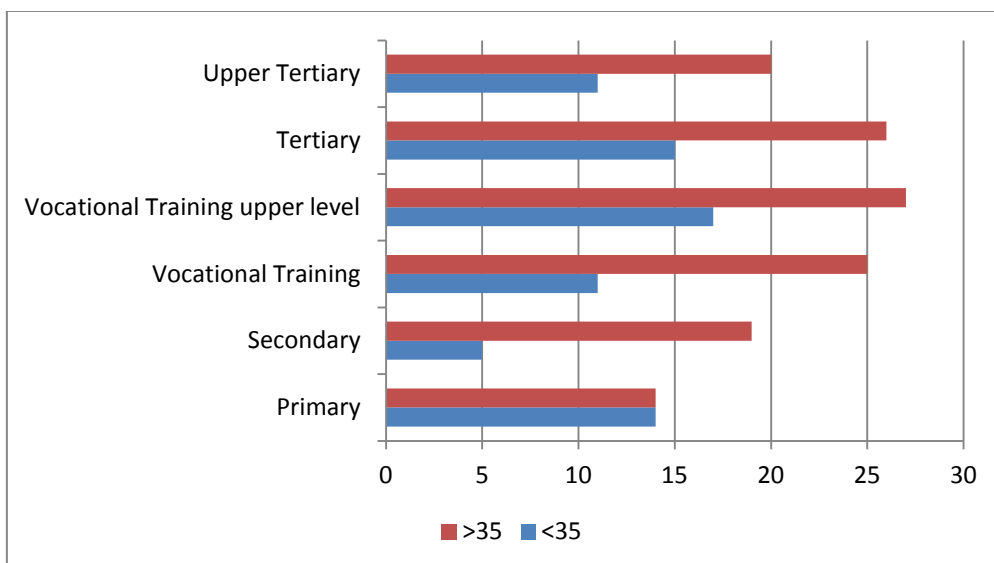
Figure 6: Trade Union Density in Spain by age group and type of contract, 2010



Source: ECVT (Quality of Life at Work Survey), INE

Finally, when we consider the education level, we see how except for primary education, the gap between age groups is narrower for the more educated workers. There is certainly a composition effect here, as the relative number of workers with higher education is higher in the below 35 age group.

Figure 7: Trade Union Density in Spain by age group and education level, 2010



Source: ECVT (Quality of Life at Work Survey), INE

The static analysis of membership figures of young people needs to be complemented with a more dynamic approach on flows in and out of the trade union. This is particularly important for trade unions as they aim at renewing their membership basis by increasing young people inflows that make it out for older workers' outflows. Moreover, membership turnover in Spain is very high and this implies it is important to know how the flows in and out of the trade unions are. In a recent analysis Vidal et al. (2014) showed how in the case of CCOO, union membership is short-lived. Thus according to this analysis, after 12 months more than 10% of the membership left the union, hence suggesting that there is a high turnover among recent joiners, most probably due to the change in the job situation or after the use of union services (Jódar et al., 2011b). In this vein, the instrumentalist approach towards trade unions explains the high levels of quitting, especially among young workers. Moreover, there is a clear difference in the levels and speed of leaving between the youngest age group, clearly the most vulnerable, and other age groups whereby 20% of the youngest age group left the union before the second year of membership.

The above highlights the need to pay more attention to retention in order to make pay the attraction efforts. So far, trade unions in Spain have focused on the attraction than to the retention of *new* membership. However, these efforts are wasted if no retention strategy / policy is developed. As we will see later in more detail, some actions are being developed in this regard, including reduction of union fees, contacting those members with pending fees and offering them reduced fees etc.

However, the interviewees showed very little hope in retention policies for young people. They think it is very difficult, not to say impossible for a young person with a temporary contract to remain member of the union once the contract expires. The problem is that the time lapse between entry in the labour market and the moment when this person signs a stable open-ended contract is becoming longer. Moreover, this period is characterized by frequent unemployment spells. This implies the young person will spend a long period without having any contact with trade unions, hence decreasing the probability of joining the trade union in the future, as used to be the case. According to the interviewees this is the real problem, not the fact that young people have unstable membership careers. Longer stabilization trajectories mean less contact with trade unions, hence making it less likely to become members once under an open-ended contract.

#### *Explaining low membership of young people*

Regarding membership of young people, several factors have been pointed out in the literature in order to explain the distance that seems to exist between trade unions and young people. The first and most important is their labour market situation (Anton 2006). The high levels of precariousness as well as unemployment, provide very little incentives for them to join trade unions. At the same time, the unstable labour market position of young workers undermines the generation of collective identities whilst promoting individual ones, hence making it more difficult to join a trade union.

Moreover, there is an extended perception among young people that notwithstanding the strong political role of trade unions and the vitality exhibited by social dialogue, its effective impact on improving the conditions of young workers and in particular, addressing the high degree of precariousness, has been very little, though this is certainly not the responsibility of trade unions alone. This has to be added to the fact that younger generations have grown up and started their labour market careers in an increasingly hostile environment for trade unions.

Another explanation is related to the internal organization of trade unions in Spain. On the one hand, it is argued how trade unions are dominated by the sectoral federations that represent the interests of the typical trade union member, i.e., middle aged man with stable contract. This means that the interests of young workers with unstable contracts would be under-represented. This problem is exacerbated by a moderate level of organizational centralization and internal democracy that renders it more difficult for small groups to have voice within the organizations. In the same vein, the differences that may exist in collective bargaining between older and younger members in the company also came out in the interviews as an inhibiting factor for young people to become a member.

The economic crisis has widened the gap between trade unions and young people as it has impacted upon all factors cited previously. First, the crisis has led to a sharp increase in youth unemployment in Spain accompanied by deterioration in labour market conditions for many others. Secondly, until 2011 trade unions have followed a policy of social dialogue with government and employer organizations leading them to sign some pacts that have been strongly criticized by young people. This would be the case of the 2011 pension pact, for instance.

All together, these three developments are making it even more difficult to organize young people and increase membership among young people. However, there are also some developments that need to be considered and that may counterbalance some of the abovementioned trends. Thus for instance, the involvement of young people in some of the new left-wing parties that have broken through in recent months may also open a window of opportunity for trade unions too, though this will depend on their capacity to develop an effective communicative strategy and undertake the necessary organizational reforms.

### ***Young Workers in Company Level Representation Structures***

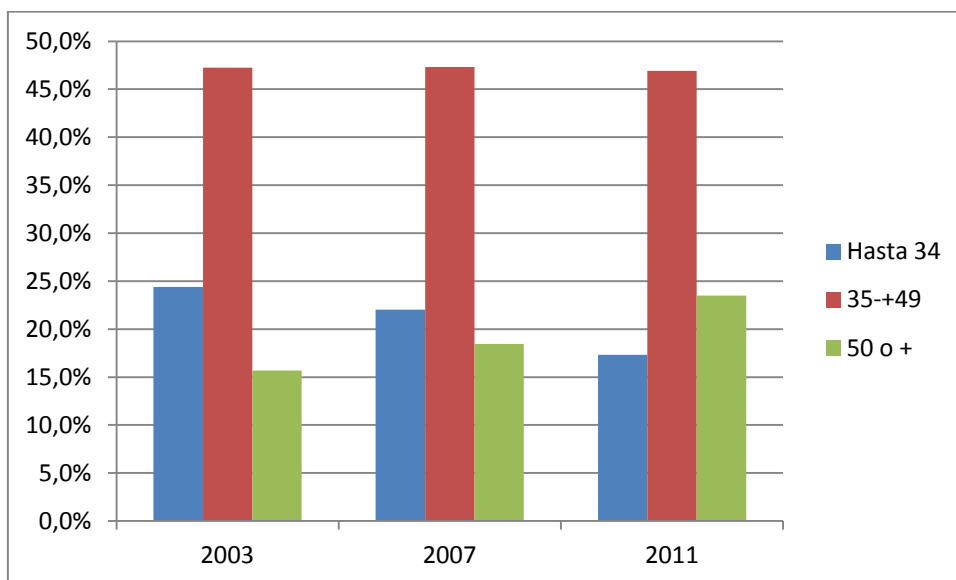
As the previous section has showed, youth membership in Spain tends to have an instrumental character and be short-lived. This means they are part of trade unions during specific periods, and when members, they tend to adopt a passive approach vis-à-vis the trade union. In this section we focus on the (minority) group who adopt a more active role and become members of company level workers' representation structures.

