

# Wages and Employment in the Spanish Economy: Behavior and Trends during the Crisis

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This paper is concerned with three main problems of the Spanish economy: (1) The basic characteristics of the economic crisis. (2) The condition of the labor market. (3) The trade-off between inflation and unemployment.

## 1. Introduction

Changes in economic conditions that emerged after 1973 - 74 as a result of a very strong rise in oil prices, start up a period of economic crisis in most of the capitalist countries, characterized by high inflation rates and strong reductions in real GNP rates of growth. The rise in energy real price changed the rates of expansion of aggregate supply and demand inducing adverse effects on labor market and giving place to a considerable labor excess supply. Nevertheless, the persistence of stagflationary conditions during so long a period of time can only be explained by the existence of rigidities originated in real factors, rigidities which have impaired the adjustments of the different economies to a new equilibrium situation. Thus, it has been argued how a great share of unemployment in USA and Japan was implied by an excessive rise in real wages — due to a given wage-indexed system — which worsened the adverse effect on employment by making labor a more expensive factor at a time when wages should have adjusted downwards.<sup>1</sup>

The economic consequences of the crisis for the Spanish economy have been much more severe than for the rest of the western countries as shown by indicators on inflation and unemployment in Table 1. As can be observed, unemployment has strongly increased during the first years of the eighties while the inflation rate although diminishing, still attained a significant high level. Spain held one of the worse positions in terms of economic disequilibria, and in 1983 things have not improved relative to other economies, as reflected by an inflation rate of 12.1 %, more than twice the average inflation rate for the OECD

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<sup>1</sup> *Sachs (1979).*

*Table 1*  
**Economic Indicators**

	Inflation (CPI)		Unemployment Rate		
	1971 - 79	1980 - 82	1970 - 74	1975 - 80	1980 - 82
European Community ..	9.2	11.2	2.5	5.3	7.9
U.S.A. ....	7.9	10.0	5.4	7.1	8.1
Spain .....	15.2	14.8	2.2	7.1	14.1

*Source: OECD, Dornbusch and Fischer (1984).*

countries (5.3 %), and unemployment which rose to 18.4 %, exactly twice as high as the OECD average of 9.2 %.

Social and economic costs derived from this serious situation make evident the necessity of carrying out adjustment policies, which tend to promote the recovery of the Spanish economy helping to slow down the fall in employment and to reduce current high unemployment. Nevertheless, it would be impossible to construct adequate policies without knowing what are the causes of this very strong process of job destruction, and of this high inflation rate in our country. Therefore, our attempt in this paper will be to analyze in the first place what are the basic characteristic of the Spanish economic crisis, and which the behavior of the relevant variables in the labor market throughout the last decade. Secondly, we will consider the basic determinants of labor supply and demand as well as the perceived changes in real and institutional factors in the labor market, with the purpose of identifying neoclassical and keynesian unemployment. Thirdly, we will examine the inflation-unemployment trade-off in order to explain the attenuated response of inflation to the persisting labor excess supply. Finally we will add some general comments on the adequate adjustment policies towards lowering the staggering high unemployment rate.

## 2. The peculiar nature of the Spanish economic crisis

The Spanish economy experienced during the sixties and the first years of the seventies an unprecedented economic expansion characterized by a staggering growth of the basic economic aggregates, which brought about a substantial economic and social change. The rapid growth during the period was fundamentally based upon the substitution of techniques, and the structural change of the economy together with an acceleration in capital accumulation, giving way to an annual

Table 2

**Production, employment and productivity growth rates\***

	GDP	Employment	Productivity
1964 - 74	6.6	0.9	5.7
1975 - 82	1.5	- 1.5	3.6

\* Accumulated annual growth rates for 1964 - 1974 period and average growth rates for 74 - 82 due to lack of homogeneity in statistical data.

Source: Banco de España, Ministerio de Economía.

