

Social Work

Making the Market

Active Labour Market Programmes and Economic Government
of the Unemployed in Switzerland

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Social Work

I. Introduction and Contextualisation

Swiss Unemployment Insurance in the 1990s

Introduction & Contextualisation: the 1990s

A sudden rise of unemployment in a «country without unemployment» (Streckeisen 2012): from 18'000 (1990) to 188'000 (1997)

- a rapid and largely uncontrolled upsurge of ALMPs
- a turn to activation policy with the 1996 Unemployment Insurance Reform

Neoliberalism and the Governability Issue:

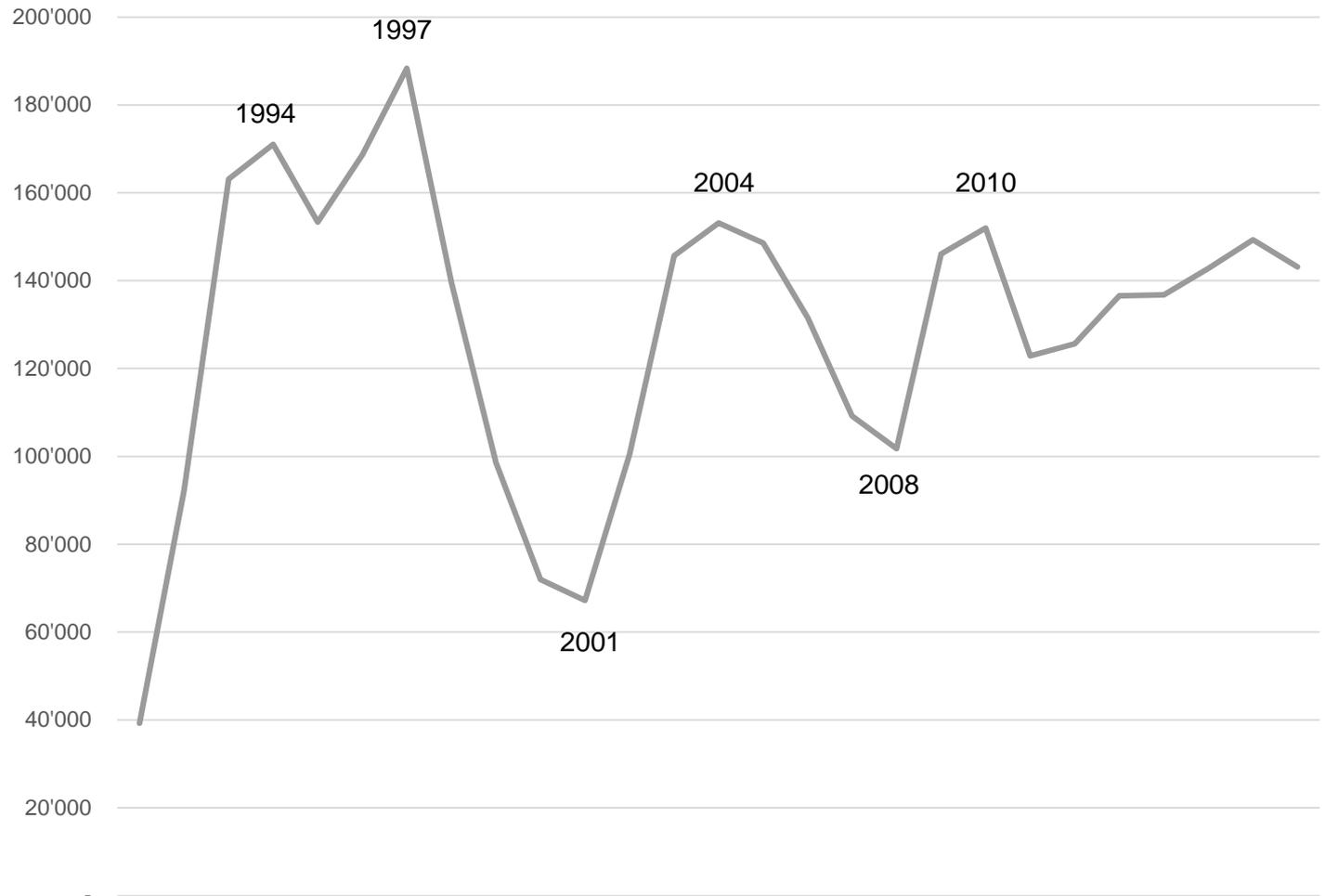
- The White Books by Business Leaders and Economists (De Pury et al. 1995)
- «Schweiz AG» and the Problem of Democracy (Borner, Brunetti & Straubhaar 1990)