Assisting and servicing the group of young union delegates has become a top priority for the youth departments of both confederations analysed in this report. This interest is consistent with the incentives provided by the institutional environment, where electoral results (in

works' councils elections) are more important than membership. This means that when allocating resources, trade unions would prioritize the performance of their representatives in order to guarantee good electoral results, rather than developing membership campaigns.

Thus another aspect to be considered when analyzing the role of youth within trade unions is the number of young persons in company workers' representation structures. Relying on data from union elections, we can observe in Figure 8 how there has been a gradual ageing of union representatives over the 2003-2011 period. This process has accelerated since the economic crisis, due to the higher unemployment increases among younger workers. In the growth period preceding the crisis, this ageing process was not so significant. Moreover, the increase in average age of company representatives has been more pronounced in the case of women. In particular, for the age group below 35, the percentage of representatives was 29.7% in 2003, hence decreasing until 20.4% in 2011. For men, the change was from 22.5% to 15.6% in the same period.

Figure 8: Percentage of Union Representatives by Age group



Source: Alós et al. 2014

In order to increase the number of young workers' representatives, CCOO approved some general guidelines to include certain groups of workers into the lists for works councils' elections. Even though there is no pre-established quota for young workers, the document stresses the importance of opening some spaces for young people in company-level representation structures.

The differences between the two largest union confederations are only significant for the older age groups. Below the 35 age, both CCOO and UGT have a roughly similar percentage of union delegates. Moreover, the evolution in the 2003-2011 period has been almost identical for the

two trade unions. In the 35-49 age group, CCOO has a higher percentage of delegates compared to UGT. However, the percentage of UGT delegates is higher for those above 50.

In absolute numbers, according to UGT data, the number of UGT young company level representatives in 2012 was 27.458, amounting to 24,64% of total UGT delegates. Notwithstanding the economic crisis, there has been an increase of 1.043 in the total number of UGT young delegates between 2009-2012. Moreover, 60% of all UGT young company level representatives were men.

### ***Youth Organizations within Trade Unions***

According to young people in Spain, one of the main problems of trade unions is their bureaucratic structure. The young people perceive that they have little voice within the large confederal organizational structures and as a consequence, trade unions fail to develop attractive and effective policies to reach young people (Vandaele 2012). This negative view seems to be more extended in recent years. Moreover, the interviews to both CCOO and UGT also coincide to stress the under-representation of young people in the governing bodies of both confederations, though they also perceive a positive change in this regard. The organizational articulation of youth sections is accordingly important for two reasons.

- a) From the point of view of the logic of membership, it is important that young people perceive they have voice within their local structures. Moreover, they also expect the youth departments to have voice within the larger union confederations.
- b) Related to this last point, from the point of view of the logic of influence, young people would expect youth sections / organizations to play an important role in the overall union strategy, in order to devise policies that may fit better with what young people expect.

The analysis of youth departments within trade unions has been made at two levels. At confederal level, the CCOO General Youth Secretariat as well as the UGT Youth Department have been analysed. But provided their importance from an organizational point of view, the Catalan regional organizations for the two trade unions have also been analysed. Several reasons justify the selection of these two regional cases. First of all, the directors of youth organizations at confederal level mentioned that the catalan regional organizations were very active and have a long tradition in organizing young people. Moreover, both manifested that the way these regional organizations worked was taken as a best practice case for the rest of regional and sectoral youth departments. Finally, they are numerically among the most important youth regional union organizations in Spain.

### ***Youth Organizations at Confederal level***

The position of the youth sections across all levels of the largest trade unions is similar for CCOO and UGT, though some important differences can also be appreciated. Common to both trade unions is the limited participation of young people in the peak governing bodies of

confederations that is limited to one in each trade union. The organizational structure of trade unions in Spain has two axis; regional and sectoral. The confederation (state level) coordinates the regional and sectoral federations. This means they do not have direct contact with young people. As a matter of fact, when joining a trade union, the youth will belong to the sectoral and regional federation that corresponds to his/her activity and the place where it works. This means youth are not direct members of youth secretaries / departments. The youth departments follow a similar logic in the two trade unions, but the specific organizational form taken in the two trade unions varies.

In the case of CCOO, there is a Youth Secretariat<sup>1</sup> (Secretaría de Juventud) in the Confederal Structure. This means the youth secretary is directly present in the governing body of the confederation. By contrast, in the case of UGT there is a youth department<sup>2</sup> (Departamento de Juventud Trabajadora), which is part of the Institutional and Organizational Participation Secretariat. This explains why in the interview with the director of the UGT youth department the organizational issue was so important; she judged the present organizational articulation of the youth department as clearly unsatisfactory as it didn't allow them to enjoy from the necessary autonomy in order to develop effective strategies and/or actions towards young people.

The ways in which youth departments have developed across the several organizational tiers within trade unions vary significantly, as the CCOO youth secretary admitted. Accordingly, there is no uniformity in the way the youth issues are dealt with in each of the lower level structures. In the case of CCOO the youth departments in lower level federations take different forms: in some cases, there is a secretariat, which has more autonomy and whose director participates in the executive body of the sectoral or regional federation. However, in other cases there is only a youth department, dependent on a secretariat. There is a youth plenary that comprises the director of the youth department at confederal level as well as the heads of regional youth departments. The plenary meets once per year and defines general strategies that are then adapted at regional level.

According to the CCOO youth confederal general secretary, the objective of the youth department is to enjoy from greater autonomy, with a secretariat in each federal organization and participation in the management of the union. Moreover, they also aim at developing a similar model of youth secretariat for all the regional federations along the lines of the one existing in Catalonia. This includes a more participatory decision making model. In this regional federation, the youth department (Acció Jove) organizes a general assembly with all youth affiliates every four years in order to discuss and decide on the main strategies and policies to be followed in the coming years. This would contribute to make the union closer to young people as well as to allow this group to have more voice, hence providing greater incentives for young people to join. Overall, the role of regional youth departments is assessed very positively and CCOO wants to enhance this model by making the young member have a threefold affiliation when joining the union; region, sector and youth department.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.jovenesccoo.es/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://portal.ugt.org/ejecutivas/departamentos.html>



In the case of UGT, the way in which lower level structures have incorporated the youth departments also varies greatly. According to the director of the UGT confederal youth department, they want lower level youth sections to have as much autonomy as possible in order to allow a better fit between the particular requirements of young people in that sector / region and the policies or strategies developed by the union.

