

Training & Employment

Recognition of Higher Education Graduates' Competences on European Labour Markets

The number of students attending higher education institutions has more than doubled in Europe during the last twenty-five years. The resulting flow of graduates on the labour market may justify the doubts expressed about these young people's career prospects, given the present economic and social trends. In this context, the European Union has opted for increasing the level of education, and the wager seems to have paid off. In a survey conducted in fifteen European countries, it was established that the graduates questioned quickly obtained long-lasting employment and that they were satisfied on the whole with their occupational situation. Although there exist some disparities depending on factors such as country, field of study and gender, it was concluded that the competences of young European graduates are generally recognized in their jobs.

At the extraordinary Lisbon Council meeting on higher education in March 2000, the European Union adopted the objective of promoting a society and an economy giving an increasingly important role to the development of knowledge. Training and higher education are key points in this strategy. The number of students attending higher education institutions in Europe has more than doubled on average during the last twenty-five years. Higher levels of education should enable graduates to obtain jobs as managers, supervisors and experts much more easily than was previously the case. But what are the chances that their competences and their potential will be valued at work? The REFLEX survey (*Research into Employment and Professional Flexibility*) (see the inset on page 3) provides some answers to this question. This research was carried out in 2005 on 40,000 young higher education leavers five years after they graduated in fifteen European countries: Austria, Belgium (Flanders), the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The REFLEX survey sheds light on the first steps in these graduates' careers on various labour markets and shows the common European trends, as well as pinpointing the specificities of each country.

Some positive conclusions can be drawn from the information provided by these respondents. From the transition-to-work point of view, most of them quickly found permanent employment. Two thirds of them had not undergone any periods of unemployment since they graduated. Five years after graduating, only 4% were unemployed. Three-quarters of the respondents from fifteen European countries were working as managers or "professionals" (for a definition of this term, see the margin on page 2), 19% were in intermediate occupations and 7% had been recruited as clerks or skilled workers. Most of the respondents agreed that there existed strong links between the content of their training and the quality of their jobs. In addition, they felt that their competences were recognized and that they contributed personally to introducing innovations at their firm.

These results are therefore encouraging on the whole. However, some striking disparities between countries can also be observed in terms of the modes of transition to work, the quality of the jobs obtained, the graduates' opinions about their study programme, and women's place on labour markets.

Specific patterns of transitions to work in each country

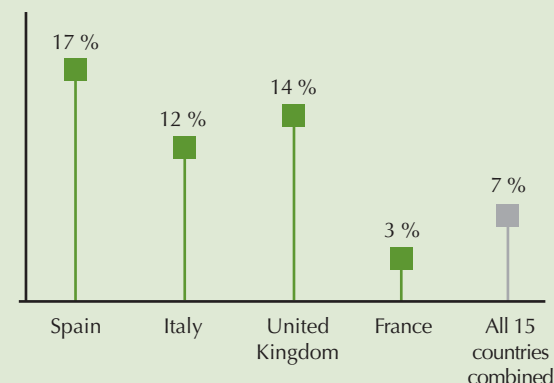
Five years after the end of their training, three-quarters of these graduates had obtained stable jobs and 80% were working full time. Half of them had immediately found stable positions when first recruited, and more than 40% were still working with their first employer. However, young graduates do not all join the labour market under equally favourable conditions.

■ Some indicators based on the 2005 REFLEX survey

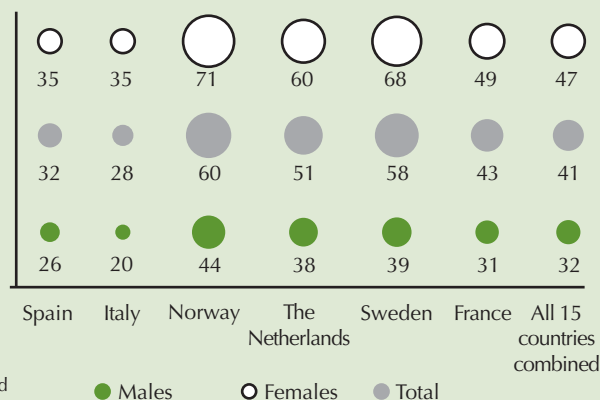
	Rate of unemployment in 2005		Young people still in their first job (%)	Temporary contracts in 2005 (%)	Use of skills and knowledge in their current work in 2005
	Females	Males			
Austria	6 %	4 %	41 %	21 %	76 %
Belgium (Flanders)	2 %	3 %	44 %	20 %	72 %
Czech Republic	3 %	2 %	58 %	13 %	67 %
Estonia	2 %	1 %	36 %	13 %	75 %
Finland	5 %	3 %	43 %	23 %	78 %
France	8 %	9 %	43 %	15 %	73 %
Germany	5 %	5 %	46 %	24 %	72 %
Italy	10 %	4 %	52 %	28 %	70 %
Netherlands	4 %	3 %	39 %	19 %	72 %
Norway	3 %	2 %	36 %	12 %	81 %
Portugal	7 %	3 %	38 %	27 %	88 %
Spain	11 %	5 %	28 %	35 %	67 %
Sweden	3 %	2 %	45 %	19 %	83 %
Switzerland	4 %	4 %	38 %	23 %	75 %
United Kingdom	3 %	5 %	30 %	16 %	67 %
Total	5 %	3 %	41 %	20 %	72 %

