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**School to Work Transition, Employment Attainment and VET.
Theories Guide for Policy Makers**

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ABSTRACT

The employment attainment after a vocational training course, in a lifelong learning perspective is due to several factors, those inherent to the individual and those through exogenous scopes. In this theoretical revue we identify the most and the least notorious theories that can support policy maker's decisions. This paper is a result of a subchapter of the author's PhD thesis. The usefulness of the theories briefly described is under the reader's verdict and judgment. The objective is barely to share a structured way to compare eleven "big groups" of theories, underneath ten different elements, that are commonly the aim of public and private policies.

Keywords: employment attainment, vocational training, job search methods, constraints factors, employment, unemployment.

JEL Classifications: J20, J6, J60, J64, J69

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Introduction

The employment attainment (entry in a job) of ex-trainees coming from the VET system (those who search the first job and those unemployed who search for a new one), has achieved a permanent and continuous attention in the agenda of national and European policies. Whichever the measures praised by the several governments: promoting matching policies between job offers and the job search, sponsored assorted training answers, or other initiatives; the main objective is, and always be, the inclusion of the individuals in the economic activity (Garcia & Gutiérrez, 1996).

Mark Granovetter's (1995) statement became famous that the way as the individuals seek for a job and it gets into the labour market is a prosaic problem. Just for this trivial essence and the inevitability of societal approach, the employment attainment issues are narrowly attached to important sociological and economic exercises (Zafirovski, 2005) and also psychological topics. Therefore, is a typical analysis subject in the frame of the Economic Sociology (Santos, 2008).

In the economics framework, countless researches and studies have been developed within the "labour mobility". In sociology, numerous analyses have been carrying out under the concept of "social mobility". However, little attention has been devoted to "how" the individuals get information about a job and "on which form" they get it or not (Granovetter, 1995).

It matters to clarify, at this stage, what it is currently understood about the meanings of "job" and "work". We consider that a "job" corresponds to the exercise of a remunerated activity, linked to one determined formal status: as employee or as entrepreneur (Santos, 2002). The meaning of "work" is linked to the several execution conditions of that one professional activity (*idem*).

In the contemporary informational society (Castells, 1996, 2000), the process of employment attainment is parallel to the beginning of the adult age, becoming itself as a social and individual transition, from the educative and familiar system to the labour market (Garcia & Gutiérrez, 1996; Gaude, 1997). However, not only the young people, but also the individuals who search for a new job, are in a transition process, now from a context of unemployment, or unstable employability, to the uncertainty of a new labour environment.

In face of this fact, and because we are not to deal only with young people seeking the first job, we do not go to lean over us on the theories of the transition process only.

Martinez (2000) calls the attention for the fact that the transition should be defined as a changing process closely related with the transition for the adult life and the active life. Therefore it includes the social and the professional insertion. That is, the transition is not only the connection from the school for the work, but also, and over all, a complex process that integrates, since the social adolescence, the school base education (and its own trajectories), the vocational training (in formal and informal contexts), the pre-work experiences, the familiar autonomy processes and the school-to-work transition itself (Casal, 1997; Martinez, 2000) involving changes of social, material and symbolic nature in the experiences of each person (Zittoun, 2008).

Therefore, the meaning of transition for the active life becomes related with the cross road from the school environment (or training) to the labour market and finishes with the professional placement (professional insertion) (Garcia & Gutiérrez, 1996).

The analyses carry out in last four decades had involved the understanding of the processes and its own time metamorphoses (paths or trajectories) as the attempts of clearing up the discrepancies between the processes and the trajectories.³ In this perspective, the professional placement overflows the simple fences of a social problem common in the nations where the unemployment runoff the landmarks of societal reasoning (Maurice, Sellier & Silvestre; 1982), to characterize itself as a continuous conflict with a socio-economic footprint.

At the EU level the European Commission has published directives, aiming at the thematic one of the school-to-work transition. At transnational level, it's above all the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that has invested some efforts in this thematic one, materialized in some conventions and recommendations.

In cyclic frameworks, where the unemployment taxes register expressive increases, the school-to-work transition catches greater scientific importance, not only in conceptual and theoretical terms, but mostly in the sketch of organizational configurations and paradigms, that provide to the users of the results, instantaneous and incisive solutions (or platforms) that stimulate the effective and long-term integration of the individuals in the labour market, contributing, thus, to avoid the accidental negative social secondary effects.

The studies and researches produced in Europe are characterized by a spraying of responsibilities. Despite the healthy diversity, the mainstream speech has not been renewed in a visibly way, throughout the years. As outcome, these works and researches shows a eclecticism of criteria and methodologies, that instead of originating efficient results, only identifies and describe theoretical orientations and trajectories (Santos, 2008). The literature that has been published had the merit to bring to the order of the day the real social problem that happens as outcome of failed insertion processes (e.g. increasing graduates unemployment, increasing of very long term unemployment). Regardless of this asset, it failed in the attempt to know how is driven the labour market insertion. As Garcia & Gutiérrez (1996) argue, this happened because the majority of the concepts (e.g. insertion/exclusion, reinsertion, school-to-work transition, trajectory) used to describe these processes are often metaphors, whose intrinsic value is obviously more insightful than theoretically supported. On the other hand, the arguments were excessively focused on definitions and in application of instruments, overlooking the processes (Comission Européenne, 1994; DGEEP, 2006).

³ [Chioussé & Werquin, 1999; CIME/DGEFP, 1999; Comission Européene, 1994; Cordeiro, 2002; DGEEP, 2006; Fernandes, 2001; Garcia & Gutierrez, 1996; Gaude, 1997; Gonçalves *et al*; 2006; Kovács *et al*, 1994; Maurice, Sellier & Silvestre, 1982; Minvielle, 1995; Neves & Graça (coord.) 2000; Oliveira, 1998; Rose, 1994; Vernières, 1997].

It's our main goal to display the theories that are currently available to researchers and policy makers, describing even their own odd characteristics.

The lean boundaries on the school-to-work transition studies, facilitates its tie to the subjects of economic sociology. So we describe the theoretic-conceptual approaches and meta-theories, closing this paper with a descriptive synthesis matrix based on ten key-elements.

THEORETICAL FRAME

Considering that the job attainment is not an isolated goal or even exempt of principles and slight policies (Santos, 2008), we start the present conceptualization, by the potentially structural theories useful to policy makers and stakeholders. We highlight the theoretical and multiparadigmatic approaches (Gioia & Pitre, 1990) that describe the employment attainment and the school-to-work transition in face of ten key-elements.

Since it doesn't exist a macrotheory that accomplished all the process, we bring into play, in a multidisciplinary standpoint (Martínez, 2000), the theoretical parcel grounds (i.e from sociology, psychology and economy), that represent several beliefs and visions that can help out future developments or will become handy to sustain policy options or strategic and analytical policies.

This meta-analysis⁴ of some theories is supported on the statements of Maurice, Sellier & Silvestre (1982) when they argue about the labour market, that there are energies (with sociological and institutional nature) that contribute to the variables significance, not only in the axiomatic aggregate of on single theory, but from several ones, simultaneously and exclusively.

1. Marxist or Neo-marxist Insight Theories

The **marxist perspective** is focused on the capital analysis and on the forms of conflictive industrial relations, holding a utilitarian point of view. Supply (of work) is caused by demand, since the labour market is regulated by the structural determinism. As corollary, the unemployment is inevitable and, simultaneously, compulsory to the logic of capital reproduction (Freyssinet, 2007). When the market calling-up low qualified or highly qualified workers, it allows conceptions of mobility and differentiated qualifications, articulated with the causal requirements of capital valuation. The wage is the key-issue that feeds the labour conflicts [Neves & Graça (coord.), 2000] therefore it is likely to become valued in the angle of the cost of reproduction of the work force, in defeat of its own price. Despite advocating the preference by public education and training, it admits that the "social status" still is strongly discriminatory. This means, that the education is multileveled, given that the

⁴ Understood while systematic review of the grounds, the arguments, the internal coherence and the experimental legitimacy.

high status classes (due to economic and cultural issues) have easier access to higher educative levels, in front of middle or worker classes.

Thus education and training reflects the class structure, regarding at employability chances level (and employment attainment) as to future wage level. This theory considers that the capitalism is a system (social and political) where the means of production (MoP - this includes the classical factors of production minus financial capital and minus human capital) are property of a small privileged minority. Therefore, the great mass of people that doesn't have these productive resources is strained to alienate its work force. The education, the vocational training and health plays two economic nature roles: they have an important role (despite is indirect), in the production and are basic for the perpetuity of the economic and social order. The results of the work force are not a school level product, but an outcome of technological and organizational settings of the productive processes.

