

Training & Employment

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM CEREQ AND ITS ASSOCIATED CENTRES

GENERATION '98

Who benefited from the economic upturn?

With the modest economic recovery of the late 1990s, young people leaving initial training in 1998 (see Box below) gained more rapid and lasting access to employment than their predecessors who had left school or university in 1992. Those, notably among the least qualified, who faced persistent unemployment were less numerous. However, the ones who benefited most from this improved economic situation were those with the most qualifications and the disparities in the school-to-work transition increased between training levels. Céreq's 2001 survey of this population also brings out the varied paths taken by the school-to-work transition. While the majority surveyed gained rapid, lasting access to employment, certain trajectories, far from being linear, included periods of training, a return to studies or temporary interruptions of employment.

The young people leaving the French educational system in 1998 reflect a continuation of the developments marking earlier generations over the past fifteen years: they were more numerous and their overall training level was higher. Indeed, some 750,000 of them entered the labour market in 1998, as compared to 660,000 in 1992. Among them, the proportion of higher-education graduates, which has been rising regularly for several decades, went from 33 percent in 1992 to 38 percent in 1998. At the same time, the proportion of young people without qualifications declined, going from one-fourth in 1992 to one-fifth in 1998. The progress of young women, already discernable in 1992, was accentuated; they were more often higher-education graduates than young men and their probability of entering the labour market at these training levels was multiplied by 1.4, as opposed to 1.2 for their male counterparts. Nonetheless, the gender distribution in the different training areas remained very unequal.

AN ECONOMIC UPTURN FAVOURABLE TO THE 1998 GENERATION

If the transition of the young people leaving the educational system in 1992 took place in an unfavourable context, notably marked by a high unemployment rate and a decline in the number of recruitments, that of the 1998 leavers benefited from a substantial improvement in the labour

market during the 1998-2001 period. The decrease in unemployment which had begun in 1997 accelerated as of January 1999 and by March 2001, it was at 8.8 percent of the labour force, the lowest level since 1992. At the same time, the employment recovery, which had begun in January 1997, intensified. During this period, the number of jobs rose sharply in the tertiary sector, and overall, the increase in full-time jobs was greater than that of part-time ones. Temp work, and fixed-term employment in general, also showed a sharp increase.

However, this economic upturn did not offer the same benefits to all the young people entering the labour market from school or university in 1998. The improvement in their transition varied with their training level and specialisation.

GENERATION '98: WHO ARE THE YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEYED?

- Students or apprentices,
- they were enrolled in secondary school or university in 1997-1998
 - they left the educational system in 1998
 - they did not resume their studies during the year following their entry into the labour market
 - they were queried in spring 2001 for the Generation '98 survey (cf. p. 7)

CENTRE D'ÉTUDES ET DE RECHERCHES SUR LES QUALIFICATIONS

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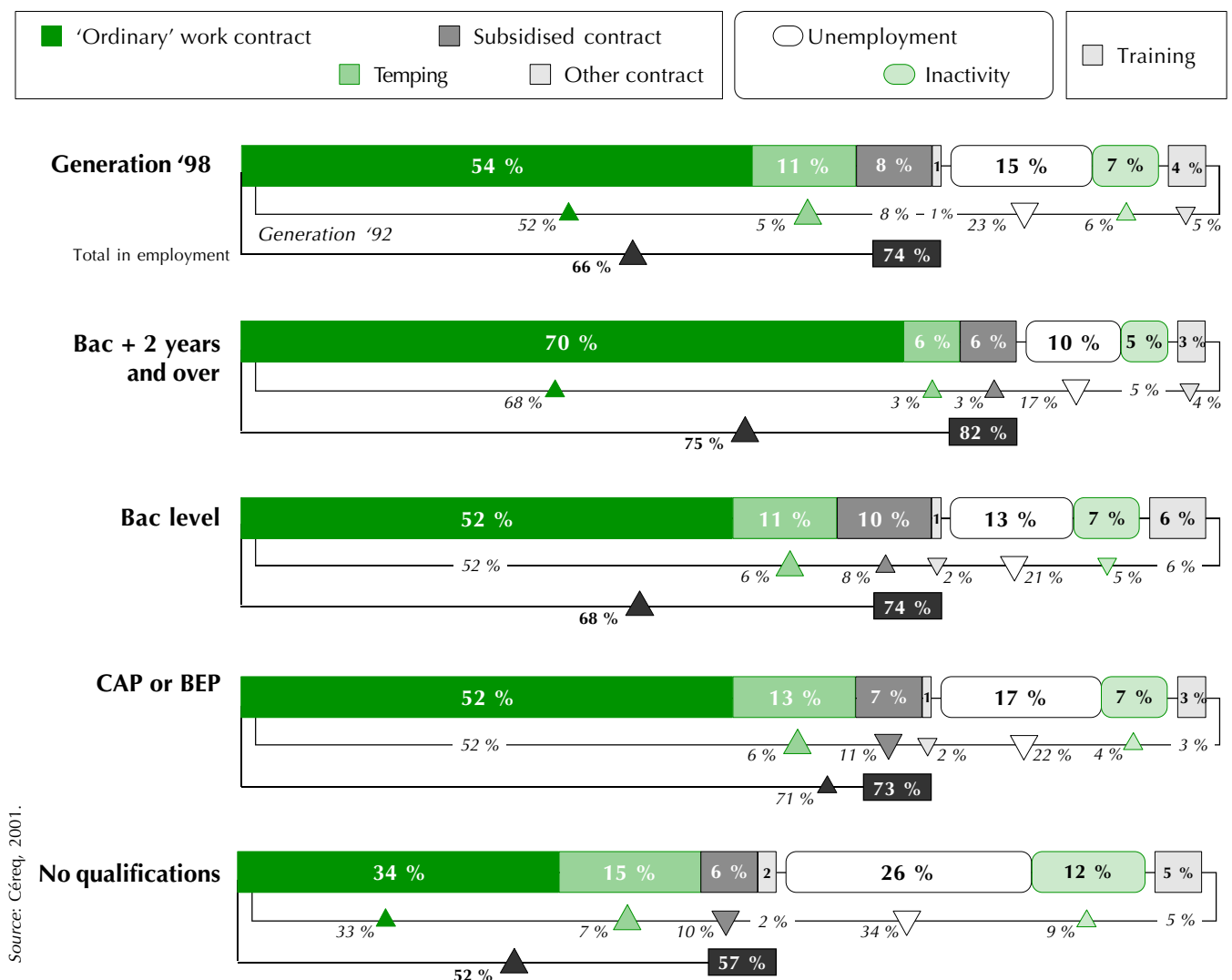
The prime beneficiaries: those with the most qualifications

