

**(Dis)Encounters between the worlds of training and work:
Sociological portraits of graduates in Education Sciences from the
University of Porto**


**(Des)Encontros entre os mundos da formação e do trabalho:
Retratos sociológicos de diplomadas/os em Ciências da Educação
pela Universidade do Porto**

**(Des)Encuentros entre el mundo de la formación y el del trabajo:
Retratos sociológicos de licenciados en Ciencias de la Educación por
la Universidad de Porto**

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Resumo: O crescente corte da linearidade entre os mundos da educação/formação e do trabalho suscita reflexões profundas em torno das trajetórias académicas e profissionais, e das suas articulações. A partir da construção de 21 retratos sociológicos de diplomadas/os em Ciências da Educação com uma inserção no mercado de trabalho entre os 7 e os 15 anos, procurou-se construir ideais-tipo relativamente às trajetórias académicas (linear, de especialização, de reformulação e de reconstrução) e profissionais (de continuidade – linear, irregular e desqualificante; e de descontinuidade – deliberada e induzida) com o objetivo de alcançar um entendimento amplo sobre as suas articulações. Em suma, descrevem-se os principais obstáculos académicos (e.g., nomenclatura dos/as diplomadas/os) e profissionais (e.g., desqualificação do diploma) destas/es diplomadas/os com vista a debater as formas que as/os mesmas/os encontraram para navegar por estes dois mundos e concretizar os seus objetivos pessoais e profissionais (e.g., aprendizagem contínua e contextualização do conhecimento prático).

Palavras-chave: Educação/Formação. Mundo do trabalho. Trajetórias académicas e profissionais.

Abstract: The growing break in the linearity between the worlds of education/training and work prompts profound reflections on academic and professional trajectories and their articulations. Based on the construction of 21 sociological portraits of graduates in Education Sciences with a labour market insertion between 7 and 15 years, we sought to build ideal types regarding academic (linear, specialisation, reformulation and reconstruction)

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and professional (continuity - linear, irregular and disqualifying; and discontinuity - deliberated and induced) trajectories to achieve a broad understanding of their articulations. In sum, the main academic (e.g., graduates' nomenclature) and professional (e.g., diploma disqualification) obstacles of these graduates are described to discuss the ways they have found to navigate these two worlds and realise their personal and professional goals (e.g., continuous learning and contextualisation of practical knowledge).

Keywords: Education/Training. Labour market. Academic and professional trajectories.

Resumen: La creciente ruptura de la linealidad entre los mundos de la educación/formación y del trabajo suscita profundas reflexiones sobre las trayectorias académicas y profesionales y sus articulaciones. A partir de la construcción de 21 retratos sociológicos de graduados en Ciencias de la Educación con inserción en el mercado de trabajo entre 7 y 15 años, buscamos construir modelos ideales sobre las trayectorias académicas (lineal, especialización, reformulación y reconstrucción) y profesionales (continuidad - lineal, irregular y descalificadora; y discontinuidad - deliberada e inducida) con el objetivo de lograr una comprensión amplia de sus articulaciones. En resumen, se describen los principales obstáculos académicos (por ejemplo, la nomenclatura de los titulados) y profesionales (por ejemplo, la descalificación del título) de estos titulados con vistas a debatir las formas que han encontrado para navegar por estos dos mundos y realizar sus objetivos personales y profesionales (por ejemplo, el aprendizaje continuo y la contextualización del conocimiento práctico).

Palabras-clave: Educación/Formación. Mercado laboral. Trayectorias académicas y profesionales.

Introductory note

In the 20th century, universities entered a hegemonic crisis, in the sense that their role as reproducers of the intellectual thought of the elite was questioned, and they were required to adapt to the social and professional demands of the industrial period, namely in the qualification of people to integrate the labour market. The current crisis is based on the relationship between globalisation processes, scientific-technological advances and the gap between higher education learning and the labour market demands (Lima, 2019).

In the European context, one way of responding to this crisis was to set up the Bologna Process in 1999, which aimed to unify higher education to increase international competitiveness, update and homogenise curricula, and promote gains in terms of employability and mobility in the European Union (EU). This reconfiguration resulted in a higher education system based on 3 study cycles: a 3-year bachelor's degree for general training, a 2-year master's degree for vocational training and a 3-year doctorate for research training, generally speaking (Macedo, 2017).