In 1976, Bowles and Gintis proposed the **correspondence theory** (or control theory), where the education level attainment is something imposed by the capitalism framework (correspondence principle) and not by the requests of qualifications and productivity looked by the employers. This means, that the educational system replicates the social conditions of the productive model (Martinez, 2000). Thus, the educational and qualifications system actuate as essence of the individual status, preparing it to occupy the same social status positions (or analogous) of its parents (Bills, 2003). The investment in education is, therefore, something with little relevance, while the position in the labour market is already predetermined by the individual social status. For Bowles and Gintis (1976, 2000) the class inequalities can be seen in the socialization processes and in the kind of education/training that the young people will receive.

As incisive ruthless critics, endorsed for some authors, it is mentioned the relative difficulty of distinction with the human capital theory; the fact of being fully opposing to "the strong" version of the selection theory (Bills, 2003; Psacharopoulos, 1979) and for the insufficient importance giving to the educational and training institutions, while agents of social change (Figuera, 1996).

2. Neo-classic Theories

At the end of XIX century the **neoclassic perspective** come into sight. The homogeneity, the perfect competition (Martinez, 2000) and the transparency are the core issues of this labour market approach [Neves & Graça (coord.) 2000]. In this framework the market is considered equivalent to any other market of goods and services, where the employer is the buyer and the worker the seller (of its work force and skills). Therefore, the wage will vary with the adjustment between the demand needs and the supply availability. In this purely rational point of view, the unemployment is considered voluntary, hence demand and supply are independent (Martinez, 2000). The model recognizes the existence of fixed costs linked to the practices of human resources management (selection and integrative training), thus the workers turnover triggers a cost [Figuera, 1996; Martinez, 2000; Neves & Graça (coord.) 2000].

One of the paradigms of this stance appeared in middle 60's with the **human capital theory** [Martinez, 2000; Mincer, 1974, 1993; Weiss, 1986 (*apud*. Chagas Lopes, 2007)]. Its main focus is to analyze the effect of qualification (mainly formal education), in the increase of productivity and on the individual incomes. To biggest productivity would correspond greater income for the employer and, consequently, greater acceptance of the qualified workers in the labour market. The productivity and employability are highly valued as factors of employment attainment. Experience and mobility are viewed as forms of human capital: the experience appears as complement of the qualification(s), needed to the satisfactory performance of tasks and mobility (implicitly involving the transferability of skills) as a display of personal ambition, where the worker will work hard to achieve good labour market entry and to maximize the incomes of its work (Mincer, 1974, 1993).

The human capital is understood as a knowledge storehouse that each person acquires and its build under the individual education/training levels achieved (Martinez, 2000). This theory introduces the factor "education" in the economic growth analysis considering it as an investment and not solely as a consumer good (Alves, 2005b). Thus understood and tied with other variables, it will be able to lead to a better wage. This theory adopts the significance of a symmetrical direct relation between the reached level of education and the wage.⁵

In collective terms, the investment to raise the population educational levels turns on, implicitly, in a bigger economic development (Alves, 2005b). One of the most repeated critics to this perspective is that not always exists a connection between the benefits (e.g. wages, insurances) and the investment in human capital (Bills, 2003; Chagas Lopes, 2007; Figuera, 1996; Martinez, 2000).

From these grounds set, was devised the **supply point of view**, that sustain that in situations of chances fairness, the differences between wages are purely individual and are outcomes of personal choices taken throughout its educational/training paths (Smith, 1994). In the same way, the investment in human capital principle lead to the job search theory. This theory states that the job search has a direct cost (in time and money) in line with the access to the work opportunities information, hence it turn down the earnings value (Boyer, 2006; Smith, 1994).⁶ The supply theory was reached by some harsh critics, namely when we can prove the existence of high leveled training unemployed and the increase of unemployed taxes within the most vulnerable categories [Neves & Graça (coord.), 2000].

The concept of education as an investment was also is criticized, over all once it's impossible to evaluate when the education expenditures are intended to consumption or when they are meant to the skills production [Lope, Lozares and Miguélez, 1997; Martinez, 2000; Neves & Graça (coord.), 2000; Smith, 1994].

⁵ This means that the education and training processes are understood as opportunities leveling agents (Lope, Lozares & Miguélez, 1997) or they are, as Bills (2003) argues, "*meritocratic* selection factors".

⁶ Therefore, the unemployment is not spontaneous, since it's the labour market demand that originates the search (Boyer, 2006; Martínez, 2000; Smith, 1994).

These critics also argue that it is impossible to assess this difference, and that the educational overheads are only consumption costs. This critic is based on two facts: the first one is that the majority of the students have public education; the second one is related to the compulsory education until some age or level. Furthermore, Bills (2003) argues that the biggest weakness of this theory consists in the lack of attention to the measuring of the most basic concepts. Finally, it is easy to assess that not always an increase in the educational qualifications (and professionals) leads clearly to a bigger employability. To prove it we can notice the relatively recent phenomenon of the increasing graduate's unemployment (Santos, 2008).

3. Credentialing Approaches

As critical or complementary points of view to the previous models, some outlooks had appeared that underline the importance of structural factors in shaping the professional chances.

The **credentialing theory** (Berg, 1971; Collins, 1979) looked to prove that the educative and training institutions impart, over all, credentials or headings (i.e. diplomas, certificates) in order to maintain the status of the elites, since the qualification needs had not increased so much as the requirements of diplomas (Bills, 2003). This theory underlines the criteria bias that employers use to fulfill the positions and functions in the companies (*idem*). Other authors also question the relation between education and productivity, as supplying of cognitive abilities, as, indirectly, socialization element (Berg, 1971), that prepares individuals to specific works or positions. Berg (1971) makes references to the little importance of the education in the worker's productivity. According to this author, the education itself has importance in selection and recruitment situations, and there is a lack of evidence that the educational level increases the worker's performance and productivity. The formal education (i.e. the qualifications) leads to the economic success, not by the influence of skills and knowledge acquired in superior levels of education, but because the social actors with higher educational degrees, that are more willing to control the access to elite's labour position (Bills, 2003; Figuera, 1996; Martínez, 2000). Thus, the increasing of years of study would be more related to the expansion of the education/training system than the real needs of the companies and enterprises. The inflation of credentials (or qualifications), conferring more status than abilities, and that results from the premises of this theory, constitutes one of the more frequent critics (Bills, 2003; Martínez, 2000). More, as we will evidence later, the excess of qualifications (overeducation) becomes along time plus a constraint to employment attainment, mainly in labour markets without capacity of absorption of its own graduates.

In 1975 Lester Thurow launches the **screening hypothesis**. Screening is considered as a mechanism throughout the markets that react to the imperfect information on the individuals' qualities (Bills, 2003) what it underlies that they compete for jobs and not for wages (Martínez, 2000). By such fact also it is also known as competition theory. This theory considers that education acts as an indicative element (or pointer) of the individual quality, viewing the selection and recruitment, set apart the "talented" from "less talented". By this method the employers can distinguish which individuals

have potentially minor integration training costs in the company (Bills, 2003; Martínez, 2000). The specific skills are acquired on job, giving hence bigger guarantees of productivity (Thurow, 1975).⁷ The main objection to this theory become throughout the fact to assume that the individuals have recurrently an unrealistic auto-conscience of its potential productivity (Bills, 2003).

The **signalling theory**, closely related with the work of Michael Spence (1973), complements the previous theory. This theory scope defends that the employers when evaluate a candidate are based on a set of elements and personal features (e.g. diplomas, certificates, work experience, gender). The author calls to the fixed characteristics as “indexes” and to those able to transform (i.e. those that can be manipulated or able to bear an investment, to one determined cost) as “signals”. A prospective signal becomes an active signal if the associated costs are negatively related with the individual productivity (Spence, 1973). The author concludes that the signals and the indexes must be considered as parameters that harness the different probabilities of opinion of one specific employer in relation to the individuals that it intends or not to hire. That is, the vocational training doesn't means necessarily higher productivity, even so the education acts like a selection system (used as a filter) of the best ones (Martinez, 2000).

The main critics to these concepts, are related with the skepticism about the applicability of the theory in the youth labour market, as several researcher had observed, that the employers do not use, in this context, the signals (i.e. higher qualifications, references of other employers) (Bills, 2003). Other detractor authors say that the signaling and screening theories are simple adjusted versions of the human capital theory (Bills, 2003; Martinez, 2000).

