



How has the Economic Crisis Affected the Poverty Situation in Spain and Portugal

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Abstract

The aim of this work is to compare the poverty situation in Spain and Portugal, by sex and age, by means of exploratory research techniques, based on secondary data, which will make it possible to design lines of action aimed at improving the situation in the two countries in question. The results obtained show that the Spanish and Portuguese female population, aged between 16-24 and 50-64 years, is the most affected by the crisis and is the one with the greatest impact on poverty levels, according to the components of the A rope Rate.

Keywords: Poverty; Social welfare; Crisis; Spain; Portugal

Introduction

The economic crisis, which is international in scope, is having a great impact on the economies of the different states. Among the most direct consequences, at the global level, are the collapse of economic activity, the fall in internal and external demand, and the destruction of employment in most countries. This increase in unemployment is unevenly distributed across different population strata, with some social groups being more vulnerable than others depending on the economic sector in which they work, the type of recruitment, the degree of qualification, gender, age or ethnicity, among other aspects [1]. According to various authors the main effect of the current crisis has been its impact on the unemployment rate, and this has not been the same in EU member countries [2-4]. Specifically, the two countries under study - Spain and Portugal - show different behaviours in the stage analysed. In the case of Spain, the increase was 10.8 percentage points in the period 2007-2016, seriously affecting the young population, where youth unemployment reached 55% in 2012. For Portugal, and in the same year, this group is close to 40.1 %

INE of the unemployment rate, and the increase for the whole period reaches 2.1 percentage points. The loss of employment has serious negative connotations since the exhaustion of protection systems (unemployment benefits, pensions, aid) and family protection lead to a worsening of the situations of poverty and social exclusion of the population, with particular relevance in Spain and Portugal, where the population at risk of poverty and social exclusion for the former has risen from 25.1% in 2008 to 27.2% in 2016, with the highest figure being 29.4% in the period 2014, the year in which the effects of the crisis were most acute. Spain has always had poverty rates above the EU average, with 23.8% in 2008 and 24.4% in 2016. For the second, Portugal, the increase in poverty levels is more considered from 25% to 26%, reaching 28.1% in 2014 [5]. Based on the data provided and taking into account that one of the main objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy is to reduce poverty and social exclusion by 20 million people, this research project is a first approximation to the study of poverty in two Mediterranean countries belonging to the EU, namely Spain and Portugal [6]. Given their geographical position, their proximity and the interpersonal, political and cultural relations, etc., that link these two regions, the aim of the

research is to compare the poverty situation of the population of these countries, by sex and age, during the economic crisis, 2008-2016, in order to establish synergies and lines of work that may be applicable to improving the well-being and the problem of social exclusion of this population. To this end, this work is structured as follows: firstly, a review of the literature is carried out in relation to the new profiles and approaches to poverty that have emerged as a result of the economic crisis, with contributions from relevant authors on this subject and the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Secondly, the main variables and methods used for this research are presented, thirdly the main results obtained from the documentary review are expressed and finally the main conclusions and lines of action of this work are established.

New Profiles and Approaches to Poverty Arising From the Economic Crisis

Traditionally, poverty profiles were related to people with low economic resources, low income, serious problems of family breakdown, disadvantaged social classes, long-term unemployed with little chance of re-employment, ethnic groups (usually minorities), people with low skills and employment opportunities, mostly family dependents, groups of people related to drug and alcohol dependency, as well as people with serious health problems and lack of economic possibilities, among others [7]. However, today, given the crisis situation that we are experiencing, new profiles of vulnerability are emerging that are related on the one hand to the loss of employment and increased economic difficulties, and on the other hand to the worsening of working conditions and increased job insecurity [8]. These facts have increased the levels of poverty among the European population during the period under consideration, and have shown an aggravating factor in this, which is the working-type variable, leading to the detection of a new typology which was not previously considered by the traditional literature. Thus, in Spain, for, there are two groups affected by poverty during the crisis: the first is called "excluded from the labour market", which includes all those with little training, unemployed people who do not receive unemployment benefits, young unemployed people, sick people and retired people, who would be part of the severe poverty and the second, called precarious social inclusion, includes all those related to work experience and academic training [9]. According to the European Anti-Poverty Network EAPN report, poverty arising from the crisis effects on the one hand, young families aged 20-40, with young children in their care, thus increasing the risk of child poverty, and on the other hand [10-13]. Finally, immigrants, affecting both women over 40 and those who have no job stability. For, the new poverty is closely related to labour vulnerability and affects young people