In the particular case of higher education in Education Sciences (ES), the course originated at the University of Porto in the 1987/1988 academic year as a complementary higher education course in the field of child education and was mainly attended by professionals in the fields of education (e.g., kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers), health (e.g., nurses) and social work (e.g., social workers). Over the years, still as complementary training, the branches have expanded into other areas (e.g., youth work and adult education). In the 2003/2004 academic year, higher education in ES was reconfigured by ministerial imposition: from complementary training, aimed at professionals working

in the field of education, but with an academic qualification below the bachelor's degree, to a bachelor's degree, being an initial training aimed at a public mainly looking to access the world of work. As a result, there has been an increase in the diversification of social, educational and professional positions on the ES courses: students who have completed the 12th grade (compulsory education in Portugal since the 2009/2010 school year), from the administrative sector and non-educational technical work, auxiliary educational work, socio-educational and cultural animation, psychosocial work, commercial activity, self-employed workers and a wide range of professionals from a wide range of professional and higher education courses (e.g., laboratory analyses, radiology and tourism) (Vaz, 2019).

In this vein, the unavoidable relationship between the academic component and the work-related component, which at an early stage of higher education was seen more in terms of continuing training, suggests the relevance of problematising these relationships, now understood from an initial training perspective. More realistically, we could admit that the possibility of building diversified academic paths in higher education (prompted by the measures to harmonise paths across Europe), but also the changes in work contexts, which dictate progression that is more horizontal (between positions) than vertical (within the same career structure), tend to define professional trajectories with greater variability in terms of continuity and rupture (Ramos, 2017), now more present in training which, although initially thought of as continuing and complementary training, has come to be structured fundamentally as initial training.

Bearing these considerations in mind, the study presented here aims to analyse a set of trajectories made by former students of the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral courses in Education Sciences at the University of Porto, with more than 7 years' of experience in the world of work, in an attempt to understand the relationship between their academic and professional trajectories. The emphasis given here to the notion of trajectory, although fundamentally centred on the process of transition between the world of higher education and the world of work, does not fail to admit that it is a relationship that is less punctually situated, either because of the relevance of the notion of permanent training, which imposes a more regular alternation between work and the increases the need to resort to formalised training situations, or because, following the transformations imposed on the organisation of academic courses through the Bologna Process, there is a growing possibility of building variable and composite paths during the academic course.

Therefore, when addressing the relationship between education and labour systems, we place them historically in a period in which, contrary to a perception of apparent linearity and hegemony of the paths between them, we are now witnessing a greater variability of situations in which this linearity seems less clear, tending to physically and temporally dissociate these spaces. As such, the various

configurations and systems of articulation that have been established between the education and work systems, particularly over the last century and up to the present day, point to a break in the linearity between educational and social opportunities, as well as a break in the relationship between the democratisation of education and gains in terms of upward social mobility (Canário, 2008). Thus, and within this scenario,

[the] organisation of training no longer guarantees the so-called entry into working life for young people, or the reinsertion of those who have been disinserted, it no longer establishes or ensures a more or less long transition from a training situation to a stable job, but tends to institute and 'naturalise' instability and flexibility (Correia, 1996, p. 25).

Along these lines, instability and flexibility seem to underpin a relative naturalisation of more distant and precarious transition processes, now less determined by the entities that promote both education and work, and more based on the assumption of the individual's right to choose, but which nonetheless conceal a transfer of responsibilities, now entirely assumed by the worker. On the other hand, educational institutions are increasingly invoking (alongside labour institutions) the emergence of soft skills, the characteristics that make us employable, also transferring (institutional) responsibility for the skills of their users (as students or workers) to them, or, as Claude Dubar (2000, p. 112) suggests, employability translates into a permanent state of competence (similar to maintaining the vigour of physical health) in a market in continuous competition "in order to be able, perhaps one day, to be hired, for a precise and limited mission, for a specific service".

Finally, it is against this backdrop, both historical and contemporary, that the reflection proposed here is developed, using the concept of trajectory, i.e., a particular line of events in a person's life that vary in proportion, degree and direction (Sánchez, et al., 2022), sketched here concerning higher education training - in Education Sciences - and the academic and professional paths observed in the sociological portraits constructed.

Methodological procedures

The research aimed to systematise and understand the relationship between academic and professional paths, based on academic trajectories (Correia & Vaz, 2023), as well as professional trajectories (Vaz & Correia, *in press*). This is the central purpose of this article, based on the analysis of sociological portraits of graduates in Education Sciences from the University of Porto.

In order to achieve this goal, former students who had completed their degree 7 or more years ago were interviewed, it was estimated that this time frame already allowed for a relative stabilisation of academic and professional paths (former students who completed their degree between

the 2003/2004 academic year and the 2011/2012 academic year were contacted randomly, revealing post-graduation trajectories between 7 and 15 years). The people who took part in the study were those who were willing to be interviewed, and written and oral informed consent was obtained.

