

Trade unions, Social Dialogue and employment in Western Europe, from concertation to confrontation. The Spanish case, 1996-2013

Marcial Sánchez-Mosquera
Departamento de Economía e Historia Económica
Universidad de Sevilla

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Literature review and theoretical framework**
- 3. The application of the Spanish case. Methodology**
- 4. The most representative Spanish trade unions. Competitive Social Pacts (1996-2009) and breakdown of social dialogue (2010-2012)**
- 5. Conclusions**

1. Introduction

This paper presents a preliminary version of the case study of most representative trade unions in Spain, as agents of change and regulation of labour markets through social dialogue between 1996 and 2013 within the context of Western Europe.

It focuses in the trade unions General Union of Workers (UGT) and Workers Commission (CCOO), the study seeks to determine the stages of social dialogue and registered conflicts, to examine the type of social agreements conclude as well as its incentives and measures adopted, and finally their effects on labour market. On a second level of analysis, the aim is to determine the impact on representativeness and the economic and social influence obtained by workers' organizations in their participation in those pacts.

To that end, the paper starts from the state of play and theoretical framework of the situation and general evolution of trade unionism in Western Europe, and explains the concept of “competitive social concertation”. The following heading focuses on the methodology adopted and the implementation to the Spanish case, with an explanation of the adopted approach, indicators analysed and key questions that have guided the present research. From there on, a new paragraph is opened in which the stages of social dialogue and registered conflicts in Spain are defined, the result of social pacts reforms are analysed, the impact on labour market in comparative perspective is evaluated and, finally, the effects on trade unions. Ultimately, the breakdown of social dialogue and the last two labour reforms (2010 and 2012), far away from the societal consensus, are reviewed.

The study has enabled us to conclude, the lack of significant results achieved by the reforms agreed in the competitive social concertation in order to improve the effectiveness and quality of the Spanish labour market. In the same way, the long period of social agreements does not seem to reinforce the basis of the major trade unions organizations in Spain, which didn't accumulate enough strength to successfully oppose a policy that, since spring 2010, is considered socially regressive.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

This heading first analyses the trade unionism in Western Europe and, subsequently, clearly defines the type of social concertation developed by the chronology proposed.

The membership evolution shows an overall progressive weakening. In Western Europe, the proportion of unionised employees was lower than it has been since 1950 (Waddington, 2005). Nordic Trade Unions are the single exception to this general trend. The fundamental reason widely perceived to explain this difference is the so called “Ghent system“, which offers strong incentives for membership, thus, it is the trade union the direct granter of particular social insurance, even of the unemployment, and it is necessary the membership for access (Schmitt, Mitukiewicz, 2012: 264). It is clear that, irrespective of the degree of involvement in social concertation national processes, trade unions have performed in a clearly unfavourable context in the last forty years.

TABLE 1. TRADE UNION DENSITY IN WESTERN EUROPE, UNIONISED EMPLOYEES RATE, 1980-2011

Country/Time	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004	2007	2011
Austria	56,7	51,6	46,9	41,1	36,6	34,1	29,9	27,8
Belgium	54,1	52,4	53,9	55,7	49,5	53,1	52,9	50,4
Denmark	78,6	78,2	75,3	77	74,2	71,7	69,1	68,5
Finland	69,4	69,1	72,5	80,4	75	73,3	70,3	70
France	18,3	13,6	10	8,8	8	7,8	7,6	7,9*
Germany	34,9	34,7	31,2	29,2	24,6	22,2	19,9	18
Greece	39	37,5	34,1	31,3	26,5	24,5	24,5	25,4
Ireland	58,4	55,4	52,2	48,1	37,2	34,8	32,1	36,1
Italy	49,6	42,5	38,8	38,1	34,8	34,1	33,5	35,2
Holland	34,8	28	24,3	25,2	22,6	21,6	20,2	19
Norway	58,3	57,5	58,5	57,3	54,4	55	53,7	54,6
Portugal	54,8	44,6	28	25,4	21,6	21,4	20,8	19,3*
Spain	18,7	10,2	12,5	16,3	16,7	15,3	14,7	15,6*
Sweden	78	81,3	80,9	86,6	80,1	76,9	71	68,9
United Kingdom	51,7	46	39,7	34,4	30,1	28,3	27,4	27,1*