Scope: young people who graduated in 2000 with 2nd or 3rd cycle University degrees or specialized (commercial, engineering, medical, social, architects') qualifications.
Source: the REFLEX survey.

• Proportion of graduates feeling that their current job was not appropriate to their higher education in 2005



• Proportion of graduates employed in the public sector in 2005 (%)



The term “**professional**” is used here in line with the international standard classification of occupations (ISCO) to mean occupations requiring a higher educational degree, such as those of top executives, engineers, computer engineers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, architects, physicians, etc.

In the REFLEX SURVEY, 19 specific competences acquired during training or mobilised at work were selected. The definitions of these competences involve the use of some other fairly synonymous terms such as “abilities”, “skills”, “faculties”, “knowledge”, “aptitudes”, etc.

Considerable differences were observed between graduates from Nordic and Central European countries, who enjoyed more favourable conditions of transition to work, and those from Southern countries. In Spain, Italy, and Portugal, young people’s careers tended to start with a fairly long period of job-hunting and several short-term contracts. Although on average, almost half of the graduates from the fifteen countries started off with fixed-term contracts, this figure amounted to 70% in Spain and almost 60 % in Italy and Portugal.

French graduates were in an intermediate situation. It took them longer than average to find their first job and they had undergone slightly longer than average periods of unemployment at the time of the survey. At the beginning of their working lives, they showed fairly similar rates of mobility to those of other European graduates: 43% were still in their first job, versus 41% among those from other countries. Most of the French graduates surveyed did not obtain stable jobs straight away. Five years after leaving the higher education system, however, many of them were in stable employment, in line with the Norwegians, Estonians and Czechs.

Strong links between training and employment

In view of the increasingly large numbers of students entering higher education, many European countries feared that a gap might develop between the qualifications obtained and the number of jobs available for graduates. However, these young people, most of whom had secured managerial or professional positions, were not really aware of this gap. Only 7% declared that their work was not up to their level of education. This percentage varied considerably from one country to another, however, since it ranged from 3% in the case of the French and Norwegian respondents to 14% and 17% in that of their British and Spanish counterparts, respectively.

Three-quarters of these European graduates therefore stated that the knowledge and skills acquired during their initial education were being used in their current occupational activities. More than half of them felt they had been suitably employed since obtaining their first job. In their opinion, “mastery of their own field”, “analytical thinking” and “ability to

acquire new knowledge" were the main strong points acquired thanks to their higher education. Many of them expressed the view that their study programme gave them a good basis for further learning, starting work, performing their current tasks, and their future career. When asked about the weak points in their higher education, graduates first mentioned "ability to write and speak in a foreign language", followed by "to assert their authority" and "to negotiate efficiently". Only 20% of the respondents stated that their studies had provided them with useful entrepreneurial skills for setting up their own business. Although the French graduates' responses were fairly similar to those of the other Europeans, they differed in one respect: looking back, many of them (71 %) said they would choose the same study programme at the same higher education establishment if they had to do it again. They were therefore fairly satisfied with their study programme, whereas the Spaniards questioned were much more critical, since only half of them gave this answer.

Innovation was another topic addressed in the questionnaire. Globalization has greatly sharpened competition in many economic sectors. Information and communication technology is playing an increasingly important role in occupational spheres and young European workers have to keep up with these changes. In fact, more than half of these graduates stated that they had contributed personally to introducing innovations at their firms and institutions. This figure varied, however, depending on whether the innovations consisted of "technology, tools or instruments" (36%), "new products or services" (47%), or "knowledge or methods" (63%). In all sectors of activity, young people from Nordic countries (Norway and Finland) seem to be more frequently involved in innovation processes, whereas French and German graduates are less frequently involved.