As pointed out previously, the issue of organizational position of the youth department is given a key role by the UGT youth organization director. UGT's youth department was created in 1979 under demand of young workers within the trade union. In its early stages, it had its own statutes and regulations and enjoyed a high degree of autonomy within the confederation. However, soon later it became integrated into the larger confederal structure and lost the autonomy it previously had. From the mid 1980s onwards, the youth department has depended on the Organization Secretariat first, and then on the Institutional Policy Secretariat. These shifts are also judged negatively by the head of the youth department, as they have made it more difficult to orchestrate a coherent policy over the years. This explains why restoring the autonomy it had in the past has become one of the main targets of UGT's head of the youth department. Even though this is judged to be very difficult due to the rigidity of bureaucratic union structures, she found positive movements in the recent congress, when for the first time in many years, the peak decision-making body of UGT allowed to discuss the youth section as an organization.

Moreover, the action program of the lat confederal congress contained a call to guarantee the presence of youth in union decision making structures (See Action Program UGT 2013, point 1259)

The role of the confederal youth departments consists in developing a youth policy within the trade union, including the definition of concrete proposals for collective bargaining and social dialogue and the development of campaigns targeted at this group. In the case of CCOO, the head of the confederal youth department argued that there has been a transformation in the role and approach of the department towards young people. Originally, it was conceived pretty much as a rather passive department within the confederation, in charge of providing assistance to young members and developing some informative campaigns for young workers. However, this has changed in recent years and it is now conceived to have a more active role within the confederation, including the development of youth policy and the coordination of activities of lower level departments. Nonetheless, the heads of the confederal youth departments in the two confederations complain that with the very limited human resources they have (two full time persons in each department) it becomes very difficult to achieve these goals.

#### *Youth Organizations at Regional Level*

The interviews with the head of youth departments within the two largest confederations show a shared belief of the regional / local as the most appropriate level to organize young people. According to them, this is the place where the trade union can more easily get in contact with young people, know their problematic and situation and thus successfully develop

(implement) campaigns targeted at this group. For this reason, they both remitted us to the analysis of regional organizations, pointing out their innovative initiatives.

The two regional organizations analyzed are 'Acció Jove'<sup>3</sup> (CCOO-Catalonia) as well as 'Avalot'<sup>4</sup> (UGT-Catalonia). From an organizational perspective, these organizations are similar. They enjoy from high degrees of autonomy within their (catalan) federal organizations. In the case of Avalot, they accept the resolutions coming out from the Catalan Federal Congress of UGT, but apart from that, they follow their own strategies and policies etc. They have 18000 members approx. Any person below 33 years either employed or unemployed can be a member of Avalot. In the case of students, there is a free fee with limited services. However, the management team of Avalot are thinking to eliminate this reduced fee and leave it at five euros per month. Members of the management team as well as area coordinators within Avalot are elected directly in the assembly with all Avalot members. The approx. number of those attending general assembly is however very low, moving around 200-100. The head of Avalot stressed the importance of regional youth organizations in order to get in touch with young people. In his view, these regional organizations overcome two major organizational problems of confederal youth organizations. First, the limited voice they offer to young people. Secondly, the capacity to develop actions more fine tuned to the specific conditions and requirements of the local/regional socio-economic context.

Acció Jove also enjoys from a high degree of autonomy within the Catalan Federation of CCOO (Comissio Obrera Nacional de Catalunya – CONC). Within CONC, they organically belong to the Organization Secretariat, though they also maintain close links with the Union Action (Acción Sindical). Acció Jove also follows direct democratic principles in the election of their leaders and management team. However, the age criterion differs with respect to the one applied by Avalot-UGT and only those below 30 are members of Acció Jove. As a consequence, membership is significantly lower, around 7,700. They also point out that the effective number attending the general assembly fluctuated around 100-150. The last general assembly organized had an attendance of 104 members.

Regional youth organizations of UGT and CCOO in Catalonia have branches at both local and district level. Strengthening these local branches has become a priority for Avalot-UGT. Even though the limited resources (both human and financial) make it difficult to reach all the territory, they nonetheless consider this a key in order to consolidate their position and increase membership in the medium term.

A crucial point in the analysis of regional youth sections is the issue of resources. This is a matter of concern not only for the regional youth sections, but for the union confederations more generally, as the regional youth branches are the most effective instrument to get the union closer to young workers. In this vein, there was explicit mention in the documents of the last Confederal Congress of CCOO to the negative impact of the economic crisis that challenged the stability and strength of the regional youth organizations (CCOO 2013,

---

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ccoo.cat/aspnet/accio\\_jove.aspx](http://www.ccoo.cat/aspnet/accio_jove.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.avalot-proves.net/>

Memoria de Actividad 10 Congreso Confederal). As will be seen later with more detail, the type and intensity of actions (including information campaigns) and / or communication strategies depends to a large extent on the resources they have. Regarding human resources, they both pointed out how the crisis has meant a reduction in the number of full-time relieved staff (from 5 to 2 in both cases). Moreover, they do not directly receive the fees of their members, but the regional federation transfers them a quota previously negotiated. This quota has also decreased in recent years for both Avalot and Acció Jove

Most of the resources the regional youth departments have are devoted to training courses for young workers' representatives in company level structures (*delegados*). This is because having well trained representatives not only contributes to improve the position of young workers in the trade union bodies (delegates etc.) and the labour market, but it also enhances the possibilities to increase membership among young workers. However, this means few resources are available to develop other campaigns, including organizing initiatives.

Overall, one of the problems coming out in the interviews with confederal youth departments is the diversity in regional youth organizations. This diversity hampers the adequate implementation of campaigns developed at confederal level. At the same time, it also makes more difficult for the confederal youth department to obtain feedback about the problems encountered, the degree of success or the aspects to be changed.

### **Section III - Views of young people about trade unions in Spain**

There are no national surveys providing periodical information on the views' young people have about trade unions. The Sociological Research Centre CIS (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas) conducts a Barometer on the views and attitudes of population around a number of socio-political issues, but there is no systematic information on attitudes on trade unions. The information available from other surveys presented here shows two main facts regarding the views young people have about trade unions. The first thing to note is that the view of young people about trade unions has deteriorated during the economic crisis. This deterioration has to be understood in a context of general frustration and attacks to the political system and political institutions. However, it is also important to note that among all political institutions, trade unions remain the one with more positive perceptions from young people. Secondly, young people are aware of the need of institutions and/or actors like trade unions in order to defense the position of the most vulnerable groups in society, but they think they should change in several ways in order to be able to represent the interests of young people.

One of the sources providing survey data about youth views and attitudes is the Injuve (Youth Institute of Spain) through its Report on Youth in Spain. This report provides information about the views and opinions of young people with respect to politics and institutions. According to its 2012 survey, the trust of young people in political institutions is low (table 1). Thus in 2012, trade unions received a 4 out of 10 in the trust level of young people. Even though this may

appear a very low figure, it is important to remark that it is not the political institution / organization receiving the lowest trust level from young people (Injuve 2012). However, compared to previous years, there seems to be deterioration in the value attached to trade unions by youth (Figure 9). But the data also shows how this deterioration is common to all political institutions. Another interesting point coming out from this survey is that trust decreases with age. The youngest persons, aged 15-19 have the more positive perception of trade unions. This is also the case with most political institutions.

