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# E-learning course

## Learning Unit 3.3 Job Search Assistance

### **Didactic Unit 3.3.1**

### **Current Labour market situation and trends**

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"Guidelines for the work inclusion of the refugees and the asylum seekers"  
Re.Inclusion



# New characteristics of Labour policies





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# 1. Employment vs Unemployment

What is deeper, is not what it is, but its practice, status, and nature of business with a company, generally termed "New Ways of Work", which presuppose new Rhythms, new Organizations and new values.

In order to better show an event that you wish to record in the conceptions of employment and unemployment, we will present as dominant theoretical currents that have been in their origins and that contribute to the meanings acquired over time, also defining the **nature and scope of the public policies of Employment**.

## 1.1 The porosity of the borders

### 1.1.1 Job

Using a classic source of the sociology of work, Friedmann presents the following definition of work: "*A set of actions that man, in order to a practical end, with the help of the brain, his hands, utensils or machines, Exerts on the matter, actions that, for their part, acting on the man, modify it*" (1961-62).

Taking into account the evolution of the various existing concepts for the definition of work, the following concepts are considered:

- a) Work as punishment and **punishment**, fruit of a curse for man. The work is associated, in the old classical societies, with slavery and the lower classes;
- b) Work as a means to obtain a **reward**, in addition to the divine reward (Calvinism). This idea subsists as a condition of higher wages for heavier jobs or even the payment of extraordinary work and one-off pecuniary rewards;



- c) Work as a vocation or as a **source of individual satisfaction**, presupposing an interiorized relationship between the human being and the work to be performed. The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions has as its presupposition an interaction between satisfaction and work results (whose origin is remote from Hawthorne studies by Elton Mayo and his team);
- d) Work as an **impersonal force** associated with the process of industrialization, which, in conjunction with the demands of machines and work organization, subordinate the worker and transform the labour force into a value of exchange, and can be bought and sold in a labour market;
- e) Work as a **job** that results from the increasing contractual dependence of the worker and his family. The evolution of social intervention in the labour market, is giving employment a value in itself, becoming increasingly an objective and right;
- f) Work as a **determinant of human time**, which also conditions the daily life and the whole life of the worker and his family. The recent evolution of flexible working hours, part-time contracts increasingly impose a new economic and social organization;
- g) Work as any human activity assumes a **social utility**, and can be an alternative, at the level of the value system, at the level of the unemployed, as a socially integrating framework (voluntary and community work).



## 1.1.2 Economy and Neoclassical tradition

Traditionally, the labour market was defined as the **place of comfort between labour supply and demand**, with independent behaviour, thus allowing a wage rate and a level of employment to be balanced.

The main characteristics and assumptions of this neoclassical approach are as follows:

- Labour market: **similar to any other market**, following the same rules of a **competitive equilibrium model**, where the wage variable adjusts the relation between supply and demand;
- Economic rationality: the **choice between working and leisure time**, depending on the salary in question;
- Homogeneous labour market: there are **no obstacles** to information, worker mobility and there is an independence between labour supply and demand;
- **Equal opportunities: of the social actors involved.**

In this area, the postulate of the independence of demand and labour supply is not accepted, but instead the predominance of the productive system as a homogeneous nature in terms of products, production processes, types of company, structures of competition, Organizational models, qualification structures, etc..

Currently, in the context of an evident crisis in the face of rising unemployment in most European countries and the restructuring processes carried out, the thesis of voluntary unemployment is not easily accepted, although the two types of neoclassical explanation remain.

In the conceptualization of the labour market, the work force is at the center, defined as a set of psychic and physical capacities that the worker makes available to the employer during a period of time provided for by the employment contract. In turn, the wage corresponds to the cost of reproductive capacity, satisfying elementary needs of the worker and his family. Contrary to what the neoclassical perspective holds, where wages consist of the value of exchange corresponding to the price of the labour force, concretizing the postulate of the independence of supply and demand of labour.