Overall, the young people exiting in 1998 spent 74 percent of their first three years of working life (not including national service for males) in employment, as compared to only 66 percent for those exiting in 1992 (cf. Fig. 1). But the scope of this increase varied greatly depending on the training level. Graduates of full higher education and those holding higher technician or polytechnic diplomas (in manufacturing as well as service fields) seem to have drawn the most advantage from the economic upturn. On the other hand, young people leaving the school system without qualifications still faced a difficult path, even if their situation improved to the extent that they spent a little more than half of their first three years of working life in employment. Similarly, the professional outlook for those

holding CAP or BEP certificates in the service fields—a large majority of young women—showed little improvement compared to their counterparts coming from manufacturing specialisations or holding a *baccalauréat*.

The proportion of time spent in jobs with ‘classic’ status (fixed- or unlimited-term work contracts) increased slightly and that spent in jobs depending on public youth schemes (i.e. ‘subsidised’ jobs under skilling contracts and job-solidarity contracts [*contrat emploi-solidarité*, CES] or, more recently, youth jobs [*emploi-jeune*]) remained stable, while that devoted to temping nearly doubled relative to 1992. The spread of temping thus had clear repercussions on the youth transition, notably for those without qualifications or coming from vocational training in the manufacturing fields. For all levels taken together, one out of five young people exiting in 1998 was recruited with a temping

Fig. 1 MORE TIME SPENT IN EMPLOYMENT DURING THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF WORKING LIFE



Source: Céreq, 2001.

Interpretation: During their first three years of working life, excluding national service, the young people of Generation '98 without qualifications spent 57 % of their time in employment and 26 % in unemployment, as compared to 52 % and 34 %, respectively, for those of Generation '92.

Note:

CAP, BEP = vocational training certificates. DUT = 2-year polytechnic diploma. DEUG = 2-year university diploma. BTS = higher technician certificate. 2nd-cycle university = *licence, maîtrise*. 3rd-cycle university = DEA, DESS advanced study diplomas, *doctorat*.

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contract for his or her first job, which was twice the 1992 rate. Conversely, the proportion of young people hired with classic or subsidised contracts decreased. Between 1992 and 1995, subsidised jobs consisted mainly of skilling or job-solidarity contracts; by contrast, those exiting in 1998 benefited from youth jobs, first created in 1997, while CES recruitments plummeted. This meant that the composition of the population benefiting from 'subsidised jobs' changed between 1992 and 1998, with youth jobs essentially going to *baccalauréat*-holders who had for the most part been enrolled in higher education without obtaining a diploma and those with a two-year university diploma (DEUG) or a *licence* in social sciences, while the CES mainly involved those with a low training level.

Fixed-term contracts—especially for temporary work—were numerous at the time of entry into working life but quickly decreased. Only 9 percent of the young people surveyed were temping after three years in the labour market, compared to 21 percent at the time of the first hiring. And this proportion fell to 6 percent for those holding a higher-technician certificate or a polytechnic diploma in a manufacturing field, despite the fact that 34 percent of them had initially been recruited on a fixed-term contract. The precariousness of their hiring status was thus quickly resolved to lead to an overall configuration quite close to that found among those exiting in 1992: after three years, almost two-thirds of the young people in employment had an unlimited-term work contract.