Table 1: Young People Trust on Political Institutions (scale 1 to 10)

Valor medio escala (1-10)	Total	Sexo		Grupos de edad (3)		
		Varón	Mujer	15-19	20-24	25-29
1 Los partidos políticos	2,92	2,98	2,85	3,08	2,98	2,75
2 El Congreso de los Diputados	3,22	3,27	3,16	3,48	3,26	3,01
3 Los Tribunales de Justicia	4,19	4,24	4,13	4,29	4,21	4,11
4 Las Administraciones Públicas	4,12	4,17	4,06	4,30	4,18	3,94
5 La policía y otras Fuerzas de Seguridad	5,01	5,12	4,89	5,01	5,03	4,99
6 Los políticos	2,83	2,97	2,69	3,24	2,80	2,60
7 Organizaciones No Gubernamentales	4,92	4,93	4,91	5,10	5,08	4,65
8 Unión Europea	4,91	4,91	4,91	5,22	5,01	4,61
9 Naciones Unidas (ONU)	5,08	5,02	5,15	5,39	5,18	4,79
10 Organizaciones Empresariales	4,00	4,06	3,94	4,36	4,03	3,75
11 Los Sindicatos	4,00	3,96	4,03	4,31	4,05	3,75
12 La Corona / la Monarquía	3,88	3,91	3,84	4,09	3,92	3,71

Source: Informe sobre la Juventud en España

There are other surveys that provide info about the views young people have about trade unions. In particular, the Encuesta Sobre Tendencias Sociales (Social Trends Survey) provides detailed info on the attitudes of young people towards political participation, trade unions etc. It is carried out by a research group of the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED). The analysis of the results of this survey confirms some of the points coming out from the previous Injuve report. According to the GETS (2011), the young people's perception of trade unions is ambiguous. On the one hand they view trade unions as a mechanism in order to defend workers' interests, hence leading them to have a positive assessment. However, they also perceive them as a bureaucratic structure that does not allow them to have voice within the organization. As a consequence, young people show distrust on trade unions. The general view of trade unions that comes out from this survey is the following<sup>5</sup>:

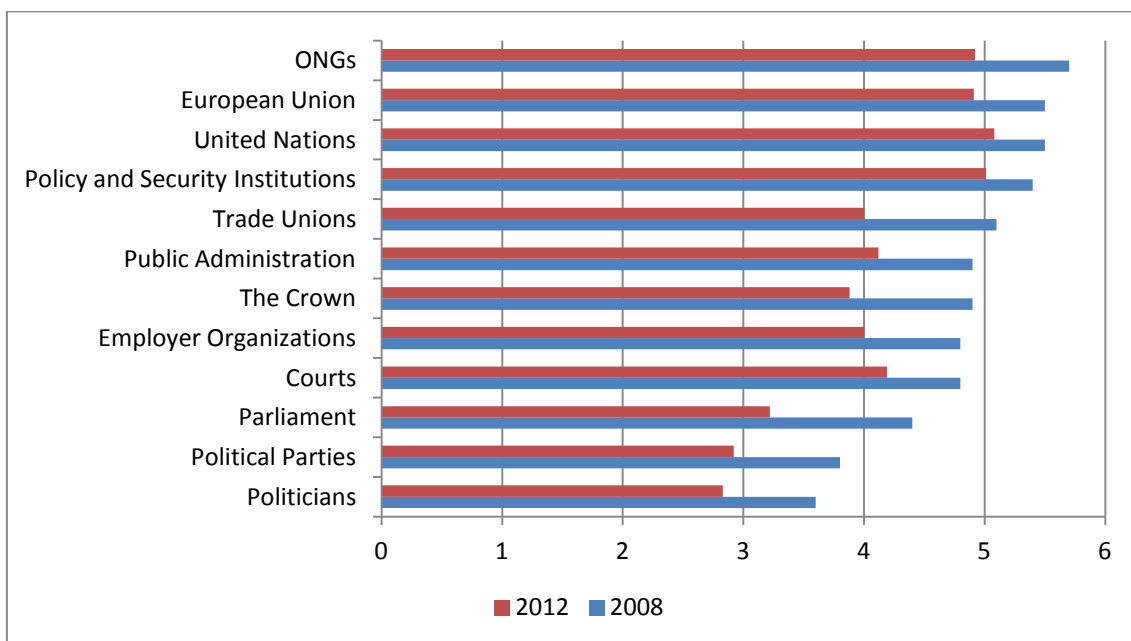
- Very Negative
- Trade unions act under authoritarian and centralized criteria
- Union officials are relieved of duties at company level and work less
- Vertical Organizations
- Youth people are not considered by union officials
- Trade unions are politicized

<sup>5</sup> See GETS (2011), La Participación Política de las y los Jóvenes, pp. 59-63

Young people’s traditional stance towards trade unions can accordingly be summarized along the lines of what one of the responsible of regional youth sections said in this regard: “we (the youth) think you are necessary, but in the way you work and organize currently, you (the trade union) are unable to deliver any good to society in general or young people in particular”.

Developments in the context of the economic crisis have contributed to increase youth’s negative views about trade unions (Figure 9). However, this has to be understood in the context of increasing disaffection of young people with respect to the political system and institutions. Moreover, this does not necessarily disengagement, as there has been a significant number of youth that have participated in demonstrations. This sentiment is exacerbated by the perception of mismanagement of the economic crisis. Thus Almost 50% of the respondents in the barometer of November 2010 (CIS) felt unsatisfied with the performance of democracy.

Figure 9: Value attached to different political institutions by young people, 2008-2012



Source: Informe Juventud España 2012

Thus the picture coming out from the analysis of these different surveys on the opinions and attitudes of young people about trade unions can be summarized as follows:

- Compared to other political actors and institutions, trade unions are still perceived positively by the population in general, and young people in particular

- The (positive) perception and attitude of young people regarding trade unions has deteriorated in the context of the economic crisis, though this deterioration has been common to all political institutions
- The main problems attached to trade unions by young people are the lack of internal democracy, that hinders the voice of this group within the union organizations, as well as the perception of little impact of collective bargaining on their working conditions.

#### **Section IV – Trade Union Strategies vis-à-vis young people**

The analysis of policies developed by trade unions in order to get in touch and organize young people will focus on three main aspects. First, the main claims made by trade union in collective bargaining and social dialogue will be analysed. Five issues have been at the centre of union strategies to defend young workers' interests in collective bargaining and social dialogue; the reduction of temporary employment and the promotion of stability, the development of adequate in-firm training mechanisms, double wage scales, activation policies and quality of employment. Secondly, the specific actions and campaigns developed by trade unions, and especially their youth departments will also be analysed. This includes an analysis of policies to organize as well as retain young people, but also informational campaigns. Finally, this section will also analyze the communication strategies of trade unions vis-à-vis young people.

##### ***Collective Bargaining, Social Dialogue and the Youth***

The interviews and the documentary analysis show a similar shift in the general approach and strategies towards young people of CCOO and UGT. Generally speaking this can be summarized as a move from a servicing / passive union, where the main role of youth departments within the confederations consisted in helping young workers and provide them with labour market information (including counseling, legal support etc.), towards a more engaging union for young workers, paying more attention to affiliation, participation in union activities as well as to the specific problems and difficulties young people experience in the labour market as well as in their workplace.