GNP real growth rate of 6.6 % and to productivity increase of 5.7 % throughout the period 1964 - 74. Furthermore, the unemployment rate never reached 3 % of the labor force and therefore, we can argue that this period was one of full employment of productive capacity in an inflationary scenario—as compared to other more developed economies—stimulated by an expansionary monetary policy.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, after 1974 production growth and productivity change considerably slowed down as they started to experience the effects of the world crisis. Average growth for the 74 - 82 period was reduced to 1.5 % from the 6.6 % level of the former period: and in addition to it, the growth rate averaged 2.4 % throughout 1974 - 77, almost stagnating thereafter, averaging only 0.9 % for the 1977 - 83 period. Consequently, the Spanish economy experienced an increase in productivity originated in a reduction in employment, while GDP continuously increased. (See Table 2.)

After the mid-seventies, Spain experienced similar problems although with greater intensity than the ones affecting other industrial countries. As shown in Table 1, inflation has always been kept at a higher level and unemployment has reached a higher level as well. The immediate consequences of a substantial increase in import prices, as a result of the tremendous rise in oil prices, implied major external and internal disequilibria: current account deficit, accelerated inflation, weakness of internal demand, unemployment expansion and so on... The required adjustment becomes particularly difficult in the Spanish economy as shown by the worsening of the inflation-unemployment trade-off.

One of the main problems which has impaired such adjustment to the new situation beared on the existence of a *too rigid and overprotected economic system*. While the former period (1964 - 74) could be characterized by substantial *relative price stability*, being employment fluctua-

<sup>2</sup> Only a few exceptions are recorded. See Martínez Serrano et al. (1982).



tions basically a consequence of expenditure and production variations, at the beginning of the seventies starts up another period in which factor *relative price fluctuations* were to significantly influence the process of capital accumulation and the use of labor. Total labor compensation experienced the highest rise during the last decade, while energy price grew at a rate lower than in the OECD countries. It was not until mid 1979 when oil prices increases were adequately passed on domestic energy prices. Thus, since 1973 - 74 the prices of productive resources labor, capital and energy did not satisfactorily reflect their degree of scarcity, not originating the necessary signals to adopt efficient investment decisions. Entrepreneurs lacked incentives to save the most scarce factor, energy, since the factor which became more expansive was labor, worsening in the process the employment situation.

### 3. Analysis of the Labor Market

#### 3.1. The Demand for Labor

Three are the main factors affecting demand for labor: *production expansion, real wages and productivity change*; and all of them moved in an unfavourable direction with respect to employment creation. In first place, the bare deceleration of the growth rate implied a decrease in labor demand. In second place, such effect was intensified by rapid advances in productivity throughout the period under consideration. While modest real wages in the sixties were associated with low labor productivity, the rapid increase in real wages induced firms to save labor costs introducing less labor-using production techniques. If we compare the rate of change in productivity in Spain with that of the OECD countries, we may confirm that while during the first half of the seventies productivity advances at a similar rate, during the second half, the Spanish rate more than doubles that of the corresponding to the OECD countries (see Table 3). Finally, real wages (total worker compensation) grew at an increasing rate until 1977, stabilizing the rate during the next two years and decreasing only after 1980.

We will now concentrate upon cyclical behaviour of the relevant labor market variables throughout the last decade. Table 4 (below) column 1, shows the rate of employment variation, showing that after 1974, there is a continuous job loss in our economy. During the years of crisis, economic productive activities were not able to maintain their employment rate. The agricultural sector reduced employment at the highest rate, amounting to 50 % of total job destruction during the period 1976 - 82. Non-agrarian activities, as shown in Table 4 column 2, did not begin employment net reductions until 1978.<sup>8</sup> If we also consider

*Table 3*  
**Trends of Production and Productivity (growth rates)**

Countries	1970 - 1974		1975 - 1981	
	GDP	Prod.	GDP	Prod.
U.S.A. ....	2.6	0.8	2.6	0.5
Japan ....	6.1	5.5	4.6	3.7
Germany ....	3.6	3.4	2.3	2.5
France ....	5.1	4.2	2.4	2.4
U.K. ....	2.7	2.5	0.8	1.4
E.E.C. ....	4.0	3.6	2.0	2.0
O.C.D.E. ....	3.8	2.7	2.6	1.7
Spain ....	6.1	4.9	1.6	3.6

Source: OCDE, INE.

the low entrepreneurial dynamism of some industrial activities together with the high relative weight of the sectors undergoing through a deep crisis, such as steel, shipbuilding, automobile and textile — with a considerable involment of the Public Sector — in which employment has not been adjusted as yet as it has been done in other countries, future perspectives for the employment situation seem to us very gloom.

