

Title: GLOBAL RECESSION AND QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT IN SPAIN:
ANALYSIS OF THE DISCOURSE OF SOCIAL AGENTS

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2.- Abstract

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The aim of this paper is to present some of the results of our research into the *quality of employment* in Spain, namely the study of the discourse of quality of various social agents, especially trade unions and employers. In the current context of a worldwide financial recession, job losses, and a shrinking labour market, the quality of employment is connected with promoting and improving production competitiveness as a way to overcome the recession. The study of discursive strategies on the quality of employment in Spain acknowledges the importance of quality, and its influence on the economy, and on society as a whole. Nevertheless, trade unions use the quality discourse as a reason to examine and reconstruct their current role, extending their main concerns and paradigms from those which defend workers' interests to those which consolidate their criticism of a reprehensible Spanish employer class. Employers' discourse, on the other hand, is aimed at highlighting the market's productive purpose, and sustaining their privileged position in labour management, whilst disassociating and distancing themselves from the employment decisions they make. In general, the quality of employment discourse represents an outlet for trade union action, which is mainly blocked by market globalisation and deregulation. At the same time, it is way to connect and combine new discourses, e.g. on ecology, responsible consumers, etc. Employers claim that the training of workers in Spain does not meet the requirements of employment of quality, but they do not accept any responsibility for this inadequacy. Instead, they use it as an excuse for the current bad quality of jobs, and maintenance of the status quo until training deficiencies are corrected.

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