Thus, 21 former ES students were interviewed, 19 females and 2 males, in line with the representation of the sexes in the degree. Their ages were between 27 and 37 at the time of the research.

In terms of academic background, 21 people have a bachelor's degree (in ES, with one person also having a degree in communication sciences), 14 people have a master's degree (10 of them in the field of education sciences, 1 in the field of service management, 1 in the field of social intervention in children and young people at risk of social exclusion, 1 in the field of training, labour and human resources, and 1 in the field of child development and education psychology) and 2 people also have a doctorate (in the field of ES). Within the field of Education Sciences, the training and higher education of these people crosses the fields of local development, adult education/training, education, culture and heritage, and community intervention, areas that are configured as fields of academic speciality, although subordinated to a common field, in Education Sciences.

As far as their career path is concerned, at the time of the research these people were working as ES graduates in a variety of employment contexts: management of training and human resources development programmes within a company (1 person); teaching at higher education level (3 people); teaching within a study center (2 people); educational assistant within a school (1 person); training and conflict mediation in the banking and business sector (3 people); within a student support office in a school context (1 person); in multimedia management at a printing company (1 person); as an education technician within a municipal education department (1 person); within the scope of the functions of a Qualifica Center (educational/training contexts aimed at adults with incomplete education and training paths to improve their qualification levels as well as their employability) (1 person); in a multinational company (2 people); in a residential for the institutionalization of young people at risk (1 person); in a hypermarket (1 person); in a socio-educational institution for children with autism spectrum disorder (1 person); and within the scope of a geriatric residence (1 person). One person is unemployed.

That said, the sociological portrait, the preferred method of processing the interviews, was structured on the basis of the dispositions of the people interviewed, considering for this purpose that these dispositions "[are] not observable as such, (...) but are supposed to be at the origin of the practices observed" (Lahire, 2003, p. 70); in this case, at the origin of the discourse on practices, imposing the submission of the portrait to the opinion of the interviewees for their subsequent validation.

In this logic, it is recognised, in the wake of Miguel Montagner (2007, p. 251), that "this construction [and its meanings] is carried out *a posteriori* by the individual or the researcher at the moment they produce an oral report, a narrative" (Montagner, 2007, p. 252), insofar as the circumstance created by the interview relationship is itself conducive to this reflective dimension.

Based on all the investigative work carried out, the data analysis was leveraged by a reading of the documentary corpus (21 interviews/sociological portraits). The data was then aggregated into 9 categories previously established according to the interview script: mobility to study, academic career (in ES and/or other courses), professional career, qualification of the value of training (in their educational area and in general), social origins, starting a family, sociability and networks, future projects, other aspects. Content analysis (Amado, 2017) made it possible to draw interpretative inferences from the categorisation process, taking into account the conditions of data production and broader theoretical perspectives, and the discussion stage was based on this analysis and categorisation work. It should be noted that although the interviewees' identities are coded, in one or other quotation a name may appear, which, for reasons of confidentiality and anonymity, is fictitious. The occurrence, here and there, of quotes in the 3rd person is due to the characteristics of the structure of sociological portraits, which are already a narrative construction that the researcher himself carries out (and which he submits to the opinion and consent of the person interviewed).

In this respect, it is also important to differentiate between first-order knowledge (the interviewees' passages) and second-order knowledge (the reflections included in the sociological portraits of the interviews), since the sociological portrait is positioned as a reflection on practices and not so much as a report of practices, as is the case with the interviews. Therefore, while the interviews involved reflecting on the practices reported by the people interviewed, the sociological portraits were built by analysing the reflections made on the practices of the people interviewed, to construct a narrative that reflects this same construction and experiences.

As such, interpreting the units of analysis (787 in total) was a process of logically justifying the relationships between complex phenomena through a process of analytical induction (Amado, 2017). In other words, understandings about the phenomena under study were progressively built up in a close relationship between analysis, categorisation, interpretation and theorisation, and it was from this sequence of investigative actions that the knowledge derived from this research emerged.

Based on this analysis, we developed a set of ideal-types (Weber, 1983) that helped typify different paths that could be built in the academic and professional context of Education Sciences. The following describes these paths and reflects on their (dis)encounters.

Results and discussion

The work on academic and professional trajectories in Education Sciences has made it possible to identify a series of aspects central to the paths taken by graduates in ES that are important to understand in this text in terms of the scope of the interrelationship between the academic and professional worlds.