Other questions focused on the graduates' work experience during their studies, their stays in other countries, and their participation in the activities of associations. In this respect, the French respondents obtained an average score, whereas the Dutch and Belgians obtained the highest and lowest scores, respectively. In terms of students' mobility, French graduates had studied abroad more frequently than most of their European counterparts: almost one third of the French, Austrian and German participants (had taken part in Erasmus exchanges, for example), whereas the average figure was only 20%. Only 3% of these young people had worked in other countries at the time of the survey, usually in neighbouring countries: French graduates in Switzerland, Austrians and Dutch in Germany, Belgians in the Netherlands, and Norwegians in Sweden.

Two unique European surveys

The REFLEX project carried out by a consortium of research groups from sixteen countries (fifteen European countries and Japan) was coordinated by the Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market at the University of Maastricht (the Netherlands). The aim of this project, which was partly funded by the European Union as part of the sixth Research and Development Framework Programme, was to answer three questions: which competences acquired by graduates are required by their employers? How do higher education institutions contribute to setting up these competences? What tensions arise between graduates, educational institutions and employers, and how could these tensions be solved? This survey focused on young people who graduated in 2000 with 2nd or 3rd cycle University degrees or specialized (commercial, engineering, medical, social, architects') qualifications, who were questioned five years after completing their studies. The countries involved were Austria, Belgium (Flanders), the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The respondents were representative of the various types of higher establishment in each country. The mean response rate obtained was 30%, and this percentage ranged from 70% in Sweden to 18% in Estonia. Nearly 40,000 young people in all, 60% of whom were women, took part in this unique survey in Europe. The questionnaire used for this purpose included about one hundred questions about the graduates' studies and their occupational situation. For further information, see: www.fdewb.unimaas.nl/roa/reflex/

This project made use of a previous European survey known as CHEERS (Careers After Higher Education: A European Research Survey), which was carried out in 1999 by some members of the present consortium and was coordinated by the International Centre for Higher Education Research at the University of Kassel (Germany). Almost 35,000 young people, half of whom were women, responded to the previous survey: they had graduated in 1995 at some of the higher educational establishments included in this study in eleven European countries and Japan. For further information, see: www.uni-kassel.de/incher/cheers

Female employment between progress and resistance

An unprecedented increase in female employment has been occurring in all European countries since the early sixties. The REFLEX survey confirms that occupational equality has progressed: women are gaining access increasingly to high-level jobs. Five years after graduating, equal numbers of men and women had obtained "professional" positions. In Austria, Norway and France, women were even ahead of men in this respect.

This does not mean, however, that all women graduates escape problems such as unemployment, limited access to managerial positions, part-time employment and relegation to specific jobs and sectors of activity. Women tend to have better educational records than men, but they position themselves less successfully on the labour markets. France is no exception as far as the gender differential is concerned: France is one of the countries showing the greatest differences between men's and women's wages, just after Estonia.

The average unemployment rate among young female graduates in the fifteen countries studied was 5% (versus 3% in the case of men). The gap between the unemployment rates of men and women is greater in Spain, Italy and Portugal, where women face much greater difficulties than men: their unemployment rates were twice those of men in 2005; whereas in France, although

See also

- *The Flexible Professional in the Knowledge Society: General Results of the REFLEX Project*, J. Allen and R. van der Velden, Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market, Maastricht University, the Netherlands, 2007.
- *Careers of University Graduates, Views and Experiences in Comparative Perspectives*, U. Teichler (Ed), Higher Education Dynamics 17, Springer, United Kingdom, 2007.
- "Être diplômé de l'enseignement supérieur, un atout pour entrer dans la vie active" (Being a higher education graduate, an asset for joining the labour market) J. Calmand and P. Hallier, *Céreq, Bref* no. 253, June, 2008.
- "Higher Education and Graduate Employment", J.-J. Paul, U. Teichler, and R. van der Velden (Eds), *European Journal of Education*, special issue, 35(2), 2000.

women's unemployment rate is fairly high (8%), it does not differ much from that of men.

