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# What do workers gain from flexicurity in times of crisis?

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# The nature of flexicurity

- A “European policy agenda” (Auer/Gazier)
- Alternative definitions, e.g. ‘state of affairs’
- Deliberately and simultaneously increase flexibility *and* security in labour-markets
- Restore competitiveness of European economies *and* maintain Social Model

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# Historical backdrop

- Fordism: the ‘Golden Age’ of mass production and mass consumption
- Institutionalisation of standard employment
- Post-Fordism: world market, competitive pressure, ‘Euroclerosis’ ...
- The flexibility agenda: atypical contracts, in some countries retrenchment of the state

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# Common Principles of Flexicurity

- 1 Flexicurity is a means to reinforce the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, create more and better jobs, [...]
- 2 Flexicurity involves the deliberate combination of flexible and reliable contractual arrangements, comprehensive lifelong learning strategies, effective active labour-market policies, and modern, adequate and sustainable social protection systems.
- 3 Flexicurity approaches are not about one single labour-market or working life model, nor about a single policy strategy: they should be tailored to the specific circumstances of each Member State. [...]
- 4 Flexicurity should promote more open, responsive and inclusive labour-markets overcoming segmentation. It concerns both those in work and those out of work.[...]
- 5 Internal (within the enterprise) as well as external flexicurity are equally important and should be promoted. [...]
- 6 Flexicurity should support gender equality, by promoting equal access to quality employment for women and men and offering measures to reconcile work, family and private life.
- 7 Flexicurity requires a climate of trust and broadly-based dialogue among all stakeholders [...]
- 8 Flexicurity requires a cost effective allocation of resources and should remain fully compatible with sound and financially sustainable public budgets. [...]

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# Criticism of flexicurity

- Assumptions: win-win; flexibility necessary; compensation by security measures possible
- Aims: confusion about objectives and instruments; lack of prioritisation; exaggerated emphasis on employment participation
- Implementation: constraining measures; poor job quality; lack of individualisation; withdrawal of the welfare state; democratic legitimacy gap

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# Flexicurity after/in the crisis

- New insights: the ‘Golden Triangle’ tarnished; ‘internal flexibility countries’ performed well
- New situation: increased labour-market problems; decreased budgetary capacity
- Widened gaps: flexicurity “only for good weather” (Tangian) vs. “now more than ever”
- Need to “re-think flexicurity” (Andor, EC)

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# Amartya Sen's capability-approach

- Paradigm for the evaluation of well-being
- Emphasis on “capability”: the freedom to be and do valuable things
- Subjective and inter-subjective valuation
- Resources and “conversion factors”
- Achievable and achieved “functionings” in the informational basis of evaluation

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# Flexicurity and the CA

- Commonality: link to the counter-factual
- Some implications for flexicurity: The CA...
  - clarifies the hierarchy of ends and means
  - delivers a concept of human well-being
  - emphasises “positive freedom” (Berlin)
  - sensitises for personal and collective conversion conditions and for their interaction
  - advocates public discussion



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# Efficiency vs. freedom?

- Flexicurity succeeds the flexibility agenda
- Workers are not let alone – even if they wish!
- Why? Competitive pressures force efficiency
- High productivity strategy requires solidarity: not redistributive, but “competitive” (Streeck)
- Threat: a “neo-social” (Lessenich) flexicurity

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# Conclusion

- After the crisis, threats from two sides:
  1. A return to the flexibility agenda
  2. Flexicurity as a “neo-social” project
- A post-political situation?
- Improve flexicurity using the CA: granting as much freedom *as possible*
- Towards a sustainable future ...with flexicurity?  
...with the CA?

