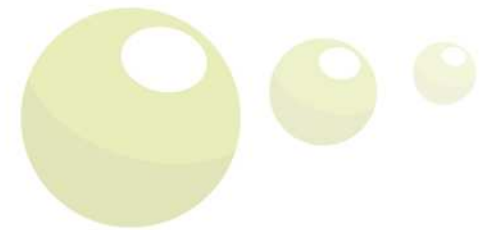


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First WORKS conference

**The transformation of work  
in a global knowledge economy:  
towards a conceptual framework**

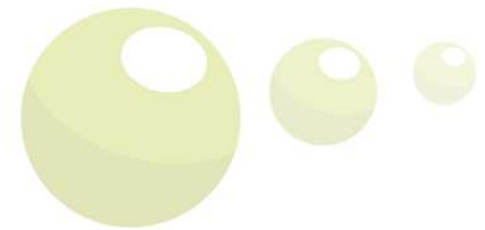
Chania – Greece, 21-22 September 2006



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# Impacts on the quality of working life

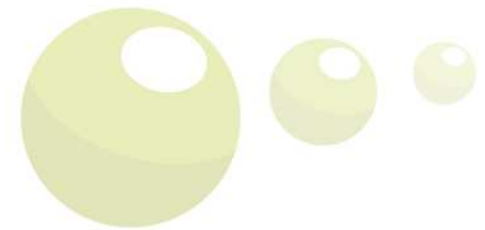
Giovanna Altieri – Director of IRES, Italy



# Quality of work and quality of life

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The European Summit held in Stockholm in March 2001 stressed that the essential requisite for good quality of life is quality of work



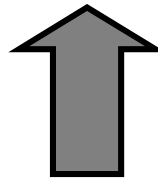
The international sociological investigation  
stress  
the **multidimensional, dynamic, complex**  
**nature of the *Quality of Life***,  
underlying  
the **different ways**  
groups construct and adjust their aspirations  
(including work) and the socio-economic  
environment under the impacts of social  
structure shifts.

Source: our review on 32 papers presented  
to the ISA Conference, July 2006

# Quality of work and quality of life

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Quality of life



Working conditions and  
characteristics

## Quality of work

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The promotion of quality of work means:

Employment and career security

Promotion of health and well-being

Skills development

Reconciliation between work and private life

# Working Structural Changes

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- changes in the structure of the workforce related to the ageing workforce and to the increasing participation of women;
- changes occurring in the labour market due to globalisation and growth of service sector;
- new forms of employment and jobs;
- intensification of work;
- introduction of new technologies and work processes.

## Conflicting changes

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Nevertheless, such changes are not unidirectional, i.e. all moving towards an improvement in the quality of work.

On the contrary, these changes are engendering non-convergent consequences in terms of opportunities and risks





## Changes in employment relationships

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New contractual arrangements have emerged and are becoming widespread.

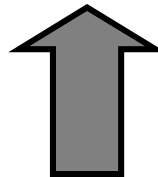
In all western countries an increasing and significant number of workers perform their job without the traditional open-ended contract

Changes

# in employment relationships

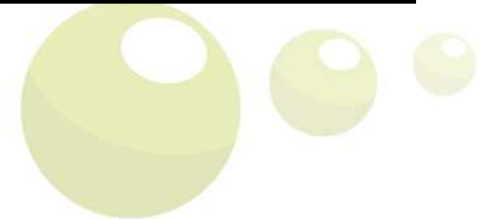
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Quality of life



Unstable jobs

**works**  
CHANGES IN WORK



# Changes

## in employment relationships

Unstable jobs

Inherent potentiality  
of a positive change.  
Increase in freedom,  
greater self-  
awareness and  
satisfaction