Data description

Table I gives an overview of the data:

Table I. Interrelationship between academic and professional trajectories

Professional trajectories (N = 21)		Academic trajectories (N = 21)			
		Linear (4 – ≈ 19.1%)	Specialization (9 – ≈ 43%)	Reformulation (3 – ≈ 14.3%)	Reconstruction (5 – ≈ 23.8%)
Continuity (16 – ≈ 76.3%)	Linear (4 – ≈ 19.1%)	1 (≈ 4.8%)	1 (≈ 4.8%)	0	2 (≈ 9.5%)
	Irregular (7 – ≈ 33.4%)	2 (≈ 9.5%)	4 (≈ 19.1%)	1 (≈ 4.8%)	0
	Disqualifying (5 – ≈ 23.8%)	0	3 (≈ 14.3%)	0	2 (≈ 9.5%)
Descontinuity (5 – ≈ 23.8%)	Deliberated (2 – ≈ 9.5%)	1 (≈ 4.8%)	0	0	1 (≈ 4.8%)
	Induced (3 – ≈ 14.3%)	0	1 (≈ 4.8%)	2 (≈ 9.5%)	0

Source: Designed by the authors based on the research data (Apr. 2023).

Among the 21 people interviewed, in terms of academic paths, 4 were linear, 9 were based on specialisation, 3 were based on reformulation and 5 were based on reconstruction. Concerning professional paths, 16 continuity paths were identified, of which 4 are linear, 7 are irregular and 5 are disqualifying, and 5 discontinuity paths, of which 2 are induced and 3 are deliberated.

Academic trajectories

Linear academic trajectories comprise the common and widespread pathways in Portuguese higher education, demarcated by the direct passage from secondary education to the higher education entrance process (the national competitive process for accessing higher education) and enrolment on a given degree course (currently, and as a result of the Bologna Process aimed at harmonising higher education in Europe, the first cycle of higher education – bachelor's degree courses – generally last

three years), which is taken over an average of three to four years. Currently, there is a growing tendency to further one's higher education studies by going straight on to a two-year master's programme – the second cycle of higher education (PORDATA, 2021a, b). Basically, these academic trajectories are called linear because they are characterised by a university path that, for various reasons, such as economic and social factors, culminates in the completion, usually without interruption, of a degree in Education Sciences.

The specialisation paths aggregate the academic trajectories of the people interviewed who focused their path in higher education, after graduating in ES, on entering a level of further study within the scientific area of Education Sciences. Basically, these academic trajectories are called specialisation paths because people sought to specialise, within the master's and/or doctorate course in ES (the latter, the third cycle of higher education lasting about three years) in a given subject with the particular aim of carrying out a professional activity very close to that subject.

The reformulation paths include the academic trajectories of the people interviewed who had an academic transition in terms of a change of course at an early stage of a bachelor's degree other than in Education Sciences (without having completed another higher education/training course beforehand). Basically, these academic trajectories are referred to as reformulation because the people sought to reformulate their educational/training path by changing their field of study, i.e., "going back and starting from scratch" (RS_S4).

Finally, the reconstruction paths include the paths of the people interviewed who, after completing one (or more) higher education/training courses in the field of Education Sciences (bachelor's, master's and/or doctorate), entered a higher education/training course (e.g., bachelor's, master's or postgraduate course) whose basic field of study differs from Education Sciences. Basically, these academic trajectories are called reconstruction paths because the people grouped in this block sought to reconstruct (rather than add another area of study to their academic portfolio of knowledge and skills) what they consider to be "their area of speciality" (RS_MC). Since the reorganisation of higher education in Portugal, it has become easier for students to be able to combine courses at different cycles in different scientific areas, thus seeking to compose more versatile academic paths, partly because of the offers available on the job market.

Professional trajectories

Regarding continuity career paths, linear trajectories are characterised by dominant stability, both in the transition from training to work and in its continuity. In some cases, there are situations in

which a prolonged and, exceptionally, subsidised internship has allowed a stable career path to be defined.

The irregular paths, still in the linear continuity typology, are characterised by situations of searching for and transitioning between work situations, although the relationship with the scientific area studied still predominates. The ideal-type described here reveals trajectories, as the name implies, marked by more erratic paths, but also paths in which the effort to build professional situations related to the area of training shows a great deal of personal investment on the part of the people interviewed.

Finally, in the continuity professional trajectories, the disqualifying paths are characterised, although the work remains in the field of education, by situations related to the terms of employment and the jobs obtained, namely precarious work and professional categories that do not recognise the academic qualifications obtained. The ideal-type described here is typified by professional situations that don't seem to fit the qualification or show some cyclical precariousness, which seems to induce "the devaluation or lack of knowledge of Education Sciences, [as] an obstacle to starting a professional career" (RS_MC).