Recent studies<sup>4</sup> show changing composition of the Spanish productive structure throughout the last decade, in favour of commodities which are less intensively labor embodied. Nevertheless, it is shown that our economy uses more labor intensive techniques, relative to the OECD countries, making the Spanish economy more sensitive to real wage variations.

The perceived decrease in employment reflects the reduction in labor demand during the 78 - 83 period. To the amount of laid-off workers (1,328,000 net employment loss) we should add retiring workers (900,000) and employment positions lossed through disabling workers (670,000) — less traumatic procedures used by firms to adjust their employed labor force — in order to get the net employment loss throughout the last five year period.

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting the employment reduction in the housing sector (— 4.4 % annual rate for 1976 - 1982), resulting from low home prices and high interest rates.

<sup>4</sup> See *Fina* (1984).

### 3.2. Supply of Labor

Cyclical fluctuations in labor force activity rate constitute the other source of adjusting labor to demand variation, and as shown in Table 4 column 3, there is a negative trend after 1974. This diminishing activity rate results in great deal from reducing the age of retirement, from extending the length of compulsory education and from the greater number of discouraged workers. Women, and young as well as aged workers have strongly reacted to labor market conditions. Looking at the empirical evidence, it seems that the discouraged worker hypothesis would be confirmed in our economy after 1974. According to such hypothesis, the secondary worker will enter the labor force only when he (or she) expects to find an acceptable job with a preestablished probability. While unemployment was increasing, employment opportunities were diminishing, resulting in a continuous decrease in the activity rate, only stabilized in the last few years. Thus, there is a differentiating behaviour of the Spanish economy — with a — 0.4 % diminishing activity rate — with respect to the OECD countries where — the activity rate grew at a 1.3 % throughout the 73 - 82 period. The main explanation of this opposite behaviour may very well lie upon the subsidiary role of the women labor force, since during the 1970 - 74 period, when employment opportunities were abundant, one million women found jobs, while thereafter, when market conditions worsened, female activity rate fell to 27.5 %, a rate much lower than the corresponding to the average of the more developed countries.

With respect to the institutions related to the labor market, we should emphasize a great transformation taking place after the political reform which followed the establishment of a new regime<sup>5</sup>. The previous absence of free trade unions and the direct protection of the worker by the State contributed significantly to a labor market characterization which presented a great deal of wage flexibility and, contrarily, heavy legal restrictions on laid offs: such fixed costs on labor use necessarily reduce quantity adjustments of actual employment. Nevertheless, wage flexibility allowed adjustments of the interindustry wage structure moderating the increasing impact of higher labor costs on domestic prices.

The institutional change that took place in the Spanish economy after 1975 saw the irruption in the socioeconomic sphere of central trade unions which were to end up with firms' monopsony power. Wage settlements through collective bargaining introduced obvious elements of price rigidity, only compensated very moderately with the beginning of a process of bringing in more employment flexibility. As is well

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<sup>5</sup> See *Malo de Molina* (1983).