with middle and higher education, and immigrants as well as nuclear families where the ages of their members range from 30 to 49 years. In Portugal, the typology of the new poor mainly affects children (minors), thus increasing child poverty levels - as in Spain - and women. In relation to the composition of the household, single-parent families with dependent children are the most affected by this situation, as well as large families (2 adults with 3 children). The working poor, mainly those on temporary contracts, also play a major role, with the majority of them being women. The unemployed, mainly young people and the long-term unemployed, also play a major role in the poverty situation, and as in Spain, retired people are characterised by poverty. Once the new profile of poverty that has emerged as a result of the crisis has been identified, it is necessary to investigate a new approach that integrates this new type of poverty. As is well known, poverty is a phenomenon that has always been present in society, and has been treated from various perspectives as objective and subjective poverty; static and dynamic, one-dimensional and multidimensional among others, where certain factors such as basic needs, food, lifestyle, health, abuse, family breakdown, education, health, among others, were present [13-19]. However, given the new profiles of poverty that are emerging as a consequence of the crisis, which is perfectly affected by the irregularities of the labour market, it is necessary to deepen poverty from its labour perspective, since there are more and more working poor today [20,21]. These people are characterized by a salary that prevents them from covering their basic needs, such as: not being able to afford mortgage and rent payments, not being able to buy certain food, shoes, clothes, make ends meet, or go on a trip once a year, among others [22-24]. All these factors prevent those who suffer from it from being able to develop a dignified life. Furthermore, all these repercussions cause serious problems for governments, since on the one hand they see increased inequality between different countries as a consequence of low income, and on the other, because they have to implement inclusion policies focused on employment and not on social benefits as has traditionally been the case [25]. Studies related to in-work poverty imply that the participation of adult household members in the labour market has an impact on whether or not they fall into this situation. However, research related to in-work poverty is very recent in Europe as it has always been thought that poverty was closely linked to unemployment situations and not to the field of work [26,27]. Although these patterns continue to be repeated, it should be noted that having a job does not exempt you from being poor, since part-time contracts, low wages and inactivity give rise to this situation [28]. However, this type of poverty can be analysed from two perspectives: the static and the dynamic. From a static perspective, the poverty situation at a given moment is studied by measuring the dispersion between the income and expenditure of individuals, determining their

characteristics in relation to a given moment. However, from the dynamic approach, which is more recently used, information from the static poverty rates is used and in addition, measures are introduced on the temporary stability and duration of poverty through the monitoring and continuity of the same individuals and households over time, allowing more complex conclusions to be obtained that frame poverty and inequality. Through this perspective it is also possible to know the moment in which an individual reaches or does not reach a certain level of income or expenditure and the circumstances which have obliged him/her to do so [29,30]. Moving these approaches to the field of in-work poverty, from the static, it would be sufficient to analyse the type of household to which one belongs and the labour participation of its members for study. However, these conditions are not sufficient and the dynamic one where the labour market is related to the poverty situation is used. The various contributions made on the dynamics of poverty make it possible to classify poverty as chronic and transitory, distinguishing within the latter those who suffer different episodes of poverty recurrently from those who suffer it only once [31-33]. This determines the proportion of the population experiencing chronic versus transitory poverty and the length of time they remain in this situation. Thus, taking into account the time spent in poverty and the employment situation, working poverty in Spain is classified as permanent, recurrent and temporary. People classified as being permanently or chronically poor tend to always remain below the poverty line and therefore only have a single episode of poverty that is equal to the duration of the period considered. Individuals in this situation tend to be trapped, making it difficult to escape from this state and worsening their standard of living [34]. This type of poverty is closely linked to long-term unemployment in Spain and low levels of education. Recurrent or transitory poverty is characterised by periods of re-entry and exit, and therefore they experience 1 or more episodes of poverty, which is less than the time considered. This is mainly due to the fact that income mobility tends to be short term and does not allow for an increase in family welfare. In Spain it is related to households whose members are unemployed or have high rates of temporariness [35]. Temporary or transitory non-recurrent poverty is that which covers a short period of time, and therefore there is only one episode of poverty that is less than the stage considered. This typology is the most widespread but least severe [36,37]. Normally, those who suffer from it experience changes in their economic situation either through the cessation and incorporation into a new job or through a decrease in their income in a short period of time, returning later to a normal life situation where levels of well-being are not altered. It mainly affects households with a high level of education and where its members are mostly adults. Spain is characterised by high recurrent poverty rates (42%) at the international level, and low rates of permanence

(2.7%). The first is conditioned by human capital factors such as training and level of studies, and the second by aspects relating to the specific situation of the individual himself (type of contract and marital status), and the composition of the households, taking into account the dependence or lack of dependence of the people who live there and the receipt of transfers from their members. On the other hand, persistent poverty is conditioned both by human capital and by the size of the household (Table 1).