Problems in Labour Market Government:

- 1996: a lost popular vote on labour law reform
- 1997: a lost popular vote on unemployment insurance reform

Furthermore the 1997 Volker Kind affair displayed a legitimacy and leadership crisis: the vice-director of the Federal Office for Industry, Trades & Labour in a conference with business representatives said that one third of the unemployed had problems with drugs and alcohol, or were just lazy persons (he got a 500 CHF fine (L'Express 1.11.1997)).

Unemployed Persons in Switzerland 1991-2017



State of Research, and Focus of my Contribution

Two bodies of literature largely ignoring one another:

- sociological studies on activation policy with a critical stance, either policy analysis or (institutional) ethnographies (e.g. Magnin 2005; Nadai, Canonica & Koch 2015; Schallberger & Wyer 2010)
- ALMPs evaluation studies ordered by state agencies, mostly framed by economic concepts, aiming at perfecting the current system (e.g. SECO 2015)

This contribution displaces the research problem:

- analyzing the emergence of a (new) market for ALMPs, and ask how this «market making» in turn affects the rights and duties of the unemployed, as well as their lived experience and their coping strategies?
- to what extent the unemployed can be analyzed like goods exchanged in this market, even if they are urged to be «active»?
- In which ways state agencies as well as work integration organizations (or social firms) are forces co-producing this market and shaping its structures and functionings?

Please note: this contribution is work in progress ...

The Leading Hypothesis

A. In the 1990s the **Swiss ALMPs Market very rapidly expands** in a largely ungoverned way. The 1996 unemployment insurance (UI) reform is only the beginning of a crucial reframing process. After oscillations and irritations, a new form of economic government stabilizes (notably after the 2000 and 2003 reforms).

B. Whereas the literature insists on the **watershed character of the 1996 UI reform**, a closer look shows all the government work done in the following years in order to fix its meaning («activation turn») and its functionings.

C. The reforms of the UI system can be analyzed in terms of **marketization** (Çalışkan & Callon). They show a trend towards **Economic Governance** (Foucault), and towards **Governance by Numbers** (Supiot, Desrosières). This in turn affects the rights and duties of the unemployed, as well as the Social Work profession, in ways not sufficiently analyzed so far.

SNSF Project «The State's Role in Labour Market Segmentation»

«The State's Role in Labour Market Segmentation: a Qualitative Study of the 'Complementary Labour Market' in BS, TI and VD»

Morgane Kuehni, Natalie Benelli, Antonin Zurbuchen (HES-SO), Spartaco Greppi (SUPSI) & Peter Streckeisen (ZHAW)

January 2018 to June 2021

Seven employment types: (1) temporary employment in unemployment insurance; (2) work integration measures in social assistance; (3) employment schemes for refugees; (4) sheltered employment in disability insurance; (5) work integration in disability insurance; (6) civilian service; (7) community service in the penal system.

Three research modules: (1) legal and contractual conditions of employment; (2) comparative analysis of market structures; (3) work relations in six institutions of the complementary labour market (qualitative case studies)

The challenge: analyzing the work of «people without work» (Kuehni 2013 «En Suisse, faux emplois pour vrais chômeurs»). Bringing the **Sociology of Work** (back) in.

