

Structural change and its discontents

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The paper addresses structural dynamics, which are fundamental to economic growth and development, and entail complex transformations in the organizational and institutional setup of societies. Specifically, it focuses on the sustainability of structural shifts primarily associated with globalization, technological advancements, and unexpected shocks. In this context, many countries are experiencing growing social discontent rooted into increasing labour market challenges. The paper originally links studies on discontent with the literature on structural change sustainability and argues that, without proper governance, structural shifts could generate social disparities within labor markets that may escalate and become unsustainable, with consequences for the entire system. In this perspective, the paper explores the illustrative case of Italy. Results show that the creation of stable and secure jobs is crucial to alleviate discontent. Policy implications envision employment creation, education, and welfare as means to encourage trajectories of structural change that are sustainable and conducive to societal goals.