*“Dimension of  
emancipation”*

Increase of risks.  
Situations of  
precariousness and  
social vulnerability

*“Dimension of  
disillusionment”*

# Changes in employment relationships

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**Unstable jobs**

**Work discontinuity**  
(work paths become fragmented)

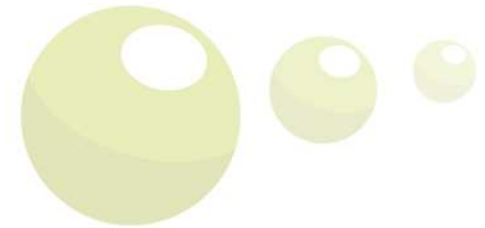
**Wage discontinuity**

**Deficit of rights and welfare protection**  
(in the majority of European countries)

## Changes in employment relationships

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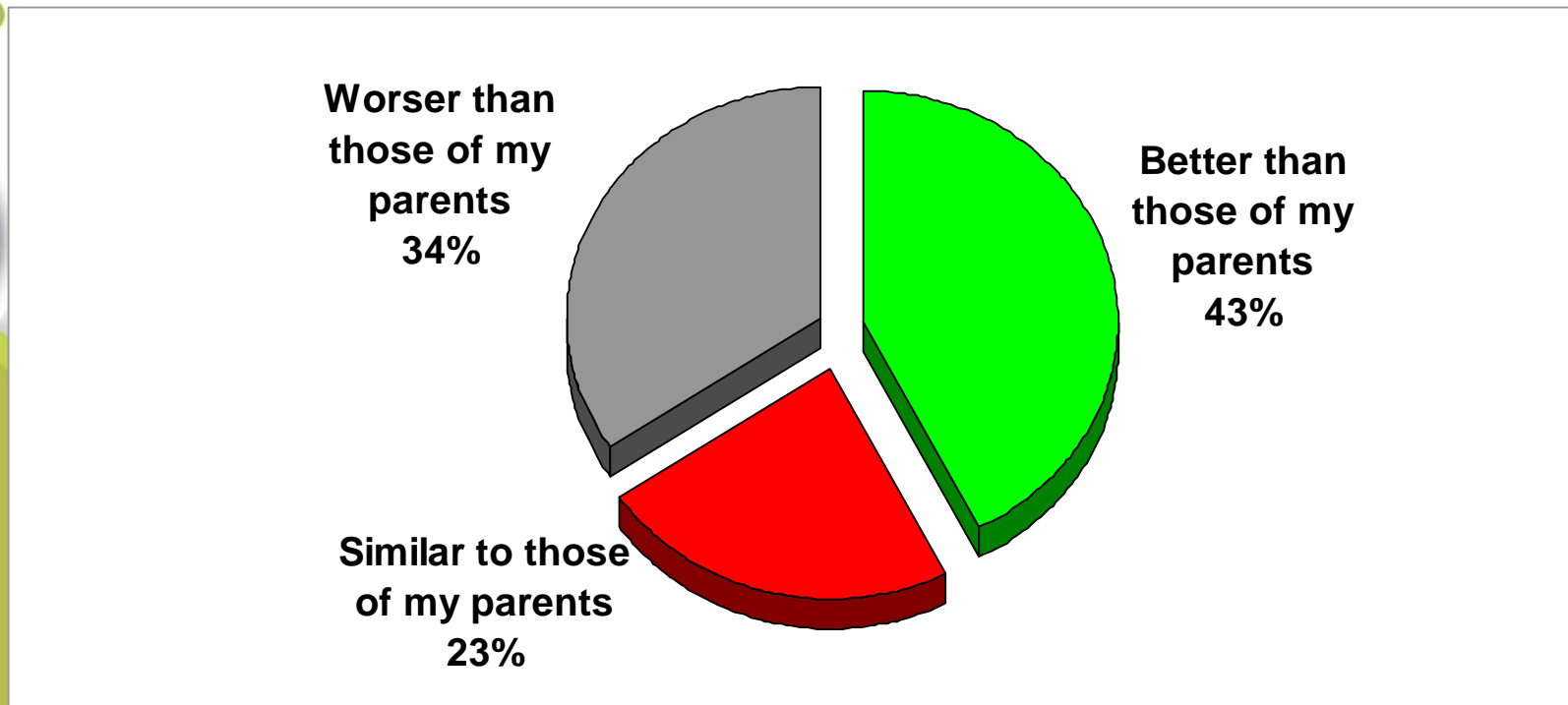
Most people who have unstable jobs have limited “empowerment”, intended as the power to purchase goods and resources to attain social well-being and more generally freedom to pursue objectives considered important



# Workers' perception of social mobility: from an IRES Survey (2006)

- ❑ The 60% of the workers imagine their future conditions *similar to or even worse than those of their parents*
  - ❑ The 68% of no standard workers

*How do you figure out your future conditions?*



## in employment relationships

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Groups at risk:



Work security

Occupational  
safety

women,  
“older” job-seekers,  
young people,  
low-skilled workers,  
immigrants,  
people with less social capital and  
networks,  
people with less economic resources.