Social Work

II. Working with the Research Programme

Sketching an Analysis of the Swiss ALMPs Market

The Research Programme (Çalışkan & Callon)

Economization, part 1: shifting attention from the economy towards processes of economization (Çalışkan & Callon 2009):

- formalist vs. substantivist debate: individual behavior vs. social structures
- economics: institutions as socio-cognitive prostheses
- economic sociology and the embeddedness approach
- anthropology, or the social life and value of things
- towards a pragmatics of valuation

Economization, part 2: a research programme for the study of markets (Çalışkan & Callon 2010):

- Pacifying Goods
- Marketizing Agencies (mSTAs)
- Market Encounters
- Price-Setting
- Market Design and Maintenance

Marketization vs. Social Construction of Markets

According to Çalışkan & Callon (2010: 4), the research programme differs in three important regards from the constructivist approach usually displayed in economic sociology:

- 1- focusing on social mechanisms alone, the character and the specificity of socio-technical arrangements is lost in constructivism
- 2- in constructivism «the explanation for the soundness of markets and for their objective reality either brackets off their material and technical dimensions or reduces these to generalized abstract notions such as ‘resources’ or ‘capital’.»
- 3- «The reflexive or theoretical activity increasingly involved in market design is largely underrated and devalued by a social constructivist approach.»

Pacifying Goods



The asymmetry of markets (agencies vs. goods) is an ontological divide created by marketization.

In order to be valuable, entities must be passive.

«Given our previous definitions of markets, is it possible to conceive of one in which goods are authorized to destroy this asymmetry of their own initiative and to contribute multiple suggestions of their own value or that of the agencies trading them? The answer is a resounding no, for it is the passivity of things that transforms them into goods, and that enables agencies to form expectations, make plans, stabilize their preferences and undertake calculations.» (Çalışkan & Callon 2010:5)

«Moments of overflow mark the emergence of a frame's shortcomings, and in so doing make material, legal or other framing devices visible while inspiring debates on how they might be improved.» (Çalışkan & Callon 2010: 8)

Pacifying Goods

The 1990s, a moment of overflow in unemployment insurance (UI).

- A rapid rise of ALMP market transactions (for instance: places in temporary employment programmes (TEP) from 1'350 (1990) to approx 20'000 (1995) (Baur et al. 1998: 21).
- The legal definition and administrative framing of ALMP appears to be deficient, from the point of view of government.
- The behavior of public employment services (PES) and individuals (the unemployed) appears to be false or confusing quite often.
- Against scenarios of further market expansion, the head of federal Industry, Trade and Labour Office (BIGA) Jean-Luc Nordmann insists: there can never be enough places for all; regular labour market integration remains the overall objective (Baur et al. 1998: 5).

Pacifying Goods

The Reframing of ALMPs in Swiss Unemployment Insurance (UI).

- from preventive measures («Präventivmassnahmen») to labour market measures («arbeitsmarktliche Massnahmen»): (a) training, (b) employment, and (c) special measures (see next slide)
- a far more detailed and clear-cut administrative framing of ALMPs (see, for instance, the circular letters by federal offices)
- a clear-cut demarcation between measures sponsored by unemployment insurance (UI) vs. social assistance (SA): measures taken for personnes with exhausted UI benefits are no longer co-financed by UI.

Pacifying Goods

Volume of ALMP market: 580 Mio. CHF in 2014 (comparing to 4'907 Mio CHF for UI benefits) (Bundesrat 2015: 15)

List of ALMPs according to Swiss UI Law (AVIG):

- Training courses
- Practical training
- Training grant
- Practice firm
- Initial job training grant
- Motivation semester
- Temporary employment programme
- Internship
- Help to self-employment
- Commuting and weekly residents subsidy
- Special measures in case of mass layoffs

Pacifying Goods

The Standardization and Certification of Services:

- **SVOAM**: a quality label for work integration organizations often required by state agencies when they contract ALMP. The SVOAM label has been developed by Arbeitsintegration Schweiz, the largest umbrella organization of ALMP providers.
- **eduQua**: a quality label für education and training programmes. The eduQua label has been developed by SVEB (Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung) in cooperation with state agencies and providers
- ISO norms probably also play a role in contracting ALMP
- at the federal state level: Swiss Accreditation Service SAS