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Thank you for listening  
Bedankt voor het luisteren  
Merci de votre attention

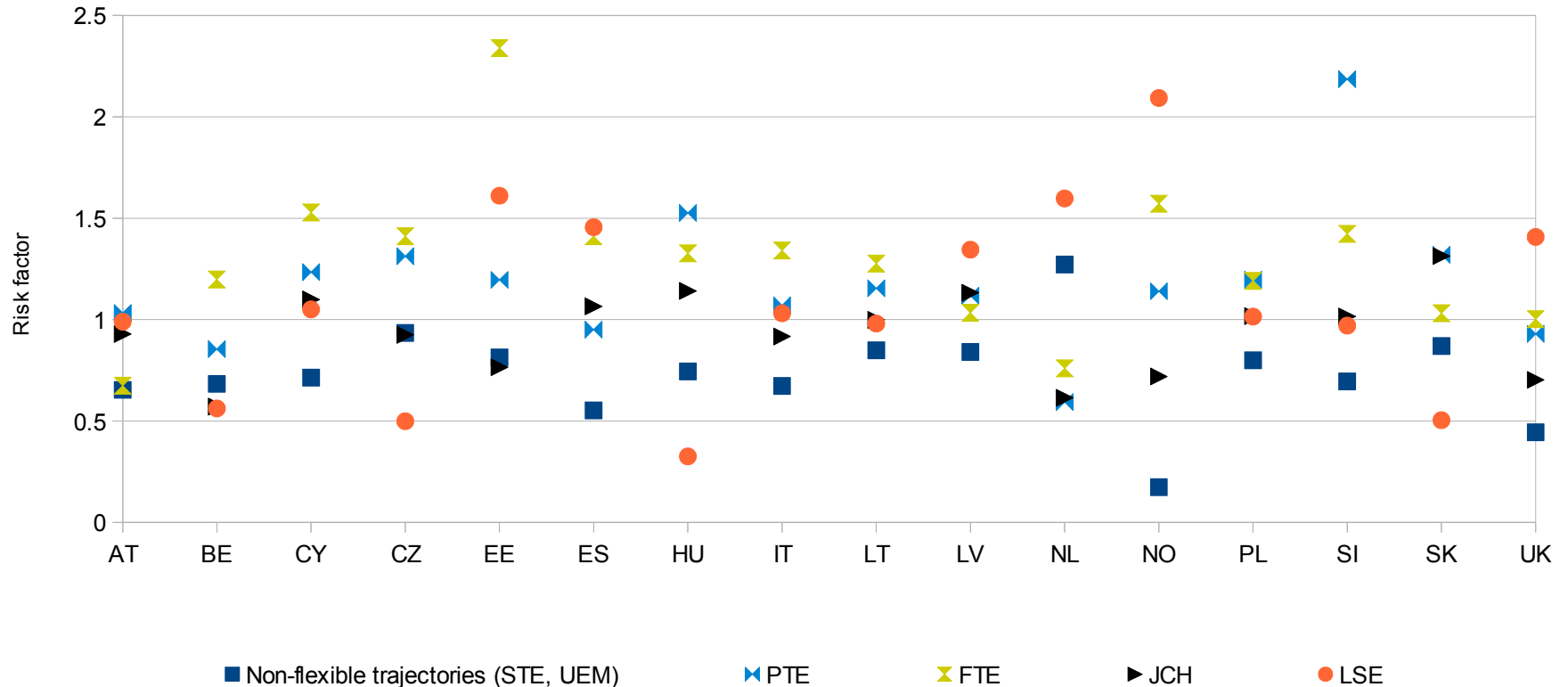
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# Labour-market segmentation

	<b>Internal Labour-Markets</b> Organisation-led	<b>External Labour-Markets</b> Market-led
<b>Primary</b> ; good jobs high income and employment security	Primary internal markets	Occupational markets
<b>Secondary</b> ; bad jobs low income and/ or employment insecurity	Secondary internal markets	Secondary external markets

Adapted from Köhler, Götzelt and Schröder (2006, 26; cp. also Köhler and Loudovici 2008)

# Poverty risk of flexibility groups



Years: 2004-2007. Data source: EU-SILC

# From resources to way of life

