

For further information refer to:

Fondazione G. Brodolini

Via Goito, 39 - 00185 Rome

Tel. +39 06/44249625 Fax: +39 06/44249565

economialavoro@fondazionebrodolini.it

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Abstracts

WAGES, PRODUCTIVITY, AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE LABOUR SHARE IN ITALY: A SECTORAL ANALYSIS THROUGH NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

Walter Paternes Meloni, Antonella Stirati

The paper explores the long-term evolution of the functional distribution of income in Italy. Specifically, we calculate the adjusted wage share (labour share) for the period 1970-2020 starting from national accounts data provided by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat). In addition to the total economy, we focus on four macro-sectors, namely: *a*) the non-agricultural private sector (excluding real estate); *b*) the manufacturing sector; *c*) commercial and professional services; and *d*) financial and network services. We discuss those trends in connection with the dynamics of productivity, real wages, and relative prices. Finally, we propose some interpretations of the evolution of the labour share by looking at the macroeconomic outlook and at episodes of institutional change that took place in the period under scrutiny.

Keywords: income distribution, wages, productivity, national accounts.

ENERGY THEORY OF VALUE AND INPUT-OUTPUT ANALYSIS

Raffaele Guarino, Fiorenzo Martini, Marco Bagliani

Questions like “what is value?” and “how does it form?” have accompanied the debate on political economy since the very beginning. Despite the foundational aspect, consulting the more than 5,700 articles of the “Ecological Economics” journal, only eight refer to “theories of value”. This paper aims to reconstruct the debate around the theories of value with a particular focus on the energy theory of value. The theory is based on a partially closed Leontief model to include labour and Government into the transaction matrix. The paper discusses the methodological issues connected to these modifications of traditional input-output analysis, and proposes some improvements (regarding gross capital formation) with empirical reference to the Italian economy for the year 2015. The correlation between the embedded energy and the economic value emerging from the results demonstrates the interdependence between energy inputs and economic outputs. As claimed by Costanza (1980), this seriously compromises the possibility of real decoupling. The emerging correlation rather suggests considering the energy-work as a primary factor of production. Finally, the opportunity of extending the concept of work in a physical sense offers the possibility of linking the classical approach regarding value with the more recent World-Ecology conceptual framework.

Keywords: energy theories of value, input-output analysis, political ecology, history of economic thought, decoupling.

OBSESITY AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING IN EU COUNTRIES: EVIDENCE OF HEALTH BEHAVIOURS USING AN INSTRUMENTAL VARIABLE APPROACH

Adriana Barone, Cristian Barra

According to Eurostat, “early school leavers” are defined as the percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most a lower secondary education, and not participating in further (formal or non-formal) education or training; among young adults (aged 18-24) in the EU, there are also geographical differences in obesity rates and in physical activity. The aim of the paper was to analyse whether an individual (aged between 18 and 24 years) who is obese has a higher probability of leaving school early. Using a probit regression and a full sample of individuals aged between 18 and 24 years, we find that being obese raises the probability of being an early leaver in the three geographical European areas (northern, central, and southern), although the coefficient for central Europe is higher than those for southern and northern areas. Further, we use an IV probit regression to deal with the endogeneity in which physical activity is the instrument for obesity. The findings indicate that obesity is a good predictor of early school leaving in central and southern Europe. These findings suggest that national Governments should promote more strenuous physical activity in universities and that fighting against obesity in early life is a valuable policy in reducing future early school leaving; valuable also because obesity adversely affects emotional and social skills.

Keywords: obesity, early school leaving, EHIS2 microdata, physical activity.

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS AND THE WORK VALUE. THE CASE OF THE RWM ITALIA (RHEINMETALL AG)

Maria Letizia Pruna, Margherita Sabrina Perra

The article presents the results of the analysis of the conflict through which the value of work inside and outside an industrial plant took shape and meaning in a complex sector – the arms industry – in which the State plays a central role as a regulator, client, and producer. The article focuses on the analysis of the case of RWM Italia, a company controlled by Rheinmetall Waffen Munition GmbH, subsidiary of the Rheinmetall AG group. The company has been involved for six years in a political conflict about production and the future of hundreds of workers of the Domusnovas plant (South Sardinia), known as the “bomb factory”, which became an international case at the end of 2015, after an investigation conducted by “The New York Times”.

The research method is that of protest event analysis (PEA), which reconstructs the protest cycle. The main results of the research highlight the fundamental role played by a social movement in restoring the ethical value of work in an area with low levels of employment.

Keywords: arms industry, trade unions, negotiation, labour dispute.

CONNECTIVITY, TIME, AND REMUNERATION. TOWARDS A METHOD FOR DETERMINING MINIMUM COMPENSATION IN PLATFORM WORK

Luigi Di Cataldo

There is much debate about the economic treatment of platform workers. Generally, workers are paid for the services performed rather than for the time made available to the company. However, the conditions under which hourly wages can be waived as a means of securing the availability of the labour factor *where* and *when* it is needed, do not seem to have been fully explained; nor have suitable guidelines been drawn to orient the legislator, as well as the social partner organisations, in defining a method to establish which internal junctures of the employment relationship are to be taken into account with a view to setting a minimum remuneration level.

Adopting an interdisciplinary perspective and a deductive-inductive method, this paper investigates the nexus between the permanent connectivity of workers, the temporal dimension of the employment relationship, and the remuneration practices of platforms, with a view to providing some policy recommendations.

Keywords: platform work, work time, hyperconnectivity, time porosity, piecework.

GENDER DIMENSIONS OF ENERGY POVERTY: THEORY MEETS PRACTICE

Marielle Feenstra, Katharina Habersbrunner

In this paper, we will deepen the insights into the gender dimensions of energy poverty by combining theory with practice. First, we describe interlinked dimensions of energy poverty through a gender lens. This theoretical and conceptual framework is in this paper applied and demonstrated with empirical data collected in the EmpowerMed project, an H2020-funded project aimed at introducing gender sensitivity into energy poverty mitigation measures. These project interventions are often the implementation of national and European policy measures to mitigate energy poverty and towards a just energy transition. How current energy policy at national and European level takes a gender approach in facing energy poverty is described in Section 4, including providing tangible policy recommendations based on our observations in the EmpowerMed project. We conclude that, for a gender-sensitive energy poverty mitigation, policy interventions need to be implemented in a gender-sensitive way by acknowledging the economic, socio-cultural, physiological, and health dimensions of energy poverty through a gender lens.

Keywords: energy poverty, gender equality, just transition, structural inequalities, gender dimensions.

IN-WORK POVERTY: THE IMPORTANCE OF A GENDER-SENSITIVE APPROACH

Marta Capesciotti, Roberta Paoletti

The article examines in-work poverty in the EU, adopting a gender perspective. Gender stereotypes influence girls' educational path in the early stage, and have an impact on the quality of their labour market participation. Data also show that women are in a disadvantaged condition compared with men in terms of both quality of contractual conditions, and wages. The unpaid care burden weighs disproportionately on women, and leads to a discontinuous presence in the labour market. Yet, the Eurostat indicator monitoring in-work poverty shows that more men than women are at risk of in-work poverty in Europe. The reason is that the general approach to in-work poverty in the EU adopts the household dimension in the calculation, which covers the specific situation of women by assuming an equal distribution of resources among family members. The authors analyse this gender paradox with the aim of informing the development of more effective gender policies to tackle in-work poverty.

Keywords: poverty, gender, inequalities, labour policies, gender gap.