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1. Introduction

Searching for a job is a phenomenon becoming even more recurrent the more intense is the risk of becoming unemployed and more lasting the time when people remain without a (new) occupation. Searching for a job and being unemployed are, so to speak, two sides of the same coin. Therefore, dealing with first issue wearing the lenses of second one will offer us the possibility of coping with three central angles to understand social processes taking place in labor market. Let us look to this.

Searching for a job is no more than the socially expected conduct of an unemployed. This is why seeking a job and being unemployed may be seen as aspects of the same phenomenon. This <u>normative dimension</u> bases the way how unemployment is defined, and consequently how it is statistically measured. In effect (and however large may be the disputes about how to good measuring it), not having a job and being looking for one are the two requirements globally and unanimously assumed in any form of operationalize this notion. This compulsion regulated by norms also backs the difference between unemployment and downtime. In this sense, focus the demand for labor having in mind its founding normative dimension is a fruitful strategy to understand the experience of being unemployed, allowing us to go beyond approaches reducing study of unemployment to measure the movement of its rates and indexes.

Besides, ways of searching for a job, in its variation, are indicators of the way how labor market operation is institutionalized, of its <u>institutional construction</u>. In other words, seeking work is, according to this second perspective, a good entry point to deal about actors and institutions in charge of making the famous *matching* between offer and demand for work.

However, ways of searching for a job also indicate <u>forms of sociability</u>. In this third sense, dealing with seek is another way of talking about building a social life, mobilization of social relations, the efficiency of social bonds; at last of non-market mechanisms present in labor market operation. Even more, it is understanding how greater or lesser vigor of these forms of sociability express the particular ways of articulation between public and private. Therefore, this gives us a glimpse of increasing challenges labor protection policies face.

The target of this text will be exploring confluence among these three dimen-

2. Searching for a job: intermediation market institutions and labor market structure

Nowadays, it is not at all trivial being in the market in search of a job. Because it turns into a thorny task for the unemployed or for anyone looking for a better job when:

- there are few vacancies and their conditions become flexible,
- requirements to fill the vacancy demand a high level of skills and there are many candidates for each position,
- Companies, in their constant search of streamlining work and cutting costs, outsource finding and sorting candidates.

The unemployed must know conduct and presentation codes to interact well with middlemen – employment agencies and temporary work agencies among others – acting in different areas of the market. They usually do a first selection of the candidates, in order to fulfill requests of departments of Human Resources of the employers. Corporate downsizing has affected personnel management sectors, thus they only perform "noble tasks" defining recruitment profiles or deciding to "bang the gavel" in final selection regarding whom will be hired, after interviewing a small group of candidates sent by the middlemen, which have already selected the most competitive and being the perfect fit for the position.

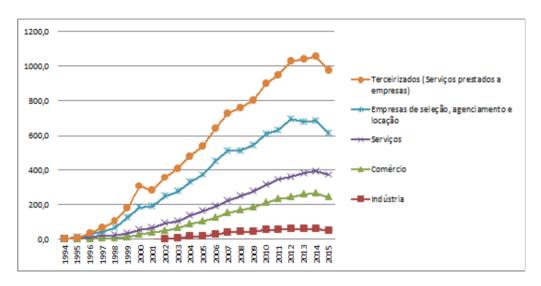
Arriving by gravity – and in large quantities, particularly when unemployment becomes worse – people searching jobs must know how to introduce themselves in the appropriate way to middlemen. And they must do it accordingly with rules of recognition of potential candidates, being able to perform well in key moments of the selection at the employment agency, and act as the ideal applicant when in the company seeking to recruit. This requires an adequate way of describing their own qualifications, skills and expectations. It is a must fulfilling conditions in order to maximize chances of success to get the job. Therefore, it is not enough being unemployed, or in search of a job to be "obviously" considered enabled to fill a vacancy. We currently know that going from "mere" claimant of a job to a possible employee implies in walking a harsh road in the market, with many players in the same race, particularly when the *matching* between vacancy and candidate is supported by the work of middlemen.²