## 1.1.3 Justification of the model

This initial classical model is confronted with some deviations, such as:

- The increasing internal differentiation of workers by the factor of **vocational training and contractual power of unions**;
- Individuals with different salary and free time utilities, and companies use **different salary criteria** when hiring;
- The opacity of the information is also another important limitation of this model, given the **shortcomings of the information channels**;
- Obstacles in job search mobility: **discouragement and economic shortage** limit freedom of entry and exit from work;
- Inhomogeneous work, which can be differently valued, taking into account the **scarcity of qualifications**, where there is intervention of the prices and quantities, thus displacing the mechanisms of regulation.

Despite its initial premises, the neoclassical approach undergoes a renewal integrating some "brokerage" theories, such as human capital theory, labour research theory and the theory of discrimination, presenting only a set of discontinuities in the market.

**The theory of human capital** strives to analyze all forms of acquisition of knowledge or skills that individuals are investing in order to obtain higher wages. The education / training (and pay) relationship is advantageous for both workers and entrepreneurs, who see in this stock of accumulated knowledge a real capital base of greater productivity and flow of future productive services.

With the theories opened up by the economic theory of imperfect information and job search, barriers to worker mobility and non-transparency of the labor market are recognized. **The job search theory** intends to emphasize the existence of difficulties in the access to information, integrating this constraints in the rationality of the individual decisions. Finally, indirectly, **the theory of discrimination** attempts to contribute to analyzing the labour market, opening it to phenomena of an extra-economic nature that interfere with the logic of its functioning. The social and cultural preferences on the part of the entrepreneurs, translated in salary differences for workers with the same productive efficiency, denounce once again the existence of discontinuities in the labour market.



## 2. Limits of a "subordinated market"

Rather than demonstrating how the neoclassical arguments are fallacious, as recent openings in the field of labour market sociology go to rethink the fundamentals foundations of mercantile relations, dismantling the mechanisms of their structuring.

### 2.1 Heterogeneity and segmentation theory

The beginning of the studies of labour market sociology is marked by two very popular contributions, which are the "segments" and the "internal" labour market, as opposed to the "external". The main idea is to associate the "internal market" (the company) with a "primary market" or a "secondary market", assuming a fundamental break between them both at the level of jobs and at the level of their operating mechanisms. Thus, very schematically, a "primary" market is aimed at a stable, central labour force with job security and career possibilities; A "secondary" market, is characterized by peripheral labour (designed to fluctuate according to the requirements of the environment), subject to high turnover rates and limited career prospects.

The opposition between the internal (primary and / or secondary) and external market allows the company **to play an intervening role in the process of segmentation of the labour force, in the insertion and mobility sectors.**

**Workers are "segmented", that is, stratified from differentiated advantages.** Wage levels, career guarantees, average qualifications, promotion prospects and the quality of working conditions are the main factors in the stratification of jobs, while the average level of training, the Unionization rate and the greater or lesser stability of workers' behaviours and aspirations, differentiate between them. Discontinuities in the workers' collective are evident, and access to the "domestic market" is the main objective of majority of workers.

Segmentation theory abandons the approach in terms of adjustment to speak in articulations and presents us with a labor market characterized by a series of segments in contraposition or juxtaposition, breaking away from the homogeneous and unified image of the labor market in logic Liberal neoclassical.



## 2.2 Theory of regulation and the system of employment

The theory of regulation is not an alternative to the labor market itself, but introduces some fundamental contributions that refer to the inevitable presence of **institutional forms regulating the labor market**. The influence of the State, the unions and various associations are taken into account here and also explain the dynamics of the functioning of the labor market. First of all, this theory criticizing the simple idea of segments, draws attention to the fact that the labor market is stratified, having a certain unity or coherence. There are thus institutional forms, proper to the economic system, necessary for the reproduction of capital, which regulate relations in the labor market:

- I. forms of competition;
- II. forms of monetary restraint;
- III. forms of state;
- IV. configuring the wage relationship;
- V. adherence to the international regime.

