

# PLURALITY OF WORK AND EVALUATIONS: CONSEQUENCES FOR JOB SEEKING STRATEGIES AND UNEMPLOYMENT POLICIES

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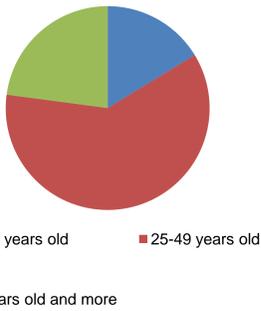
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## CONTEXT

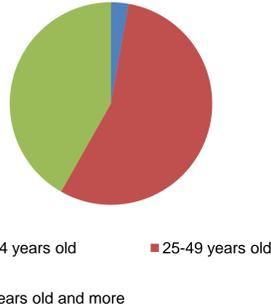
Source: SECO, september 2012

### REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED IN SWITZERLAND:

By age categories



Long duration unemployment (>1 year)



- Young unemployment rate (3,5%) is higher than the national average (2,8%), but more than 85% of young people get out of unemployment before 6 months.
- In contrary, people with 50 years old and more have higher chances to experience long duration unemployment.

- Switzerland cope with an ageing work force [Bonoli, 2008] but strong constraints against older job seekers.
- Activation social policies aimed to enhance the employability of beneficiary populations [Bonoli, 2008]

➔ Emphasis on increasing employability and (return to) employment fails to recognize the importance of quality of work issues [Gallie, 2007] and of enhancing the real freedom of people [Sen, 1993] [Bonvin, 2008]

## BUT

- Actual «active» social policies are not very effective [Bonoli, Flückiger and al., 2008]
- Precarious employment is increasing [Bühlmann, 2012]

↓  
**We need to take a broader view that extends our comprehension of job seeking mechanisms, in particular in integrating the labor market and work organisations characteristics and logics**

## THEORETICAL APPROACH

1. Work is more than just a job: 4 dimensions of work are assumed [Eymard-Duverny, 2012]:

1. *Personal dimension*: work is linked to a person with a familial, educational and professional biography

↳ **Life course framework**: age-graded and biographical timing + linked lives principles [Elder, 1994] / differential impact of unemployment spells [Gallie, 2004] / gender perspective [Widmer and al., 2009]

2. *Ethical dimension*: the sense people give to work/employment/unemployment and to the functions and degree of centrality they have in their existence. **Distinction** between **work** (activity/production) and **employment** (formal rights, conditions and benefits / binding modes of the individual to an organization) [Paugam, 2007].

3. *Social dimension*: provider of social status [Schnapper, 1989] / major component of the social bound [Paugam, 2006] / affected by new organisations of work [Zimmermann, 2011]

4. *Political dimension*: work as a component of the common good and object for public action

↳ - political measures and their implementation as based on various rules of **justice** [Astier, 1996]. Fairness in the resources people have and in the capacity to use them in accordance with what they value [Zimmermann, 2011].

↳ - informational basis of justice [Sen, 1990] [Bonvin et Farvaque, 2007] are at stake when analysing employability measures and evaluations of work.

2. **Agency within structures** approach [Giddens, 1984] [Settersten, 1998]

↳ **Agency**: when unemployed are seeking a job, individuals develop various strategies, depending of their resources as well as of their **evaluations of work and employment**.

↳ **Structure**: individuals and their strategies are put to various **tests** by labour market and public action institutions and agents, through which they are differently selected [Boltanski and Chiapello, 1999]. Labour market and organisational requisites imply the selection of specific capacities to work [Marchal et Rémillon, 2007].

## AIMS AND QUESTIONS

- To identify:
  - the evaluations of work and (un)employment:
    - experienced by unemployed [Marchal et Rémillon, 2007]
    - setting up by companies [Marchal et Rieucou, 2011]
    - supported by unemployment devices and agents [Bonvin et Moachon, 2008]
  - the tests imposed by labour market and economic organisations, and experienced by job seekers [Boltanski et Chiapello, 1999]
  - the tests imposed by public institutions and agents, and experienced by job seekers [Serrano Pascual & Magnusson, 2007]

How job seekers evaluations of work and (un)employment are affected by experiences and life course characteristics? To which extent are they adequate to the modes of evaluations of organisations and to the functioning of labor markets?

How the labour markets functioning and organisations' and recruiters' modes of evaluation influence the procedures and tests of recruitment? With which consequences?

To which degree the requisite and tests imposed by public devices are in agreement with the selection operated by labour markets and economic organisations? Do public institutions and agents take account how unemployed evaluate work and employment, and improve their capabilities to work?

- To analyse job seeking strategies, in relation with:
  - Individuals biographies, experiences and resources, and the ways people live and evaluate unemployment [Schnapper, 1981]
  - Plurality of labour markets and organisations requisites, evaluations of capacities to work, and recruitment procedures [Marchal et Rémillon, 2007].

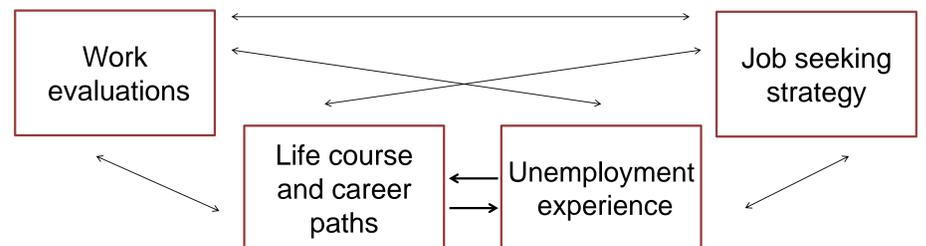
To which extent job seeking strategies are appropriate with the labour markets and organisations functioning and valuations?

Can we observe socio-professional specificities when searching for a job?

To what resources unemployed have access through employment policies? How do they use these resources?

How different experiences of unemployment shape the life course and the work horizon?

- To question the organizational and public actions about work and unemployment and to establish promising avenues:
  - Do they take into account the specificities of the life courses, of the work trajectories and experiences? What kind of change are needed in order to better do so?
  - How do they affect the social bound and the professional community and what has to be done to strengthen the latter?
  - To which extent they limit, or at the contrary extend, the capacity to work and to choose and to live the life they value, and how to progress toward such a goal?



## METHOD

1. Questionnaire sent to companies considering their size and socio-professional position.
2. Interviews with unemployed people, considering their age, gender and socio-professional status.
3. Comparative approach, focusing 4 cantons: Vaud, Valais, Fribourg, Neuchâtel.

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Note:  
\*In process of designating a second co-supervisor