To provide a basis to our reasoning: when seeing Brazilian statistics in Chart 1, most significant fact is the expansion of formal jobs in the years 2005 to 2014. Then more evident becomes the importance of these brokering com-

² For a deeper and more systematic discussion about this argument, in the light of ethnographies in the region of São Paulo and interviews with workers in search of a job, see Guimarães (2009), Vieira (2012), Tartuce (2011), Demazière at al (2013), Guimarães and Vieira (2015), Guimarães (2016). To a glance based in sound works, very comparative, performed abroad, see Autor (2009), Benner et al (2009) and Fu (2015).

panies (Guimarães, 2011). Such importance can easily be measured by the speed these agents provided (and keep providing) to access formal job opportunities to a significant group of individuals, particularly young people engaged in temporary jobs, with access to social rights, however of very short duration and extremely turnover (Guimarães, 2009 and 2016).

Chart 1 - Evolution of the index relating to Brazilian formal wage volume, by highlighted sectors (base year: 1994)



Source: Ministry of labor and Employment. RAIS – Annual Social Information Report, 1994 to 2015. Base year: 1994. Outsourced: services rendered to companies / Employment, procurement and location companies / Services / Commerce / Industry

When economy began showing signs of slowdown, formal jobs generated by employment agencies, location, procurement and personnel selection companies, seemed to be the first ones to become sensitive to the backflow, and therefore rapidly reduced its growth rate (Chart 1). Indeed, while industrial direct jobs, in commerce and services kept maintaining a positive pace up to 2014, increase in number of hired people through middlemen stabilized between 2012 and 2013, and since 2014 began back flowing. If we look into outsourced jobs, movement becomes even clearer (also in Chart 1) regarding formal vacancies offered by employment agencies to other companies (or in other words provider of services and not only employment brokers).

In the meantime, there is a third important aspect to be mentioned when seeing employment brokers looking for vacancies. In spite of clear backflow in rate of job creation in 2015, when labor market crisis already existed, middlemen maintained same expansion rate of vacancies than in 2010, when market was booming. This means that in current crisis, even slowing down their hiring, they keep placing workers into the formal market, at a much faster speed than in 2004-2005, when job cycle expansion began; and it even equaled rate registered in 2008, in the peak of activation of economy. The same pattern may be observed (in Chart 1) for outsourced companies rendering services.

So, where are we heading? Looking to the job search movement from employment agencies viewpoint, companies specialized in *matching* between workers and jobs, we could say that recent expansion observed between years 2004-2014 seems to have been not just a growth employment movement - and of formal protected vacancies. This expansion showed that the Brazilian labor market structure is continuously changing, that formal jobs diversify, that a new class of workers – growing faster, based in the way they look for and get vacancies, reach special types of jobs. Special not only because they are obtained through brokers contact. But special also because they are more fragile (while formal) and less safe (although allowing access to a basket of social rights).

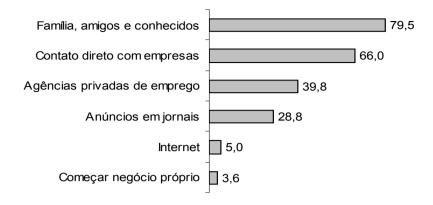
3. Searching for a job: people looking for jobs and their different strategies

Nevertheless brokering employment agencies have an increasing importance as ways out of unemployment; we must also consider two other facts. In first place, individuals in search of a job do use many strategies to achieve their target. In second place, among these strategies in Brazil a privileged position is occupied by non-commercial ways of searching jobs, and obtaining them. We will name these strategies as non-commercial since they are woven within a private sociability environment: friends, relatives and acquaintances networks, meeting between companies offering vacancies and people looking for jobs, or in other words, the Brazil labor market hardcore.