From one generation to the other, entry into employment accelerated. The young people exiting in 1998 who had held at least one job began working an average of four months after leaving school or university, compared to five months for those exiting in 1992; 70 percent obtained their first job in less than six months, compared to 61 percent in 1992. The proportion of young people who did not work at all during the three years following their exit from initial training also decreased: they represented 9 percent of the leavers in 1992 and 7 percent of those in 1998, mainly young people without qualifications and, to a lesser degree, those holding CAP or BEP certificates in tertiary activities.

Unemployment still high for those with the least qualifications

Overall, the proportion of time spent in unemployment during the first three years of working life showed a marked decrease, going from 23 percent for those exiting in 1992 to 15 percent for those in 1998. But behind this drop, we find considerable disparities depending on the training level, as is also the case when we analyse unemployment rates at the end of three years of working life. Thus, the unemployment rate of higher-education graduates, already relatively low, declined sharply from one generation to the other, reaching, for example, 3 percent among those with a BTS or a manufacturing DUT (cf. Fig. 2). By contrast, although the unemployment rate of young people without

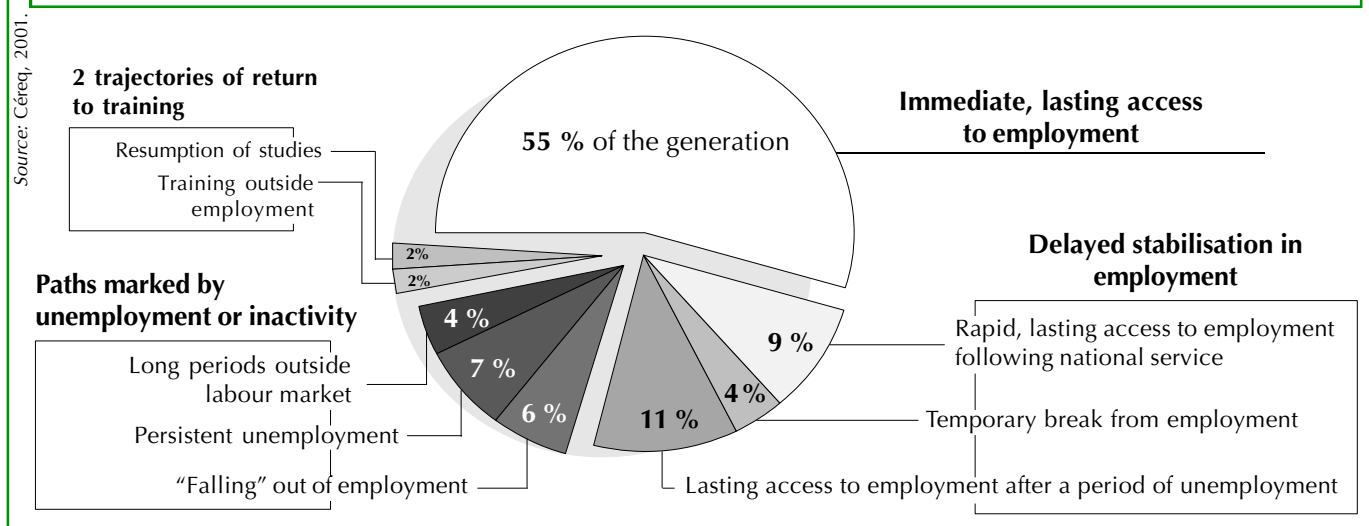
Fig. 2 THE YOUTH TRANSITION FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER: SELECTED INDICATORS

Exit level ▽	Generation	First job				Unemployment rate 3 years after leaving the educational system (%)		Never worked during the first 3 years of working life (%)	
		Obtained in less than 6 months (%)		Temping (%)		'92	'98	'92	'98
		'92	'98	'92	'98				
No qualifications		43	45	12	27	36	30	25	23
2nd year CAP or BEP, 1st or 2nd year high school		56	60	15	31	24	20	13	10
CAP or BEP tertiary		65	63	6	16	20	17	7	8
manufacturing		70	77	15	28	13	8	4	4
Bac level without qualifications		63	73	13	29	20	11	9	6
Bac holders tertiary		65	68	8	19	15	8	4	6
manufacturing		69	81	21	32	8	5	4	2
General bac holders, bac + 1 or 2 years without further qualifications		59	69	11	18	17	10	10	7
DEUG		68	75	8	14	8	7	7	4
BTS or DUT tertiary		68	81	11	17	8	4	2	1
manufacturing		62	81	20	34	8	3	3	1
2nd-cycle university									
humanities, social sciences, management		67	72	4	10	9	8	6	5
math, science and technology		66	74	6	12	7	5	4	3
3rd-cycle university									
humanities, social sciences, management		65	75	3	5	8	6	4	3
math, science and technology		61	78	4	5	10	6	7	2
Business school		74	86	2	5	7	3	1	1
Engineering school		56	84	2	4	8	2	3	1
All levels combined		61	70	11	21	17	11	9	7
TOTAL Generation '98		72		20		10		6	

Data bearing on all the training programmes covered by the "Generation '98" survey and not, as is the case for the preceding line ("All levels combined"), only those common to the "Generation '92" and "Generation '98" surveys (cf. Fig.1 p. 2).