(*)Data extracted in 2010

Source: Jelle Visser. *Data Base on Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions, Wage Setting, State Intervention and Social Pacts, 1960-2011* (ICTWSS), version 4.0. <http://www.uva-aias.net>

As the membership rates have decreased, the coverage of collective bargaining has reduced in the 1990s, and the different bargaining systems trend to be decentralized towards enterprise level, at the expense of the sector or intersectoral agreements. This tendency coincides with the decrease of trade unions ability to intervene on legislative changes at national level (Glassner, Pochet, 2011).

TABLE 2. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING COVERAGE RATES IN WESTERN EUROPE, 1995-2010

Country/Time	1995	2004	2008	2010
Germany	76,0	65,8	63,9	61,1
Austria	98*	99*	99*	99
Belgium	96*	96*	96	96
Denmark	84	85	85*	ND
Spain	83*	77,4	80,2	73,2
Finland	85*	88,3	89,5*	ND
France	ND	92*	92	ND
Greece	65	65*	65	ND
Ireland	ND	41,9*	ND	42,2
Italy	85	85	ND	85
Luxembourg	60*	58*	58	ND
The Netherlands	83,4*	84,7*	85	84,3
Portugal	94,7*	ND	90	90*
United Kingdom	36	34,7	33,6	30,8
Sweden	94	94*	91	91

(*) Figures correspond to years immediately preceding or after the date indicated.

Source: J. Visser. *Data Base on Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions, Wage Setting, State Intervention and Social Pacts, 1960-2011 (ICTWSS)*, version 4.0. <http://www.uva-aias.net>

The economic stagnation, the reduction in business profits and the high rates of unemployment started in the 70s, the supply-side policies and the triumphant economic deregulation since the 1980s, the new competitive demands, the progressive globalisation of markets have imposed a goods and services production focused on flexibility, cost reduction and permanent innovation. The regulatory changes introduced to this end have meant the trade unions loss of power and the strengthening of corporate

governance to implement unilateral changes (Baños Díez, Pérez Cuerno, 2005: 772-774, 780-781).

In that context, the trade unions role has been reduced at the same time has been limited the regulatory capacity of the State. Transnational capitalism goes beyond the regulatory framework of countries and, on many occasions, making the arrangements reached inoperative. That is not to say that, the industrial relations systems and their institutions have disappeared, but it has been set a dynamic which exceeds the control exercised by the traditional forms of representation and negotiation, very related to the national framework.

Social concertation established in Western Europe, becoming even clearer since the late 1980s, has been appreciably different to general income agreements and policies to affect demand developed by Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, which coincided with the largest insurance period and trade union power. Further changes in the structure, contents and incentives to secure agreements have been made. Those countries, in which social pacts have been signed, searched the generation and maintenance of jobs and the Welfare State at the expense of limiting social benefits and wages, since incentives in the field of employment derived from the competitiveness of the business fabric. Each individual country has intended to increase competitiveness vis-à-vis others, a strategy in which trade unions have been inserted through the signed pacts. A model that, despite the intentions of trade union organizations of contributing to the generation of employment, has highlighted a lack of solidarity and reinforced the competition between employees in different countries (Antenas Collderram, 2008: 46). This new concertation has been called “competitive”, “competitive corporatism” (*competitive corporatism*, Rhodes 1998 and 2000: 165), or “supply side corporatism”.¹

The so called “competitive corporatism” has sought to reach social agreement to drive up deregulation alternatives and flexibility less radical and detrimental for social model, but also more consensual and at the lowest cost in terms of social and industrial

¹ The notion of “*supply side corporatism*” in Traxler F. (2001) ‘Die Metamorphosen des Korporatismus: vom klassischen zum schlanken Muster’, *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 42: 590–623, cit. in Siegel (2005: 107).

conflicts. The agreements have been fragmented and decentralised regarding those based on the demand-driven.²