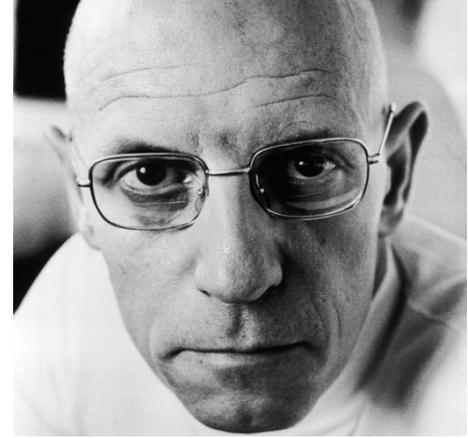
Pacifying Goods

Modifying the circulation of goods (i.e. the unemployed):

- before 1997: preventive measures protected the unemployed against falling out of the UI system. When benefits expire the unemployed can participate in a TEP and re-open a new UI benefits period.
- 1997-2003: (the right to) special ALMPs benefits prolongs benefits periods and requires the state to increase its ALMPs offer (or alternatively, to pay special benefits to persons not participating in ALMPs).
- from 2003 on: the current benefit regime urges both, the PES and the unemployed, to become active as soon as possible, that is, not only when UI benefits expire.

BY THE WAY: these modifications threatened the very existence of the unemployed's defence committees (see PhD by Anina Zahn, forthcoming)

Pacifying Goods



Pacifying and/or activating the unemployed?

- qualitative research and the contradictions of standardized activation
- The unemployed to some extent are exchanged like goods. In this respect they must be passive («pacified»), they are controlled and categorized (see, for instance, client profiling and ALMP matching).
- At the same time, the unemployed are urged to be active and they are sanctioned if they fail to prove their activity.
- In order to understand and analyze this, governmentality studies and their research programme on subjectivation (Foucault) are helpful: people are free to behave the way they should behave, from a government perspective

Pacifying Goods

Some oscillations, and confusing measures (1997-2003)

- the minimum number of TEP annual places offered by every canton (at first 25'000, later on 15'000 places for the whole country): steering input instead of output, and empowering providers instead of PES
- the introduction of special benefits for unemployed persons in ALMPs
- the payment of benefits in the form of wages submitted to UI contributions but not re-opening a new period for UI benefits

The abrogation of such confusing measures signals the maturation and consolidation of market design at the beginning of the 2000s.

- for instance, put an end to «false» PES practice by abrogation of special benefits for persons in ALMPs (Bundesrat 2001: 2253)
- see also Bieri, Müller & Balthasar 2004 («PES/ALMPs professionalization»)

Marketizing Agencies (mSTAs)



Agencement, a term hard to translate in English...

«The notion of agencement (...) is a methodological term designed to respect and render the diversity of these forces [of marketization, P.S.]. It demands that a panoply of entities be flexibly taken into account and described, in detail, whether they are human beings or material and textual elements.»

Socio-technical *agencements* (STA) «are comprised of human beings (bodies) as well as material, technical and textual devices.»

«Nothing is left outside *agencements*. That is to say, there is no need for analysts to seek further explanation, because the (eventual) construction of its own meaning is by definition an integrated part of the *agencement*.»

(Çalışkan & Callon 2010: 8-9)

Marketizing Agencies (mSTAs)

The cross-calculation of values is a specific feature of mSTA (compared to other STA):

«Any agency unable to calculate values towards the end of exchanging, and in particular unable to take the calculations of other agencies into account in their own calculations, would rapidly jeopardize its business. A market implies the execution of these crossed calculations and includes only the agencies capable of performing them.» (Çalışkan & Callon 2010: 11)

See, for instance, canton Bern in the 1990s: a market largely dominated by providers, because (a) federal law prescribes a minimum offer, contributing to market expansion, and (b) cantonal labour office lacks contracting experience (i.e. their calculative equipment is weak) (Bieri, Müller & Balthasar 2004: 51).