Source: Céreq, 2001.

Fig. 3 THE DIFFERENT TRAJECTORIES FOLLOWED BY GENERATION '98



qualifications also declined, it was nonetheless 24 percent. In addition, the rate of long-term unemployment diminished considerably less for these young people; thus, for example, the proportion of young women without qualifications who, three years after the end of their studies, had been unemployed for one year went only from 22 percent for those exiting in 1992 to 20 percent for those in 1998.

On the whole, access to the labour market also improved from one generation to the other, but disparities by training level were accentuated. The economic recovery offered few advantages to young people who were already having difficulty with the school-to-work transition. On the other hand, recent higher-education graduates, whose entry into working life was much less problematic, benefited fully from the upturn. It thus appears that growth alone does not suffice to efface in any significant way the handicap represented by the lack of training in a context where the general training level for young people is on the rise.

Beyond the time spent in employment or unemployment, this sequence of different situations during the first years of working life confirms the influence of the training level on

the course of the youth transition. It also demonstrates the variety of the pathways, where we may also find periods of training, where stabilisation in employment is sometimes brought about through mobility but also where economic inactivity is not always synonymous with a definitive withdrawal from the labour market.

Overall, the young people exiting in 1998 followed four main types of trajectories during their first years of working life (cf. Fig. 3). The majority gained immediate, lasting access to employment. Others arrived at stable employment but much less directly. By contrast, certain followed paths marked by long periods of unemployment or absence from the labour market. And finally, a small number returned to training.

IMMEDIATE, LASTING ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

Among the young people surveyed, 55 percent began to work almost immediately after leaving the educational system in 1998 and continued to do so in a lasting way: most of them spent less than three months in unemployment during their first years of working life. The proportion of young people following this kind of path increased considerably since 1992, owing to the improved economic situation but also to the gradual elimination of national service from 1997 on (cf. Fig. 4).

This 'painless' transition might take extremely diverse forms combining jobs in several companies and different contractual ties with the employer. But on the whole, stabilisation in employment depended either on a certain loyalty developed between the young people and their first employers or on mobility involving one or several changes of employers.

Diverse forms of loyalty between beginners and employers

Among the young people who gained immediate, lasting access to employment, 47 percent had worked for only one employer at the time of the survey (cf. Fig. 5). A very large majority of them were not seeking another job and said they were satisfied with their professional situations. In general, these young people seemed to be 'loyal'.

A typology of the trajectories

Beyond an analysis of the periods spent in employment or unemployment and the situations of the young people after three years of working life, the Generation '98 survey permits a more longitudinal vision of the school-to-work transition. A professional calendar was used to identify each young person's situation month by month: employment, unemployment, national service, training, studies, economic inactivity. The trajectories recorded in these calendars were then grouped together in function of the situations encountered by each subject (according to the method developed by the LIRHE, Céreq's associated research centre at the Université Toulouse 1): two young people were considered to have close trajectories if they experienced the same situations at the same time; conversely, their trajectories were considered remote when the number of months where their situations differed was great. On this basis, nine families of typical trajectories were identified (cf. Fig. 3 for their relative importance at the end of three years). These families of trajectories were then analysed according to the dominant features of the young people composing them. Figures 4, 6, 7 and 8 show how concrete situations within these typical trajectories evolved over the three-year period.

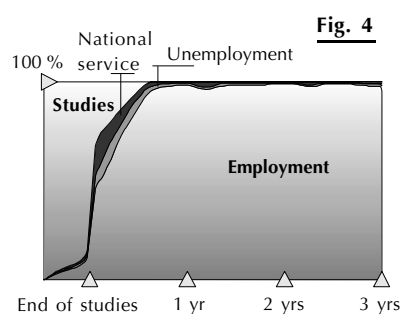


Fig. 4

They were maintained in the company on several different kinds of contracts. Half of them were recruited directly on unlimited-term contracts (CDIs) or as public servants. Nearly a third began to work with temporary contracts—most often the classic fixed-term contract (CDDs)—which were subsequently transformed into unlimited-term contracts. Finally, one-fifth remained in the same company with a precarious status.

The ways these young people remained with the same employer varied considerably with their training level and specialisation. Those with the most diplomas were more often hired directly on a CDI. Conversely, those without diplomas remained twice as often in the same company without obtaining a stable status. This practice of “remaining without a firm contract” was also fairly frequent among recent graduates in tertiary specialisations.