In a very significantly way, since the 1990's, the "competitive social pacts" were spreading favored by stringent institutional reforms and macroeconomic developments which were attempting to undertake. Suffice it to say that, in 2003 all Western Europe countries developed such agreements with the exception of Denmark, Italy, France and United Kingdom (Baccaro, Simoni, 2008: 1.326).³

The economic integration process, well-known as Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), required a series of reforms to the member states which involve the introduction of certain "orthodox" discipline in public accounts and measures of flexibility and deregulation. This institutional factor and the increasing exposure to foreign competition (globalization) have been fundamental in the consolidation of the "competitive corporatism" (Rhodes, 2000: 166-167; Baccaro, Simoni, 2008: 1.341-1.343, y Hancké, Rhodes, 2005). Governments, particularly the weakest, sought broad consensus to undertake the changes required. In Italy, Ireland, Greece, Portugal and initially in the Netherlands, the "orthodox" criteria of economic convergence of the Maastricht Treaty will be reached through a tripartite agreement formula (Regini, 2003: 258). In Spain and Ireland were the reforms of the welfare system, in a restrictive way, which addressed through tripartite agreements.

The most important problem in Western Europe countries was the unemployment, above all in those relatively more backward regions and in specific groups such as women, youth and disabled people. This is well acknowledged by the European Union (EU) in 1997 on the occasion of Luxembourg Council and the European employment strategy for all Member States. The Community programme to combat unemployment fits perfectly within the competitive arrangements paradigm or on the supply side: improving the "employability" through training and labour practices; the encouragement of entrepreneurship through tax reductions, mostly SMEs; the promotion of flexibility and adaptability of the organisation of work and finally to facilitate access to equal opportunities of women and disabled (Léonard, 2005: 318).

² The decentralisation has been developed at the local level, that is to say: in regions, provinces and cities. The local level is of key importance in the European social model (Pichierri, 2012).

³ Since the triumph of Margaret Thatcher, United Kingdom has consistently maintained away of the corporatist agreements. And, obviously, has not been integrated into the EMU.

The economic crisis began over the last few months of 2007, however, has coincided with the breakdown of social dialogue in Western Europe countries. In principle, we could consider that straits imposed by the problems of economic growth and high unemployment would stimulate the subscriptions of agreements.

Since 2009, the UE authorities and the Member States governments start to opt for adjustment policies, social cutbacks, deregulations of labour markets and fiscal tightening.⁴ Definitely, the policies applied over the previous two decades have intensified, but in a context marked by high levels of unemployment and major imbalances in public funding. The research to improve enterprises competitiveness and, for that matter, in those countries in which these policies are implemented, became a large scale tightening policy based on internal devaluations (social and economic impoverishment). Trade unions have been unable to underwrite these policies. Although they have formed part of the competitive consensus, they have no scope for negotiation. It was not acceptable, in any way, continuing with agreements that imposed overall adjustment in which the principal victims were the workers and unemployed. The return to dissent on the part of trade unions was the reason for which social dialogue was broken (Hyman, 2010: 4-8).

The current economic crisis seems to show that, as indicated by Schmitter in 1991, the corporatist practices have managed much better and therefore with more credibility in the expansive phases of economic cycle. Situation in which there is sufficient resources to compensate trade unions in exchange to stabilise and adjust the economy (Schmitter, 1991: 77).

3. Methodology

In order to achieve the purposes outlined in the first heading, it is examined the developments of social dialogue in Spain from 1996 to the present, with particular

⁴ European Central Bank (ECB) has insisted that the priority was to ensure price stability and reduce labour costs. In 2009, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recommended to increase the liberalisation of markets in the EU (Hyman, 2010:3).

emphasis on changes in the labour market and its impact on the evolution of unemployment rates.

No pretence is made that the difficulty of isolating the different reforms in labour market, with the inclusion of changes in collective agreements, to other factors which explain the unemployment levels in a given territory. Nevertheless, the qualitative analysis of its evolution in a comparative viewpoint can indicate whether the transformations undergone change substantially, based on the data of Eurostat and the National Statistical Institute (INE).