Concerning discontinuous career paths, deliberate career paths are characterised by the interviewee deliberately turning to other scientific areas, where there is discontinuity from the field of study of Education Sciences. In some cases, this decision manifests itself during the academic path.

Finally, and still with regard to discontinuous career paths, induced career trajectories are characterised by a moving away from the scientific area of ES, either because of the inability of the academic qualification to change previous work paths, or because it has changed them, but not in a way that brings them closer to the area. This also implies, to a certain extent, a disqualifying perspective, either due to factors such as being overage and/or related to professional experience - which does not make it easier to articulate work situations already acquired and their improvement as a result of increased academic qualifications - or due to the perception of disqualification for gender reasons, here denouncing a labour market, particularly in the private sector, in which factors of discrimination associated with gender still persist in access to top positions. The ideal-type described here shows professional situations that differ from the area studied, although they do not correspond to deliberate choices, but rather contingente and sometimes imposed ones.

Training and work: Articulations between two worlds weakened by the entropy of contemporaneity

The relationship between academic and professional trajectories helps us to reflect on the educational and labour systems and the links between them, in relation to their roles in contemporary

society. It is important, albeit briefly, to look at the construction of these links in recent times in order to better understand their specificities and transformations. Correia (1996) identifies three distinct periods in the second half of the 20th century that typify these links in the Portuguese context:

- a first period, which includes the 1950s and 1960s, a **period of stability** in which the articulation between education and work is characterised by the relative autonomy of the systems, but also by their incommunicability, based on a system of dichotomies: development (in school) versus maturity (in work); school versus working life; professional socialisation versus the exercise of the profession; the worker versus the citizen. It is defined by a logic of the exteriority of the *polis* and citizenship in relation to work; of the times and spaces of training in relation to the times and spaces of the exercise of work; of the recipients of training in relation to the contexts where the effects of training are exercised;
- a second period, which covers the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, a **period of change** in which the articulation between education and work is characterised by the subordination of the training system to the labour one, based on an articulated system of subordination, e.g., the inclusion in training paths of logics aimed at the subsequent development of maturity, working life, the exercise of the profession and the worker. It is defined by a logic of spatial exteriority articulated with a logic of subordination: subordination of the *polis* and citizenship in relation to work; subordination of the times and logic of training in relation to the times and logic of work; subordination of the recipients in relation to the instrumental constraints of the contexts; and
- a third period, comprising the second half of the 1980s and the 1990s, a **period of instability and uncertainty** in which the system of articulation between education and work is characterised by interpellation and intermediation, based on processes of mediation coexisting with a system of subordination. It is defined by contradictory, disruptive and interpellating logics: disruption of the relationship between the qualities of individuals and the quality of their social contexts; disruption of the relationship between training/work and employment; disruption of the relationship between the global and the local in the management of training/work systems.

A fourth period could be rehearsed here, now at the beginning of the 21st century (as it is more directly related to this study), which would be characterised by the transformations in education and work systems as a **period of flexibility and mobility** in which the system of articulation is based on subject-centred negotiation, based on the principle that the individual is socially responsible for their future. It is defined by identity logics based on individual success, in which there is: the rigidity of social status induced by the flexibility of labour systems; the rigidity of qualifications imposed by the

logic of competencies; the overlapping temporalities of training and work, based on individual effort and the absence of a shared destiny.

Despite the somewhat critical nature of this picture, it still seems to describe a scenario in which the academic and professional trajectories of graduates in Education Sciences seem to fit. In this vein, we will now consider the academic and professional trajectories through the journey from the first entry into higher education to the last data we have on these trajectories. However, it should be noted that a small proportion of the people interviewed, around 14% (3 people), already had professional experience in their background when they entered higher education.

Linear academic trajectories are related to professional trajectories that are also linear but have continuity, as well as to professional trajectories of irregularity with continuity and deliberate professional trajectories marked by discontinuity. In other words, a linear academic path does not imply a direct relationship with professional paths that are also linear, affirming the break in the linearity between higher education and the world of work that was once observed more regularly in society (we are referring, in a way, to the first period described above, at a time when the possession of a higher education qualification was effectively distinctive due to its still very elitist nature). It is also worth noting that half of the linear academic paths are affected by the precariousness of the labour system, here marked by a professional path of irregular continuity, in terms of constantly changing jobs in order to look for better socio-economic opportunities and professional enrichment, as one interviewee points out: "It's a bad sign because we don't have that stability and we always have to look for new opportunities. ... After one job came another, another, another, [but] always precarious jobs (RS_B)".