The Pierre Bourdieu's (1973, 1978) **reproduction theory** enhance the role of the socioeconomic origins and emphasizes the importance of non-cognitive cultural capital as a distinctive status of the dominant group. This author defends that, with the technological and industrial development of societies, there is a trend to a wide spreading of educational policies and, therefore, all the individuals have access to qualifications. However, the individual employment attainment chances would not tend for the equality. The “elites” would continue to have the best chances and the higher possibilities in the labour market, because they have had possibilities to construct (and to inherit) social nets characterized by a great stock of cultural capital, in order with the social conditions and the higher educational level of its parents. For this French author the school is considered as continuity (or a reproduction) of the family and its own social practices, but imposing the “habitus” of the dominant class. Bourdieu (1973) states that “habitus” is an organizational way to define a group or class. Thus, to children from workers classes, the school represents a rupture with their values and social practices, since they need to learn new standards or culture models.

⁷ Psacharopoulos (1979) identifies two versions of this theory: weak and strong. In the strong version, the education appears as a pointer or signal, that doesn't added no productive capacity to whom gets it. As a result the employers actuates irrationally and they continue to pay higher wages to the individuals with higher educational attainment levels even they show a productivity off-line with the presumable preparation. The weak version supports that education provides also a signal but simultaneously increases the individual productivity. The employers can initially pay bigger wages to the individuals with higher qualification levels, but in line with the registered performance they can make adjustments.

Inside this logic, it's insightful that for pupils coming from "higher" classes, it becomes easier to reach the educational and professional success. The Bourdieu critics claim that it not always take place the reproduction of class "habitus", because if it exists always it would not explain the diversity of insertion possibilities around one same work opportunity (Bills, 2003).

4. Structuralist Perspective

According Neves & Graça (coord., 2000), the sprouting of the **segmentation theories** happened as refutation to the neo-classic perspective, placing the *locus* in the side of demand and underlying the role of enterprises in shaping the labour market [Veloso, Gonçalves & Parente (coord.), 1997]. In this set of theories, the corporation becomes a decisive variable on the markets, showing therefore, differentiated significant sensitivity to the framework changes (Santos, 2008). This means that the more steady labour markets tend to absorb the qualified workers, while less steady they are propitious to the absorption of less qualified man power and lead to a higher precariousness (Santos, 2008).⁸ That is, the labour market is imperfect, identified with structural discontinuities that result from the pattern imposed by the productive network (*idem*).⁹

Some ambassadors of this theory argue that the labour markets display a "dual" characteristic (Peixoto, 2008; Winter-Ebmer & Zweimtluer, 1992). The "primary" market characterizes itself by: a) the stability of the job conditions, b) the existence of good wages and perspectives of career (through a domestic labour market established on the organizations), c) a good social protection and a recognized raised social status. It is the common sense that are the public structures and some (few) private companies, who exhibit these three characteristics (Martinez, 2000; Peixoto, 2008; Winter-Ebmer & Zweimtluer, 1992). The "secondary" market, by the opposite, is shaped by: a) precarious jobs, b) low wages, c) weak chances of promotion, d) absence of social protection and low social satus (*idem; idem; idem*). Blanch (1990) assigns the workers in this secondary market as "infra-employed". The insertion of a worker to one or another market is a result of its own qualifications combined with the activity settings.

Basing on this distinction and as resulted of a societal¹⁰ and institutional dynamics, Doeringer & Piore (1983) proposed a dual typology of labour markets: internal labour market (or ILM) and external labour market (or occupational labour market or OLM).

In ILM the internal promotion, through a set of administrative norms and procedures, or through transferences of workers between units, are the main ways to fill vacancies and to establish wages. For such fact, the stability and the workers rights are better protected.

⁸ On accepting differentiated access to a job, under the social class, gender or even the race, this premise locks up of the marxist or neo-marxists arguments (Lope, Lozares & Miguélez, 1997).

⁹ In this framing also the use of manpower is reliant to the designs and orders of the corporations, as these are seen as generating assets of specific qualifications, over all those ones that they need in are specific moment [Neves & Graça (coord.), 2000].

¹⁰ Maurice, Sellier & Silvestre, 1982.

In OLM the wages and vacancies fulfilling depends on macroeconomic variables (Martinez, 2000) and by the individual qualifications. That is, the recruitment is external and is dogged by a set of selection and access rules.

The most incisive critics are related with the relative limitation of these theories in establishing criteria and identifying the market segments classes (Winter-Ebmer & Zweimtluer, 1992), as well as for its inability in ignoring the neoclassic concept of market when they refer to the enterprise management models [Neves & Graça (coord.), 2000]. Moreover it is pointed negatively, the extreme importance award to the markets (and to the enterprise management models and policies), that is, to the microeconomic context, while explicative variable of the difficulties of employment attainment, in harm of the individual idiosyncrasy, values and initiatives [Martinez, 2000; Winter-Ebmer & Zweimtluer, 1992].

Through this point of view the employment attainment (professional insertion) only exists in imperfect competition frameworks and is conditioned by enterprise policies (e.g. internal, external or mixing recruitment policies) and for the labeling of workers groups [Martinez, 2000; Neves & Graça (coord.), 2000; Winter-Ebmer & Zweimtluer, 1992].

5. Sociologic Based Model

In this model, exclusively applicated to Great-Britain, the socioeconomic structure and the process of personal and collective socialization have the same importance, while elements of employment attainment.

The **structure of opportunities model** appeared by the hand of Kenneth Roberts in 1968. This British author claimed that the job attainment has by basic grounds a structure of opportunities (chances). The employment attainment is understood within three function: a) the labour market is controlled by an organized structure socially stratified (the individual does not choose a job, but only can obtain that one that is available, b) the distribution of chances is a result of the relation between the family origins and the educative and occupational processes and c) sometimes the individuals do not fit onto the available chances, as it is in the case of university students (coming from low social classes), that they have limited possibilities, decurrently of the social stratification of the labour market. In the framework of this point of view, any type of intervention of psychological or carrier guidance (in order to achieve the employment attainment) will be failed.

This model experienced a numerous and vigorous critics especially by the fact that we can't deny the existence of individual processes that influence the employment attainment (Valero, 2003).

6. Regulationist Approach

The French origin **regulation theory** was born in middle 70's as severe critic to the neoclassic economy.¹¹ In this framework, the confrontation between demand and supply disappears, being then the social agents who set in motion the regulation (Cerdeira, 2007). When affirming itself mainly as an economic theory, it admits the existence of different manpower management practices a policies and even different brands of work organization [competitive, *taylorist*, *fordist*, *toyotist* (Kovács 2002, 2005)]. This theory defends the collectivism in a moderate shape (i.e. in a lower degree than marxist or neo-marxists theories); the wage relation is product of the set of legal and institutional conditions that regulates the use of work (Cerdeira, 2007, Oliveira, 1998). The supply will dominate the job search, causing labour conflicts, with diverse complexity degrees (Cerdeira, 2007). Mobility it's inner part of the wage relation [Cerdeira, 2007; Neves & Graça (coord.), 2000; Veloso, Gonçalves & Parente (coord.), 1997].¹² The employment attainment is an outcome from the definition of the conditions of manpower's use, which is product not only of the internal market but also of the legal conditions, other institutions (e.g. the state) and the actors [Cerdeira, 2007; Neves & Graça (coord.), 2000; Santos, 2008].¹³

So, according to the regulacionist approach, the capitalism is an unstable system and spontaneously has cyclical crises. However, it's able to multiply during some periods through the design of a regulating device that, as it's accepted by the economic agents [Cerdeira, 2007; Neves & Graça (coord.), 2000], tend to act in a anticyclical form.

Implicitly this is a critic to the orthodox Marxism, since the crises of capitalism do not result in its overcoming. An important concept used by this school is the accumulation regime. An accumulation regime estimates an organized standard of the economic activity, adjusted to the consumption standard, that is, a level of economic activity well-matched with the effective search (aggregate supply equal to aggregate demand) (Boyer, 1986). Another distinguish concept of this theory is the "regulation way", that consists in a set of laws, values and practices that mediate the relation with the accumulation regimen and keep the social cohesion (*idem*). The elements that make up a regulation way are called structural forms (*ibidem*).

The most common critic to this axiomatic point of view becomes from the minimalist foresight of the absolutist role of the state in the processes of school-to-work-transition and in the several ways of entry in working life.