As shown already in the previous section, one of the most common criticisms made by young people to trade unions is that they do not adequately represent their interests. Some authors argue that the segmentation that characterizes the Spanish labour market is also a feature of

the internal trade union organization (Polavieja 2003). This includes on the one hand, the lack of specific internal democratic mechanisms giving voice to young people (see previous section). But it also refers to the perception that union action and strategies in collective bargaining and social dialogue focus on their core membership, i.e., middle age male workers with stable contracts. This argument nonetheless neglects the influence of structural determinants of the labour market, including firm size and production strategies, to explain the reliance on temporary employment. Precisely for this reason, all the interviewees place themselves very strongly against the development of a specific youth employment policy<sup>6</sup>. They argue that a youth employment plan is not convenient because it introduces a positive discrimination that does not contribute to solve the really important problems in the labour market. In other words, they do not think there is overt discrimination against young workers by employers, but labour market regulations provide them incentives to use flexible forms of contract with young workers.

In the years following their creation, trade unions didn't develop specific claims for young people. Only since the late 1980s trade unions in Spain have incorporated some specific youth demands in collective bargaining as well as in social dialogue. These strategies mostly consist in the fight against temporary employment and precarious work as well as guaranteeing training opportunities for young workers. These have also been the issues that have appeared more prominently in relation to the defense of youth interests in social dialogue. As pointed out by Anton (2007), the first stage in the development of a truly youth agenda was the 1988 first one day general strike, where CCOO and UGT protested against the Socialist's government attempt to pass a youth employment plan containing mechanisms that allowed employers to hire young workers with reduced salaries among other advantages.

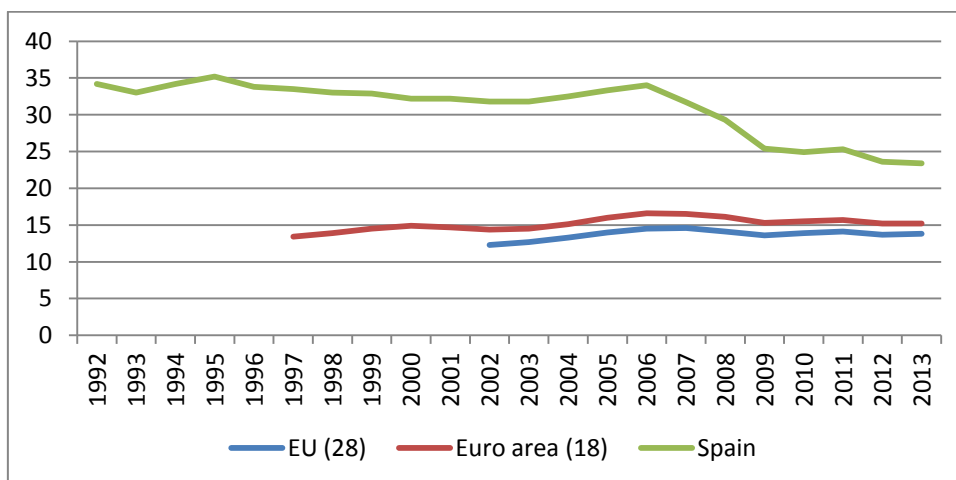
From 1988 onwards, the strategies of trade unions vis-à-vis young people have focused on proposals to reduce temporary employment and fight against double wage scales (i.e., lower entry wages for young people in order to foster job creation). The 1997 peak agreement on employment stability was an attempt to develop mechanisms aimed at increasing stable employment, particularly among young workers, through collective bargaining. These included limits on the maximum number of consecutive temporary contracts an employee could have as well as incentives (fiscal subsidies mostly) to transform temporary into open-ended contracts.

In spite of two decades of fight against temporary employment and having made of this claim the flagship of union's policies towards young people, very little has been achieved to reduce temporary employment. The temporary employment rate has remained well above the EU average since the early 1990s and only with the economic crisis there seems to be a purely cyclical reduction of temporary employment as the first to be fired are certainly those employees with temporary contracts. The reason is that temporary employment has become the default flexibility option for employers and a structural feature of the labour market in Spain.

---

<sup>6</sup> In point 340 of the action Program of CCOO's 10<sup>th</sup> confederal congress, it is stated that 'public policies have to support labour market integration and not only regulate labour market contracts of young workers'.

Figure 10: Temporary Employment Rate in Spain, 1992-2013



Source: EPA, INE

The development of adequate lifelong learning trajectories and training opportunities for young people has also been a central claim of trade unions since the mid 1990s. However, it has been more a rhetoric demand, reflecting the new orientation of the European Employment Strategy with very little effective impact on collective bargaining. In particular, little has been achieved to build a stronger link between temporary employment and training. However, the gradual deterioration of collective bargaining institutions also casts doubts about the efficacy of these general orientations.

The lack of significant advances in any of the strategic youth demands of trade unions might contribute to widen the gap between them and young people. As pointed out by the UGT's regional youth department representative, the general impression young people could have is that in spite of several agreements and labour market reforms negotiated or not among social partners, little has been achieved to improve their labour market position. Thus the logic of influence, that helps to explain why workers become member of a trade union, would in the case of Spain be a factor hindering rather than favoring youth membership. A similar view was expressed by the head of UGT's confederal youth department that attached the loss of approx. 30,000 young affiliates to the perception that overall, trade unions' capacity to improve the position of young workers in the labour market, is limited.

An additional problem pointed out by the confederal youth department heads of both CCOO and UGT is the generational gap in collective bargaining. In particular, they point out how collective bargaining is carried out by older members, who are the majority of workers' delegates in company level representation structures. This means that they may overlook the demands and interests of younger workers. One of the issues that better illustrates the problems posed by the generational gap is that of double wage scales or reduced entry wages for young workers. The head of CCOO's youth department explained how in some companies there is support by older union members and workers' representatives to this mechanism. All



together, this means that collective bargaining in Spain struggles to develop mechanisms providing effective protection for this group.

In its last confederal congress, UGT included a specific section of its action program dedicated to promote equal treatment for young workers. In particular, it was stated the need for young workers to access jobs with the same conditions as other senior workers. This applied specifically to wage conditions. Moreover, point 401 of CCOO's 10<sup>th</sup> confederal congress denounced the use of double wage scales, particularly among young workers and immigrants.

Another increasingly important issue in the collective bargaining agenda for young workers, according to the interviews, is that of stagiaires. Young workers under this modality are very often asked to perform the same tasks as any other employee, notwithstanding their particular legal status. Moreover, young workers are very often hired as stagiaires rather than with training contracts, which are more expensive and very often contain an obligation by the employer. Trade unions are fighting to clearly define the rights each group has and avoid abuse by employers.

Social dialogue in Spain has never focused specifically around young workers. There has been attention to temporary employment, and several tripartite and bipartite agreements have been signed on this issue. Moreover, several agreements have also been signed around training. After the abandonment of tripartite social dialogue by the Rajoy government in 2012, tripartite social dialogue has been resumed around the negotiation of labour market measures to fight against the high youth unemployment rate. In a meeting in March 2014, social partners and the government considered this a priority in the labour market, together with mechanisms to reduce high long-term unemployment rate levels among young early school leavers.