Table 4. Trend of main labor market indicator (growth rates)

	1 Employment	2 Non-agrarian employment	3 Activity rate	4 Unemployment rate	5 Nominal Wages	6 Real wages
1972	1.8	3.9	1.1	2.2	16.8	8.5
1973	1.8	3.9	2.3	2.8	19.5	8.5
1974	1.3	3.0	-0.3	3.0	26.3	10.5
1975	-1.7	0.04	-2.5	3.8	28.7	11.8
1976	-1.8	-0.1	-1.9	4.8	30.2	15.3
1977	-0.04	1.8	-0.2	5.7	30.2	5.7
1978	-1.8	-1.9	-1.0	7.6	26.2	6.4
1979	-2.2	-1.3	-0.7	9.3	23.3	7.6
1980	-3.2	-3.1	-1.6	11.5	18.7	3.2
1981	-3.1	-3.0	-0.5	14.4	19.0	4.4
1982	-1.2	-1.6	0	16.3	15.4	1

Source: Banco de España, INE, Ministerio de Economía.



known, a higher interindustry wage structure rigidity brings up “spillover” effects which reinforce the inflationary pressure originated in escalating wages. Nevertheless, some adaptability is kept, which reduces the effects on average wages brought up by linear wage increases holding the wage structure unchanged.

### 3.3. Labor Market Adjustments

Table 4 column 4, shows how the continuous fall in employment has given way to complementary raises in the rate of unemployment. As shown in the table, a situation of excess supply has characterized the labor market, reaching 18.4% of the labor force in 1983. We should emphasize though, that excess supply was basically of unqualified workers. During the expansionary phase, growth was characterized by the weakness of investment as a job creator mechanism. The use of capital intensive techniques requiring qualified workers has aggravated short and medium term employment conditions. Furthermore, external migration which had alleviated the unemployment rate until 1974, began at that time to present negative balances as a result of deterioration of the European economies. The continuous return of migrant workers and the growing difficulties to maintain the former migrating flows aggravated still more the perspectives of employment.

The main fact to be highlighted from table 4, refers to nominal and real wage behaviour as shown in columns 5 and 6. In spite of the high levels of the unemployment rate, wages have shown very little sensitivity towards market changing conditions, since they have not rapidly adjusted to the persisting excess supply. From 1972 until 1976-77, nominal and real wages continuously increased at considerable rates while the unemployment rate moved from 2.2% up to 4.8%.

In 1977 there is a very significant change in the Spanish wage policy when, induced by the government, an incomes policy is enacted to attempt to stop an inflationary period, which originated with the first oil crisis, had been deteriorated by a spectacular increase in real wages. The significance of the change lied on the one hand, upon the attainment of a compromise between three parts — firms, workers and the government — of accepting a range of wage negotiation based upon *expectation* on future inflation. An adaptive criterion was abandoned according to which the bargaining process had to recover wages from the loss in purchasing power produced by *past* inflation and to advance in accordance to productivity gains experienced during the former last three years<sup>6</sup>. The new “rational” criterion — eliminating a great deal

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<sup>6</sup> See *Espina* (1984).



of wages inertia — provided a much more powerful mechanism to fight short run inflation.

The beneficial effect produced by the change in the process of forming expectations was attenuated in part, by an accorded wage revision mechanism which had to be enacted when price surpassed anticipated inflation after a six month period. A very small price deviation over the accorded level was made permanent when it was automatically incorporated into revised wages, not allowing enough time for the economy to disinflate<sup>7</sup>.

In summary, we may conclude that the slow downward response of wages facing very gloom labor market conditions has caused employment fluctuations. Quantity adjustments — employment and rate of unemployment — have been more frequent than wage adjustments.

#### 4. The Inflation Unemployment Trade-Off

We now offer a possible interpretation of the effect that the economic crisis had on employment in Spain, articulating the play of supply and demand for labor. Employment stabilization in 1974 and the continuous decrease in jobs from 1977 until the present time raises an interesting question whether unemployment has a neoclassical or keynesian origin<sup>8</sup>; that is to say, whether it is produced as a result of a weakened demand together with an incomplete price adjustment or whether, on the contrary, the cause of unemployment lies on too high real wages.