In that respect, the fundamental question to be attempted to address is focusing on clarifying to what extent the Spanish policy developments on employment, with or without social pacts, has indeed contributed to reaching a better performance of labour market.

Furthermore of labour market development and its results in terms of efficiency and quality, it is relevant to bring closer the impact of the most representative trade unions involvement in social dialogue. In this respect, worker representation (elections), the coverage of collective bargaining, industrial conflict and the level of awareness of union activities will be taken into account. Measurable outcomes obtained on the available data in Eurostat, the works of Jelle Visser, the National Statistical Institute, the Ministry of Employment and Social Security and trade unions themselves.

4. The most representative Spanish trade unions. Competitive Social Pacts (1996-2009) and breakdown of social dialogue (2010-2013)

The victory of the People's Party (PP) in the 1996 legislative elections coincided with the start of world's economic recovery. The relative weakness of the Government and largest unions, the readiness of the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organisations (CEOE) towards the reforms were undertaken, the necessity of social consensus in order to leave behind the crisis that began in 1992, the European favorable influence towards concertation agreements, the *fragmentation* of positions agreed in separate negotiating tables as well as the beginning of economic recovery enabled the social partnership rehabilitation. From then on, it was imposed a growth based on

infrastructures and construction which managed to significantly reduce unemployment rate (to below 10% in 2007), but not temporality rates.

In line with other European trade unions, the Spanish unions were made ready to participate in arrangements which safeguard the minimum social and employments rights in the midst of “necessary reforms”. This “realism” has incurred in certain business criteria, particularly through the creation of employment (Santos Ortega, 2003).

TABLE 3. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN WESTERN EUROPE, 1996-2013

GEO/TIME	1996	2000	2004	2007	2008	2009	2011	2012	2013
European Union (28 countries)	:	8,9	9,3	7,2	7,0	8,9	9,6	10,4	10,8
European Union (15 countries)	10,3	7,9	8,3	7,1	7,2	9,1	9,6	10,6	11,0
Euro area (18 countries)	:	8,8	9,2	7,5	7,6	9,6	10,1	11,3	12,0
Euro area (15 countries)	10,8	8,5	9,1	7,5	7,5	9,4	10,0	11,2	11,9
Euro area (13 countries)	10,9	8,5	9,1	7,5	7,6	9,5	10,0	11,2	11,9
Euro area (12 countries)	10,9	8,6	9,1	7,5	7,6	9,5	10,0	11,3	11,9
Belgium	9,5	6,9	8,4	7,5	7,0	7,9	7,2	7,6	8,4
Denmark	6,3	4,3	5,5	3,8	3,5	6,0	7,6	7,5	7,0
Germany (until 1990 former territory of the FRG)	8,9	8,0	10,5	8,7	7,5	7,8	5,9	5,5	5,3
Ireland	11,7	4,2	4,5	4,7	6,4	12,0	14,7	14,7	13,1
Greece	:	11,2	10,8	8,5	7,9	9,7	17,9	24,3	27,3
Spain	19,9	11,9	11,0	8,2	11,3	17,9	21,4	24,8	26,1
France	11,0	9,0	8,9	8,0	7,5	9,1	9,2	9,8	10,3
Italy	11,2	10,0	8,0	6,1	6,7	7,8	8,4	10,7	12,2
Luxembourg	2,9	2,2	5,0	4,2	4,9	5,1	4,8	5,1	5,8
Netherlands	6,4	3,1	5,1	3,6	3,1	3,7	4,4	5,3	6,7
Austria	4,3	3,6	4,9	4,4	3,8	4,8	4,2	4,3	4,9
Portugal	7,2	4,5	7,5	8,9	8,5	10,6	12,9	15,8	16,4
Finland	14,6	9,8	8,8	6,9	6,4	8,2	7,8	7,7	8,2
Sweden	9,6	5,6	7,4	6,1	6,2	8,3	7,8	8,0	8,0
United Kingdom	7,9	5,4	4,7	5,3	5,6	7,6	8,0	7,9	7,5
Norway	4,7	3,2	4,3	2,5	2,5	3,2	3,3	3,2	3,5