Successive researches have shown the importance of non-commercial ways of accessing chances of finding a job (Guimarães, 2009 and 2009-a; Guimarães, Brito and Silva, 2011; Guimarães, Barbosa and Carvalhaes, 2015). We have initially verified the remarkable importance of social networks, through a survey made in the metropolitan region of São Paulo in 2001, with the economy in crisis and rising unemployment. Networks were most used tool by individual in search of jobs because it proved to be the most effective to get a job. No fewer than 8 in each 10 people answering the research said they used this mechanism (Chart 2). When asked how they had got last job, 7 in each 10 respondents confirmed the efficiency of social networks to get a job.

Chart 2 - Most used tools to find a job in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, 2001

UNEMPLOYMENT AND JOB SEARCH: SOME CHALLENGES



Source: CEM - Seade "Occupational mobility", Supplementary module to the Survey of Employment and Unemployment in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, April to December 2001. It was a multiple choice question. Apud Guimarães (2009). Relatives, friends and acquaintances / Direct contact with companies / Private employment agencies / Advertisement in newspapers / Internet / Starting own business.

In 2004, in a new survey made in São Paulo (Guimarães, 2009-a) interviewing people in search of jobs through employment agencies, we found same results (Chart 3). It was a moment of resuming (though still in early stages) economic growth and turnaround in offer of vacancies. Search through employment agencies was having same pace of growth, and unemployed massively used their services to get a job. The curious fact is that while being interviewed when searching jobs in employment agencies, and although they said this was the mechanism they usually uses, these interviewed admitted in large majority they had found their last job through personal contacts, and not through employment agencies; and not only the last one, but also before last year and third to last of their jobs.³

Chart 3 - Means by which people got a job in the metropolitan region - of São Paulo (MRSP), 2004

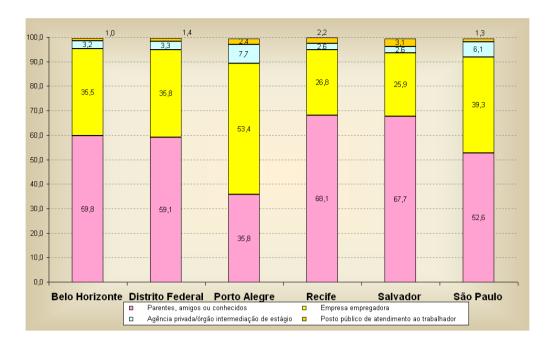


Source: CEM, Survey "Searching for a job", Survey by representative samples of individuals searching for a job in employment agencies of the metropolitan region of São Paulo, August 2004. Apud Guimarães, 2009-a

By which means did you get the job? Searching for a job: A research in employment agencies 2004 - MRSP

The results achieved in these two first surveys were confirmed by a third one, conducted in 2008, now covering six of main Brazilian metropolitan regions. Again, social networks seemed to be the most important mechanisms to connect people to their future occupations. While having different weights according to the Brazilian metropolis verified by the Research of Employment and Unemployment, networks were referred by people as being the most efficient resource to access job opportunities (Chart 4). ⁴

Chart 4 - How to get a private job? Differences between Brazilian metropolises in 200



Source: DIEESE. Survey sample "Information on Public System of Employment, Work and Income", complementary questionnaire to PED, May-Oct. 2008. Apud Guimarães, Brito and Silva, 2011. Relatives, friends or acquaintances / Private agency/traineeship broker's company Employer / Worker's service station.

Also in 2008, a national household survey, the PED (Survey on Social Dimensions of Inequalities) for the first time interviewed people of households located outside of major metropolises. Results for Brazil in joint confirmed previous findings. Guimarães, Barbosa and Carvalhaes (2015) showed that almost 5 of each 10 respondents (47pct of them, precisely) stated having got their current jobs through contact networks; being 11pct relatives, close friends 22pct or acquaintances 14pct. Only 4pct of respondents mentioned having contacted middlemen - employment agencies and temporary jobs companies for the search.