¹¹ Although not consist in a labour market theory (but as an economic theory, in structural terms), it contributed decisively with concepts and definitions, over all for the segmentation theories (Santos, 2008). The principles of regulation and organization (of the economic system) and the concept of wage regulation had been some of these added values.

¹² Flexibility is understood in a broader sense, as beyond the turnover (of jobs), it assembles, among others elements, the organization of the work processes, the wage modalities and the qualifications hierarchy [Boyer, 1986; Cerdeira, 2007; Kovács *et al*, (1994); Neves & Graça (coord.), 2000].

¹³ The articulation of the trinomial relation training/unemployment/profession can lead to the conclusion that is the state that organizes the labour market through public policies and institutions that deal with employment and training issues [Neves & Graça (coord.), 2000].

7. Economics Models (of Job Search)

After the advent of scientific (taylorist) management of the work and throughout almost a century, the economists and later the psychologists, had started to be interested about unemployment phenomena, even so tied up to discrepant framings and never overlapped (MacFadyen & Thomas, 1997).¹⁴

The generalist economic model was always supported in a utilitarian vision. Any job search action tries to maximize the respective utility and rationality on the task to find work. We can introduce here the concept of “reserve wage” that represents the most constructive strategy for who is searching a job. This concept defines the minimum wage that each individual is ready to accept, ceasing the process of job search (through some devices). That is, it is the wage value that is in the thin boundary of somebody to be employed or unemployed. Each unemployed reaches its reservation wage, balancing the advantages to continue the job search (with a better wage) and the costs in terms of loss of income. Inevitably this model, for its simplicity, allows us, using econometrical models (Feinberg, 1978), to assess the effect of increasing income levels (e.g. unemployment subsidy) in the spreading of unemployment length (Holzer, 1987, 1988) and, naturally, in the unemployment rate (Jones, 1988).

Layard, Nickell, & Jackman (1991) admit that this model is static, when assuming deterministically that somebody who seeks for a job it will get one. They consider, thus, that the individual process of job search (and later integration in the work) involves three different stages: 1) to collect information on the available vacancies, 2) to decide, for each vacancy, if it goes to apply and 3) to accept one of the job offers (bearing in mind that it knew in advance the wage value of the vacancies). According to these authors, and at that time, the first stage was neglected by the researchers. Thus, after some studies, the three researchers had concluded that the most rational strategy is using some devices in function of the conditions of the labour market. Along with statement they allege that: 1) the time spent to the job search decreases with the age, most likely because of the generalized perception that the market chooses younger individuals, 2) the financial investment in the job search is also affected by the supply, yet the devices are not, 3) the income amount in unemployment situation (i.e. unemployment subsidy or other allowances) affect the amount of time spent in the job search, as well as the expectable employability, and 4) the income amount in unemployment situation does not affect, however, the individual strategy of job search.

Some authors had introduced variations in this model and pointed out the importance of other variables in the individual calculation of the reservation wage, such as the personal judgment of the leisure, the status of the offered job, the work conditions, the aspects related with the hygiene and security at work, the rate of unemployment and the intensity of the job search (Bradley & Taylor, 1992).

¹⁴ Only in the end of 90's some authors had started to consider models that traditionally integrated variables that belonged to one or another disciplines. However a clear separation existed between the economics approach (almost exclusively based in one rational model of job search) and some psychological models (MacFadyen & Thomas, 1997).

From this point of view and bearing in mind the effect of the unemployment length, two models had appeared.

The **theoretic model of search**, slightly matches the previous generic model, despite the different considerations about the length of unemployment. In accordance with this conception has much larger it is the unemployment length, higher odds of the individual to find more suitable work offers (reducing the value of its reservation wage), because more information is achieved during the search process. Thus, while the basic model assumes that the odds to find work remain constant with the unemployment length, this model implies that this probability increases throughout the time. The **scarred model** considers that as bigger is the unemployment length; less probability exists of employment attainment, due to factors such as the lack of motivation and willing strength (Layard, Nickell, & Jackman, 1991). It's a model next to the psychologist's idiosyncrasy, as it understands the unemployment as a process (MacFadyen & Thomas, 1997).¹⁵

Some critics had been endorsed to these two models, specifically for only valuing a limited number of variables and for ignoring others (of psychological order), as they are the self-esteem and the status related to a job (MacFadyen & Thomas, 1997; Smith, 1994). Other authors had questioned the use and application of the reservation wage concept, because they admit that it's not only the wage that an unemployed takes in consideration, but also other aspects, for instance the personal and social need to be busy (Granovetter, 1991), accepting for this fact, wages below of the reservation wage (Feinberg, 1978; MacFadyen & Thomas, 1997). Moreover the individual apathy, generated by long term unemployment, can affect the rational ability to find clear solutions (MacFadyen & Thomas, 1997; Martinez, 2000).

8. Cognitive Approaches

In the scope of psychology and psycho-sociology several cognitive matrix frameworks had appeared (applied to the job search) that inherently contains primary aspects to understanding the employment attainment. The **mental incongruence theory** formulated by Fritz Tazelaar (1989, op. cit. Valero, 2003) tried to foresee the behavior of the individuals (mainly young people) while they seek the first job and after the employment attainment. For this author there are two types of induced conditions of the individual behavior. First, there is the set produced by the objective features of the labour market, by the environmental framework, by the physical characteristics and by the individual social net. The second one is the individual tendency (determined for psychological variables that interacts) to release an action. The theory distinguishes two types of psychological variables: the subjective assessments on the fact to have a work and the perceptions (or cognitions) that the individual has about the labour

¹⁵ One of the endeavor of this model lies in the phenomenon known as "hysteresis", as an explanation to the persistent and scatter unemployment, saying that high unemployment levels due to temporary and circumstantial causes are gone to keep (even that these causes have however disappeared) ongoing the unemployed becomes less "employable" and this fact is supposed as so by the employers (Chagas Lopes, 2007; MacFadyen & Thomas, 1997).

market. When there are conflicts between valuations and cognitions, the individual go through mental incongruence.¹⁶

As critic, emerge the impossibility to explain way the majority of people have a positive consideration about the work criterion and the fact of easily remark that is an unemployed, awarding a high work appraisal, that cause worse and more serious stress situations (Valero, 2003).

The **expectation-value theory** is the axiomatic way to analyze the effect of the psychological variables onto the job search (MacFadyen & Thomas, 1997), since it recognize that job search is influenced by the personal expectations to get a work, by the values and by the need to get it. The researchers Martin Fishbein & Icek Ajzen (1975; op. cit. MacFadyen & Thomas, 1997) consider that the expectations are related with the individual beliefs on the dimension of competitiveness by a job, with previous judgments on the abilities or requirements, with the knowledge on the success/failure of previous competitions and with the results of the individual appliance in relation to other candidates. The subjective values are built individually on one specific job and the inherent actions to the job search. MacFadyen & Thomas (1997) argue that this set of values can be influenced by an aggregate of specific individual needs (including the need to be busy/to have a work). The expectations and values as a whole, influence the motivation of somebody to start an action (e.g. to seek or not a job, to apply or not to a vacancy). Some researchers had found positive correlations between the subjective values attributed to a job and the search frequency (Feather & O'Brien, 1987).

Despite some evolution in this theory, while integrating several variables, as critics we can found that this theory not yet includes variables such as the social pressure (MacFadyen & Thomas, 1997). Besides they have a low power to explain behaviors in unemployment situations (Valero, 2003). Moreover, the empirical evidences doesn't establish reciprocated relations between expectations and values, in the sense to induce motivation, but both elements related independently from each other in the job search process (*idem*).

For its turn the **candidate theory**, proclaims that the decisions based on the uncertainty can be lead by heuristic beliefs (Bryant, 1990), in order to minimize a bigger dimensions problem, but running the risk to diverge from a rational decision (MacFadyen and Thomas, 1997). That is, the individual has alternatives with insecure results, but it knows the odds, giving bigger emphasis and importance to the losses than the profits. Richard Bryant (1990) considers the terms "cancellation" (trend to cancel elements or components shared for several options, without comparing them) and "coding" (choosing a reference point to evaluate candidates, e.g. situation of the candidate to unemployment). Together these two elements lead to a polarization in the decision to accept a specific job, without having in account small details, for

¹⁶ In the specific case of the employment attainment the incongruence occurs when the cognition to be unemployed is followed by a high judgment about the work, or in the inverse direction, that is, when the cognition to be employed is followed by a low judgment about the work. In this last case, a change in the behavior can occur (e.g stress). Thus, the magnitude of the incongruence is useful to foresee the probability to look for a work (Valero, 2003).

example, the labour accidents hazard. That is, the information that the candidate possesses does not confer the positive role that generally it's recognized.¹⁷

As more sharp critic we can relate the unavoidability of the systematic deviation behaviors, being, therefore, only relevant in frameworks where the candidates rationalize the "mistaken" choice about a job (MacFadyen & Thomas, 1997).