It is convenient to partition the 1974 - 83 period in two subperiods. During the first subperiod 1974 - 77 job creation stopped and the higher inflation and unemployment rate seem to have been generated by the spectacular growth in real wages and not in the higher oil prices, whose impact was delayed by the government until the final years of the decade (77 - 80). Unemployment would be, at least at its origin, of a neoclassic kind due to the faster wage trend than the constant employment wage trend, that is to say the path of wages compatible with the maintenance of employment. The real growth rate, which had fallen to an annual rate of 2.4 % for the 1974 - 77 period, was still able to maintain the absolute level of employment although it seems very likely, that due to the above mentioned fixed costs of labor, firms gradually adjusted actual labor transferring the impact to the 1977 - 83 period, when the annual real growth rate had fallen even further to 1.1 %. The

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<sup>7</sup> The estimated gap between wage and price disacceleration seems to be a nine month period. *Ibid*, 33.

<sup>8</sup> We will use part of the paper by Viñals (1983).

first impact could then be attributable to a supply shock initially originated in the rapid real wage trend.

Throughout the second 1977 - 83 subperiod — during which time employment continuously fell at an annual rate of  $-1.8\%$  — two types of contractive shocks concurred. On the one hand, real wages still advanced — although at a lower rate — not curbing their path until 1982: furthermore, labor adjustment inertia of the immediately previous period carries over the depressive effects on actual employment on to this subperiod. On the other hand, the economy starts getting impacted by the contractive effects on demand originated by the former supply shock together with a restrictive antiinflationary demand monetary policy and the also contractionary behavior of foreign net demand.

In a recent study, an attempt to identify the labor demand function for the industrial sector during the 1964 - 82 period concluded that labor cost per unit of output was the most significant explanatory variable in the regression analysis. No empirical support was found for effective demand as a Keynesian source of short run unemployment. Estimated long run wage elasticity of labor was 1.4 although the lag of employment adjustments to labor cost changes was shown to be very high: thus, it takes three years for the labor market to adjust 50 % of the permanent employment change induced by a raise in wage compensation and it is only after one year when the initial impact on employment is evident.

In chart 1 it appears the inflation-unemployment tradeoff showing how during the first years of the decade there is no clear relationship between both variables and how it is only after 1977 when a movement along a short run Phillips curve can be established. Such relationship has been very weak, specially in the last few years, when a small reduction in the inflation rate has been achieved at the cost of great increases in the rate of unemployment.

Why has unemployment generated such a small effect on the rate of change of prices and wages in the short run? In order to answer this question it is necessary to find what are the characteristics an the nature of unemployment. In the first place, we should emphasize that the Spanish labor market cannot be considered an only one market, but made up by many particular markets. If the labor force is not homogeneous and it is differentiated according to qualification, experience and skills, there exist several segmented labor markets. If that is the case, there may be limited competition between workers developing a specific task and other workers outside the firm, due to the high training costs. These permanent relationships between workers and