## About the role of education: from an IRES Survey (2006)

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The educational level is no more a variable which could have a positive impact on the awareness of risks related to health and safety: a standard contract, the affiliation to a trade union, older age are important dimension of variables **affecting the way workers correctly perceive and, thus, manage risks.**



# Changes

## in working conditions: new OSH risks

**works**  
CHANGES IN WORK

Five main type of emerging risks:



related to changing labour markets



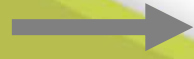
related to changing work organisations



having an impact on work characteristics



related to changing workforce



having an impact on individuals

Source: OSHA, 2005

# Changes

## in working conditions: new OSH risks

**works**  
CHANGES IN WORK

### The “top” ten of organizational and social emerging risks:

- Unstable labor market, precarious contracts etc..
- Globalization.
- New forms of employment, contracting practices.
- Job insecurity.
- The ageing of workforce and its implication on the labour market.
- Long working hours.
- Intensification of work, high workload, high work pressure.
- Lean production, outsourcing.
- Poor work-life balance.
- Older workers and the implications at the individual levels.

Source: OSHA, 2005

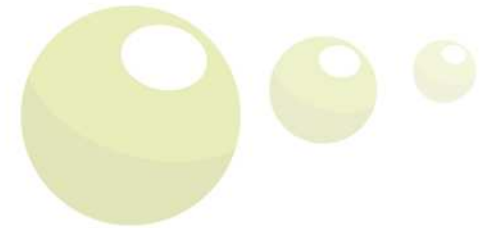
# Changes in working conditions

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## Autonomy/Control over the work

Great differences between different  
groups of workers

Women, workers with fixed-term or temporary  
agency contracts have less influence



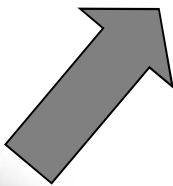
# Changes in working conditions

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## Work intensity

Work has been shown to be getting more and more intensive.

A lot of worker claim to work at high speed or to tight deadlines; they do not manage to finish their work in time



project-oriented work, individual contracts, and result-based salaries, high speed of organizational changes

# Changes in health and safety

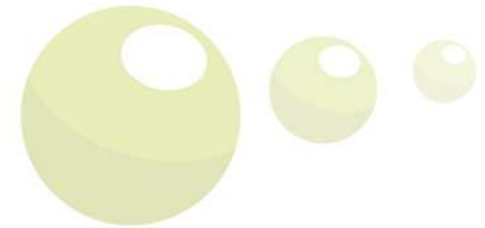
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## New health problems at work

Growth of psychosocial problems, such as  
stress and burn out

Emerging physical risks

Growing concern of multi-factoral issues



## Changes in health and safety: from an IRES Survey (2006)

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High level of job insecurity  
has deep impacts on workers risks'  
perception:  
it tends to narrow work-related risks  
(either physical or psychosocial)  
behind the feeling of insecurity.  
Consequently, a negative impact on  
risks' awareness  
and on how workers manage them is  
observed.

# Changes in working time

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## De-standardization

Not equally distributed among the various sections of the population

Produces a range of “working hour packages” - often associated with differing contractual protection standards - which are segmented according to gender, age, ethnic group, social category

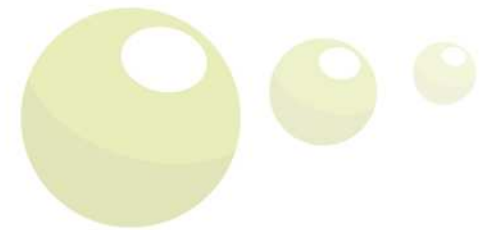
## Changes in working time

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For some people  
de-standardization means:

antisocial hours

excessively long working hours





# Changes in working time

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**works**  
CHANGES IN WORK

Excessively long working hours

is particularly prevalent among  
the so-called “professionals”  
or “knowledge workers”