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Some authors consider that exist a set of theories that are supposed to hold a multidisciplinary and integrationist approach (Martinez, 2000) between the individual and contextual aspects of the job search.

Although not to be seminal theories, they offer a set of concepts that are originals and interesting, in entering into the labour market framework.

Let's see them!

Draw from psycho-sociology, Marie Jahoda (1987) proposed the **models of latent functions** (deprivation theory) considering that the individual is a passive agent and dependent of the environment where it develops. Consequently the employment/unemployment is a context structural product, in face of the individual becomes totally weak (Blanch, 1990). These latent functions includes giving the day a time structure (or daily agenda), providing opportunities for social contact with other people, contributing to status and personal identity for the individual, and providing an opportunity to strive towards collective purposes and shared experience. When these latent functions are lacking, ill-health may result.

This Austrian author defined the employment psycho-sociological functions. She argued that, beyond the wage, other functions (latent) are originated by this condition: the positive motivation for work, the definition of an identity and status, the accomplishment of an organized activity, the use of time structure and the stimulation and increase of social relations. The access to a job is a psychological need of the occidental societies, thus the unemployed suffer with its absence, while when the incomes are inexistent or reduced it becomes private of those psycho-sociological functions, i.e., disappears the evident functions (wage) but basically loses the latent functions (Jahoda, 1987).

Some critics underline the difficulty of empirical verification of the theoretical principles, the ambiguity as the author describes the concept of privation (as cause or as outcome of unemployment) and the fact to have appeared in the beginning of the 80's, did not take in account a great diversity of changes in the work processes (Fryer, 1986) with the information technologies revolution. However this last obstacle also is valid for most theories.

¹⁷ Bryant (1990) gives us an example: if a candidate (in unemployment situation) attributes a subjective value to an accident that occurred in the company A (where a work is in all similar to the work in company B), it can ignore this fact and evaluate the two jobs under others dimensions. It can inclusively accept the job, if it seems to be better in these other dimensions, despite the risk associated with job B is marginally smaller.

The **agency theory**, or agency restriction model, (Fryer, 1986; Fryer and Payne, 1984) consider the individual:) as an active being that organizes and leads its own behavior, b) that endeavors in the direction of self-affirm, c) that is intrinsically motivated and d) that acts in function of its experiences and the respective future visions. The authors allege that in face of an unemployment situation the individual suffers a drop from the psychological point of view, since it taste a great difficulty in interpreting an extremely complex situation (in the individual, familiar and social frameworks) that causes an incapacity to plan its behavior in the presence of the same difficulty.

Fryer (1986; Fryer & Payne, 1984) has criticized the latent deprivation model by suggesting that Jahoda's work placed too impressive emphasis on the role of social factors and too little emphasis on personal agency and its restriction by the financial deprivation associated with unemployment, on a brand new and complex set of different cognitions and behaviors.

The criticism to this approach is centered in the excessive importance grant to the individual and cognitive behaviors instead of the unemployment related social aspects (Valero, 2003).

The **transactional-cognitive theory** of stress (or confrontation model), proposal by Richard Lazarus and is team (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988; Folkman 1984) is built on the assumption that exists an interdependence between the cognitions, the emotions and the behaviors. It's a perspective where we can find two processes, evaluation and coping or stress (i.e. the process to deal with internal and/or external needs that exceed or consume all the individual resources). According the authors the evaluation and coping are transactional processes, while they do not study the environment or the individual separately, but they bet in the integration of both in one single transaction. The evaluation (e.g the evaluation of an oppressive situation) involves a set of environment conditions that are evaluated by the individual. Coping, in its turn, includes answers (thoughts and behaviors) of confrontation that the individual uses to deal with the requirements of the transactions between it self and its environment. These answers would be of palliative type (i.e. break out) or control (directed to the problem).¹⁸

The authors consider that these strategies depend on an evaluation process composed for two phases: process of primary appreciation and secondary. The primary appreciation consists on an evaluation of the consequences that take place in a situation (of unemployment) whereas in the secondary appreciation process the personal and social resources are evaluated in order of estimate the results expectations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988; Valero, 2003). Lazarus and his team (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988; Folkman 1984) claims that it is precisely in this phase that more two variable more appears in the confrontation strategies choices: the process of guilty (to

¹⁸ In the case of the employment attainment, the first type of answers (more emotional) would have for purpose to reduce stress or the associated anxiety, but they were not aimed at the job search. In the second type, the individual strategies would aim the change or the elimination of stress, through the active job search (Valero, 2003).

be unemployed) and the control perceived in face of the situation (self-confidence, social support). If the sensation of control become visible the individual produces direct answers, however if happens the opposite (non control of the situation) the individual uses palliatives (e.g. to speak with other people about the difficulties or to carryout innocuous and disconnected alternative activities).

Despite the chance that the model has to predict the ex-trainees stress, this theory doesn't allow to foretelling the individual behavior (Villar, 1992, *op. cit.* Valero, 2003: 111). Moreover, some of the theoretical constructs are more subjectives than objectives and its not yet clarified if the confrontation is cause or effect of other significations, what it makes impracticable the establishment of causal relations (Valero, 2003).

9. Integrative Models

We have decide to feature this typology based on the fact that the paradigmatic badge of these models consists in recognizing the individual as an active agent in the employment attainment, integrating simultaneously character, structural and socio-economic variables, at the same time that are defined interactive relations between them.

In 1984 Stumpf, Colarelli & Hartman patents the model of **professional pathway analysis**. This theory puts in relation the individuals and the inborn cognitive elements, transforming them in employment attainment constraints. The central concept is the definition of path analysis (or professional searching). This means that a set of cognitive and behavioral that in intentional way generate information about employment, occupations or organizations (Figuera, 1996) either in situations of unemployment as throughout a professional pathway (Valero, 2003). Thus, Stumpf, Colarelli & Hartman (1984) argues that the individual behavior will be the result of the interaction of cognitive processes, behavioral and affective, that becomes a critical factor in the process of socio-professional insertion (i.e. where, how, how much, and what is searching related to the path). The authors claim that the analysis process (exploration) has three basic dimensions, that they keep between itself bidirectional causal influences: behavior (exploration process) the affective (reactions to the exploration) and the cognitive (beliefs concerning the exploration). These three dimensions have clearly applicability to the process of employment attainment. Stumpf and her partners consider that in the behavioral dimension (or exploration process), further than where, how, how much and what, we have to consider the intensity of job search. In the affective dimension (that represents the feelings or beliefs about the gotten information), it is necessary to also consider the degree of satisfaction with the results and the anxiety (or stress) disclosed during the process.

Finally, the cognitive dimension (beliefs) about the exploration is divided in three areas: 1) perception about the job market conditions, 2) the belief on the utility of the

behaviors and used exploration methods (i.e. job search) and 3) the importance awarded to the professional goals.¹⁹

The limitation further currently pointed to the model is the scarce importance conferred to the origin socio-economic, as explicative variable of the employment attainment.

The **vitaminic model** considered by Peter Warr (1987), establishes an analogy, of the vitamins effect on the body, to explain the effect that the social environment wield on the mental health. Thus, in employment/unemployment frameworks, and applying this model, it is possible to verify the mental health degree of the individual. This model was one that more empirical research generated (Valero, 2003). Warr (1987) claims the existence of eight characteristics, of any social environment, that establish the mental health: 1) the opportunity to have control on the environment, 2) the chance to use and to develop the individual and interpersonal skills and abilities, 3) the existence of objectives coming from the environment, 4) the variety, 5) the mental clarity, 6) the economic availability, 7) physical security and 8) the appraisal of the social status. The author adds that the lack or excess of a vitamin in the body can provoke weakening of the physical condition. So, applying this concept to any social environment it's possible to compare the level of mental health, between unemployment and employment circumstances. For example, the unemployed who have a deficit personal framing (e.g. little economic resources, lesser chance of control of the environment, less number and quality of aims and goals, less variety and clarity, minor degree of physical security, poorer social net, etc.) can reveal a lesser degree of mental health when compared with employed (Valero, 2003).