## ***Campaigns and Actions***

### ***Membership fees, Attraction and Retention***

Both CCOO and UGT have reduced fees for certain groups. In the case of UGT there is no specific membership program for young people. There are reduced fees (3,30€ per month) for unemployed, students and / or low wage earners. By contrast, CCOO has recently introduced a specific fee for students under 30 that are on the university or vocational training and haven't yet entered into the labour market. The annual fee is 24€. Moreover, there is also a reduced fee for unemployed that varies according to the unemployed income. The objective of these reduced fee is not only to increase membership, but they're also considered to be a retention mechanism whereby the member losing his/her job or returning to education may remain within the union. The regional youth organization *Acció Jove*, established in 2006 a reduced fee of 1,65€ monthly for students. This certainly has a purely symbolic value of support to the union, but it is aimed at establishing a relationship with the young person before they enter the labour market, with the expectation of increasing likelihood of future membership.

Early contact with young people was given great importance by youth organizations of CCOO and UGT. At confederal level they think it is important to make the trade union visible among

university and vocational training students. In order to this, they try to develop informative sessions in collaboration with universities, secondary schools as well as vocational training centres. However, the regional youth organizations complain that the regional government has recently removed a support plan for approaching students to trade unions. In its more recent confederal congress, CCOO proposed to create information points in universities or secondary schools in order to increase visibility of the union and get in touch with students close to finish their degrees (point 670, Action Program, 10<sup>th</sup> CCOO confederal congress).

It is important to stress how the main approach from the two largest confederations to organize young people remains to a large extent passive. That is, is mostly based on offering reduced fees. By contrast, little is done in order to organize young people at workplace level. The campaigns towards students are not directly aimed to increase membership, but to make the union visible in order to enhance the probability of membership once the young person enters the labour market.

Regarding retention of young workers, the CCOO youth organization representative admitted that there are several obstacles that make it difficult to follow the trajectory of the young worker that remains unemployed and / or changes sector. There is no easy solution to this though. But they agree that retention policies should be developed. The head of UGT's confederal youth department shared this view. The only instrument mentioned were the reduced fees that allowed young workers experiencing movements in and out of the labour market to maintain membership in spite of losing their job.

### *Campaigns UGT*

Most of the campaigns launched by the UGT confederal youth department have been aimed at improving the information youth have on the labour market and their employment rights.

In 2008, they published in collaboration with CCOO and the Spanish government the “Guía Socio-Laboral para Jóvenes”<sup>7</sup>. The objective of this document was to provide a reference guide for young workers in order to be aware of their rights on a number of dimensions (working time, wages, holidays, training etc.). Moreover, the document also contained systematic information about certain characteristics of the industrial relations system like now collective agreements, dispute settlement mechanisms or company-level worker representation structures.

More recently, they also developed the “Trabajar en Tiempos de Crisis” campaign<sup>8</sup>. The objective of this campaign was to provide young people with some insights and recommendations to find a job in the crisis.

---

<sup>7</sup> See full text at <http://www.ugt.es/juventud/guiajovenesOKugt.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.ugt.es/actualidad/2013/diciembre/a02122013.html>

In 2012, the confederation launched the 'Vitaljob' Campaign aimed at increasing awareness among young workers of the mechanisms they can use in order to improve their working conditions. The campaign presented in a medicine box with the name Vitaljob. As pointed out by the director of the youth department, the objective was to allow young workers to know their rights and do not give up in looking for a good quality job.

Compared to the important role played by the informative campaigns within UGT, affiliation campaigns have played a marginal role. There have been few of them, and very often led by sectoral and/or regional federations. According to UGT's confederal youth department head, these informative campaigns are also intended to make the trade union visible and provide incentives for young workers to become members.

Thus for instance, in 2004 and 2006 UGT and CCOO launched a campaign, in coordination with the Spanish Youth Council (Consejo de la Juventud), in order to fight against abuse by employers and promote collective action of young people. This campaign, called "Que no te Engañen. Trabaja por lo Justo" (Don't be fooled. Fair Work), promoted the joint action by young workers in order to report employers that do not respect labour law. The campaign included recommendations to join trade unions as a mechanism to enhance their protection at workplace level.

In 2013 the UGT Service Federation launched the campaign "Tenlo Claro Acude a UGT" (Have it clear; come to UGT). The objective of this campaign was to know first of all the needs of young people. For this reason, they relied upon an online questionnaire. The second objective of the campaign was to show how union representatives may help them to solve some of their problems.

Regarding affiliation, the action program of the 2013 confederal congress contained in its point 1062 a recommendation to increase membership by improving the personal interaction and treatment between the worker and the trade union. According to this point, this first contact is crucial for the worker to finally become member of the trade union.

### *Campaigns CCOO*

One of the differences between UGT and CCOO is that the campaigns organized by the second are much more centered around the need to increase membership as well as to attract young workers, compared to the more informative character of those by UGT. Thus for instance, the most recent campaign launched by the youth department ("La resignación no es una opción: lucha", succumbing is not an option; fight) aims at increasing awareness among young people of the need to get involved in the trade union as a member.

The main actions and activities developed by the CCOO confederal youth department have pivoted around the following objectives:

- Increase youth membership. The main tool in order to reach this objective have been the meetings with young in universities, vocational schools or secondary schools. The implementation of this objective has been a responsibility of lower level youth

sections (regional and sectoral). These meetings have been complemented with informative campaigns about workers' rights and trade unions. An example would be the "La resignación no es una opción" campaign (succumbing is not an option)

- Strengthen the training programs for young delegates / representatives. This has been achieved through the annual organization of Confederal Youth School where Young delegates have the opportunity to acquire negotiation skills, improve their knowledge on specific legal issues etc.
- Participation in social dialogue, particularly in the context of the Tripartite Commission for Youth Employment as well as in the elaboration of an Employment and Entrepreneurship Youth Plan.
- Institutional participation in several bodies, including the active role in the Spanish Youth Council.
- At international level, CCOO has also played a very active role in the Youth Committees of the International Union Confederation as well as of the European Trade Union Confederation

One of the points coming out in the interview with the head of the youth department at confederal level was the strategic importance of getting in touch with youth before they enter the labour market, for instance at the university or secondary school level. They consider this a priority given that it is more difficult to reach them once they start working. However, they're aware this task is very limited in scope and cannot reach a majority of the young population due to the limited resources they have. In the particular case of Acció Jove, they signed an agreement with employers and the Catalan government to present different aspects related to the labour market among young students, particularly those in secondary school, but also universities. Presentations included issues such as health and safety, job search, self-employment etc. However, in 2012 the Catalan government stopped its support to this project and they're trying to develop it with their own resources, though with an even more limited scope. The impact of these meetings varies greatly depending on the social structure where the school is located. In those neighborhoods with a predominance of working class, there is a more positive response from students.

In 2006, the Youth Strategic Plan (Pla Estratègic de Joventut) was approved by CCOO Catalunya under the initiative of Acció Jove. This plan contained a detailed list of policies and demands to be developed by the trade union in collective bargaining and social dialogue in order to improve the position of young workers in the labour market. Even though this Plans has not been renewed since then, it still constitutes a reference for the development of youth policies within the trade union.

### ***Communication Strategies***

Trade union communication strategies in Spain have evolved along with the introduction of new technologies. However, we could expect the different strategic views exhibited by UGT and CCOO regarding their campaigns and actions to have a reflection in different communication strategies. As pointed out by Martínez Lucio (2003: 335) methods of

communication have been at the heart of the way in which Spanish unions have developed and differentiated themselves.