Another black spot is the fact that most managers' positions are still held by men. In Estonia, for example, many of these jobs go to young graduates but the balance is greatly in favour of males (34% of the men questioned were managers, versus 17% of the women). France ranked third in this respect, after Estonia and Switzerland: 9% of the women questioned and 17% of the men were managers.

Because of gender differences in the educational process, men and women tend to end up in different occupations and economic sectors. Almost one third of the men and only 7% of the women had taken engineering courses. On the other hand, one third of the women had obtained degrees in fields such as the Social Sciences, the Arts and the Humanities, as compared with only 13% of the men. The field of study chosen affects the type of employment obtained. Only 10% of the women graduates had been recruited as scientists and technical engineers, versus 31% of the males. In France, the figures are 10% for women, but only 24% for men. France obtained the lowest score (along with Norway) of all the European countries, in terms of the numbers of male engineers recruited.

Women were present in varying numbers in all the economic sectors. Women graduates frequently held jobs in education, health and commerce, but less often in the manufacturing industries. However, the public sector is the main employer of women in all European countries. Half of the women in activity, as opposed to only one third of the men, work in this sector in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands. France scored average in this respect: 49% of the women and 31% of the men were employed in the public sector.

As regards non standard types of employment (temporary and part-time contracts), women again came out top. At the time of the survey, 22% of the female graduates and 17% of the males still had only fixed-term contracts. Apart from this common trend observed among all fifteen countries, some national specificities emerged. Temporary employment is much more frequent in Southern countries, especially in Spain, than in the Nordic ones, where the legislation and the power of the unions tend to restrict this practice. Part-time work is another national specificity. A quarter of the women questioned work less than thirty-two hours per week for their company or institution, versus only 9% of the men. The gender differential is even more conspicuous in countries with high

rates of female unemployment, such as Spain, Italy and Portugal, whereas in the Netherlands, part-time jobs enable women to gain access to the labour market.

Similar conclusions reached in two European surveys

There exist many points of convergence between European countries in terms of youth transition to work and graduates' perception of their previous studies. The results of the REFLEX survey lead to similar conclusions to those reached six years previously in the CHEERS survey (see the inset on page 3): higher education graduates are in an enviable position because they do not have to cope with the same hardships as other young people. Two thirds of them (68% in 2005 and 64% in 1999) were satisfied with their occupational situation at the time of the survey. Most of them felt that their jobs were appropriate to the knowledge and skills acquired at higher institutions and stated that they had contributed personally to introducing innovations at their company. In this respect, the French respondents ranked roughly in the middle of both cohorts of graduates: the Italians and Spaniards were the least satisfied with their occupational situation, whereas the Norwegians, Austrians and Belgians were the most satisfied. In fact, the more stable their employment status was, the more satisfied the respondents were.

Are these young graduates well prepared for forthcoming social changes? In response to this question, these young people said that their studies had trained them to quickly assimilate new knowledge and to adapt. However, they also admitted to lacking some skills, such as "ability to use computers and the internet", "willingness to question their own and others' ideas", "ability to come up with new ideas and solutions", and "alertness to new opportunities". According to these former students, little attention was paid to developing these competences at their higher education institutions.

The advent of the latest technological innovations and their fast uptake are leading to jobs being created and transformed in several sectors. The stakes for Europe consist in providing young graduates with a high level of education and enabling them, once they have joined the labour market, to maintain the value of the competences acquired.

*Christine Guégnard, Julien Calmand,
Jean-François Giret, Jean-Jacques Paul
(Céreq, IREDU/CNRS)*

Further reading

- "Comparaison internationale : à la recherche de jeunes diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur compétents en informatique" (An international comparison: in search of young graduates with computer skills), J.-J. Paul, J. Murdoch, *Formation Emploi* no. 82, April-June, La Documentation française, 2003.
- "Génération 2004, des jeunes pénalisés par la conjoncture" (Generation 2004, young people penalised by the economic situation), O. Joseph, A. Lopez, F. Ryk, *Céreq, Bref* no. 248, January 2008.

ISSN - 1156 2366

Céreq

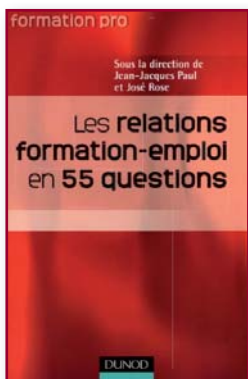
Direction de la publication : Michel Quéré. Rédacteur en chef : Jean-Louis Kirsch. Traduction et adaptation : Jessica Blanc. Pao : Dominique Bally
Reproduction of (part or all of) the material published in this issue is authorised on condition the source is explicitly mentioned.
Dépôt légal 1er trimestre 2009.