In the school-to-work transition, this model as some clarifying power about the consequences for the mental health that happen in the transition process for assorted environments, since we can know the involved characteristics in each one of the situations and compare them. Martinez (2000) argues that this model brought to research the fact of being the first one with integral shape. The employment attainment takes in account the individual factors (including those of psychological nature) and the social factors and their own interactions.

Very recently it was presented by Steve Fleetwood, in 2006, the labour markets **socioeconomic critical-realistic perspective** (critical-realist (oriented) socioeconomic labour markets). According this author there are currently two research tracks on the labour market: the generalized labour market, with a neoclassical grab, (also called mainstream labour market or MLM), where the social structures analysis is useless, and in the opposite direction, a labour market with a socioeconomic matrix, not systemize or broken up, that recognizes the embededness (Granovetter, 1991) of the markets in the social structures (i.e. regulation, resources, rules, habits, government, etc.). In this second type Fleetwood (2006) includes the approaches: marxist,

¹⁹ By the way, of this last area, Blanch (1990) found empirical evidences, in studies carried through with long term unemployed, that the feature "time of unemployment" affects in a inversely proportional order the job search behavior. That is, more time of unemployment corresponds less belief to find a job and, therefore, minor search intensity, until arriving almost to be inexistent. This author observed that despite beyond aid the insertion in the labour market, the intensity and the frequency of job search (exploration) smooth the progress of the exit of unemployment situations.

regulacionist, socioeconomic, institutionalists, as well other frameworks draw from industrial sociology, the labor legislation, the human resources management, the industrial relations and urban geography. The author shows openly care for the second way, and opposes the systematic notion (i.e. interrelated, integrative and inclusive) socioeconomic of the labour markets, around the critical-realist meta-theory that supplies the solid beddings to the construction of an alternative to the MLM hegemony. Face to this Fleetwood (2006) concludes that if the labour markets are social structures or emanate from social structures, then the interaction between social agents (i.e. people) and structures is that must be the foundation of the theory, drawing up the boundaries of the study field and legitimizing policy prescriptions (public and entrepreneurial).

Fine (2007) criticizes this perspective when arguing that Fleetwood does not define clearly what he understands for MLM, nor the capitalism or capitalism meanings, he doesn't present recent or future trends and the fact that includes a set of theories, the model becomes a simple composite of theoretical notions. Finally Fine (2007: 127) questioning "*...how we can speak about labour markets (given they are a single outcome of the capitalism) without approaching the analysis of the capital and the critical application of the economic policy categories, at least the value theory ?*"

10. Transition Theories (or Professional Careers Theories)

According some authors the transition-to-labour market theories are not yet enough developed, but they are indexed to the professional careers theories (Rogers & Creed, 2000), therefore, they have within the potential to validate formats and to legitimize interventions in the scope of employment achievement. The **learning theory** (through vocational guidance) is rooted in the theory of the social learning behavior (in contrast with the cognitive social theory proposed, by Albert Bandura)²⁰. This theory advocates that each individual is intelligent, pro-active, that interacts with its environment, in order to reach its goals and needs (Rogers & Creed, 2000). However the genetic heritage, the environment conditions, the planned and the unexpected events (and education/training experiences) influence the individual professional path (*idem*).

Therefore, to understand the individual phenomena it is essential to know the past and present personal frameworks and "how" those contexts affect the current individual perceptions (Herr, 1996; Rogers & Creed, 2000). This theory advocates that the activities of guidance and orientation should start about the seven years of schooling. It considers that the vocational tests have simple inferential function on the matching of the individuals to the professions (Rodrigues, 1997) and are useful to point new learning objectives (Rogers & Creed, 2000).

In this framework are mostly stimulated the interventions that promote learning situations, such as: working clubs programmes, the use of study resources as books, articles and videos, the simulation of occupational situations and other trainings, in a

²⁰ [(1971; *op. cit.* Rogers & Creed, 2000)]

cognitive and behavioral base, meant to promote the self-esteem (Martinez, 2000; Rogers & Creed, 2000).²¹

Others transition support practices (mainly in European education/training matrix systems) consigned in the context of this theory include, for instance, the specific technical training programmes sponsored by the industry, the school-workshop programmes, the tutorial programmes and the traineeships in companies (on job training). Thus, this theory can incorporate: techniques to promote the searching and the individual curiosity, activities of the discovery and learning (e.g. devices to job search, cognitive and behavioral simulations techniques), promotion of the theoretical and technical training of skills, use of evaluation/personality identification tests, the interests and the objectives and sponsorship and stimulation of self-esteem.

The **social cognitive career theory** (SCCT), proposed by Lent, Hackett & Brown (1996) was based in the Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory proposed in 1986²². It was not developed specifically to explain the transition process. For such fact we do not include it in the chapter meant to the cognitive base theories. However its statements offer us a proficient perspective to understand the transition process. Thus, it defines transition as gradual procedure that can start in the intermediate cycles of schooling and goes until the employment attainment, and doesn't concentrating, hence, at the moment subsequent to the end of an educative/training step (Chagas Lopes, 2007; Lent, Hackett & Brown, 1999). The three concept-key of this theory considered by the three authors are: the self-efficacy (auto-effectiveness), the outcomes expectations and the personal goals.

The self-efficacy refers to the expectations (Strauser & Berven, 2006) on the waited success of the individual skills. When a task is successfully executed goes, consequently, to increase the probability of the following tasks also is, raising, then, the self-efficacy. The outcomes expectations concerns to the beliefs that someone has about the expenditure of the effort applied to perform a single-minded task or activity. The personal goals (of life) basically have importance in the materialization of long term results, for instance, the finishing of a graduation or an employment attainment. When the individuals select objectives (and in this framing especially the young people) they guide their educative and vocational behaviors, that is, the goals are makers of individual motivation (Lent, Hackett & Brown, 1999).

The actions taken in the framework of the social cognitive career theory were specifically directed to point barriers (Strauser & Berven, 2006) and supports (Martinez, 2000) that the individuals find (or not) in the transition process to the labour market (Lent, Hackett & Brown, 1999).²³ In review, the transition process actions that follow this theory must hold up basically in: to recognize chances and

²¹ The counseling technicians and vocational guidance professionals have in this case a further protagonist role than the basic counseling and guidance, in the transition process; therefore they must take in account other elements that influence this process (Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999).

²² (*op. cit.* Martínez, 2000; Rogers & Creed, 2000)

²³ For instance, it is recommended that the individuals are encouraged to recognize the odds and resources (e.g. devices) to find jobs, as well as increase personal pillars systems (i.e. strong and weak ties) such as the family, the neighbors, acquaintances or colleagues, in order to help to hold up its vocational goals (Granovetter, 1995; Rogers & Creed, 2000).

resources, to promote support systems, to promote the skills updating abilities, to encourage individualized experiences, to review success performances and help to identify and to modify imperfect beliefs (Lent, Hackett & Brown, 1999; Rogers & Creed, 2000).

The application of this theory in the labour market transition scope has the inconvenience, according to some authors, that the self-efficacy variable has a much more complex nature than others (phobias or routines) traditionally related with this approach (Valero, 2003). Other investigators nominate as weakness, the exaggerated importance and a primordial role given to personal factors (e.g. personality features) to explain an entirely social phenomenon (*idem*).

The **life career rainbow model** was conceived by Super Donald (1991). This comprehensive model conceives the career as a countless of roles and shows those ones more important (in normative terms) that an individual plays throughout its life cycle (Chagas Lopes, 2007). Super (1991) emphasizes, equally, the importance of the personal features (biological and psychological) and circumstances (historical and socioeconomic) and the influence of the background on the individual vocational development (vocational path).

The name of the model come from its graphical representation: an arc, where in the left side are locate the personal characteristics (attitudes, motivation, skills and behaviors) and of the right side are represented social features that influence individual paths (family, community, school, group of pairs). Between these two groups there's an interaction and remain joined through the diverse overlapping arc that represents the stadium of the professional career, the distinct roles, throughout its vital cycle, as well the "self" (key element of the model). The basic principles described by Super (1991) are the existence of an interaction between the personal and social factors that explain the professional pathway. In this interaction we find the self (angular vertex of the system) that runs the own action. At the end their's the individual freedom to make life options (auto-concept or personal construct theory) (Leitão & Miguel, 2001). This means that is the individual who takes the decision to yield or not, in face of one or another type of pressures (personal character, family, social, politics or economics) (Valero, 2003). The critics are basically centered in the fact that the author don't explain as much as necessary what's the load of each feature in the employment attainment process (Martinez, 2000; Valero, 2003).