Source: Eurostat

This period left a series of pension system agreements (“Pact of Toledo”), Extrajudicial Conflict Resolution Agreement (1996), Job Security and Collective Bargaining (1997). Between 1998 and 2004 were signed Continuing Training tripartite agreements (2000), about the Extrajudicial Solution of Labour Conflicts(2001) and

Collective Bargaining (2002) (Pérez Infante, 2009: 62-63), even though also significant disruptions were made which caused conflicts, such as the labor reform proposal in spring of 2002 with the consequential general strike starting on 20 June. The strike received enough support to cause the withdrawal of the reform presented practically in its entirety by the Government, but two measures have come into effect which constituted a reduction on workers' rights and the deregulation of the labour market.

TABLE 4. TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES AS PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL EMPLOYEES IN WESTERN EUROPE, 1996-2013

GEO/TIME	1996	2000	2004	2007	2008	2009	2011	2012	2013
European Union (28 countries)	:	:	13,2	14,6	14,1	13,5	14,0	13,7	13,8
European Union (15 countries)	11,8	13,6	13,5	14,9	14,5	13,8	14,2	13,8	13,8
Euro area (18 countries)	:	14,9	15,0	16,5	16,2	15,3	15,7	15,2	15,2
Euro area (13 countries)	12,9	15,3	15,3	16,9	16,6	15,6	16,0	15,5	15,5
Belgium	5,9	9,0	8,7	8,6	8,3	8,2	8,9	8,1	8,1
Denmark	11,3	10,2	9,8	9,0	8,5	8,7	8,9	8,6	8,8
Germany (until 1990 former territory of the FRG)	11,1	12,8	12,5	14,7	14,8	14,6	14,8	13,9	13,5
Ireland	9,2	5,3	3,4	8,0	8,4	8,8	10,2	10,1	10,0
Greece	11,0	13,8	12,4	10,9	11,5	12,1	11,6	10,0	10,0
Spain	33,8	32,4	32,1	31,7	29,3	25,5	25,4	23,7	23,4
France	12,5	15,4	12,8	15,0	14,8	14,3	15,1	15,0	16,4
Italy	7,4	10,1	11,9	13,2	13,3	12,5	13,4	13,8	13,2
Luxembourg	2,6	3,4	4,8	6,8	6,2	7,2	7,1	7,6	7,0
Netherlands	11,9	13,8	14,4	17,9	17,9	18,0	18,2	19,3	20,3
Austria	8,0	8,0	9,5	8,9	9,0	9,1	9,6	9,3	9,2
Portugal	10,7	19,8	19,9	22,4	22,9	22,0	22,2	20,7	21,5
Finland	17,3	17,7	17,1	15,9	14,9	14,5	15,5	15,5	15,3
Sweden	11,5	14,3	15,5	17,2	15,8	14,9	16,5	15,9	16,3
United Kingdom	7,0	6,6	5,6	5,7	5,3	5,5	6,0	6,2	6,1
Norway	13,2	9,7	10,2	9,5	9,0	8,1	8,0	8,5	8,4
Switzerland	11,9	11,6	12,2	12,9	13,2	13,3	12,9	12,9	12,9

Source: Eurostat

In 2004, with a new social democratic executive, social dialogue was encouraged. However, it was not achieved a reform agreement of labour market until 2006, although it seems that the succession of forward contracts was limited for reducing the temporality, in fact supposed to sustain and extend the flexibility reached by the previous centre-right government with regards to the in and outflow of workers in

enterprises. Thereafter, the agreements were extended in terms of dependence, equality of women and social security reform, among others (González Fernández, 2010: 122-126).

This concertation period coincided with an economic expansion period, in which it was generated an economic growth and employment, although with the nuances pointed out by the table.

For the most representative unions, this period was characterized by ongoing progress in membership and better results in trade union elections until 2008.