10, place de la Joliette,
BP 21321,
13567 Marseille cedex 02.
Tél. 04 91 13 28 28.
Fax 04 91 13 28 80.
<http://www.cereq.fr>

Briefing

New Publications

A recent publication by members of Céreq



Les relations formation-emploi en 55 questions

[The relationships between training and employment in 55 questions]

> Coordinators : Jean-Jacques Paul and José Rose

All the experts working in economic and social spheres agree that the relationships between training, employment and work constitute a crucial challenge. In this volume, more than 50 specialists, many of whom are from Céreq, present findings which provide food for thought, challenge commonly held assumptions and suggest some lines on which future actions could be based.

Dunod, October 2008, 350 pages. Available at bookshops or directly from the publisher. ■

Les usages de la base de données REFLET

[The use of the REFLET database. A seminar held in June 2008]

Net.Doc 40, July 2008

> Françoise Kogut-Kubiack, Jean-Louis Kirsch (*Eds*)

INTERNET
Net.Doc

In June 2008, Céreq organised a seminar, which was attended by twenty or so users of the database called REFLET (Regards sur les flux de l'enseignement technique et professionnel: Looking at the technical and occupational educational flows). Since the number of users of the database has increased with time, it seemed to be worth examining how they had appropriated it, while thinking about its future. Research workers from Céreq and its Associated Centres, as well as several outside users spoke about how they used REFLET, based on the following four themes:

- Analysis of occupational fields,
- Analysis of occupational training paths and levels,
- Comparative European studies,
- The links between REFLET and other tools.

Although various possible lines of development were suggested, two points in particular were stressed by all the participants. On the one hand, there is the fact that the historical approach adopted by REFLET is of exceptional interest, in terms of both the length of the period covered and the significance of the genealogical information provided. On the other hand, there is the quality of the service provided by this database, in terms of both the ergonomics of this tool and the readiness of those in charge to respond to even non standard requests. ■

Les chemins de la formation vers l'emploi. 1^{ère} biennale formation-emploi-travail

[Paths from training to employment. Proceedings of the 1st. Biannual Meeting on Training, Employment and Work]

Relief no. 25, May 2008

This issue of RELIEF contains the proceedings of the first Biannual Meeting on Training, Employment and Work organized by Céreq. To address the theme «Paths from Training to Employment», projects of three kinds have been launched: the Statistical Branch Portraits, which give a picture of the current situation in specific occupational branches and provide material for prospective analyses, including those in which future employment requirements are predicted; studies on the changing training supply in higher educational spheres; and the initial results of the third survey on young people who left the educational system seven years previously. The aim of these biannual meetings is to present data which can be used to compare the points of view of orchestrators working at the supervisory ministries on which Céreq depends, as well as those of other ministries, local authorities, social partners, and public and private institutions dispensing initial and continuing vocational training. ■

DOCUMENTS
RELIEF



New Publications

L'expertise formation-emploi à l'épreuve des territoires. Premières rencontres interrégionales Céreq - DARES - inter CARIF OREF

[Expertise in training and employment stands the territorial test – The first interrégional Céreq-DARES-inter CARIF OREF meeting]

Relief no. 26, June 2008

The need for expertise in the field of training and employment started in the early 1970s under the Sixth national Plan, and was subsequently driven by the process of decentralisation of vocational training launched in 1985. Since the 1990s, training and employment policies have been decentralized, which has led to a process of contractualisation. Recent legislative measures have promoted initiatives in favour of employment, transition to work and vocational training at the level of the French regions. It is not just a question of how the scope of administrative bodies is defined, but also a matter of alliances between players who manage to reach agreements about the operations to be carried out within a given perimeter. Expertise in the field of training and employment is therefore being applied under entirely new conditions. All the regions in France are now endowed with new of observation and information systems based on agreements between regional councils and the State. In this context, the occupational branches are being encouraged to deploy prospective methods at both regional and local levels. In parallel, expertise in the field of training and employment is also developing at the infra-regional level: departments, geographical areas and urban communities are investing in monitoring and information systems focusing on employment, transition to work and information. The main aim of this symposium was to take stock of a number of experiments with various goals (such as collecting information about occupations, career guidance, making occupational paths safer and working hand in hand with the occupational branches) which foreshadow the new forms of cooperation currently taking shape. ■

Les services d'information, de conseil et d'orientation professionnelle des adultes : un appui aux transitions professionnelles ?