The **adjustment theory** (person-environment fit theory or theory of work adjustment - TWA) it was based on two complementary theories: **the model of the personality vocational types** developed by the psychologist John Holland (in 1997) (op. cit. Rogers & Creed, 2000), that is centered in the professional selection and guidance, with six personality types (Holland's hexagon) and the **profession adjustment theory** of Dawis and Lofquist (1984) (op. cit. Taveggia and Santos, 2001), that claims the vocational adjustment over all. In the European Union member states this last theory has been the classic and wide approach model in the domain of adult's guidance, (CEDEFOP, 2001). The bi-dimensional adjustment theory can be applied to the transition process, once it considers the environment and the individual at the same level and adjusting (matching) the individual to the job. There are 3 main principles.

The first one claims that the individuals look the environments that are congruent with its personality. Holland (1997) (op. cit. Rogers and Creed, 2000) claimed theoretically and *a posteriori*, in an empirical form, he identified six great dimensions of vocational interests and work environments: 1) realistic, 2) analytical, 3) artistic, 4) social, 5) entrepreneur and 6) conventional. According the theory, the individuals looks for environments where they can apply its qualifications, express its attitudes and values and assume congruent roles with its interests (or personalities).

The second one defends that the individual degree of adjustment to the environment is related with the attainment of significant results. Good results stimulates the personal satisfaction and the accomplishment, and inspire the behavior stability, than the barren results induces the individual to make adjustments or, in boundary, to leave the environment.

The third principle estimated the mutual adjustment, that is, the environment and the individual molds itself or adjusts itself mutually (Rogers & Creed, 2000). Traditionally the labour market transition mechanisms, centered on the environment, overlook the individual (*idem*). To overcome this problem many education and training systems, in general, and training and education institutions, in particular, had promoted guidance and counseling systems in an attempt to increase the individual awareness of the different available chances [Albert *et al*, 1998; Baptista, 1993; Korpi, *et al*, 2003; Neves & Graça (coord.), 2000; OECD, 2000; Rogers & Creed, 2000], therefore the knowledge of the needed standards skills in labour market also appears as a critical element of this theory.

Thus, the intervention plans on the school-to-labour market transition (i.e. the entry on working life), founded in the adjustment theory, includes: the identification and development of skills and individual values, the increase of the conscience of the skills required for the labour work, the increase of the awareness and information on the opportunities of education/training and work, the teaching of soft skills and the motivation to the continuous decisions evaluation.

The **development theory** (of the professional career) offers a practical model to understand how the individuals (special young) move themselves from school to the labour market. According this theory the main element consists of stimulating the conscience of choice (interests), through the search of information and of following planning, in order to select options (Savikas, 1999). The interests are closely related with the concepts of "value" and "need". The needs are the initial impulse to stimulate a behavior and emerge from a sense of emptiness. The values identify the kinds of reward that they could be gotten. The interests, in turn, disclose the way as the individual looks to the accomplishment of its values having in attention its needs. In assessment with the necessities and the values, the interests are less steady; therefore they depend on the individual framework (*idem*).

This theory identifies, thus, the tasks and interventions developed suitably to the several education levels, centered over all in: professional information and guidance, and decision and planning processes with four intervention methods (*ibidem*). These four interventions methods are: orientation to career, skills development oriented to career and searching planning, career management techniques training, and work

problems simulation (Rogers & Creed, 2000; Savikas, 1999). The orientation for the career stimulates the conscience of the trainees/students to the need to have a career as well to adopt positive attitudes for activities that develop the planning and the management of this same career. The training in career management techniques will allow that the individuals adopt correct behaviors with future co-workers and prepare them to multicultural work environments (Savickas, 1999). The simulation of work problems allows the individuals more best and based answers that will allow it to increase the capacity of adaptation to its first work (*idem*). In summary, the transition strategies actions, inspired on the development theory recognize: the encouragement of the career orientation, the sponsorship of positive attitudes guided for development career tasks, the training in career planning and management techniques skills and the training in problems overcome, through simulations.

11. Occupational Approaches

The aim of these theoretical approaches has a likelihood character on the placement of an individual in the labour market, having in balance the interactions between individual, social and structural variables. The common denominator to next two presented models is to describe the employment attainment in terms of potential engagement.

The **occupational labour model** (or employability psycho-sociological model) proposed by Blanch (1990) establishes an approach on the occupational insertion (Martinez, 2000) where get involved social and individual variables. The Blanch's model (1990) identifies a set of factors that influence the employment attainment, based in the following principles:) the causes to find (or not) a job are barely socio-economic nature, b) the socio-economic structure of chances are a necessary condition but not enough for the occupational labour, c) the employment/unemployment does not have a random behavior on the active population, d) the access of a candidate to a job depends, in part, of its *curriculum* characteristics articulated with the prerequisites, and e) the macroeconomic dimension and the social macro-actors actions influence the supply side (in the composition of the work opportunities structure). Relatively to this last principle Blanch (1990) argues that the social policy can, through corrective measures of social inequalities and curricular deficits, to strengthen the occupational odds to specific candidates.

The author classifies the "ocupability" as the odds degree of a candidate to find a work, taking in account the integration of structural and personal variables. So, this "ocupability" is function of two other variables: the "hiringability" and the "employability". According Blanch (1990) the "hiringability" shows the level of adequacy (i.e. adjustment or matching) of the candidate's bio-demographics and curricular characteristics to the job offer characteristics. This interaction comes out at the framework elements (labour market structure and trends), social and individual levels (e.g. *curriculum*, gender and age). Despite Josep Blanch (1990) have presented his theory one decade before McQuaid & Lindsay (2005), the meaning of "employability" follows closely the research line of the Scottish authors, as he defines it as the degree of adequacy of the latent psychosocial profile to the employed person typical profile. Blanch (1990) defends that the concept is affected by the following variables: labour values (instrumental and personal importance that the individual

award to the job), availability for the job, causes of the employment/unemployment and how to face the unemployment (amount and quality of used “employability” strategies).

Some authors (Martinez, 2000; Valero, 2003) including Blanch (1990) argue and recognize that there are some aspects related with the individual psycho-social profile (as a resulted of its socialization) that are not caring in this model.

The **labor placing model** proposed by the catalan professor Josep Montané (1993), despite that was drawn up for graduates (from universities), holds a set of research tracks with intrinsic value for the integrationists and holistic generated public policies. Montané (1993) argues that the odds of an individual to get a job depend on three factors: 1) the labour market, 2) the individual characteristics and 3) the techniques and processes of professional placing. The labour market inherent factors that go to define the supply and demand are restricted to causes that Montané (1993) calls political-economics. That is, the supply and demand flow goes to affect the amount of available chances and the number of candidates. This flow still determines the offers pre-requisites which include the needs upcoming from the labour market (e.g. age, gender, certificates or diplomas, experience, personal qualities). About the personal characteristics, the author, peak as foremost: a) the curriculum, demographic variables, diplomas, experience, time of unemployment, availability for the job and personal need, b) the aptitude of theoretic-practical learning and adaptation to the changes of the work market, c) the activities of insertion (related with the work search, that is, the use of devices), d) the labor availability (understood as the set of options that the individual is according to use, taking in account the diversity of occupations, the flexibility of the jobs characteristics and the time devoted to the job seeking), e) professional self-esteem (individual professional self-valuation), f) the occupational maturity (individual willingness to lifelong learning and ability of adaptation to a new job and its preservation).

Finally, respecting to techniques and processes of professional placing, that Montané (1993) calls employability aptitudes, are selected:) the knowledge of insertion (or occupational information) include the information that the individual has on the labour market, the job characteristics and the paths to get information (devices) and b) the employability behaviors that are related with the abilities to job search and with the decision to presenting itself to a selection procedure.

Despite the strong power of the model to clarify, Valero (2003) considers that the approach pass over the influence of variables as the socio-economic origin and the causalities of the described factors.

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In order to smooth the understanding of the ten main elements, they are summarized in the following tables that characterized the previous cited theories. The ten elements are found in the full set of theories. Even so nor do all reflect the whole of these components, since they lock up partial points of view.