We can distinguish two periods in the introduction and use of new technologies by trade unions. The first period was characterized by the passive adoption of internet technologies as well as email. By passive we mean that the trade union used them in a rather reactive way, with informational objectives, without a clearly defined strategy and with no underlying renewal motivation behind it. Two main positive outcomes can be pointed out as a result of this adoption. On the one hand, it has increased the visibility of trade unions, whilst at the same time changing internal communication practices.

The second wave of technology adoption by trade unions took place around ten years ago. The technologies introduced in this period consist in social media and social networks. The potential impact of adopting these strategies is qualitatively different compared to the first wave. These instruments may have a stronger impact in the relationship between the trade union and society. Compared to the first wave, where the main outcome consisted in the redefinition of internal communication, this second wave allows the trade unions to improve their links with broader social groups as it allows interacting with members and other social groups.

Anton (2007: 278) pointed out how there are several and increasing trade union communication initiatives towards young people especially. But there isn't yet an explicit communication policy in any of the two largest confederations. This has also been confirmed in the interviews, where communication is just conceived as a tool, not as a strategic area of the trade union requiring a specific policy. Thus the adoption of the new communication mechanisms (including social networks, blogs, etc.) by been made without a predefined set of objectives and lacking a coherent communication policy.

The analysis of youth departments in the two largest trade union confederations shows some differences between them. Thus for instance, the UGT youth department page appears less structured, but at the same time, it provides more links to blogs, social networks (facebook, twitter etc.), videos as well as many informative campaigns developed by this department. By contrast, the CCOO youth department page has a more structured appearance, but at the same time, it provides significantly less space for social networks and multimedia material. One could say that CCOO youth section page resembles a digital newspaper. In this vein, UGT's page probably performs better in terms of providing information. Moreover, it is more interactive, showing several spaces where this interaction may occur. An example is 'Demanda joven' (youth demand) within UGT's youth organization page, a blog where members of youth departments all over the country express their views on different issues related to their job as trade union representative and share it with both members and non-members. By contrast, CCOO's page offers fewer possibilities to interact in their youth department webpage.

An important communication instrument developed by UGT in order to allow greater participation of young members as well as to get feedback on the policies developed is the so-called Foro Joven. This instrument thus responds to the strategic objective defined in the 41<sup>st</sup>

confederal congress of UGT to 'approach the trade union to the youth and organize them in order to defend their rights and interests' (UGT 2013). The Foro Joven will also contribute to reach another goal agreed in this congress, i.e., to generate a debate around the creation of a youth association within UGT that would allow young people to get closer to the union. At the moment, this tool is being used in order to open a space for debate thus allowing the union organization to get closer to the demands and views of their young members. Only those members below 36 can participate in the Foro. When logged in, participants can choose three thematic areas to participate:

- Participation and Internal Democracy
- Work, trade union policies and Workers' Rights
- Youth Activism within the Union

The head of the CCOO youth department acknowledged that whilst it is very easy to communicate with their young members, mostly by email, they have a problem when trying to reach young non-members. In order to reach them, CCOO developed a campaign in the media, including announcements in Spotify, where they informed about several issues of interest for young workers. Moreover, they intensified their presence in social networks. However, these efforts are still considered insufficient. More recently greater efforts are being made in order to reinforce the use of new technologies. More specifically, the Action Program of the 10<sup>th</sup> CCOO confederal congress stated that 'social networks must be understood as a two-way communication channel facilitating the participation of members'. However, little progress has been made in this direction so far.

### ***Concluding Remarks: Re-building links with young people in turbulent times***

The impact of the crisis on the relationship between young people and trade unions has been twofold. On the one hand, the crisis has triggered an increase in the precariousness of young workers, including higher (long-term) unemployment levels as well as low paid jobs due to greater reliance upon part-time by employers. On the other hand, the surveys show an increasing disaffection of youth with respect to political institutions generally and trade unions specifically. Mobilizations have made clear the 'urgency' to re-build the deteriorated links with a part of the society who is increasingly skeptical or openly critical of the role played by trade unions at political / macro level and to a lesser extent, micro (company) level. The interviews have showed how in spite of sharing a similar view of these problems, trade unions have slightly different views as to the main lessons to be taken from them and the most adequate responses. In the case of the regional youth organizations, they emphasized the need to move the main locus of organization from the workplace towards the local assemblies. According to them, the success of social movements in the context of austerity in mobilizing young people has resided precisely in their open and participatory character. Moreover, this would be the only way to get in touch with a mass of young workers, provided the high levels of

unemployment as well as their reluctance to get in touch with organizations that are insensitive towards youth issues, partly because of the lack of youth within their structures. If trade unions want to maintain their capacity to mobilize masses of people, including the young people, local assemblies in contact with other youth local organizations and/or movements (not necessarily trade unions) outside the workplace would play a key role.

According to the interviewee of UGT's confederal youth department, these episodes made clear how young people can be mobilized when the right mechanisms and incentives are used. Even though they complain about the lack of communication, and in particular, the fact that these social movements are somewhat reluctant to engage into dialogue with trade unions, they think there are some lessons to be learnt. The most important one is the need to increase the visibility of the union among young people. Secondly, there is a need to develop more effective communication strategies, though little is done in this regard apart from using social networks. In this vein, there is a need to move from a passive, one-way communication strategy (which follows the traditional informative campaigns developed by trade unions) towards a more engaging use of these mechanisms. Some experiences have been already developed in this regard, using these tools as participatory devices.

As two of the youth section representatives pointed out, the use of digital media and social networks opens up new opportunities to attract and mobilize young people. As pointed out by Anduiza et al (2012), this opens a new scenario for traditional political organizations, including trade unions that need to re-consider their communication strategies in order to strengthen the links with young people. However, they realize this is only a tool, and that a more effective communication strategy relying on these mechanisms will only be effective after trade unions engage in a process of internal restructuring and organizational change in order to give more voice to young workers. In this vein, they follow what other authors have argued about the complementary rather than substitutive role of digital media. One of the potentially positive impacts of the use of social networks by trade unions is the possibility to bridge the distance between the trade union and the workplace, or as pointed out by some authors, the lack of organizational articulation (Molina 2008). However, as pointed out by Martínez Lucio (2003) the renewal potential of these new communication strategies has been to large extent neutralized by the long-standing organizational characteristics of trade unions.

Some authors have argued that the revitalization strategies followed by trade unions since the mid 1990s in Spain have worsened rather than improved the representation problems with respect to young people. In their view, developments during the crisis would confirm these insights. In particular, reliance on institutional power resources and the focus on political action strategies (Martínez Lucio, 2008; Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003) rather than on organizing as in liberal countries, has contributed little to close the gap between workers' organizations and young people. Moreover, Hamann and Martínez Lucio (2003) emphasize the scarce development of new strategies allowing for the incorporation of new perspectives in trade unions, such as the presence of young in the governing bodies of trade unions.

Other authors have argued that the main problem trade unions in Spain in order to develop effective actions and campaigns towards young people are organizational. Thus for instance, Martínez-Iñigo et al. (2012: 397) argues that organizational culture of Spanish trade unions

constitutes an impediment to adapt to a new context. Hence, whilst the difficulties to reach and recruit young people, particularly those with precarious contracts and/or in small firms, are widely admitted, it is also pointed out how actions in this direction should not threaten the identity or values of the trade union. The general impression coming out from interviews with youth sections is that the organizational characteristics of trade unions in Spain are a hindrance to carry out the necessary changes in order to more effectively organize young people. On the one hand, organizational path dependency and the bureaucratic character of the large organizations makes it very difficult to develop innovative plans and campaigns. Thus the demand made by the confederal youth departments for greater autonomy within the confederal structure would be a first step to improve the strategic capacity with respect to young people.