In Portugal, studies related to this type of poverty classify it as temporary or permanent. This country is characterised by high rates of temporary poverty, due to the precariousness and instability of the labour market affecting mainly single-parent households with dependent minor children. Lasting poverty is more frequent among those who are long-term unemployed [39,40]. The analysis of poverty from a labour perspective is a step forward for its eradication provided that appropriate measures and reforms are adopted to that end. But there is still a lot of research to be done on this subject. Although it is true that poverty has been reduced in recent decades (the poverty rate recorded in 1990 has been halved by 2015), much remains to be done, especially in an environment of incessant economic crisis where it is being shown that slow economic growth is causing considerable increases in inequality in the long term [41,42]. This is why this work aims to contribute to improving this situation by raising awareness of the groups most affected by poverty during the crisis, as indicated below.

Data Analysis

In this work an exploratory research is carried out, through a descriptive analysis that uses qualitative research techniques to obtain information through documentary research. This type of analysis makes it possible not to condition the results, to understand the phenomenon, not to quantify the variables analysed, and to obtain a greater quantity of data [43]. On the other hand, according, exploratory research is considered a first phase of the study where problems are discovered using variables that allow you to understand and classify the experimental processes [44]. This study makes a comparison of the poverty situation in Spain and Portugal in order to detect which groups are most affected by it during the period 2008-2016 and serves as a precedent so that in subsequent contributions it can be possible to improve the poverty situation in both countries with the application and implementation of public-private measures that allow this. Therefore, the following variables will be used to make this comparison: Unemployment Rate, and Arope Rate and its components [45-49]:

- Risk of poverty and social exclusion rate, which includes those whose total income is less than 60% of the median income of a country per consumption unit and always built on the income of the previous year.

- Severe material deprivation refers to people who are deprived of 4 of the following items from a list of 9 (cannot afford to go on holiday once a year, cannot eat meat, chicken or fish at least every 4 days, cannot maintain a home at an adequate temperature, cannot cope with unforeseen expenses, are late on mortgage payments, rent, gas... cannot have a car, telephone, television or washing machine).
- Low employment intensity households (LIEH): these correspond to households whose working-age members did less than 20% of their total working potential during the income reference year, i.e. the year prior to the interview [50-54].

All these variables are analysed according to gender and age group, and in addition to those mentioned above, the poverty line and the Gini index are taken into account. The process of collecting data and indicators comes from both quantitative and

qualitative secondary information sources such as Eurostat, national public bodies Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) in Spain and Portugal, EAPN reports in both countries, as well as the most relevant scientific databases ISI Web of Knowledge, Scopus, Latindex, among others. With all this, and establishing the different comparisons between the different countries analysed regarding the poverty situation during the crisis, the objective of this research is met, without losing sight of the behaviour of the EU-28, through the following results [55-58].

Results of the Application to Portugal and Spain

The main results obtained during the period analysed show a growth in the general unemployment rate, and in youth unemployment, as well as in the poverty levels of the population studied, in both territories at a more pressing rate than in the EU (Figures 1,2).

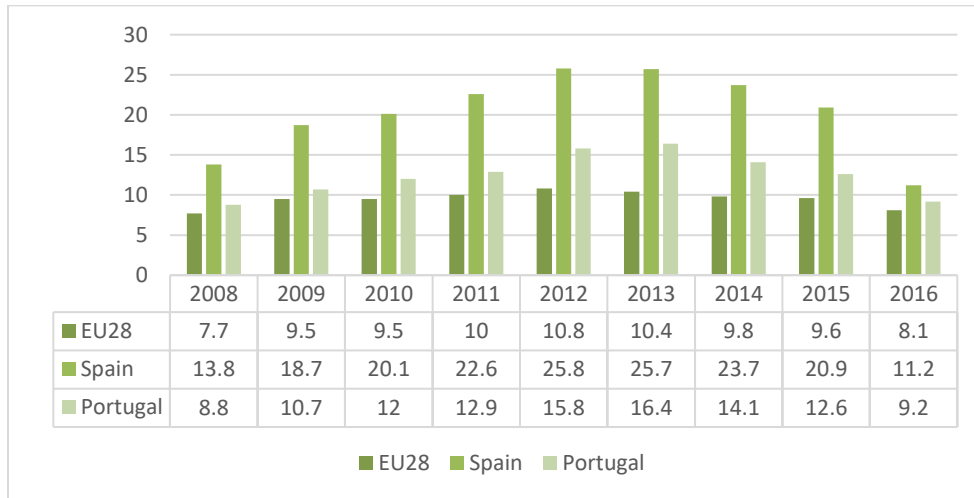


Figure 1: Unemployment rate evolution in Portugal, Spain and EU-28.