Marketizing Agencies (mSTAs)

Major institutional innovations in the 1990s:

- creation of approx. 150 regional PES (in German: **RAV**), replacing the traditional municipality labour offices
- creation of cantonal contracting agencies (in German: **LAM**) assigned to order and buy ALMPs
- merger of two federal offices, BAWI (office of foreign trade) & BIGA (office of industry, trades, and labour), giving birth to the **State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco)**. Plans for a Federal Labour Office in charge of UI were abandoned. Personal continuity (J.-L. Nordman at the Labour Directorate) vs. programmatic discontinuity? (see, for instance, the rise of «economics at large» in the Economic Policy Directorate)

Marketizing Agencies (mSTAs)

Benchmarking, or marketization within the state (Bundesrat 2015):

- a system with federal legislation and cantonal implementation
- from input to output steering at the beginning of the 2000s
- a bonus/malus system is rapidly replaced by benchmarking
- cantons can use federal money for ALMPs within a budget ceiling, based on the number of job seekers but with decreasing per capita lump-sums according to the cantonal unemployment rate (more or less than 4%)
- performance is measured by four indicators focusing rapid labour market integration of the unemployed
- a benchmarking system displays performance by canton, regional PES and individual collaborator
- in case of underperforming seco organizes a follow-up process
- the system includes exogenous factors correction

Marketizing Agencies (mSTAs)

Moreover, regarding the importance of non-humans in mSTAs ...

- circular letters of seco
- service contracts between cantonal offices and providers
- IT platforms for ALMPs offers (for instance, simap.ch)
- IT systems at Federal level (AVAM; ASAL) (see, for instance, controversy regarding the 2010 modernization of AVAM93 in «Der Arbeitsmarkt» (<http://derarbeitsmarkt.ch/de/print-artikel/Es-kann-nur-ein-einziges-AVAM-fuer-die-ganze-Schweiz-geben>))

Furthermore, look also at providers, and at the unemployed:

- changing business models (for instance, from charity to social firm) and calculative equipment of providers
- market capacities and market emotions of the unemployed

Market Encounters



Supply and Demand do not meet spontaneously:

«Treating ‘the encounter’ in the singular is misleading. So is the assumption that supplies and demands can be formulated without preliminary intermediation, especially by marketization professionals. In reality, markets involve a series of multiple encounters and overlapping processes of calculation. Contingencies certainly play a part, as do the initiatives taken by agencies and the unpredictable movements of goods which overflow and follow unexpected trajectories. Yet encounters are not produced haphazardly. Like goods and agencies, they are also framed and formatted by a series of devices.»

«Taking the analysis of these mediating activities as its object of investigation, the ANT approach emphasizes the analytic importance of non-humans.» (Çalışkan & Callon 2010: 14-15)

Market Encounters



Contractualization and the framing of market encounters:

- According to Greer et al. (2017) there are three basic transaction modes between state agencies and providers: grants, purchasing, and vouchers
- At the moment, there is controversy as to whether procurement law applies to ALMPs. 31% of mandates in German-speaking Switzerland, and 4% of mandates in the rest of the country, are commissioned by call for bids, i.e. open purchasing procedures. Other procedures are invitation (8% resp. 6%), and direct negotiation (60% resp. 90%) (Bundesrat 2015: 38).
- Federal law obliges cantonal offices to conclude service contracts with providers and spells out which questions must be addressed. For instance, profit-making is excluded and providers must exhibit internal cost and risk control systems (OFAS 2018: 25).

The encounters between ALMPs providers and participants (i.e. the unemployed) are framed by assignation by PES offices, individual target agreement, and reporting by provider staff to PES office.

Market Encounters

«It's the keywords, stupid!»

The head of a provider's ALMPs unit insists on the following points:

- In order to get the mandate, it's neither the best concept nor the lowest price that counts (in itself...).
- Most important are: (1) extremely detailed compliance to procedure and formal prescription and (2) matching the call's criteria and keywords.
- What counts is not so much the philosophy of the provider, but the philosophy of the contracting agency that providers must understand.
- Providers need bidding experts, whatever their professional competence.