[Services providing adults with occupational information, advice and career guidance: a means of promoting transition to work/occupational transitions]

Relief no. 27, July 2008

> Coralie Perez and Elsa Personaz, with the assistance of Philippe Cuntigh and Sébastien Segas

For several years, there has been a move in Europe to promote the development of occupational information, advice and career guidance services, which are expected to improve or even organize transition to work processes on labour markets. The aim of a comparative European study which was completed in June 2007 was to examine why career guidance was placed on five European countries' political agenda and to describe what it consists of and the players and stakes involved. This study made it possible in particular to compare the modes whereby the information, advice and career guidance services run for adults said to be "at risk" in the United Kingdom, Slovenia, Germany, Spain and France. There exist some striking differences between these countries in terms of both their Welfare State traditions and the development of career guidance services for adults and the forms they take. The results of these investigations confirmed the validity of the hypothesis that career guidance plays a strategic role in a context where occupational statuses and internal markets are constantly being degraded. In the large field studies conducted, the conditions under which these services are provided were investigated, focusing on the status of the service providers, the economic issues involved and the types of professionals engaged for this purpose, depending on the type of transition process targeted by these services. Lastly, a typology was drawn up of the services corresponding to various kinds of career guidance. This document was based on the material collected on the case of France during the study, which was conducted at both national and regional levels. It therefore provides some useful responses to the questions raised and the hypotheses put forward by the European research group. ■



DOCUMENTS
RELIEF

Le pilotage de l'orientation tout au long de la vie. Le sens des réformes

[Piloting people's careers throughout their lives. The reason for the reforms]

Nef no. 29, July 2008

> Isabelle Borras, Thierry Berthet, Etienne Campens and Claudine Romani

The aim of this document was to inform national and regional decision-makers in France about the ongoing reforms in the field of career guidance at schools and in occupational settings and to suggest some possible lines of novel public action. After reviewing the successive public policies adopted in this respect and explaining what contribution career guidance is now being expected to make in view of the changing patterns of work, employment and occupational training, some questions are addressed such as the individualisation of these services, their territorialisation and the development of quality standards. The following three parts then deal with the internal reforms being carried out in three relatively autonomous areas: career guidance at schools, occupational guidance for job-seekers, and occupational guidance for employees. Since these national reforms reflect a wider movement, which has been mediated by the OCDE and the European Commission, comments have been added to each of these points giving the international point of view. ■

Les choix d'orientation à l'épreuve de l'emploi

[Will the choice of career withstand ordeal by employment?]

Nef no. 30, July 2008

> Isabelle Borras, Agnès Legay and Claudine Romani

Six years after the end of their initial training, what did youths who had difficulty in joining the labour market feel *a posteriori* about the relevance and utility of their choice of career? Now that they are working adults or adults in search of employment, how do they assess these early decisions? Are they satisfied with the jobs to which they led and with any subsequent turns in their occupational paths? What do they feel about the significance of the occupational know-how they have since acquired? To answer these questions, Céreq carried out a special survey on sixty-eight youths with all levels of occupational training who had left the educational system in 2001 and had difficulty in accomplishing the transition to work, as described in the present paper. ■

Panorama sectoriel de la relation formation-emploi. Une exploitation des portraits statistiques de branche

[A sectoral panorama of the relationship between training and employment. A study based on statistical branch portraits]

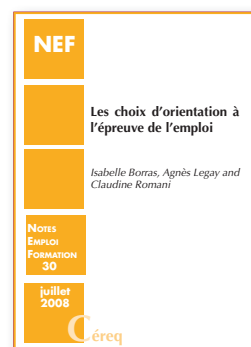
Nef no. 31, July 2008

> Dominique Fournié and Christophe Guitton

The changing relationships between training and employment in the main economic sectors from 1994 to 2006 have been characterised in France by a two-fold process: job qualification levels have been increasing and so have individuals' qualification levels. Job qualification levels have increased because there are fewer unskilled jobs, the numbers of skilled jobs have stabilised and the numbers of jobs in the higher categories have increased. Individual qualification levels have increased because of the move to improve education, which has led to people undergoing longer studies and obtaining higher qualifications on the whole. These two processes have not been exactly contemporaneous, however, and this has caused the structure of qualifications to become top-heavy: firms have been appointing candidates with increasingly high qualifications to positions in all the occupational categories. This trend is even more obvious if one compares those in the under-30 age group with the over-50s. Qualification standards have therefore definitely been changing at all socio-occupational levels in all sectors of activity. ■