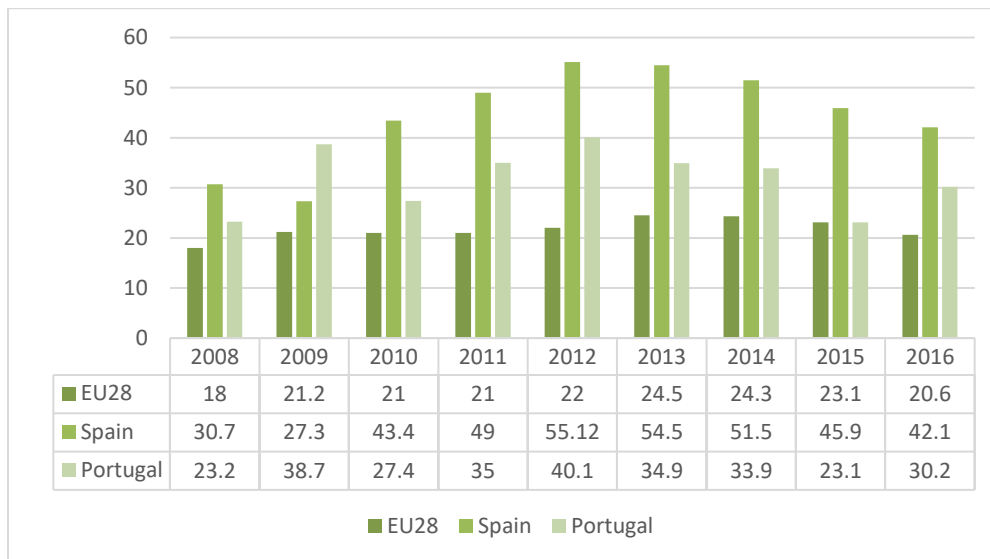


Figure 2: Unemployment rate population < 25 years Portugal, Spain and EU-28%.

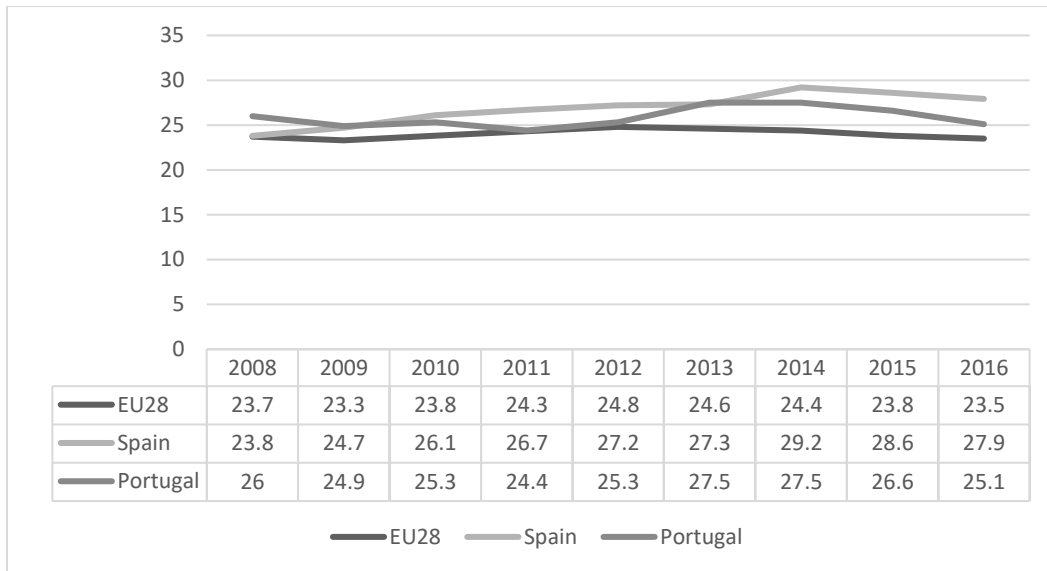


Figure 3: Evolution of the Arope Rate in %.