Market Encounters

Competition and/or Control?

- Providers complain there is too much control of their activity by cantonal labour offices, as well as too restrictive rules regarding profit-making and reinvestment of ALMP revenues.
- Current practice is based on seco's interpretation that ALMPs are not subject to procurement law (BöB), but to the law on subsidies (SuG).
- The ongoing reform of Federal and cantonal procurement laws will probably change the rules of the game, submitting ALMPs to procurement law.
- The Swiss Federal Audit Office challenges the seco's interpretation, strongly promotes open procedures and calls for elimination of controls and profit-forbidding rule in case of open procedure (EFK 2017).

Price-Setting



Valorimeters and cross-calculation:

«The existence of a market implies that the valuations, and the calculations that produce them, come out in the form of prices. Fixing a price is always the outcome of a struggle between agencies trying to impose their modes for measuring a good's value and qualities. (...) We suggest the term 'valorimeters' to denote the various tools, procedures, machines, instruments or, more generally, devices affecting this controversial translation of values into figures and, more precisely, into monetary amounts.» (Çalışkan & Callon 2010: 16-17)

In the Swiss ALMPs market, not much light has been shed on price-setting mechanisms so far. The federalist setting leaves much latitude to cantonal contracting agencies whose practices could be analyzed by documentary and ethnographic analysis

...

Price-Setting

For example, «AMM Transfer 2018-2022», canton Berne

- open procedure according to WTO rules
- 5 regional lots for the same ALMP
- acceptance of a bid based on 9 criteria
- price counts for 20 percent in the overall assessment of bids
- individual prices per places offered for every lot resp. provider, ranging from 143'034 CHF to 187'826 CHF (four years)
- number of bidders varying from one to four; the highest price was not for the lot with only one bidder

source: www.simap.ch

Price-Setting

Another example, «PvB Rahmenverträge», canton Zurich

- negotiated procedure («freihändiges Verfahren»)
- frame contract with price per place/year, but without ex ante determination of the number of places resp. participants
- for political reasons (implementation of national preference following the popular vote on «mass immigration») the contracting office lacks planning reliability
- categorial prices depending on trades: 40'000 CHF in gastronomy, industry and trade; 27'000 CHF in commerce, retail trade, health, welfare; 31'000 CHF in services

source: www.simap.ch

Price-Setting

Revenues of work integration organisations (WIO) and social firms (WISE) in the field of work integration (Adam et al. 2016.)

- They combine different sources. 73% of WIO got money by cantons, 32% by Federal state, 29% by municipalities; 57% have revenues by sales of goods, 48% by contributions of clients, 50% by donations/legacies.
- Surplus control: 80% of WIO cannot distribute any surplus
- 50% of WISEs engage not more than 50 disadvantaged employees; 20% of WISEs engage more than 300 disadvantaged employees.
- 20% of WISEs have a sales turnover up to 100'000 CHF; 35% of WISEs have a sales turnover of over 1'000'000 CHF.

Price-Setting

What about impact, and performance based compensation?

- service contracts with providers must spell out objectives of the ALMP
- current practice hardly spells out performance or impact objectives, but mostly output objectives (the number of places and actions taken)
- providers are paid independently of the impact of their programmes

OFAS 2018: 26-27

Swiss Federal Audit Office calls for impact-dependent compensation:

- cantons should get subsidies based on ALMP impact
- providers should be paid based on impact

EFK 2017: 21-22

Market Design and Maintenance



Performativity programme:

«The aim in the performativity programme is to study all the theoretical and practical, expert and lay knowledge, know-how and skills developed and mobilized in the process of designing and managing market STAs.» (Çalışkan & Callon 2010: 19)

Economics at large:

This implies not only the role of academic economics, but rather what Callon calls «economics at large» i.e. various forms of collaboration between «researchers in the wild and confined researchers». (Çalışkan & Callon 2010: 20)

Market Design and Maintenance

seco at the center of «economics at large»:

- Economic Policy Directorate, created 2003, gathers a critical mass of internal economic expertise (the «economic conscience» of the Swiss Federal Administration)
- a continuous research programme on labour market policy since 1999, establishing economic truth regarding ALMPs, inter alia (seco labour market policy studies)
- publication of findings in «Die Volkswirtschaft» («La vie économique»)
- further research is needed regarding, for instance, the division of work between internal expertise and external experts
- probably inspired by seco, 2006 the Federal Social Insurance Office starts a research programme on Invalidity Insurance (FoP-IV)

Market Design and Maintenance

Who excels in the labour market policy studies market?

- two dominant players: economists from university departments & experts from private research and consultancy services
- Universities of Applied Sciences are almost completely absent
- George Sheldon, University of Basel, determined the Swiss natural unemployment rate and measured the overall efficiency of PES
- Rafael Lalive, University of Lausanne (coming from University of Zurich), is one of the rare important players in French-speaking Switzerland
- Egger & Dreher pioneered the evaluation of ALMPs
- Ecoplan is in charge regarding precarious employment in Switzerland
- B,S,S has got three important mandates since 2015 (inter alia, the first overall PES efficiency study after Sheldon)
- Kaltenborn & Kaps and IZA Bonn are the only two players from abroad

Market Design and Maintenance

The Theory of Yardstick Competition (Shleifer 1985):

- An interesting example of Federal administration economists (Bundesrat 2015) referring to academic economics in order to account for the benchmarking system (seco-cantonal labour offices).
- Shleifer shows how benchmarking allows the regulator to incite regulated institutions to price reducing (vs. cost-of-service regulation)
- «To use this scheme, the regulator does not need to know the cost reduction technology; the accounting data suffice to achieve efficiency.» (Shleifer 1985: 320).
- However as in the case of the Swiss ALMP market, failing cantonal PES cannot be eliminated, seco organizes a follow-up process in case of underperformance in order to improve effectivity and efficiency.

Market Design and Maintenance



Market Emotions:

«The question of maintenance has been addressed in an oblique manner by economists, and later by economic sociologists through the notion of 'trust'».

But «the notion of trust covers only a portion of of the realm of affects and emotions, without which markets would collapse.» (for instance, hope, moral sentiments, taste etc.)

«Ultimately, then, our objection to trust is that it is used as an undifferentiated explanation of coordination that black-boxes maintenance operations and social-technical devices, instead of demanding that these be studied. It would be useful to develop further studies of market emotions that grant a key role to materialities in the production of these very emotions. It is important to recognize that the notion of STA is designed to encompass the emotional, corporal, textual and technical elements that contribute to the maintenance of markets.» (Çalışkan & Callon 2010: 21)

Market Design and Maintenance

Bringing qualitative studies and ethnography back in:

- Qualitative research is best suited in order to analyze market emotions, feelings, convictions, and the ethos of people involved
- So far much research has been done about the unemployed.
- Research is also needed regarding providers staff, and the «street level bureaucracy» (Lipsky 2010) working in state agencies.

What does it need for all these actors involved to believe in the existence and in the usefulness of the ALMP market, making them behave, more or less, like market actors? (or even: marketizing actors)

Social Work

III. Conclusion

**Marketization and Economic Government in Swiss
Unemployment Insurance**

Making Activation Work

The **activation turn** was not accomplished at once. There was a period of hesitations and confusion (1997-2003). And there is an ongoing period of market maintenance and improvement.

- 1996 reform: declaring the principle, creating new institutions
- 2000 reform: a technical revision improving the mSTA
- 2003 reform: tightening the benefits regime, winning popular support

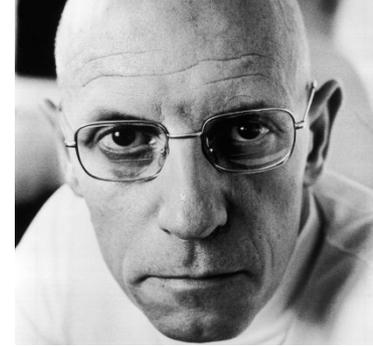
A next fundamental step might the **extension of procurement law** to ALMP (see current parliamentary debate).

