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ABSTRACT

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SESSION III: FUNCTIONS OF FAMILY SOCIAL NETWORKS

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PRECARIOUS OCCUPATIONAL INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL DISAFFILIATION PROCESS: THE CASE OF SWITZERLAND

Labour relations have undergone significant changes over the last decades. Job precariousness and work precariousness weaken assured and stable occupational integrations. These changes challenge “rigid”, continuous and foreseeable conception of occupational career (the choice of a profession, training, labour market integration, promotion and retirement), and question both material and symbolic recognition that are linked to professional activities.

Furthermore, individualisation has emerged as an influential characterisation of contemporary Western society (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002, Giddens 1991). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argue that “the post-war development of the welfare state brought with it a social impetus toward individualisation of unprecedented scale and dynamism. […] a break in historical continuity released people from traditional class ties and family supports and increasingly threw them onto their own resources and their individual fate (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002: 30).

Facing this rise of uncertainties, we analyse how precarious occupational career are unequally exposed to the “disaffiliation” risk (Castel 2005).

According to Duncan Gallie and Serge Paugam (2004) there are three types of factor that might affect the hardness of the effects of precariousness on people’s lives. First, the characteristics of the welfare institutions. Second, the specific economic conditions that each society is confronted with, deriving from their level of economic development and the rapidity of economic restructuring. Finally, the patterns of family life and sociability, which are also influenced by the characteristics of the welfare institutions, are closely related to much longer-standing cultural traditions. This latter factor can be decomposed in three different spheres of sociability: (i) The immediate family and household relations (ii) the interactions with neighbours and the encounters with friends and relatives outside the household (iii) the participation in organizational and associative life.
The first main question of this contribution is to assess how precarious occupational career is accompanied by the breakdown of everyday social networks, thereby reinforcing the rupture from the world of precariousness by cutting people off from information about jobs and undermining their self-esteem. The second main question is to understand how the role of family may act as “social regulation of risk”. More precisely, we can raise four research questions:

- How to define atypical occupational trajectories?
- How growth of uncertain affects occupational career of young adult workers in Switzerland?
- Is there a link between precarious occupational career and disaffiliation of social ties?
- How family can act as social buffer in case of professional precariousness?

On this basis we draw two hypotheses:

- The experience of precarious professional career has often been analysed as a withdrawal from social and family life. The processes of losing stability and position in the occupational sphere can be humiliating and this can change relations with others and lead to a self-imposed isolation. Many people may prefer to accept a reduced level of contact with their wider family until such time as they have gained a job which, from their point of view, renders them more respectable. For the value attributed to work, it can be expected that in Switzerland the more professional career is closed to precariousness the less is the frequency of contact with the relatives, neighbours, friends and the participation in organizational and associative life.

- Where, for reasons such as religion, family norms are particularly strong, then the family is more likely to offer overcome the shortfall of state provision than in societies where the dissolution traditional conceptions of the family has spread more widely in the society. For such institutional and cultural reasons, it can be expected that in Switzerland individual may be personally responsible for their precariousness. Hence family support is likely to be scarce. In other words, we are not expecting that familiy play a significant role in terms of resources supplier.

In order to test our hypotheses, we draw on data from the swiss FNS study FamilytiMes and analysing occupational integration and social ties of two cohorts (1950-1955, 1970-1975) from the age of 16 years old to the age of 36 years old for the younger cohort and from the age of 41 years old to the age of 61 years old for the older one. We mobilise sequence analysis method for categorizing career patterns and use optimal matching tool for computing pairwise distances between them by means of sequence alignment algorithms and using this information for clustering the sequences. Logistic regression will help us to identify which population is at risk. Then we use network analysis to understand how people who are characterised by a precarious professional career are exposed to less social integration.

References