

Youth Poverty and Labour Market Transitions in six European countries

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Abstract: School to work transitions are central for young people to achieve adult status. Having a job, and the income associated with it are key for achieving economic and personal independence. Furthermore, research has often linked youth trajectories into the labour market, and in particular youth unemployment and inactivity, with increased risk of disadvantage over the life cycle (e.g. Mood and Jonsson, 2012; Gregg and Tominey, 2004). Using longitudinal data from the EU-SILC for six European countries (Denmark, Belgium, France, the UK, Italy and Spain) this paper explores to what extent youth poverty, gender and social class shape early labour market trajectories. Rather than dividing young people in categories based on their current labour market positions, the paper makes use of the monthly information data available in the SILC datasets to construct labour market trajectories using sequence analysis. The findings echo previous research in the UK which has stated the persistent effect of individual background on early careers (Anyadike-Danes and McVicar, 2010; Schoon, 2010). The paper also highlights the existence of substantive cross-national differences in the patterning of youth transitions. The results are linked to the debates regarding the individualisation of the life-course.