Finally, it should be noted that the professional trajectory of deliberate discontinuity appears as an attempt to take control of one's own life path (here the fourth period that we characterised above seems to be evident), here taken into account from the academic and professional trajectories, since the people interviewed seek other higher education paths to achieve success in the professional field; in the case of one person interviewed it involved, "after finishing my degree in Education Sciences, ... applying again for Communication Sciences, which I ended up entering (RS_MH)".

The academic paths of specialisation, represented here by the most significant number of cases (around 43% - 9 people), appear to be related to professional paths of linear, irregular and disqualifying continuity, as well as professional paths of induced discontinuity. In other words, furthering higher education does not prove to be an asset in terms of building stable professional paths, and within the universe of people interviewed, the opposite is true for only a small number of people. In this sense, the overwhelming majority of people interviewed experience permanent instability in their professional

trajectories, particularly in terms of constantly changing jobs in order to look for new opportunities to find greater professional and personal fulfilment. This also highlights what seems to be an institutional attitude on the part of the professional bodies towards the Education Sciences degree, which leads to a disqualifying experience, i.e., the labour bodies are unaware of the scope of action of educologists³ and, as such, delegate duties that are unsuited to the professional skills that their academic qualifications point to; in one of the cases, this related to the non-recognition of "the category of Senior Education Technician, while in other areas this is not the case (RS_MCI)".

Lastly, there have been a few academic paths of specialization that have not been able to change the job insecurity previously experienced, particularly in terms of the instability of employment contracts and/or the professional demands that lead to discontent with professional practice.

The academic trajectories of reformulation are linked to professional trajectories of irregular continuity and induced discontinuity. In other words, the reformulation of the academic pathway, although it has made it possible to complete higher education, has not resulted in a professional trajectory marked by stability, but rather by the permanent change of workplaces and, for the majority of people in this situation, the impossibility of changing previously precarious professional pathways, particularly due to the difficulty of entering the labour market with the new qualifications; one interviewee said that he "hasn't given up on the idea of working in his field, and continues to look" (RS_JI) and another said that he "went on many interviews, most of which ended without the success he had hoped for" (RS_S).

The academic paths of reconstruction are related to the professional paths of linear and disqualifying continuity, and deliberated discontinuity. In other words, for the overwhelming majority of this group of people, the reconstruction of their academic trajectory appears to be an opportunity to build stable professional paths, even if this meant investing in a new higher education degree. However, for some of the people interviewed, the reconstruction of their academic path is marked by dissatisfaction with their professional career, since their employer doesn't recognise the professional's potential - their skills - in the course of their work.

Therefore, given these journeys, a few points should be highlighted. In general, the people interviewed tried to draw on socio-personal resources (e.g., resilience and contact networks)⁴ to get

³ It is understood that the term educologist encompasses all people with a degree in Education Sciences in all cycles (bachelor's, master's and doctorate). Its importance arises from the fragility that the absence of a nomenclature for ES graduates in the Portuguese context creates for the profession in this area, hindering the entry and permanence of these graduates in the world of work. This proposal is therefore emphasised as a possibility for responding to this challenge.

⁴ It's important to point out here that when we characterise the fourth period in the relationship between training and work systems above, we mean above all an institutional disengagement in these processes, which leads to

around the challenges of the labour market (e.g., precarious employment contracts), as one interviewee said: "I basically began to show the supervisor that I was interested in this field [training], and she began to realise that I had the skills for it, so I joined the department in 2012" (RS_M1). This immediately raises (as we mentioned above) the difficulty of academic qualifications being recognised in the labour market, which seems to require the mobilisation of other types of resources that are not necessarily part of an academic path in order to force this recognition. The general picture seems to suggest that integration into the labour market is weakened by the fragility of contracts, it is important to understand whether, in the specific case of Education Sciences, this is not due, at least in part, to the difficulty of recognising this qualification in clearer and more stable professional positions. More specifically, and considering the most frequent professional paths, it can be seen that:

- for professional trajectories with irregular continuity, the use of an academic path through specialisation (around 19% - 4 people) seems to highlight the attempt to counteract a somewhat erratic professional integration, also based on the reinforcement of academic qualifications as a belief in changing this situation; in the case of one person interviewed, it led her to "go on to a master's degree after completing her bachelor's" (RS_B). If we consider that situations of linear academic paths have also been identified here, this seems to reinforce the difficulty of entering the professional world on the basis of the qualification in ES;
- and for the professional paths of disqualifying continuity, it can be seen that the academic trajectory of specialisation is characterised by people seeking to circumvent the challenges of precarious employment, together with the search for greater personal and professional enrichment (the same belief as in the previous situation, but now accentuated by an explicit devaluation of qualifications by the professional positions held), while the academic paths of reconstruction seem to reveal difficulties in the phase of entering the labour market, in other words, the paths of academic specialisation seem to favour entry into the labour market, e.g., through the curricular internship, as in the case of one interviewee: "The opportunity to do six months of internship, ... it was almost an actual work experience ... it worked as a springboard into the work context" (RS_JC), while the reconstruction academic paths still seem to dispute this transition.