These disparities were related to the forms of workforce management: 67 percent of the “loyal” young people in a business providing “noble” services to companies (computers, law, accounting) had signed a CDI at the time they were hired. The medium and large manufacturing concerns, by contrast, relied on much more gradual practices for “developing loyalty”. Thus, in automobile construction, a young entrant most often worked several months with a temporary contract before receiving a CDI and three times out of ten, remained in the company with a temporary contract, most often as a “temp”. Although they often belonged to the public sector, the employers working in the areas of education, health or social services frequently developed the loyalty of young people without resorting to fixed-term contracts, in part by recruiting through youth jobs. Similarly, the public administration—beginning with local communities and the army—maintained 50 percent of these young people in their employ on temporary contracts.

Mobilities towards more stable, better-paid jobs

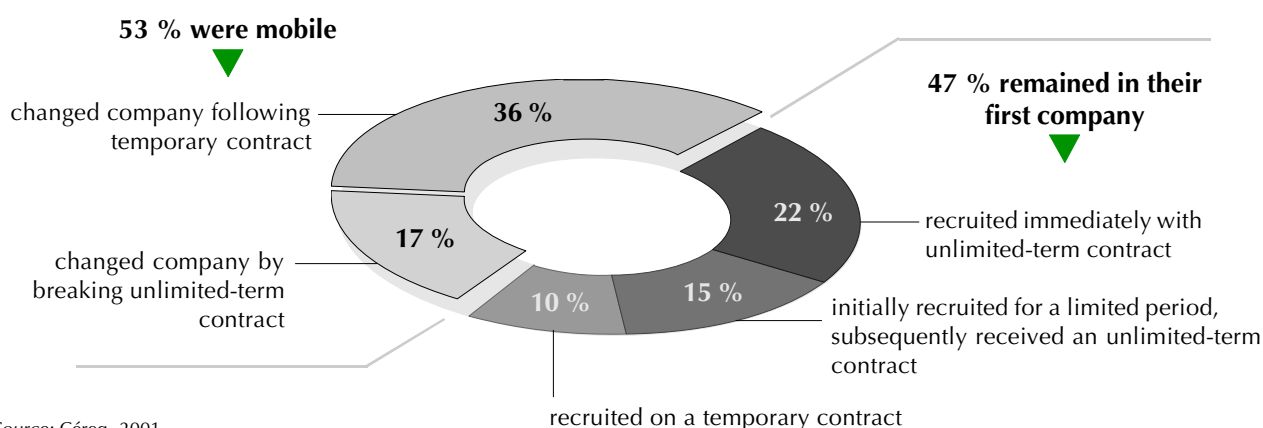
Stabilisation in employment could also result from a mobility. Thus, just over half of the young people who gained immediate, lasting access to employment changed employers during their first three years of working life. In general, they remained little more than a year with their first employer and the majority only changed institutions or companies one time.

The separation between the young person and the first employer most often occurred at the end of a temporary contract, essentially a CDD or temping assignment. But in one-third of the cases, a CDI was broken (cf. Fig. 5). Such breaking of a lasting contractual engagement was twice as frequent among the young people with the most diplomas (at least five years of study after the *baccalauréat*) than among those who had no qualifications, presumably because the former were better equipped for “handling the beginning of their careers” while the latter were more often confronted with increasing precariousness in low-skilled jobs.

These ‘mobile’ young people tended to leave certain sectors which have difficulty holding on to the young labour force for more ‘attractive’ ones such as non-market services (public administration, education, health, etc.), energy, transportation, financial and real estate activities, ‘noble’ services to businesses and, to a lesser extent, large industrial concerns. Those sectors which fail to win over young people, such as services to individuals, hotel and catering (which frequently hires them on CDIs) and the food-processing industries, as well as retail sales, emerged as way-stations along the paths of stabilisation in employment.

These trajectories marked by mobilities, whether voluntary or imposed, generally led the young people towards more stable jobs: at the end of three years of working life, they were twice as numerous with CDIs and two times less numerous in part-time work than when they left their first employer and this progression was often accompanied by a sharp rise in wages. Thus, the median wage of young people who had changed companies a single time went from 6,000 to 7,500 francs net a month (915 to 1,143 euros today) during their first three years of working life, notably with an increase

Fig. 5 ITINERARIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH IMMEDIATE, LASTING ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

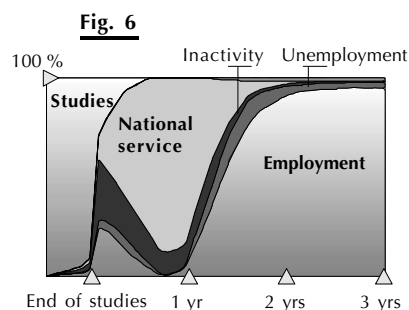


Source: Céreq, 2001.

of 700 francs (107 euros) between the end of the first job and the beginning of the second. Such changes in wages varied with the level of initial training. In addition, if at the time of their first job, the “mobile young people” were generally hired with a median wage distinctly lower than that of the “loyal young people”, mobility allowed this gap to be reduced and, whatever their training level, those who were “mobile” tended to catch up to their “loyal” counterparts. Ultimately, the change of employer allowed young people obtaining an immediate, lasting job to improve both their status and their wages.