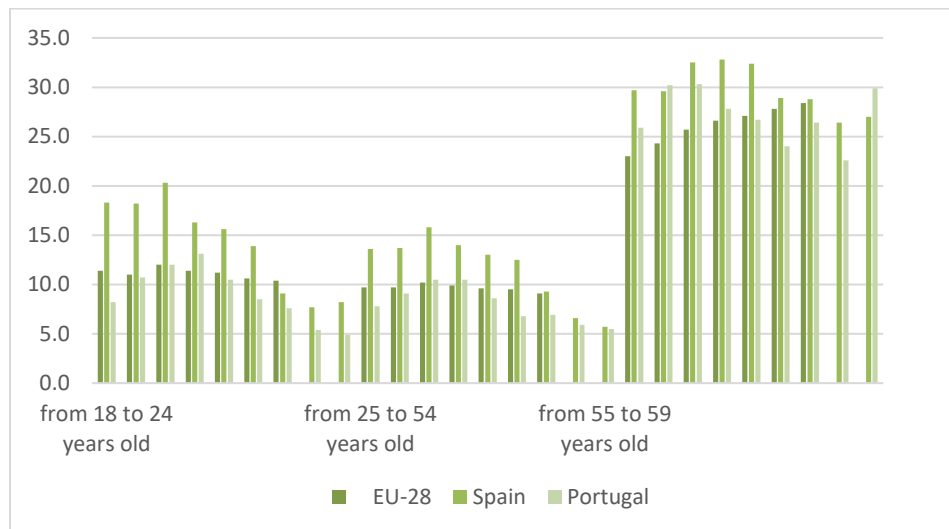


Figure 4: BITH women 2008-2016 in %.

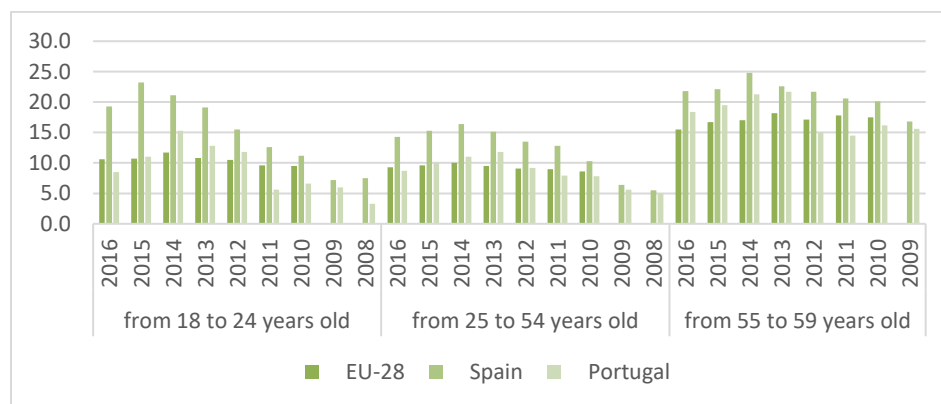


Figure 5: BITH men 2008-2016 in %.

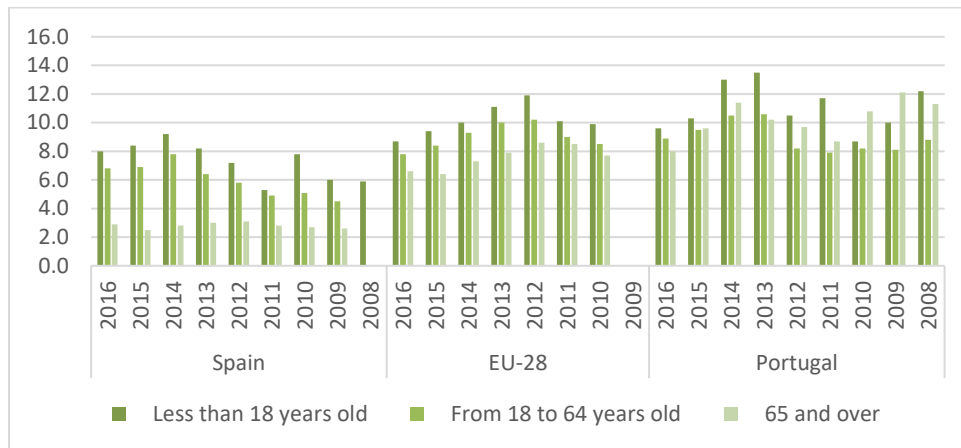


Figure 6: Severe material deprivation for women in %.