TABLE 5. UNION REPRESENTATION IN SPAIN, ELECTION OF UNIT REPRESENTATIVES OF WORKERS 1995-2011

TIME	DEL	CC OO		UGT		OTHERS		NA	
		Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
1995	204.586	77.348	37,8	71.112	34,7	49.495	24,2	6.631	3,2
1999	260.285	98.440	37,8	96.770	37,2	57.006	21,9	8.969	3,1
2003	280.396	109.431	39	102.930	36,7	60.584	21,6	7.471	2,7
2007	310.231	121.556	39,2	114.269	36,8	68.190	22	6.216	2
2011	307.011	116.331	37,9	109.913	35,8	74.877	24,4	5.890	1,9

Source: Jódar (2013: 543).

There was an increase of social presence as well as in enterprises, coinciding with the spread of its political influence by their participation in social agreements. The reason of this progression is based on the improvements in the labour market in this period and in the lower degree of competition of Inter-Trade Union as a result of the unity of action between UGT and CCOO, and a reduction of dependency of political parties, elements which weaken the membership.

Spain counts with a model of union representation of high rates of collective bargaining coverage and low union density, characteristic of Mediterranean Europe, in which may include countries such as France or Italy (Beneyto, 2008: 67). The collective bargaining is characterized by an interim centralization, with the dominance of sector and province as a reference for negotiation (Glassner, Pochet, 2011: 25). The collective agreement coverage has been especially high, but in the last years analysed (2008-2010)

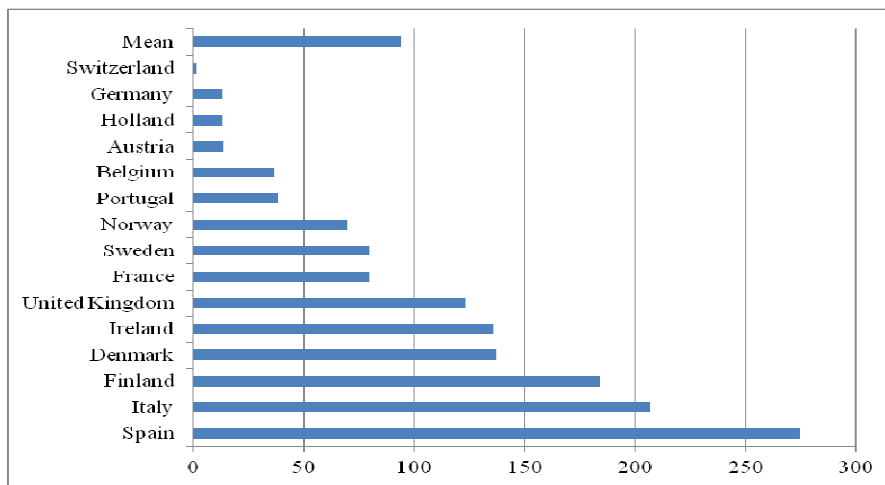
the positive development registered has halted and retreated 7 percentage points (Table 2).

These years (2009-2010) of social dialogue without agreements, consequently, caused a strong decline of union density, electoral hearing and coverage of collective bargaining.

In May 2010, the Spanish Social Democratic Government announced, under the international pressures especially from the EU, a strictly turn in the economic policy towards budgetary adjustment. Clearly, social dialogue was broken by the outright disaffection of trade unions which called a general strike the 29th of September. The return of confrontation has coincided with the growing social discredit of the major trade unions and in the reduction in the gross union representation ratio in enterprises about 2 points, settling at 47.4% in 2010, but approaching the Mediterranean counties average (48%), in 2008, and of the UE 27 States (50%) (Beneyto, 2009: 3 y 2013: 533). In the same way, the union density has been maintained in a low rate, around the 15% (Visser, Base de Datos ICTWSS, versión 4.0).

The return of disputes, on the occasion of the breaking-up of social dialogue, cannot hide the slender results obtained in the reduction of previous years. From 1980 to 2008, Spain was the Western European country with most working days lost for strike for every 1.000 workers.