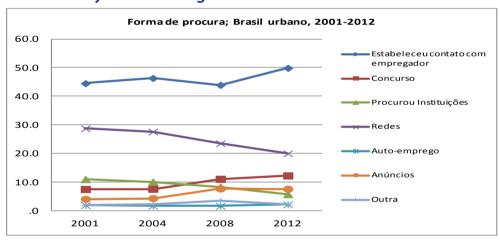
Table 1 - Ways of accessing jobs and income. Brazil, 2008

	N	%
Acesso sem venda de trabalho	1311	24.5
Relação direta (prospecção/meios anônimos)	1098	20.5
Relação mediada por redes sociais (familiares, amigos, conhecidos)	2525	47.2
Relação mediada por instituições	235	4.4
Outras	182	3.4
Total	5351	100.0

Source: Survey "Social dimensions of inequalities", 2008. Apud Guimarães, Barbosa and Carvalhaes, 2015. Access without selling jobs / Direct relation (prospection/anonymous media) / Relation established through social networks: relatives, friends, acquaintances / Relation established through institutions / Others

However, different individual strategies of occupational inclusion are in themselves, sensitive to labor market dynamics. In order to document this, we have observed results of the National Sample Survey of Households regarding ways of searching jobs in Brazil in four selected years: 2001, 2004, 2008 and 2012; and we highlight main Brazilian metropolises (Chart 5). ⁵

Chart 5 - Ways of searching Jobs in urban Brazil - 2001 to 2012



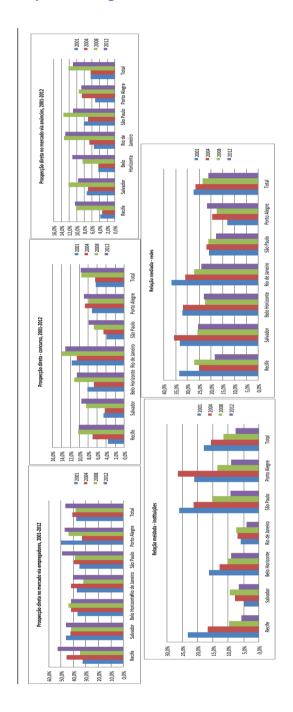
Source: National Sample Survey of Households, selected years (2001, 2004, 2008, 2012). Made contact with the employer / Contest / Contacted institutions / Networks / Self-employment / Job advertisements / Others

Over the years 2000, as suggested in Chart 5, people looked to feel even safer to directly prospect the market, whether seeking possible employers, whether applying for selection procedures or replying to advertisements. When observing this same movement in several metropolitan regions, selected by their importance, we roughly see that same trend is kept (Chart 6). There is a reduction in demand of ways of searching through networks, location companies and employment agencies (represented in the two inferior figures of Chart 5) and at the same time an increase in prospection trend based in a direct relation between individuals and employers, be it in search at the com-

⁵ These four years have been chosen to show: 2001, a period of economic slowdown in labor market; 2004 the first year when market shifted trend and jobs began to increase; 2008 year of maximum expansion of growth pace capacity of middlemen to provide new formal jobs, and 2012, the most recent year.

pany, replies to selection procedures or advertisements (as seen in superior figures of Chart 6)

Chart 6 - Panel of variations in ways of searching jobs (Brazil and selected metropolitan regions). 2001, 2004, 2008, 2012



Source: National Sample Survey of Households, selected years (2001, 2004, 2008, 2012)

Therefore we can see that in this period, job search middlemen increased their capacity of getting jobs, and did this at a faster pace than the general average and also faster than any of main economic activities sectors (cf RAIS, Chart 1). However there was a reduction of people looking for jobs (cf PNAD, Chart 5). The attentive reader may wonder if there is not a contradiction between results of household survey (PNAD) and findings arising from compulsory information disclosed by companies (RAIS). We believe this decrease may be result of a conjunction between wider offer of job vacancies, combined with lower market opacity and a broader reaching of social protection policies, allowing individuals having more control to manage their strategies and compare better alternatives of searching a job.

Nevertheless this result may suffer, in some ways, the effect of an excessive enumeration of direct prospection arising from ways of measuring job search adopted by the PNAD, issue that we will see in last section, when we will discuss methodological questions.