- reduction of controls and «liberal bureaucracy» (Giauque 2004) ?
- from cantonal to regional contracting (if «there is no market») ?
- towards a two-tier structure of the ALMP market with «primes» subcontracting to local institutions ?

State vs. Market

- challenging this ontological divide installed by liberalism
- State and market are not separate realities or forces alien or hostile one to the other
- co-production of markets and statehood (for instance, new forms of marketization within the state)
- the emergence and evolution of ALMP providers results more and more from responses to state marketization
- see, for instance, the metamorphosis of charities into social firms (social enterprises)
- mSTAs as an analytical tool challenging the ontological divide and permitting to analyse its relevance and functionings

Economic Government



- Foucault insists on the importance of economic knowledge (truth) as a rising form of knowledge-power («savoir-pouvoir»)
- Callon enlarges the concept to «economics at large», including not only academic economists, but also «researchers in the wild»
- Economic Government is a way of depoliticizing politics: it shifts the argument from law, ethics, conflict, justice etc. towards economic truths measured by quantitative empirical analysis
- Is there a parallel to the socialist trajectory from «utopian socialism» to «scientific socialism»?
- Are we witnessing the age of «scientific liberalism»?

At seco, see for instance, **David Syz** the Utopian Liberal (director 1999-2003) vs. **Aymo Brunetti**, the Scientific Liberal (head of Economic Policy Directorate 2003-2012).



Governance by Numbers



- According to Supiot (2017) government by law is marginalized by new forms of governance by numbers. A competition between legal systems for optimal outcome is created.
- Desrosières (2014) shows that in neoliberalism, statistics is openly performative, that is: it aims not so much at representing reality, but at transforming reality (through benchmarking, for instance)

In the Swiss ALMPs market, both elements can be detected:

- the rising influence of infra-legal documents: decrees, circular letters, expert knowledge, contractualisation (seco-cantons; contracting offices-providers; providers-participants)
- benchmarking is used within the state so far; a stronger orientation towards ALMPs results might be ante portas with the extension of procurement law

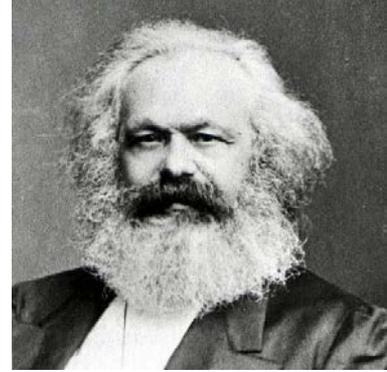
Challenges to the Social Work Profession

- ... and to further sociologists and socialists ...

See, for instance, the **debate about sanctions**: AvenirSocial (2014) refers to human rights, professional ethos, sociology and psychology vs. Morlok et al. (2015) refer to quantitative empirical evidence: Do sanctions work?

- It is not enough to encounter the arguments of the political right who fights on the same (political, moral) grounds than social work is used to.
- It is also necessary to encounter economization, that is, the shift from one kind of argument to another. This requires two things: (1) take economics at large seriously and (2) fight epistemological battles!

... what about Work? The Last Word.



Remember the challenge of our SNSF project: analyzing the work of «people without work» ...

... but: what have we learned about their work so far? Almost nothing.

Markets are institutions designed to objectify (reify) human activities and social relations. These activities and relations must become things in order to be valuable (pacifying goods). Thus marketization makes work invisible.

Marx already knew this when he opposed circulation and production, the realm of freedom and equality vs. the realm of domination and exploitation. For this reason, the researcher must enter the shop floor even if there's a sign that reads: «no admittance except on business».

Sociology of Work must do both: analyzing production and circulation. With our case studies, we will «enter the shop floor». Sensitized by our analysis of marketization, we will be able to detect and understand the multiple effects of economic reification co-producing what work is and means in our society in general, and for «people without work» in particular.

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