DELAYED STABILISATION IN WORK FOR ONE-FOURTH OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Alongside the majority of the young people, who gained immediate, lasting access to the working world, 24 percent of those exiting in 1998 followed trajectories which ultimately led them to employment but in an indirect way.



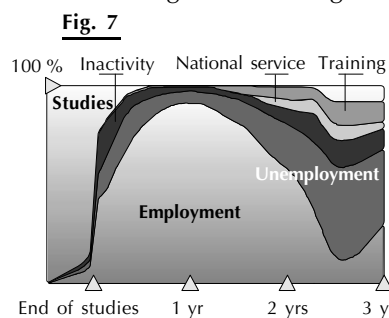
Thus, 9 percent fulfilled their national service obligation not long after leaving initial training. On the whole, this postponed their entry into the labour market by a little less than one year, with some of them spending several months outside the labour force, in unemployment or even in employment before their entry into the service. But afterwards, they quickly obtained a lasting job and three years after the end of their studies, 95 percent were working. With the phasing out of compulsory national service since 1997, this kind of path has obviously disappeared. For Generation '98, it basically concerned men leaving higher education and still subject to military obligations, while this was no longer the case for the younger members of the sample leaving school before the *baccalauréat*.

Another 4 percent of the young people surveyed arrived in employment after a much less linear trajectory which consisted of “temporarily opting out of employment” about a year and a half after the end of initial training although they had already worked for several months. This break was often tied to a postponement of national service or the search for another job and afterwards, they rapidly re-entered the working world. A number of young people exiting the last year of high school, without or without their *baccalauréat*, followed this itinerary.

Finally, 11 percent of the young people obtained lasting employment after a period of unemployment. Half of them spent more than eight months looking for their first job. Those with BEP or CAP certificates in service activities were the most numerous to follow this itinerary. Among young people exiting higher education, those with post-graduate university diplomas were most affected by this period of unemployment before attaining stability in the employment, while graduates of the elite ‘Grandes Ecoles’ escaped it.

ITINERARIES MARKED BY UNEMPLOYMENT OR ECONOMIC INACTIVITY

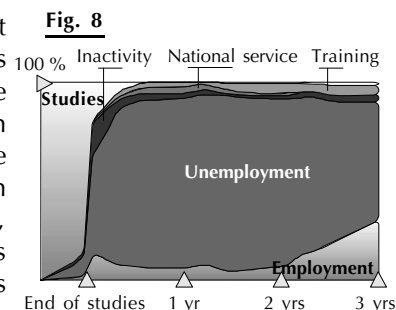
Unlike the three foregoing trajectories, which led towards employment, three kinds of itineraries, representing 17 percent of those exiting in 1998, predominantly terminated in unemployment or economic inactivity. Thus, 6 percent of the young people, apparently settled in employment, stopped working about two and a half years after their entry into working life (cf. Fig. 7). This “falling out of employment” mainly affected young people at CAP or BEP level and, to a lesser degree, those leaving higher education without a diploma. At the end of three years in the labour market, 70 percent of them were not working.



Persistent unemployment: a predominantly female trajectory

Among the 7 percent of the young people faced with “persistent unemployment”, three-quarters experienced a total of nearly two years without a job: 42 percent never worked and 32 percent obtained only short-term employment of less than six months after spending an average of more than one year in search of their first job. Nonetheless, fewer young people in Generation '98 followed this kind of pathway than those in Generation '92.

Persistent unemployment was one and a half times more frequent among the young women than among their male counterparts. Between 1992 and 1998, moreover, the gender difference was accentuated, insofar as the men were less



affected by very long-term unemployment while the women were more so, especially when they left the educational system at CAP or BEP level. The more frequent orientation of their training towards the services and the increased competition of graduates with a higher qualification level might explain this increase. The case of young women who had left school with a secretarial CAP or BEP is symptomatic: they were faced with persistent unemployment twice as often as the young men leaving a training programme in auto mechanics at the same level. In addition, for secretarial jobs, which require interpersonal, general and multi-area skills, employers tend to recruit beginners with at least a *baccalauréat* level.

Inactivity not always synonymous with withdrawal from the labour market

Women also constituted the majority of the 4 percent of 1998 leavers whose transition pathway was marked by “long periods

of economic inactivity". But such inactivity also affected the men, and increasingly so: they represented 30 percent of the young people withdrawing from the labour market during the three years following the end of their initial training.