Thus, notwithstanding the acknowledgment of the problems trade unions have in this regard, there is disagreement on which are the main obstacles in order to get in touch with young people and regain their trust, and by implication, the strategies that should develop. In particular, some differences are observed in the discourse of interviewees at national / confederal and regional level. In particular, those in regional youth sections think it is a priority now to improve the external image of the trade union, which has deteriorated in recent years due to a number of factors, including worsening labour market conditions, some scandals related to the management of training courses as well as the dynamics of social dialogue with employers and the government. Any policy aimed at attracting new members should be preceded by an effective campaign to increase visibility and change the perception young people have. Thus in the case of *Acció Jove* (CCOO), it is argued how the trade union has underestimated the negative impact of certain news and images appeared in the news in relation to trade unions. By contrast, this issue does not appear so prominently in the discourse and views at peak level. There, the main concern moves around the construction of a cross-cutting youth policy and guidelines for collective bargaining.



## References

- Alós, R.; Beneyto, P.; Jódar, P.; Molina, O.; Vidal, S.; Benito, R. (2014) Análisis de las Elecciones Sindicales 2013/2012. Participación, Afiliación, Representación, Colección Documentos de Trabajo, n.8, Fundación Primero de Mayo: Madrid
- Anduiza, E.; Cristancho, C.; Sabucedo, J.M. (2012) Mobilization through Online Social Networks: the political protest of the indignados in Spain, <http://www.protestsurvey.eu/publications/1344588239.pdf>, accessed on 2 April 2014.
- Antón, A. (coord.) (2004) Jóvenes y acción colectiva. Experiencias en el marco sociolaboral, Madrid, GPS
- Antón, A. (2007) Jóvenes Trabajadores y Sindicalismo en España (Análisis de un Desencuentro), Tesis Doctoral, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- Antón, A. (2007b) Jóvenes y Sindicatos: El Reto de sus Vínculos, Mientras Tanto, pp. 47-63
- Calleja, J.P. and Köhler, H-D. (2013) Trade Unions in Spain. Organisation, Environment, Challenges, Country Reports, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
- Köhler, H-D. (2013) Estrategias de Revitalización Sindical. Experiencias de Organizing, en Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, Sindicalismo en la Empresa y el Territorio. Una perspectiva anarcosindicalista e interdisciplinaria, pp. 25-39
- Durgan, J. and Sans, J. (2012) No one represents us”: the 15 May Movement in the Spanish State, Sozial.Geschichte Online, 7, pp. 93–113
- Fernandes, T. (2012) Civil Society After Dictatorship: A Comparison of Portugal and Spain, 1970S–1990S, The Hellen Kellogg Institute for International Studies Working Paper 384
- Fishman, R. (1990) Working-Class Organization and the Return to Democracy in Spain, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press
- Gumbrell-McCormick, R. and Hyman, R. (2013) Trade Unions in Western Europe. Hard Challenges, Hard Choices, Oxford University Press: Oxford
- Hamann, K. and Martínez Lucio, M. (2003) Strategies of union revitalization in Spain: negotiating change and fragmentation, European Journal of Industrial Relations, 9(1), 61-78.
- ILO (International Labour Organization) (2012) Global employment trends for youth 2012, ILO: Geneva
- INJUVE (Ed.) (2012) Informe de la Juventud en España 2012, Injuve: Madrid
- Izquierda, J. L.; Callejo, J. J (2013). Asociacionismo y participación voluntaria de los jóvenes españoles. Cambios y tendencias actuales, Cuadernos de Trabajo Social, 26(1), 159-170.

Jódar, P., Alós, R., & Vidal, S. (2011) Why do workers leave unions? Group differences between workers in CCOO-Catalonia, *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 17(4), 471-484.

Jordana, J. (1996) Reconsidering union membership in Spain, 1977-1994: halting decline in a context of democratic consolidation, *Industrial Relations Journal*, 27(3), 211-224.

Kahmann, M. (2002) *Trade Unions and Young People: Challenges of the changing age composition of unions*. European Trade Union Institute: Brussels.

Lope, A. and Alós, R. (1999) La Acción Sindical en la Empresa. Entre el Desconcierto y la Reacción, in Miguélez, F. and Prieto, C. (eds.) *Las Relaciones de Empleo en España, Siglo Veintiuno*: Madrid, pp. 213-238

López, P., Miguélez, F., Lope, A., & Coller, X. (1998) La segmentación laboral: hacia una tipología del ámbito productivo, *Papers: revista de sociologia*, (55), pp. 45-77.

Mari, D. (2013) ¿Por qué partidos y sindicatos no conectan con las personas jóvenes y precarias?, *El Viejo topo*, (302), pp. 12-19

Campos Lima, Maria da Paz; Martin Artilles, Antonio (2013) Youth Voice(s) in EU Countries and Social Movements in Southern Europe, *Transfer*, 19(3), pp. 345-363

Martínez-Iñigo, D., Crego, A., Garcia-Dauder, S., & Domínguez-Bilbao, R. (2012) Organizational culture as a source of change in trade unions, *Employee Relations*, 34(4), pp. 394-410.

Martínez Lucio, M. (2003) New communication systems and trade union politics: a case study of Spanish trade unions and the role of the internet, *Industrial Relations Journal*, 34(4), pp. 334-347.

Martínez Lucio, M. (2008) ¿Todavía Organizadores del Descontento? Los Retos de las Estrategias de Renovación Sindical en España, *Arxius de Ciències Socials*, n.18, pp. 119-133

Molina, O. (2005) Political exchange and bargaining reform in Italy and Spain, *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 11(1), pp. 7-26.

Molina, O. and Miguélez, F. (2013) From negotiation to imposition: Social dialogue in austerity times in Spain, *DIALOGUE working paper No.51*, International Labour Organization: Geneva

Morales, L. (2005) ¿Existe una crisis participativa? La evolución de la participación política y el asociacionismo en España, *Revista Española de Ciencia Política*, nº 13, pp. 51-87

Pedersini, R. (2010) *Trade union strategies to recruit new groups of workers*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, May. Available at: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/docs/eiro/tn0901028s/tn0901028s.pdf>,

Pérez Díaz, V. (2000) From Civil War to Civil Society: Social Capital in Spain from the 1930s to the 1990s, *ASP Research Paper 36(b)*

Polavieja, J. G. (2003) Temporary Contracts and Labour Market Segmentation in Spain An Employment-Rent Approach, *European Sociological Review*, 19(5), pp. 501-517.

Recio, A. (2011) Efectos de la crisis sobre las clases trabajadoras, *Papeles de Relaciones Ecosociales y Cambio Global*, n. 113, pp. 45-55

Torcal, M. (1995) Actitudes políticas y participación en España. Pautas de cambio y Continuidad, Tesis doctoral. Madrid: Departamento de Ciencia Política, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Vandaele, K. (2012) Youth representatives' opinions on recruiting and representing young workers: A twofold unsatisfied demand?, *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 18(3), pp. 203-218

Vidal, S., Alós, R., Jódar, P., & Beneyto, P. (2014) Membership duration in a Spanish union: A survival analysis, *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 35(3), pp. 507-529