FIGURE: ANNUAL AVERAGE OF WORKING DAYS LOST FOR STRIKE, 1980-2008



Source: Luque Balbona (2010: 111)

The new government of PP, elected at the end of 2011, pursued the policies of deregulation and adjustment of labour market. The Spanish labour reform undertaken in 2012 has reinforced the decentralization of collective bargaining even the corporate unilateralism to ensure flexibility. In a context characterized by the smallholding and a weak representation structure, all the changes encourage the process of “decollectivisation” of labour relations (Merino Segovia, 2012: 37-38; Baylos Grau, 2013). Moreover, the strict compliance of agreements has proven to be highly problematic in a context characterized by very high unemployment (26,1 %) and temporary employment (23,4%) in 2013.

5. Conclusions

This paper has led to the conclusion that competitive social concertation, a model established in Western Europe to cope with the crisis of 1992-1996 and to undertake the necessary reforms in those countries members of the Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union, has proved appropriate to adopt labour reforms and to improve policies in the expansive cycle, but not during the current economic crisis. Clear evidence of this is the rupture in those countries which, in the previous period, had often concluded agreements.

The Spanish case has proved paradigmatic. Furthermore, in this case is evident the poor performance of social agreements concluded (1996-2008). It was not possible to reach a substantive improvement with regards to the average values of neighboring countries. Even though, the expansive cycle generates employment, it was of poor quality and continued to show a high temporality and duality in labour market.

The European trade unions have developed a period of economic growth and competitive social agreements without leaving the same regressive practice, which has caused them to lose members and economic and social influence since the 1980's. The involvement of Spanish trade unions in competitive social concertation not only did not get appreciable results for their members, but in reality, scarcely managed a very modestly improvement in terms of society and business penetration. The union density improvement (despite highlighted in the European context), the electoral hearing and

collective bargaining obtained in a cycle of ten years stopped and decreased only two years later, since the current economic crisis. All the work of restraint and responsibility performed during the social dialogue period, agreeing to a deregulation and gradual flexibility of labour market, have not been compensated.

The breakdown of social dialogue, clearly generated since mid-2010, has left hardly response capacity to the largest Spanish trade union leadership. The labour reform of 2012 restricts significantly the intermediation and the collective contracting which are some of their fundamental reasons. The restriction of collective bargaining, in a country with an union model based on high levels of collective bargaining and low union density, with the limitation of holding elections to unitary representatives of workers in businesses with fewer than 6 employees, can strangle notably these organisations. It would create an extreme imbalance, in which the leading labor unions would become very weak and absolutely dependent of the procurement of government in office, irrespective of the measures concluded.

The labour reforms carried out by Spanish trade unions have been less aggressive than those unilaterally decided by the Government, sometimes with the acquiescence of employers' organization. However, what is certainly problematic for trade unions is that the consensus stages have not allowed them to accumulate strength in order to successfully oppose to more aggressive legislative changes, as the last two concluded in Spain in 2010 and 2012.

References

- ANTENAS COLLDERREMAN, J. M. (2008): “Los sindicatos ante la globalización. ¿Hacia qué nuevas formas de solidaridad internacional?”, *Cuadernos de Relaciones Laborales*, Vol 26, No 1, pp. 35-55.
- BACCARO, L., SIMONI, M. (2008): “Policy Concertation in Europe Understanding Government Choice”, *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 41, nº 10, pp. 1323-1348.