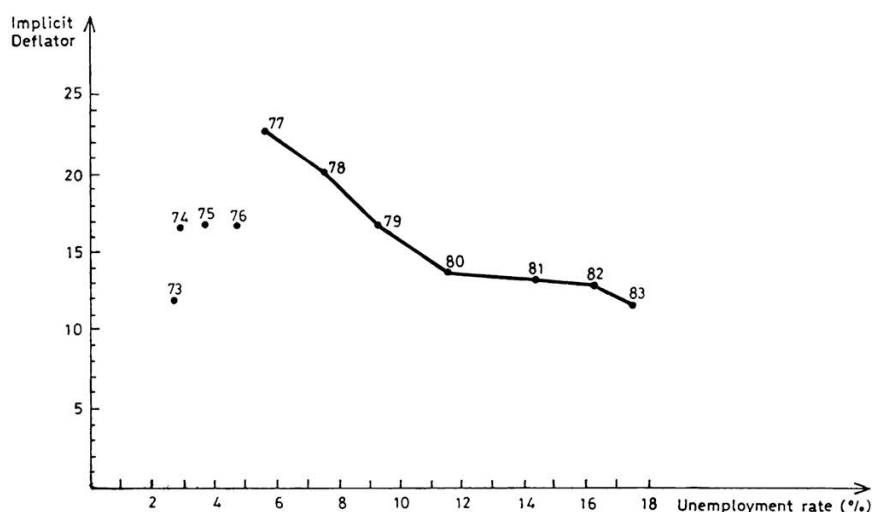


Chart 1: The trade-off inflation — unemployment

firms may imply that when there is a deteriorating change in particular market, wages do not decrease and jobs are maintained by firms facing high searching and training costs should demand recover after a short period of time. Labor may behave in the short run as a quasi-fixed factor of production. Table 5 shows that 40 % of the unemployed workers had held jobs for a period of time shorter than two years; 28 % from 2 to 5 years and only 31 % of the unemployed had kept relationship with their own firms for a period of time longer than 6 years. Apparently, this result might contradict the hypothesis of the presence of a permanent relationship between firms and workers since a greater share of unemployed with shorter previous jobs should be expected. Nevertheless, this is not the case if we check the distribution of laid off workers according to their professional category and their load of responsibility at their previous job as it appears in table 6 and 7. Almost 90 % of the unemployed had very little responsibility at their working place and in more than half of the cases they were unskilled workers.

In sum, we may conclude that firms facing a drop in labor demand, have adjusted to the new situation disposing of those less qualified workers and of those not holding positions of significant responsibility. It has been shown how more than two thirds of cyclical fluctuations in employment correspond to secondary workers with low level of specialization. The high level of excess supply in Spain during the last few years concentrated upon workers with low degree of qualification. Therefore, the downward pressure on these wages may have had very



Table 5

**Distribution of unemployed, according to job seniority**

Last job seniority	Total unemployed %
less than 5 months .....	19
from 6 to 11 months .....	12
from 12 to 23 months .....	9
from 2 to 3 years .....	16
from 4 to 5 years .....	12
from 6 to 10 years .....	14
from 10 to 20 years .....	8
more than 20 years .....	9

Source: Encuesta FIES, 1979.

little effect on the aggregate wage level. The dual nature of the labor market explains in part the deterioration of the short run Phillips curve. The weakness with which inflation reacted to unemployment induced the economic authorities to react directly against the inflation rate and to this purpose — besides the implementation of a restrictive monetary policy — they have pursued from 1977 on wage control programs. These agreements on wages between firms, government and unions, fixed the range within which limits wages had to move. The main target of such controls were to fight inflation, then expectations, and if such effect was successful, then for a given unemployment rate,

Table 6

**Percentage distribution of unemployed, according to last employment category**

Category	Total unemployed %
Managers and directors .....	3
White collar .....	12
Blue collar .....	68
Supervisors .....	2
Skilled workers .....	28
Unskilled workers .....	32
Beginners .....	6
Other categories .....	17

Source: Encuesta FIES, 1979.

Table 7

**Distribution of unemployed,  
according to their last level of responsibility**

Level of responsibility	Total unemployed %
Low level .....	78
Mid low level .....	11
Mid high level .....	7
High level .....	4

Source: Encuesta FIES, 1979.

actual and expected inflation would be lower. It would be possible in this way to control inflation independently of changes in unemployment.

Wage control and restrictive monetary policy have successfully reduced the inflation rate although they do not seem to have lowered significantly inflation expectations. Thus, there exists a second source of wage inertia originated in the necessary time lag for price expectation to adapt to actual inflation, which could be explained in part, by wage dynamic dependence on past wage levels and by spillover effects. Institutional and political reforms after 1979 gave way to a major role played by unions, introducing in this way a great deal of wage rigidity into the wage system. Transmission mechanisms of wage raises between different sectors and professional categories were reinforced weakening the wage response to labor demand and supply changes. This lower wage structure flexibility may be responsible for the higher unemployment cost of disinflation policies as shown in chart 1. Summarizing, the battle against inflation was the main target for economic policy but adaptive expectations have deterred the improvement in the inflation-unemployment trade-off.

