

THE RELATIONAL SIDE OF THE SCARRING EFFECT OF UNEMPLOYMENT: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES AMONG THE YOUNG IN CATALONIAⁱ

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ABSTRACT

The paper approaches inequalities in the labour market by looking at the role of social capital in job seeking processes. More specifically, this paper aims to analyse how the weak presence of young people in the labour market (in the form of unemployment and/or underemployment) at the beginning of their career path affects their relational resources for job-seeking. It merges the conceptual frames of social network analysis and the life course perspective in approaching the process of accumulation of disadvantages along labour career paths.

To do so, the 'Personal networks of the youth in Barcelona' survey was conducted. This survey, carried on in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona in 2014, interviewed 250 young adults (20-34 years old) following a quota sample strategy. In the personal network questionnaire used components of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were included in one single data collection device. The data obtained has very rich information on the events that make up the interviewees' labour trajectory, as well as on the structure and use of their personal network.

The results of the paper delve into the different ways in which social capital is built and mobilised in the labour market at different stages of an individual's labour career, looking specifically at: (1) The impact of (long-term) unemployment and precarity on young people's process of creating and developing their personal network; (2) Its effect upon the ability of networks to produce returns in the labour market and its consequences for the development of the ensuing labour trajectory; (3) The social class differences on (1) and (2). By so doing, the paper explores the "relational side" of the 'scarring effect' of unemployment.



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