The wage relationship can be defined as a **set of legal and institutional conditions governing the use of wage labour, as well as a reproduction of workers' conditions of existence**.

We recognize the existence of different modes of manpower management according to the salary relationship, with the following market segmentation criteria:

- the organization of the productive process;
- the hierarchy of qualifications;
- mobility of workers;
- the formation of direct and indirect wages;
- the use of wage income.

The market is an area regulated by institutional forms, being a space always open and incomplete, no longer being regulated exclusively by the principle of economic rationality. Given that it is inserted in capitalist formation, from submission of labour to



capital, there is the principle of the supply domain on the demand for employment, according to a complex, conflictive process, largely unstable by social forces in the presence.

The proposed project aims to replace the term "labour market" with that of the employment system: **"an organized set of structures, agents and economic and social mechanisms that shape the use and circulation of labour in interaction with the processes of reproduction of the labour force. work"**. Thus, the employment system is not simply a space of confrontation of supply and demand, neutral or empty, but consists of powers and filters that structure it.



## 2.3 Sociological point of view or the "invention" of unemployment

The category of unemployment and the unemployed is linked to the large industry and mass redundancies of big business. There are several analyzes on the subject of "unemployment", however, for the sociologist, being unemployed is not simply being unemployed or being deprived of a job, it is also being recognized as such, being able to legitimately claim a job, is to be part of a category (social classification process). At the same time, the category of the unemployed presupposes an objective condition, deprivation of employment, a subjective condition, unemployment and a statutory condition defined by an institutional framework.

Unemployment is thus a form of non-work which shows the inadequacies of the systems of support for the unemployed, inciting the intervention of the State to create a system of insurance against unemployment.

Next, a table is presented where one can visualize the **dynamic reconstruction of the history of those "fit for work and who do not work" and of the importance of relational and social fragility in determining their state and their trajectory.**

|                             |            |                            |         |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------------------------|---------|
| ZONE I                      | EMPLOYMENT | JOB                        | ZONE II |
| <b>INTEGRATION</b>          |            | <b>VULNERABILITY</b>       |         |
| Sociability social resource |            | Relational Fragility       |         |
| <b>RELATIONAL INSERTION</b> |            | <b>NO SOCIAL INSERTION</b> |         |
| <b>ASSISTANCE</b>           |            | <b>DESAFILIACTION</b>      |         |
| ZONE III                    | NO         | JOB ZONE                   | IV      |



**Axis of integration / non-integration through labour:** a range of positions ranging from stable employment to complete absence of work, through participation in precarious, intermittent or seasonal forms of occupation.

**Axis of insertion / non-insertion in a socio-family sociability:** marks a set of positions between the inscription in the solid networks of sociability to total isolation.

The concepts of employment and unemployment are social constructions, and their borders are difficult to identify. Both employment and unemployment are defined by social rules and cultural norms, the fruit of dialectical relations between economic and juridical prescriptions, individual strategies and identity dynamics.

## 2.4 Proposals

The term "long-term unemployment" has led to proposals for its solution which can be grouped into three groups:

1. **Increase the labour supply**, ie increase the volume of employment. Increase economic growth so that the volume of employment increases proportionately;
2. Respond to the inadequacy of unemployment by dividing available employment in a harmonious and equitable way by **redistributing employment, sharing work, or even reducing working hours** (without changing wages);
3. Create employment **outside the classic and usual sector**. As an example we have the jobs of service to the people.



## 2.5 Video viewing

❖ **Unemployment & Find a jobs**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1J3diJsD9U>

❖ **Creating employment opportunities for under-served youth | Arthur Langer | TEDxTeachersCollege**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DwJFY34\\_yY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DwJFY34_yY)

❖ **Employment, skills and education**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7g8OpiWR83Y>

❖ **Employability skills**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wr\\_o1Yy2S9w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wr_o1Yy2S9w)