## 5. Adjustment Policies in the Labor Market

As the previous analysis has put forth, the most important problem the labor market is facing nowadays is the protracted growth of the unemployment rate which — by the end of the last quarter of 1983 — amounted to the 18.4 % of the total labor force. Moreover, the burden of the unemployment has fallen increasingly on workers with high average duration of unemployment — one third of the unemployed remains in this situation for more than two years and on those with high frequency of unemployment; therefore the groups, who had suf-

ferred the most adverse consequences are: the teenagers — 40 % of the unemployment —, women — with a rate of unemployment 5 point higher than men — and workers close to retirement age and low qualification.

There is no doubt, that it will continue to be the global level of aggregate demand and the rate of economic growth, the factors which will offer the stimulus needed in order to achieve a permanent and important reduction of unemployment. Nevertheless, demand management policies and the problems which they imply — pressure on the inflation rate, balance of payments disequilibrium, and an increasing budget deficit — will continue to constrain the economic policies designed to promote employment.

The other measure which could favor the demand for labor retrieval would be the reduction of the real wage. We already pointed out previously that the existence of downward rigidity in the real wages has been one of the most important reasons preventing the process of economic recovery. In this sense, recent incomes policies have been successful in reducing the gap between actual real wage and the equilibrium real wage. Nevertheless, such policies have increased the wage structure rigidity by letting all wages rise up to the upper limit, independently of the particular conditions of each economic sector. We consider, that more attention should be paid to the necessary relative wage adjustments which would enhance labor mobility.

In general, the will to limit cost increases, to favor employment and to avoid a reacceleration of prices leads to consider incomes policy not as a substitute but as a complement to adequate monetary and budget measures<sup>9</sup>.

An attempt to stimulate the labor market through an expansionary budget policy should not impair the main target of controlling inflation. Job generating programs should be directed in favor of specific groups of workers with limited bargaining power and or most affected by unemployment. Labor compensation to new workers might be reduced through a temporary reduction in social security taxes paid by firms. Its budgetarian cost would materialize only when jobs are created, and since the added value is greater than the percentage of wages paid as social security tax, the ratio deficit/GDP would diminish.

On the other hand, we could favor other measures tending to improve labor qualification through training and retraining programs which might increase the necessary labor mobility. Tax deductions for firms

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<sup>9</sup> See *OECD*, (1982), 152 - 153.



hiring new workers while they are being trained would also improve market conditions for young unexperienced workers. The liberalization and further extension of part-time jobs would also enhance the possibility of job creation by firms.

Finally, we should note that the decrease in the activity rate together with the stagnating employment and the increase in the “official” rate of unemployment, may be explained in part — as it occurs in the Italian Economy — by the important development of the hidden economy sector. Consequently, “official” unemployment increases and the budget deficit worsens. The hidden economy has alleviated some sectors specialized in light industry — such as textile, shoe making, jewelry, furniture, housing, home services and so on . . . — from the severe impact of economic recession.

### Summary

The required adjustment process of the Spanish economy was mainly impaired by the existence of a too rigid and overprotected economic system. As a consequence the Spanish economy experienced a crisis deeper than other comparable countries. High unemployment was the result of the slow downward response of wages to worsening conditions in the labor market. Adaptive expectations have hampered the improvement in the trade-off between inflation and unemployment. The article ends with general comments on the adequate adjustment policies towards lowering the high unemployment rate.

### Zusammenfassung

Der erforderliche Anpassungsprozeß in Spanien wurde vor allem durch ein Übermaß an Rigiditäten und protektionistischen Maßnahmen zugunsten der Wirtschaft beeinträchtigt. Als Folge davon geriet die spanische Wirtschaft in eine tiefere Krise als andere vergleichbare Länder. Hohe Arbeitslosigkeit war die Konsequenz einer langsamen Anpassung der Löhne an verschlechterte Arbeitsmarktbedingungen. Adaptive Erwartungen haben die Verbesserung des trade-off zwischen Inflation und Arbeitslosigkeit behindert. Der Artikel schließt mit einigen Bemerkungen zur angemessenen Anpassungspolitik zur Senkung der hohen Arbeitslosenquote.

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