4. Searching for a job: the challenges of measuring this issue

Analyzing the Brazilian market through the prism of movements made by those in search of a job drives us into facing another challenge: how to capture the phenomenon of searching jobs. We began this paper drawing attention to the fact that however large be disputes on how to well measure unemployment, not having a job and being in search of it are always the two requirements globally and unanimously assumed in any way of operationalizing this issue. In this sense, it was crucial documenting the so-called "active search of work", the one which would establish the frontier between unemployment and inactivity, between being in the market in search of insertion, or giving up the fight. This is the reason why statistical surveys began researching how to find a job, less by taking it as a relevant object from a theoretical and interpretative point of view and more to measure it and having certainty than respondent was really committed in getting a job; when he/she looked for it and how did it, through which mechanisms tried to find a job opportunity became extensively verified variables.

However, among us such measuring early gained analytical interest in itself. Already at the beginning of the 1980's, two developments in this field became relevant. Benchmarks of short term initiated register of unemployment movements, through doing in some Brazilian main metropolitan regions, the Monthly Research on Employment (PME).⁶ And this is an important data

because first massive unemployment heavy crisis, particularly affecting main cities at the dawn of the 1980's, signaled that people were clung to surviving with income obtained in the market, and there they remained doing nothing. And this brought a main problem to the society; since movements of unemployed began appearing in the political scenario in main cities like São Paulo.

A second also relevant unfolding takes us to reflect about the fact that an important part of Brazilian intelligentsia started to intervene in unemployment rates measured by ILO.7 They questioned characteristics of job relations and ways of unemployment in the then called "heterogeneous markets" workforce. In these markets it would not have spread, in spite of being legally stated, a contract norm based in wage for an indefinite duration and protected by the formalization of contractual relationship. Moreover, deprived of protecting institutions created under social welfare universalist regimes, markets like our lacked a public support system for the unemployed, in a way to make him facing circumstances while having lost the job and during search for a new one. In these conditions labor market was far away of being reduced to the pair formed by lasting employment and formally protected from one side and the transitory unemployment and also protected, on the other one. This debate, as we know, originated a bold undertaking from a political and methodological point of view: a new measurement of employment strategy and unemployment, represented by the Survey of Employment and Unemployment (PED), commanded by DIEESE and supported by some local state governments. This survey monthly monitored the performance of the market. It was assumed the intention of conceptualize and quantify situations established between the formal and lasting job and open and transitory unemployment, creating a sort of fluid limit between situation supposedly discrete and perfectly measurable.

The construction of an operational definition to measure what was called "hidden unemployment" was an early-days theoretical-methodological challenge. Only then it could be seen the weight of some sectors of labor force standing or in the thin gray border between occupation and unemployment – disguised in a sort of unemployment hidden in a precarious job – or in the gray border between activity and inactivity – under the shape of an unemployment hidden in frustration.

It was necessary analyzing the subjective disposition to be engaged with the job, enquiring on claims regarding working hours, facing the challenge of a more refined and careful way of measuring the phenomenon of searching a job, verifying different and wider timings than week before the collection, till then adopted as reference. Even more, it has to be asked about mechanisms used in the search, and this opened a main way to measure role of different agents - in the market or and out, engaged with movement of information on occupational opportunities.

Different Brazilian labor market economic trend statistics began using

several metrics to count unemployment and establish the existence of job search, thus making the comparison task to turn into a main challenge. More than this, since devices used to search jobs had – each one of them – separate distinctions, always committing a wider look on the issue.

This is the case, for example, of National Sample Survey of Households – PNAD, sole great national encouragement statistics survey, which in a long historical series, regularly captures labor situation, not only respecting instrument bias of survey on search, as also clearly overestimates direct worker's prospection in the market. The PNAD informs on job search mechanisms from such answers as "actions taken to get a job". Therefore, it only checks the usual search, or in other words does not look to the so called "effective search". Such approach is always repeated when interest only focuses in documenting searching to rank well the respondent as being in situation of unemployment, not paying attention to study of mechanisms allowing to effectively reaching the job.