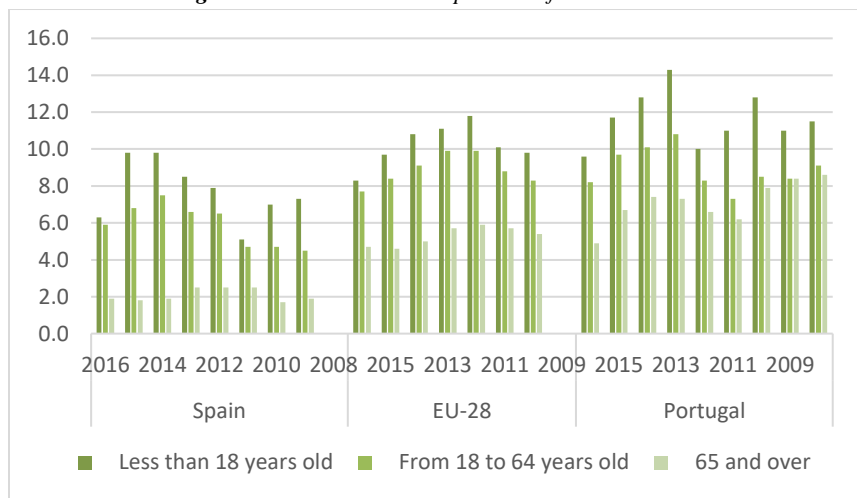


Figure 7: Severe material deprivation for men in %.

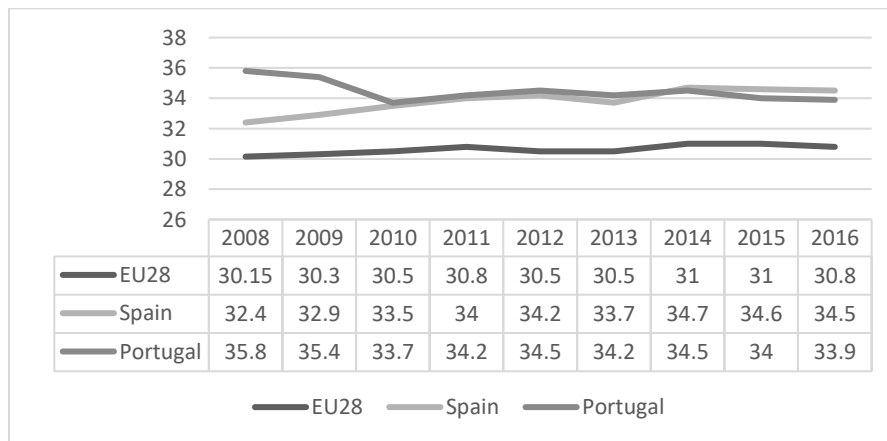


Figure 8: Evolution of the Gini Index.

As can be seen in Figure 1 and 2, Spain is the country most affected by the economic crisis, reaching unemployment figures of 25.8% in 2012 and 55.12% for the population under 25 in the same year. For Portugal, the highest figure is obtained in 2013, with an unemployment rate of 16.4%, and youth unemployment reaches 40.12% in 2012. Both countries exceed the EU average. These high unemployment figures are one of the main causes of the increase in poverty in Spain, which reaches 29.2% in 2014, coinciding with Portugal where it reaches its highest figure of 27.5% in the same year (Figure 3). The fact that 2014 will be the year with the highest Arope rate is partly due to the exhaustion of social benefits and public

protection systems initiated in 2012 (unemployment, assistance, etc.), which will come to an end in that period, and the worsening of family difficulties, with fewer and fewer resources available to help members in this situation. These people are forced to turn to municipal social services, which, through the social assistance they receive, are able to cope with this situation and their day-to-day life. To find out more about the groups most affected by this situation, the components of the Arope rate by sex and age in the countries analysed are studied below. Firstly, the population at risk of poverty and social exclusion is analysed by sex and age group (Table 2).

Table 1: Characteristics of in-work poverty in Spain according to its variables.

	Persistent poverty	Recurrent poverty	Temporary poverty
Socio-demographic variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary education and studies of 2nd stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people Married, widowed, divorced, separated No tertiary studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people, women with non-higher education
Labour variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low labour intensity. Households with dependent children and more adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part-time jobs and low wages. Homes with a greater presence of children Households with low labour intensity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary contracts.