It is important to emphasise that disqualifying professional paths of discontinuity are not only found in the field of Education Sciences, but also in other areas of higher education, albeit in different ways, e.g., in political science and psychology (Nyström, Dahlgren & Dahlgren, 2008), in the social

greater individualisation (and competitiveness) on the part of people in order to meet the challenges they face. This does not preclude (indeed, it reinforces) the use of social networks that can overcome individually perceived adversities.

sciences and humanities in general (Morettini, Primeri, Reale & Zinilli, 2016) and in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and LEM (Law, Economics and Management) (Dutta, Wielgoszewska & Iannelli, 2020), suggesting that: sometimes there is a mismatch between academic competences and the work functions performed in the general scenario of the labour market, placing the problem upstream and from a perspective of the instrumentalisation of education/training in relation to work; sometimes there is a mismatch between the instruments for recognising qualifications - expressed, in particular, in the relationship and contractual link - placing the problem downstream and from a perspective of the professional value of the qualification.

To sum up, all of these academic and professional paths affirm the break in the linearity between higher education and the labour market. It should be noted that the overwhelming majority of trajectories are not linear, either at an academic or professional level, but rather are marked by irregularity, deliberated and/or induced actions in the face of the precariousness of the labour market and/or difficulties in entering it, as well as labour practices that disqualify the academic degree and, consequently, the professional. In this sense, these academic-professional narratives, which are also life narratives (albeit partial), make it possible to paint a picture of social instability, where the bridge between the worlds of education and work is weakened, which seems to reinforce the line we drew in the fourth period from the point of view of the weakening of the articulation between the worlds of education and work, which seems to leave the construction of these articulations to the individual subject.

From a broad perspective, higher education does not currently seem to translate into more stable career (and life) paths, i.e., if the importance of increased qualifications is confirmed, they do not necessarily seem to correspond to the available labour market options/opportunities. With due reservations for the specific nature of training in Education Sciences (for the reasons already mentioned), it seems difficult to counteract the characteristics of a labour fabric that is still very much based on small enterprises, which is hardly capable of harbouring advanced qualifications, assuming that this transformation will take place (only) upstream. The demands that are increasingly being placed on academic institutions to measure the effectiveness of their work based on employability rates, thereby determining the sustainability (or not) of the training they offer, but also the diversification of dual-certification training offers (e.g., professional and technological courses) (Nilsson, 2017), perhaps in this way seeking to achieve a better match between academic paths and professional positions, seem to highlight more labour market dysfunctions than a mismatch between academia's training offers. On the other hand, it seems undeniable that encouraging young people to broaden their educational base - which they see as creating more resources to access the labour market - is not explicitly reflected in the opportunities they actually find.

Without disputing the legitimate aspiration of students to see their efforts in producing a qualification recognised in jobs that give meaning to that qualification - because, ultimately, if the job market doesn't recognise or value qualifications, there seems to be a clear loss for the individual, but also for society as a whole - the issue of transition seems to be very present as a critical problem, which this study has tried to highlight through this analysis of academic and professional trajectories and the links between them. If, overall, the continuity of professional trajectories accounts for around 76% (16 people) of the set of paths analysed here, it is important to consider that the overwhelming majority of these are academic trajectories of specialisation, reformulation or reconstruction, which means that it is difficult to build a link between academic and professional trajectories for which the initial degree - a bachelor's degree - seems sufficient.

In this vein, these figures, regardless of other considerations - which, in particular, seem to be reflected in the (still prevalent) lack of communication and relationship between the higher education world and the professional world, as well as in the hybrid and meritocratic tendencies of a society where higher education increasingly occupies the place of one academic possibility among many others (and where its instrumental place seems to be emphasised) - do not fail to reflect how complex this transition in people's lives seems to have become, being reflected, among other things, in the increase in the temporality that seems to distance the world of education from the world of work, conveyed, in particular, by the myriad of instruments (e. g., professional traineeships, specialisation internships and professional practice in work contexts) that postpone this transition.