However, these withdrawals turn out to be less decisive than they might appear. The young people following an itinerary marked by long periods of inactivity may in fact have worked intermittently. Thus, one-third of them—twice as often higher-education graduates than those without any qualification—held at least one job for more than six months. And more than half of them stated that they had made at least one attempt to seek work during their longest period of inactivity: one out of two contacted the national job centre (ANPE), nearly one out of three proposed unsolicited candidatures to an employer and one out of five registered with a temp agency.

Furthermore, in face of a possible job offer during their longest period of inactivity, about half of the young people indicated that, depending on the job proposed, they would have accepted to work. Indeed, 18 percent of them even stated that they would have accepted any job and only 36 percent of them would have refused all offers. Such a position of total withdrawal from the labour market was more frequent among the women than the men but the essential difference is to be found in the explanations provided: pregnancy, obviously, but also caring for young children were never invoked by the young men, while more than half of the women advanced a reason of this type. Apart from family obligations and the anticipation of national service for the young men, similar reasons were offered by both men and women remaining totally inactive: health problems first of all, followed by the lack of desire or need to work.

Last of all, one-fourth of the young people who apparently withdrew from the labour market undertook "training outside of employment". These training periods were less frequent than those found in the trajectories marked by unemployment but were, on the average, longer. In one out of three cases, the longest training experiences during a period of inactivity lasted over six months. For young people following a pathway dominated by inactivity, such training was more often aimed

at obtaining a qualification than for those faced with lasting unemployment. And this objective was twice as frequent among those with diplomas. For those without qualifications, training generally had several purposes including, in one out of three cases, "meeting standards".

TWO ITINERARIES FOR A RETURN TO TRAINING

Finally, beyond the itineraries of persistent unemployment and economic inactivity including training time outside of employment, two types of trajectories, representing 4 percent of the Generation '98 leavers, are distinguished by a considerable period of training. Some of the young people in fact resumed their studies, on a full-time basis, in a school or university, with the result that 80 percent of them remained students for more than one year. However, with the exception of *baccalauréat*-holders who had begun higher education during their initial training without obtaining a diploma, few young people followed this kind of path, which concerned only 2 percent of the 1998 leavers.

Another 2 percent of the young people, most often with few or no formal qualifications, devoted a large part of their itinerary to training outside of employment, including training courses and alternating training, notably obtained through their local youth assistance teams (*missions locales*), or correspondence courses. Such training generally began during the year following their exit from the educational system, became less and less frequent in the following two years and gradually gave way to employment after a short period of unemployment. At the end of their first three years of working life, 73 percent of the young people who had followed this path were working.

BETTER TRANSITIONS, VARIED TRAJECTORIES

In April 2001, 81 percent of the young people leaving initial training in 1998 were working, which marked an 8 percent increase over those of Generation '92. Even if those with the most qualifications particularly benefited from the economic upturn, and even if the gaps between training

The "Generation '98" Survey

In spring 2001, Céreq queried a sample of 55,000 young people who had left initial training in 1998, at all levels and in all training specialisations, out of the 750,000 young people leaving the educational system for the first time that year. This survey, entitled "Generation '98", follows the "Generation '92" survey and pursues the same objective: analysing the first years of the school-to-work transition.

Notwithstanding this common goal, however, the two surveys are not totally identical. The "Generation '98" sample was interrogated in spring 2001, in other words, three years after it left the educational system, and it has now been interrogated again (April-July 2003) in order to permit an analysis of the process of career advancement. By contrast, the "Generation '92" survey was conducted only after the first five years of working life. In addition, "Generation '98" covered more than 98 percent of the initial training programmes available in metropolitan France, while the field of "Generation '92" did not exceed 82 percent.

If "Generation '92" was broadly focused on employment situations, "Generation '98" was aimed rather at describing the different components of the transition pathways. To this end, it explored all

the situations—employment, unemployment, training—experienced by the young people between the date of their exit from initial training and the date of the survey.

In order to compensate for these differences in scope, the comparisons presented here were carried out on the basis of the first three years of working life of the two generations and solely on the training common to the two surveys.

The "Generation '98" Survey in Facts and Figures

- The total base: more than 1.2 million individuals presumed to have left the educational system in 1998, constituted by Céreq following contacts with the totality of the Education Offices and universities as well as thousands of individual schools
- Notification letters sent: 170,000
- Young people contacted by telephone: 135,000
- Telephone interviewers: 150
- Average duration of questionnaire: 20 minutes.
- Total time involved: 5 months (2 months devoted to the pre-survey and 3 months to the survey)

levels were accentuated, the varied pathways followed show that the disparities in the transition cannot be reduced to a simple opposition between those who are integrated into the labour market and those who are not. The itineraries may be hesitant and complex, with detours via national service or training, breaks from employment or the labour market and returns to unemployment or studies. Even rapid, lasting stabilisation in employment takes different forms which change with the employers' approach to workforce management and, in particular, to recruitment. Thus, the increased recourse to temping did not seem to run counter to the gradual development of the young peoples' loyalty to their first employer or to their remaining in the same company. The economic inactivity marking certain trajectories, meanwhile, often turns out to be partial, or even illusory, when we analyse it in greater detail. A minority of those surveyed would seem to have adopted fluctuating, ambiguous postures in relation to the school-to-work transition. But we can only conclude that once again, the

younger generation is experiencing—and experimenting with—the transformations of the labour market.