Table 2: Population at risk of poverty and social exclusion (2020 strategy) x sex and age groups.

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
<16 years Female									
EU28	26.3	27.1	27.4	27.4	28	27.3	27.4	-	-
Spain	31	32.9	35.3	30.4	32.0	32.9	33.5	31.2	30.5
PT	28	29.9	31.1	30.5	27.2	26.7	24.4	27.3	26.9
<16 years old Men									
EU 28	25.6	26.4	27.5	27.6	27.6	26.8	27.2	-	-
Spain	32.3	34	35.4	33.4	30.9	30.4	31.7	32.6	28.6
Portugal	24.5	28.3	30.5	31.1	26.8	28.6	29.7	28.1	30.0
16-24 years old Woman									
EU-28	31.5	31.2	32.4	32.4	31.2	30.5			
Spain	41.0	41.1	36.7	35.7	36.7	33.2	31.6	27.8	27.5
Portugal	29.3	30.6	33.2	32.9	31.6	31.8	29.6	27.3	30.2
16-24 years old Male									
EU	23.2	23.3	24.3	24.2	24.3	23.2	22.4		
Spain	29.5	29.9	31.6	28	28.1	26.9	24.6	22.6	21.2

Portugal	22.7	24.1	25.7	26	23	20.9	21.8	21.5	23.4
25-49 women									
EU-28	23.2	23.3	24.3	24.2	23.2	22.4			
Spain	29.5	29.9	31.6	28	28.1	26.9	24.6	22.6	21.2
Portugal	22.7	24.1	25.7	26	23.0	20.9	21.8	21.5	23.4
25-49 men									
EU-28	22.3	22.7	23.4	23.2	23.2	22.4	21.6		
Spain	28.5	30.2	30.8	29.2	28.6	26.2	25.2	21.5	20.6
Portugal	21.8	24.6	25.1	26.9	23.3	21.9	22.8	21.6	22.9
50-64 years old women									
EU	25.4	26.1	26.7	27.6	27.4	26.8	26		
Spain	30.2	29.9	30.5	28.8	27.5	25.6	24.8	24.9	24.3
Portugal	30.8	32.8	32.8	31.6	29.6	26.9	29.2	29.2	28.4
50-64 years old men									
EU	23	23.8	24.1	24.2	23.8	23.2	21.9		
Spain	29.5	29.7	30.4	26.8	25.3	24.6	21.6	21	18.9
Portugal	29.3	29.3	29.5	28.9	25.5	24.2	24.3	23.2	22.8
65 and over women									
EU-28	20.6	19.6	20.2	20.5	21.5	23.2	22.9		
Spain	14.9	14.8	14	15	16.8	22.9	24.9	27.0	28.7
Portugal	24	24.3	23.6	21.6	24	26.4	28.9	28.5	29.9
65 and over men									
EU-28	15	14.6	14.6	15.2	16.2	16.9	16.5		
Spain	13.8	12.2	11.4	13.8	16.1	18.9	20.2	22.3	22.9
Portugal	18.9	18.2	17.6	18.3	19.7	21.9	22.3	22.5	24.6

From table 2, it can be seen that the incidence of poverty in groups under 16 years of age is different in one country from another. Note that in Spain, in the period 2013-2016 and in 2009, poverty was more pronounced among men than among women in the period 2010-2016, as was the case in the EU-28 throughout this period. However, for the groups of 16-24 years old, both countries agree that women are the most affected by poverty, reaching significant differences with respect to men. For the 25-49 age group, there are not so many significant differences between the two, with the sexes being interspersed in both countries, although in the EU, the sex most affected by poverty is the female sex. In the 50-64 age group, women are once again the main victims of poverty, with significant differences compared to men in the two countries studied and in the EU, although it should be noted that in Portugal the role of women in poverty will

increase from 2011, with men being the main victims in the years that follow [59-60]. The last age group, the over-65s, includes women throughout their period in the countries studied. Second, the low labour intensity of households is analysed, by sex and age. As can be seen, the low employment intensity of households affects women aged 55-59 more than men in this age group (Figure 4,5).

Furthermore, it can be seen that the BITH in Spain is higher than in Portugal and the EU over the whole period considered, as a consequence of its high unemployment rates which affect the whole population, especially those over 45 years of age who are part of the long-term unemployed as they have great difficulty in finding work. It should also be noted that BITH also affects men in the 18-24 age group in the case of Spain. Low intensity is more frequent among women than among men, as they are at a greater

disadvantage in terms of labour market insertion. Thirdly, with regard to severe material deprivation, the overall results show that the most affected group is men under 18 years of age in both Spain, Portugal and the EU. Women under 18 are also affected by this deprivation in both countries (Figure 6).