DOCUMENTS
NEF

■ These publications are available at the Céreq bookstore or by mail order to Marie-Christine Antonucci, Céreq, 10, place de la Joliette, BP 21321, 13567 Marseille cedex 2. Tel. 33 (0)4 91 13 28 89 Fax 33 (0)4 91 13 28 80. E-mail: antonucci@cereq.fr. Orders must be accompanied by payment (please include 4 € for postage and handling).



De la mobilité des cerveaux

[Brain migration revisited]

> Annie Vinokur

The “brain drain/brain gain” debate is raging again after thirty years of respite, based on better empirical data but the same conceptual framework, which is static, retains nation states as the pertinent space of analysis, and assumes labour demand to be exogenous. Starting from opposite premises, we suggest to distinguish between two types of migration flows. One, potentially reversible, concerns the tradable, for-profit productive occupations, the location of which are directly controlled by capital’s global strategies. The other, self sustaining, refers to the non-traded, not-for profit occupations which cater for the reproduction of the labour force, under the budgetary constraints laid upon the states by their competition to attract capital flows.

Le non-retour des étudiants étrangers : au-delà de la « fuite des cerveaux »

[Non-return of foreign students: beyond the “brain drain”]

> Ridha Ennafaa and Saeed Paivandi

This article re-examines the question of the return of foreign students to their home countries after their studies. It is based on a survey by the French Observatory of Student Life (OVE) carried out in 2005 among 1,715 foreign students in ten French universities. The article uses international documentation to show, in its first part, the changes in the “brain drain” paradigm, its connection with study abroad and its limits. The second part deals with the future plans of the foreign students surveyed. This paper aims to contribute to the renewal of questions about the significance of international mobility among students, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the question of nonreturn in view of the setup of systems aimed at improving the selection and hosting of candidates for education in France.

Mobilité internationale des étudiants et débuts de vie active

[International Mobility of Students and Early Career]

> Harald Schomburg and Ulrich Teichler

Surveys undertaken a few years after graduation which examine the educational and life paths of the respondents in retrospect, indicate impressive proportions of border-crossing mobility. The information provided by the REFLEX study and other studies suggest that

persons internationally experienced prior to graduation or shortly after are clearly more likely to be internationally mobile and are clearly more likely to take over jobs at home which require international competencies. This confirms a strong “horizontal” link between international learning and experience on the one hand and international work on the other hand.

L'autre réalité du programme Erasmus : affinité sélective entre établissements et reproduction sociale des étudiants

[The other reality of the Erasmus programme: selective affinity between establishments and social reproduction of students]

> Magali Ballatore and Thierry Blöss

The spectrum of student migrations has broadened in Europe in recent years. A study of it reveals the transnational social and political logics which implement them. In other words, the individual capacities attributed to migrant students are closely linked to their educational and social characteristics, which are reflected in a growing diversification of student careers. This article considers the Erasmus system, an exchange programme between students within the European community. It is based on a comparative analysis between three countries: France, Great Britain and Italy. It aims to stress that despite a principle of reciprocal exchanges, the concrete relations between universities are based on logics of “selective affinities” which reveal the relatively elitist character of the programme and also reinforce the migratory imbalances already existing between the countries concerned.

La déqualification ouvrière en question

[The deskilling of unskilled workers in question]

> Armelle Gorgeu and René Mathieu

Like white-collar workers, unskilled workers are concerned by the shift from the qualification model to the skills model, which is accompanied by a reappraisal of unskilled workers’ qualifications. This means that new jobs are created without reference to the classifications of collective labour agreements. This article concerns the automobile sector (manufacturers and suppliers). Based on qualitative information gathered from union representatives, factory managers and unskilled workers, it shows that unskilled worker qualification is in question in this industry, linked in particular to the continual readjustments in work organisation, the practices of flexible employment and labour, and selective recruitment.



■ This issue may be ordered from La Documentation française.

- Issue price: 16 €.
- Special issue: 20 €.
- One-year subscription (4 issues): 56.20 € for France, 59.80 € for Europe, 60.90 € for the French overseas departments and territories, 64.10 € elsewhere.