Dominique Epiphane, Jean-François Giret, Pierre Hallier, Alberto Lopez and Jean-Claude Sigot, with the collaboration of the entire Department on Entries into Working Life

Further Reading

- The main findings of the "Generation '92" survey are available in French on Céreq's website: www.cereq.fr/cereq/gene92/Accueil.html
- D. Martinelli, G. Simon-Zarca, P. Werquin, Y. Pérot. "Génération 92" : profil, parcours, emploi en 1997." Céreq *Bref* no. 149 (January 1999).
- *Formation Emploi* no. 73 (January-March 2001), special section on Generation '92, English summaries of articles in *Training & Employment* 41 (October-December 2000).
- T. Couppié and D. Epiphane. "Closing the Gender Gap? Non-traditional Curriculum Choices and Entry into Working Life." *Training & Employment* 44 (July-September 2001).

On "Generation '98"

This issue of *Training and Employment* presents the initial data from the "Generation '98" survey. The indicators dealing with the whole of the young people surveyed are now available in French on Céreq's website: <http://www.cereq.fr/G98ind/premierepage.htm> These data, presented in the form of Excel tables, deal with the socio-demographic features of the young people entering the labour market in 1998, their transition pathways, their first jobs and their work situation at the end of the first three years. In addition to the general data for the generation as a whole, this series of indicators permits gender comparisons.

✓ *Contact:* Olivier Joseph (joseph@cereq.fr)

It is also possible to access data concerning the schooling pathways and labour-market entry of women and men coming from seven training streams, at different qualification levels: <http://www.cereq.fr/cereq/G98ind/filieres.htm>

These data are grouped in PDF files. Obtained from the Generation '98 survey, they are presented with analyses and commentaries (in French) taken from a 2002 study carried out by Céreq within the framework of an inter-ministerial agreement aimed at promoting equal opportunity for males and females within the educational system.

✓ *Contacts:* Thomas Couppié (couppié@cereq.fr) and Dominique Epiphane (epiphane@cereq.fr).

The Youth Transition over the Generations

In spring 2001, Céreq queried more than 55,000 young people from the generation leaving the educational system in 1998. A year later, the centre published *Quand l'école est finie...* [When School Is Over], a study drawing up a statistical portrait of their first steps in working life (cf. *Training & Employment* 44 [July-September 2001] for a description of this publication).

In spring 2003, while the abundance of material obtained from this survey was still being processed in various contexts, 21,000 young people from "Generation '98" were re-contacted. At the end of this operation, information on five years of the generation's working life will have been amassed and will be available for comparison with the path of Generation '92. This new investigation, which is an extension of the survey carried out at the end of three years of

working life, reflects two major preoccupations:

- The first concerns the young people who take the most time to arrive at stable employment. Some of them go through particular forms of employment (subsidised contracts, training, etc.) while others, generally coming from short-cycle higher education, resume full-time studies. For these young people, the school-to-work transition often lasts beyond the first three years and remains heavily dependent on the ups and downs of the economic situation.
- The second deals with professional mobility, which is often high during the first years of working life. The objective is thus to gain a better knowledge of the movements of these young people, whether they remain in the same company or go from one employer to another. In particular, when they have not obtained a first job related to their diploma level, do they subsequently manage to make up for 'downgrading'? On the basis of these two preoccupations, the questionnaire developed for the 2003 survey included several new features offering 'close-ups' of certain specific populations:
 - the young people working for the same employer for more than a year were queried about their "attachment" to their job or their employer and their relations with their work environment;
 - those who were unemployed or economically inactive were questioned about their involvements and social relations outside of work, as well as about possible "estrangements from family or friends";
 - the young people holding a job at the end of three and five years of working life were queried in view of an audit of their professional evolution;
 - the young people in employment at the time of the survey were queried on the "occupation" which they had acquired or in which they were advancing.

While this interrogation was being carried out, with its share of technical challenges, preparations for a new investigation in 2005 were already getting underway, along with those for the "Generation 2001" survey which will deal with young people entering the labour market in 2001, in a clearly less favourable economic context. As with "Generation '98", Céreq is presently offering interested partners the possibility of co-funding regional or national extensions of the survey in specific fields.

✓ *Contact:* Alberto Lopez (Céreq), tel. 33 (0)4 91 13 28 58, lopez@cereq.fr