Once the components of the Arope Rate have been analysed, it is important to consider what the poverty lines are in each country studied for the consideration of the poor. The results are shown in table 3 (Table 3).

Table 3: Poverty Threshold in Spain and Portugal.

Year	Threshold person		Threshold home	
	Portugal	Spain	Portugal	Spain
2016	5.269	8.209	11.066	17.238
2015	5.061	8.011	10.628	16.823
2014	4.937	8.011	10.368	16.323
2013	4.906	7.961	10.303	16.719
2012	4.994	8.114	10.488	17.04
2011	5.046	8.321	10.596	17.473
2010	5.207	8.358	10.935	17.551
2009	4.969	8.763	10.435	18.402
2008	4.886	8.879	10.26	18.641

As can be seen in table 3, Spain has a higher poverty threshold than Portugal, however, this in Spain has decreased by 670 euros for one person and by 1,403 euros per household over the whole period considered [61]. This is due to the decrease in income and wages as a result of the crisis and the worsening of working conditions for those who continue to work. Finally, the Gini Index, used to measure inequality of income or wealth, shows a differential behaviour in the countries analysed. Until 2009, inequality was higher in Portugal (36.8%) than in Spain (31.9%), but from 2011 onwards, Portugal will reduce this inequality and put it on a par with Spain, remaining practically constant throughout this period [45] (Figure 7,8).

Conclusions

In relation to the results obtained in this research and following a comparative study between Spain and Portugal, it can be confirmed that Spain has had worse consequences during the crisis than Portugal. This fact is supported by the high rates of unemployment which affect the population as they are higher in the whole period analysed, reaching figures of 29.2% in Spain and 27.4% in Portugal. It is worth highlighting mainly the youth unemployment, which reached 55.2% in Spain and 40.13% in Portugal by 2014. These high unemployment rates caused upward variations in poverty levels, proof of which is that the Spanish Arope Rate increased by 4.1 percentage points and the Portuguese rate fell by 0.9 during the period under consideration. However, this does not indicate that the levels have disappeared, in fact as this study shows the figures in both countries are much higher than in the EU-28. Analysing the components of the Arope Rate, in both countries it can be stated that the population at risk of poverty and social exclusion most affected has been women aged 16-24 in Spain and 50- 64 in Portugal. The low intensity of

employment in households affected mainly women aged 55-59 in both countries, followed by the youth population aged 18-24. This can be explained by the expulsion from the labour market of those of mature age, such as the over-40s, who have little training and low professional qualifications, and therefore find it difficult to enter the labour market. We must also bear in mind the difficulties of finding employment among the young population, due to their inexperience and the inability of the market itself to incorporate them. On the other hand, in relation to the severe material deficiency, it shows a more differentiating behaviour in Portugal than in Spain, reaching higher figures in the population under 18 years of age. These data show that, although in this country the rope rate is lower than in Spain, there are people who are unable to meet their basic needs, mainly those under 18 years of age, and this fact can affect child poverty, which can sometimes make situations of poverty chronic and even intensify them. The poverty threshold is lower in Portugal than in Spain, as the standard of living in this country is lower than in Spain, but the threshold has nevertheless increased and in Spain it has fallen over the period in question. In conditions of inequality, Portugal can be seen to have improved this indicator, reaching figures similar to those in Europe. As for in-work poverty, in Spain it is more frequent, while in Portugal it is more temporary. In Spain, this type of poverty affects young people, married people, widowers, and households with minor children and those with low labour intensity. In Portugal, it is more frequent in single-parent households with dependent minor children, where the protagonist is the woman. In short, we are experiencing a change of scenario in the face of new poverty profiles that are emerging as a result of the crisis. We are facing new forms of poverty affecting the working poor and families who, before the crisis, were well positioned to meet their needs, both basic and social,

and to enjoy a good level of well-being. Today, the working middle class is deteriorating, as worsening working conditions and low wages prevent families from meeting their basic needs and thus deteriorate their social welfare. In the light of these events, a period of reflection and study is opening so that public and private institutions, mainly governments and institutions, can implement a series of measures and reforms, which can help to alleviate and improve this situation and guarantee the social welfare of the entire population.

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