The answers, in turn, are classified by means of a set of alternatives: "established contact with the employer", "did an exam", "contacted an employment agency or labor union", "placed or answered an advertisement", "contacted relatives, friends or colleagues", "has taken steps to initiate a business". Such classification has an ambiguity affecting calculation of several job search mechanisms. Therefore we must know how answer "contact with the employer" is operationalized. If it is measured by PNAD, it goes beyond usual understanding given to the "direct prospection" (being registered in a work or personnel department, or sending a resume or an answer to vacancy announcement poster). It also includes the inscription in an employment agency or in a trade union, answering an advertisement in a journal or magazine, asking a relative, colleague or friend, a personal visit, a letter, a telegram or any other way of accessing the potential employer. Such overlapping of selection criteria exceeds individual job search initiative regarding employers, and reduces weight of other categories such as search through announcements, networks or brokering agencies, which become subsumed in the category "establish contact with the employer".8

And also the Survey of Employment and Unemployment, PED, which arises based in a good measuring of frontiers between occupation, unemployment and downtime, likewise makes studies of job search turn into a mere indicator of unemployment levels. Because it does not make any progress regarding effective and well succeeded since drove people to get a job, and also does not goes departs from classifying mistakes regarding multiple mechanisms by them mobilized. Collection of PED demand mechanisms starts with following question to respondent: did he/she look for a job during last thirty days? If the answer is yes, then he/she is invited to mention what steps he took, choosing from following ones: (i) did he/she look for a company, agency or

trade union, (ii) did he/she contact National labor Service, SINE, (iii) did he/she place/answer any advertisement, (iv) did he/she contact relatives, friends or acquaintances, (v) did he/she look street advertisements, (vi) did he/she make contacts with potential clients. This categorization, while having the enormous advantage of highlighting public system resources, also has a limit, since develops in same type of mechanisms, direct search in companies with search through employment private agencies and trade unions. This prevents from a more accurate analysis of the role of non-government brokers (trade union and agencies), being together in an unjustified way, from initiatives of direct prospection in companies.

To conclude, to measure job research by considering it a relevant object in itself, is not an easy task. This brings to important gaps regarding a better understanding of mechanisms used by individuals in its search to escape from unemployment. And this is particularly relevant in situations when labor market reveals being in crisis.

5. By way of general conclusion

During last decades we have seen in Brazil an expansion on commitment of the economic activities, and together with it a consolidation in the selling off labor process (Guimarães, Brito and Barone, 2015). Two aspects of this process are particularly remarkable: a growing compulsion to seek survival in the market and a progressive dominance of the link between wage earning and self-employment. Therefore reliance on the market and on the employer become the anchors on which is based the Brazilian labor market structure emerging, indelibly marked, in Brazil from the 1980s.

This wage earning growth and more recently the formal sector employment increase arose the question of understanding how was woven the social relation in the heart of this commercial dynamics, between job applicants and suppliers. Interestingly, when focusing how this matching happens, we saw close articulation between typical commercial and noncommercial elements. These last ones come from informal relations weaved in private sociability spaces, or formal relations established between individuals, subjects of rights, and social protection policies. Both of these, in spite of having an extra-economic nature, they are economically relevant.

Then we explored the interrelation between market (expressed in the competition for jobs, which is at the core of job search) and solidarity emanating from private sociability spaces. In the Brazilian case, it has proved to be crucial to allow people know where the occupational opportunities are, so they can develop conditions, timing, resources and assets to compete for them. This has showed us that is it impossible understanding how individuals stay in the

market and reach jobs without taking profit of the close inter-relation existing between these two spheres – market and private sociability spaces.

In the meantime, progressing in the understanding of unemployment when viewed from search side, demands improving ways how we measure such phenomenon, getting around problems still left by the statistics we see coming from Brazil.

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