- BAÑOS DÍEZ, D., PÉREZ CUERNO, J. M. (2005): “Globalización, flexibilidad y neocorporativismo”, *Revista Universitaria de Ciencias del Trabajo*, nº 6, pp. 757-796.
- BAYLOS GRAU, A. P. (2013): “La desconstitucionalización del trabajo en la reforma laboral del 2012”, *Revista de derecho social*, nº 61, pp. 19-42.
- BENEYTO, P. J. (2008): “El sindicalismo español en perspectiva europea: de la anomalía a la convergencia”, *Cuadernos de Relaciones Laborales*. Vol. 26, nº 1, pp. 57-88.
- BENEYTO, P. J. (2009): “Panorama actual de la afiliación sindical”, *Observatorio Confederal de Afiliación de CC OO*, nº 1, diciembre, available on line at <http://www.1mayo.ccoo.es>.
- GLASSNER, V., POCHET, P. (2011): “Why trade unions seek to coordinate wages and collective bargaining in the Eurozone: past developments and future prospects”, Working Paper, 03, European Trade Union Institute, available on line at <http://www.etui.org/Publications2/Working-Papers/Why-trade-unions-seek-to-coordinate-wages-and-collective-bargaining-in-the-Eurozone>
- GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ, Á (2010): “Confrontación y consenso: la concertación social y el juego de intereses en España (1977-2010)”, *Pasado y Memoria. Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, 9, pp. 101-128.
- HANCKÉ, B., RHODES, M. (2005): “EMU and Labor Market Institutions in Europe. The Rise and Fall of National Social Pacts”, *Work and occupations*, vol. 32, nº 2, pp. 196-228.
- HYMAN, R. (March 2010): “Social dialogue and industrial relations during the economic crisis: Innovative practices or business as usual?”, Working Paper No. 11, Industrial and Employment Relations Department, International Labour Organization, available on line at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---dialogue/documents/publication/wcms_158355.pdf
- JÓDAR, P. (2013): “Una breve panorámica de las elecciones sindicales de 2011, con apuntes de su evolución desde 2003”, *Anuario Sociolaboral de 2012*,

- Madrid, Fundación 1º de Mayo – Comisiones Obreras, available on line at <http://www.1mayo.ccoo.es/nova/files/1018/Portada201208.pdf>
- LÉONARD, E. (2005): “Governance and Concerted Regulation of Employment in Europe”, *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 11, nº 3, pp. 307-326.
 - LUQUE BALBONA, D. (2010): *Las huelgas en España: intensidad, formas y determinantes*, Tesis Doctoral, Departamento de Economía Aplicada de la Universidad de Oviedo, available on line at <https://www.educacion.gob.es/teseo/imprimirFicheroTesis.do?fichero=21015>
 - PÉREZ INFANTE, J. I. (2009): “La concertación y el diálogo social en España: 1977-2007”, *Revista del Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración*, nº 81, pp. 41-70.
 - PICHIERRI, A. (2012): “Social cohesion and economic competitiveness: Tools for analyzing the European model”, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 16(1), pp. 85–100.
 - RHODES, M. (1998): “Globalization, Labour Markets and Welfare States: A Future of ‘Competitive Corporatism’?”, RHODES, M., MÉNY, Y. (Eds.), *The Future of European Welfare: A New Social Contract?*, London, Macmillan, pp. 178-203.
 - RHODES, M. (2000): “The Political Economy of Social Pacts: ‘Competitive Corporatism’ and European Welfare Reform”, PIERSON, P. (Ed.), *The new politics of the Welfare State*, Oxford, University Press, pp. 165-196.
 - REGINI, M. (2002): “I dilemma del sindacato del 2000: più rappresentanza per avere influenza o viceversa?”, *Quaderni di Rassegna Sindicale*, nº Speciale Congreso CGIL.
 - REGINI, M. (2003): “Tripartite Concertation and Varieties of Capitalism”, *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 9, nº 3, pp. 251-263.
 - SCHMITTER, P. C. (1991): “La concertación social en perspectiva comparada”, ESPINA, A. (Comp.), *Concertación social, neocorporatismo y democracia*, Madrid, Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, pp. 67-80.

- SCHMITT, J., MITUKIEWICZ, A. (2012): “Politics matter: changes in unionization rates in rich countries, 1960–2010”, *Industrial Relations Journal*, vol. 43:3, pp. 260–280.
- SIEGEL, N. A. (2005): “Social Pacts Revisited: ‘Competitive Concertation’ and Complex Causality in Negotiated Welfare State Reforms”, *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 11, n° 1, pp. 107-126.
- WADDINGTON, J. (2005): “Afilación sindical en Europa. La magnitud del problema y la variedad de las respuestas sindicales”, *Documentos de trabajo para la Universidad de verano de la CES/ETUI-REHS de los dirigentes sindicales europeos*, available on line at <http://www.ugt.es/internacional/universidadces/univeranocesafiliacion.pdf>