1a.Theoretical Key-Elements

		Key Elements						
		EDUCATION	TRAINING	PERSONAL FEATURES	EXPERIENCE	PUBLIC POLICIES	LABOUR MARKET	ENTERPRISES FEATURES
MARXIST OR NEO-MARXIST INSIGHT THEORIES	Marxist Perspective	Ordered set and socially stratified. Economic function.	Ordered set and socially stratified. Economic function.	----	----	Settle on educative and training offers .	Regulated by the structural determinism . Supply regulates Demand.	
	Correspondence Theory (or control theory)	Establish by the capitalism demands. Status legitimacy function.	Establish by the capitalism demands. Status legitimacy function.	----	----	Settle on educative and training offers .	----	----
NEO-CLASSIC THEORIES	Human Capital Theory	Personal Investment. Chances leveling instrument.	Personal Investment. Chances leveling instrument.	----	Qualification Complement.	----	Bigger qualification corresponds to highest employability.	----
	Supply Point of View (and job search)	Personal Investment. Chances leveling instrument.	Personal Investment. Chances leveling instrument.	Establishes individual educational/training paths .	Qualification Complement.	----	It activates the job search.	----
CREDENTIALING APPROACHES	Credentialing Theory	Source of titles (or qualifications) and socialization element.	Source of titles (or qualifications)	----	----	The expansion of the education/training system enhance the schooling years.	----	----
	Screening Hypothesis	Indicator (or signaling) to differentiation .	Indicator (or signaling) to differentiation .	----	Rather on job after placement.	----	Competition is due to jobs and not by wages.	----
	Signalling Theory	System (and individual sign) to select the "best ones".	Personal sign of differentiation.	Differential individual indexes .	Personal sign of differentiation.	----	Bigger qualification could corresponds to highest employability.	----
	Reproduction Theory	It reproduces the stratification and class domination.	It reproduces the stratification and class domination.	Represent the status of the dominant group.	----	Trend to spread the educational policies .	----	----
STRUCTURALIST PERSPECTIVE	Segmentation Theories	It gives access to specific labour market segments.	It gives access to specific labour market segments.	It filter the access to labour market segments.	More importante in ILM and less in OLM.	They build the labour market, from both sides (supply and demand).	Sensible the conjunctural changes. Dual characteristic.	They shape the labour market.
SOCIOLOGIC BASED MODEL	Structure of Opportunities Model	Element of professional insertion chances.	Element of professional insertion chances.	Element of professional insertion chances.	----	----	It's controlled thought a socially multilevel structure.	----
REGULATIONIST APPROACH	Regulation Theory	Understood as a social right. It is a way of production and reproduction of the intellectual conditions.	Understood as a social right. It is a way of production and reproduction of the intellectual conditions.	----	----	They shape the labour market throught intervencionist and regulatory practices.	The social agents promote regulation. Supply dominates demand.	----

1b.Theoretical Key-Elements

		Key Elements										
		EDUCATION	TRAINING	PERSONAL FEATURES	EXPERIENCE	PUBLIC POLICIES	LABOUR MARKET	ENTERPRISES FEATURES	HR PRACTICES	EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS	EMPLOYMENT ATTAINMENT	AUTHOR(S)
ECONOMICS MODELS (OF JOB SEARCH)	Theoretical Model of Job Search	Probability calculatory variable of employment/unemployment.	Probability calculatory variable of employment/unemployment.	Settle job search.	----	----	Distribuição probabilística da oferta.	----	----	Calculatory variable to reservation wage.	Defined in terms of Job search.	Leslie Rosenthal, Robert Feinberg, Stephen Jones, Harry Holzer
	<i>Scarred Model</i>	Probability calculatory variable of employment/unemployment.	Probability calculatory variable of employment/unemployment.	Settle job search.	----	----	Distribuição probabilística da oferta, com fenómenos incisivos de histerese.	----	----	Calculatory variable to reservation wage.	Defined in terms of Job search.	Leslie Rosenthal, Richard Layard
COGNITIVE APPROACHES	Mental Incongruence theory	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	----	Settle element of professional insertion.	----	----	----	It's a product of physiological variables that evaluates employment.	Fritz Tazelaar
	Expectation-value Theory	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	----	Settle element of professional insertion.	----	----	----	It depends on personal variables about the relation employment/expectations/value	Martin Fishbein, Icek Ajzen, Norman Feather, Geoff O'Brien
	Candidate Theory	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	----	Settle element of professional insertion.	----	----	It drives to the concept of cancellation and/or coding	It depends on personal heuristic decisions (certain/uncertain).	Richard Bryant
	Models of Latent Functions (Deprivation Theory)	----	----	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	----	Context result, without influence in insertion.	----	----	Has psycho-social functions.	Has latent psycho-social functions	Marie Jahoda
	Agency Theory	----	----	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	----	----	----	----	Has psycho-social functions.	Has new psycho-social functions.	David Fryer, Roy Payne
	Transactional-cognitive Theory	----	----	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	----	----	----	----	----	Control or palliative functions of the stress behavior.	Richard Lazarus, Susan Folkman
INTEGRATIVE MODELS	Professional Pathway Analysis	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion. Socioeconomic origin with lower impact.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion, while generator of believes.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	It contains information in order to settle affective cognitions.	Constraint by the individuals and its own affective, cognitive and behavioural elements.	Stephen Stumpf, Elisabeth Astin, Karen Hartman
	Vitaminic Model	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	----	----	Constraint by social and individual factors and its own interactivity.	Peter Warr
	Socioeconomic Critical-realistic Perspective	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Result of the interaction between agents and social structures.	Embedded in social structures.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Result of the interaction between agents and social structures.	Settle element of professional insertion.	Conditionated by individuals, agents, public and private policies and social structures.	Steve Fleetwood

1c. Theoretical Key-Elements

		Key Elements											
		EDUCATION	TRAINING	PERSONAL FEATURES	EXPERIENCE	PUBLIC POLICIES	LABOUR MARKET	ENTERPRISES FEATURES	HR PRACTICES	EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS	EMPLOYMENT ATTAINMENT	AUTHOR(S)	
TRANSITION THEORIES <i>(or Professional Careers Theories)</i>	Learning Theory (through vocational guidance)	Constraint of employment attainment	Constraint of employment attainment	Constraint of employment attainment	Constraint of employment attainment	Supplier of elements for vocational guidance.	Supplier of elements for vocational guidance	Supplier of elements for vocational guidance	Supplier of elements for vocational guidance	Supplier of elements for vocational guidance	Is a result of individual and societal learnings.	Mary Rogers, Peter Creed	
	Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)	Employment attainment holder	Employment attainment holder	Holder (individual) and barrier (social) of employment attainment.	Employment attainment holder	Barrier of employment attainment	Barrier of employment attainment	Barrier of employment attainment	Barrier of employment attainment	Barrier of employment attainment	Gradual procedure, settle by barriers and holders. They define the vocational behaviour.	Albert Bandura, Robert Lent, Gail Hackett, Stevene Brown	
	Life Career Rainbow model	Personal settle element of professional insertion.	Personal settle element of professional insertion.	Personal and social settle element of professional insertion.	Personal settle element of professional insertion.	Structural and social settle element of professional insertion.	Structural and social settle element of professional insertion.	Structural and social settle element of professional insertion.	Structural and social settle element of professional insertion.	Social settle element of professional insertion.	Is a result of interaction between personal, social and structural settle elements.	Donald Super	
	Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA)	Critical matching factor	Critical matching factor	Matching factor	Matching factor	Matching factor	Matching factor	Matching factor	Matching factor	Matching structural factor	Matching factor (reciprocal)	It results from the reciprocal matching between environment and the individual.	John Holland, René Dawis, Lloyd Lofquist
	Development Theory (of the professional career)	It results from directionned interests.	It results from directionned interests.	They settel values and need.	It results from directionned interests.	Critical element in establish the choices.	Critical element in establish the choices.	Critical element in establish the choices.	Critical element in establish the choices.	Critical element in establish the choices.	Critical element in establish the choices.	It results from choices and interests specifically pointed.	Mark Savickas
OCCUPATIONAL APPROACHES	Occupational Labour Model	Individual settle element of "hiringability".	Individual settle element of "hiringability"	Social and individual settle element of "hiringability".	Individual settle element of "hiringability"	Structural settle element of "hiringability"	Structural settle element of "hiringability"	Structural settle element of "hiringability"	Structural settle element of "hiringability"	Settle element of oportunities supply.	Probabilistic character, while as interactions between structural, social and individual variables.	Josep Maria Blanch	
	Labour Placing Model	Probabilistic element of professional insertion.	Probabilistic element of professional insertion.	Probabilistic element of professional insertion.	Probabilistic element of professional insertion.	Economic and policy factor.	Economic and policy factor	It supplies elements to information and techniques.	It supplies elements to information and techniques.	It supplies elements to information and techniques.	Settle by elemtns, devices and information.	Josep Montané	

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