Concluding remarks

The relationship between academic and professional trajectories, particularly in the field of Education Sciences, has been marked by the instability inherent in neoliberal market forces, leading ES graduates to interspersed and challenging trajectories from the point of view of socio-professional and economic stability (Meirieu, Araújo & Medeiros, 2023). From a broad perspective, as discussed above, this reality, on the one hand, is transversal to other areas of higher education and professional fields, and, on the other hand, is accentuated by the specificity of the area of Education Sciences, which is no stranger, despite the latitude of the educational phenomenon, to the difficulty of its social and professional recognition beyond the predominant function of teaching (and, when this recognition is made, the colonisation of functions by other scientific areas of more recognised social value tends to make the knowledge of education sciences invisible).

With this in mind, the research made it possible to characterise the academic-professional paths of these people by means of 3 essential aspects, namely; **continuous learning**, i.e., the person

seeks to specialise or update themselves in order to acquire assets to make a name for themselves in the professional market, where higher education can appear as a place of passage, for example, in the context of a postgraduate or master's course; the **construction of a professional identity of their own**, i.e., the person seeks, within the professional place where they find themselves, to develop a series of identity markers of their professional practice (e. g., the trainer is concerned with the structure of the programme and the pedagogy of the training, and the community worker is concerned with the social work inherent in the role), where competences play a crucial role in penetrating the professional market, sometimes forcefully; and the **flexibilisation of time, spaces and relationships**, in other words, the person builds their academic and professional paths with diverse resources (e.g., cognitive, economic and social) and through a wide range of contexts (e.g., family, academic and professional), which, although they can be generalised according to ideal-types, mark a particular broader path, where there is growing flexibility in time (e.g., challenges in reconciling family and work), spaces (e.g., face-to-face and distance education/work) and relationships (e.g., work - unstable contracts; education - usefulness of acquired skills; and personal - challenges in building and maintaining interpersonal relationships).

Having said that, while the macro changes in the academic and labour contexts are taking place slowly and not necessarily in a very communicative way, some strategies have proved to be useful to leverage in order to resist these challenges, particularly in the field of Education Sciences: the **transfer of knowledge**, i.e., taking advantage of the interdisciplinarity of the Education Sciences to deepen the knowledge and build the skills that are most pertinent in the field of professional activity; the **contextualisation of practical knowledge**, i.e., in given educational/training contexts, knowledge and skills are built, deepened or refined as the action in the context takes place, preferably with the appropriate supervision and follow-up; and **re-situate knowledge**, in other words, in situations of transition between work contexts and/or higher education courses, taking into account that all the knowledge learnt and all the skills developed turn out to be assets, with the appropriate adaptations, in other professional contexts and academic places, increases life opportunities.

In this line of thought, in the field of Education Sciences, the qualitative view - around competencies - regarding the relationship between the academic and professional worlds, although it allows us to observe questions throughout the academic journey about the competencies of educologists, in the work context they seem to be being answered and reconfigured, despite the stressful situation that emerges from this *in situ* learning process. And in the quantitative view - around employability - within this relationship between academia and the world of work, the data shows a positive note, in that, of all the people interviewed, 20 people were employed and 1 person was

unemployed, despite the labour challenges, such as the precariousness of work and disqualifying situations in relation to the professionalization in Education Sciences.

Having said that, it's important to say that the research would be enriched by a more diverse population in terms of geographical locations (at least within Portugal) and by a focus on particular situations, such as students that work and study at the same time or gender and ethnic issues, which would make it possible to diversify other relevant dimensions in this study of transitions between the worlds of education and work. It seems to us, in any case, that the ideal types constructed in academic and professional trajectories constitute a consistent entry matrix to encompass this diversity.

Nevertheless, the research points to ways of combining these two worlds - the academic and the professional - in the form of transversal competencies: in the field of **communication** (e.g., active listening, critical questioning and communication ethics), in the area of **problem-solving** (e.g., identifying problems and their solutions, critical decision-making and strategies for evaluating different situations) and in the area of **collaborative work** (e.g., sharing a collective/group identity and roles). From a broad perspective, the appropriation of these competencies was seen as a contribution to overcoming the challenges of the academic path and managing the instability of the professional trajectory.

Finally, it should be noted that individual biography (e.g., socio-economic status), the macro context of society (e.g., social and political instability or stability) and the contexts of higher education (e.g., tuition fees or free access) and of the labour market (e.g., high or low employability) contribute to facilitating or hindering academic and professional trajectories, and are essential aspects to take into consideration.

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