Work becomes

“a time without confines”

difficulties in work-life balance

## Changes in working time

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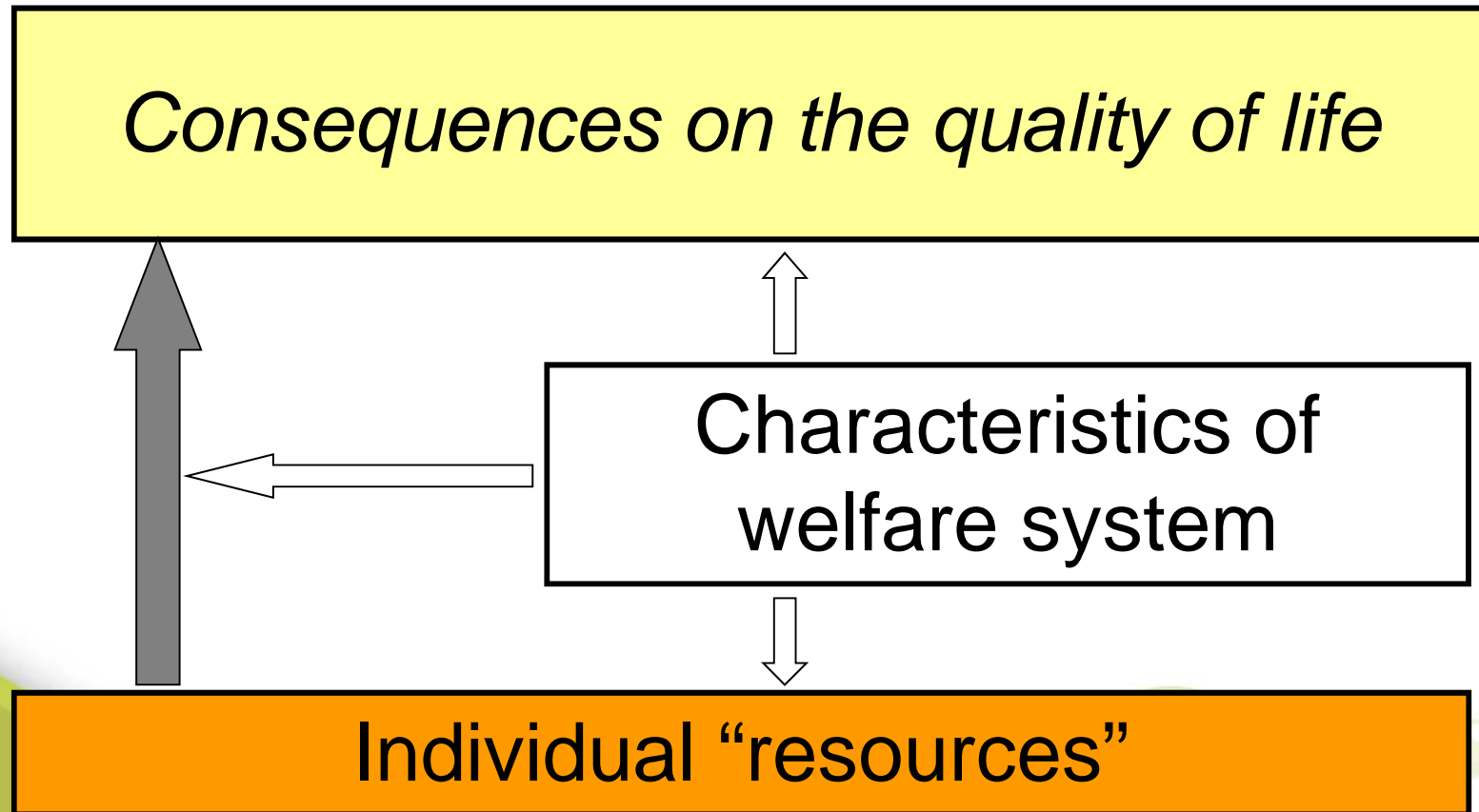
The possibility of balancing work and private life means sometimes:

worse career prospects  
and chances to do more gratifying work

worse social protection

In many countries it is the case of part-time, precarious job with short working time, prevalent among women

# Changes in work and quality of life



# Changes in work and quality of life

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*Consequences on the quality of life*

Gender, age, ethnic group, social class,  
family social capital and networks,  
family economic resources, etc.

## Changes in work and quality of life

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Old inequalities are reproduced  
New inequalities are created

