

# Graduates employability: research developments in Portugal

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11/10/2012 – IST - Lisboa



# Research field “under” construction

- . Insertion professionnelle ?
- . Entrée dans la vie active ?
- . Entry to work ?
- . Transition to work ?
- . Graduates employability ?

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# The “origins”

- The **70s** - internationally

(due to expansion of higher education and to changes in the graduates' labor market)

- The **90s** - in Portugal

- **Transitions:** understood as *a process* that lasts a certain time

# The “under construction” phase in Portugal

**When** has knowledge about transitions been produced ?

**Who** has been producing knowledge about transitions ?

**How** has knowledge about transitions been produced ?

**Which** themes and issues has research been focusing ?



## **When** and **Who** has been producing knowledge?

- National survey in 1993 (published in 1996) by the Ministry of Education
- National survey in 2001 by Ministry of Education and Ministry of Work and Solidarity
- At least 12 higher education institutions have conducted surveys since the late 90s but mainly since 2000 (10 in universities and 2 in polytechnics)

# **When** and **Who** has been producing knowledge?

- At least 9 PhD thesis since 2003
- Predominance of Sociological and Educational approaches
- Diversity of theoretical and conceptual references
- Usually focusing all the domains of studies in a certain institution (it is less frequent that research considers a specific disciplinary field of studies and/or professional domain)

# How has knowledge been produced ?

- Initial phase: questionnaires to first degree graduates (that had finished in a certain year or that had finished between year  $x$  and year  $y$ )
- Recent trend: questionnaires to graduates that have finished one year before (because collecting this type of information about graduates' employability is a requirement within HE assessment and evaluation)
- Institutional studies frequently combined with PhD research and in these situations questionnaires are complemented with interviews or biographical research

# Which themes and issues have been highlighted?

- Social origins and/or geographical mobility
- Educational and/or academic trajectories
- Professional trajectories
- Professional situation when answering the questionnaire

(considering both objective data as well as subjective opinions and evaluations)



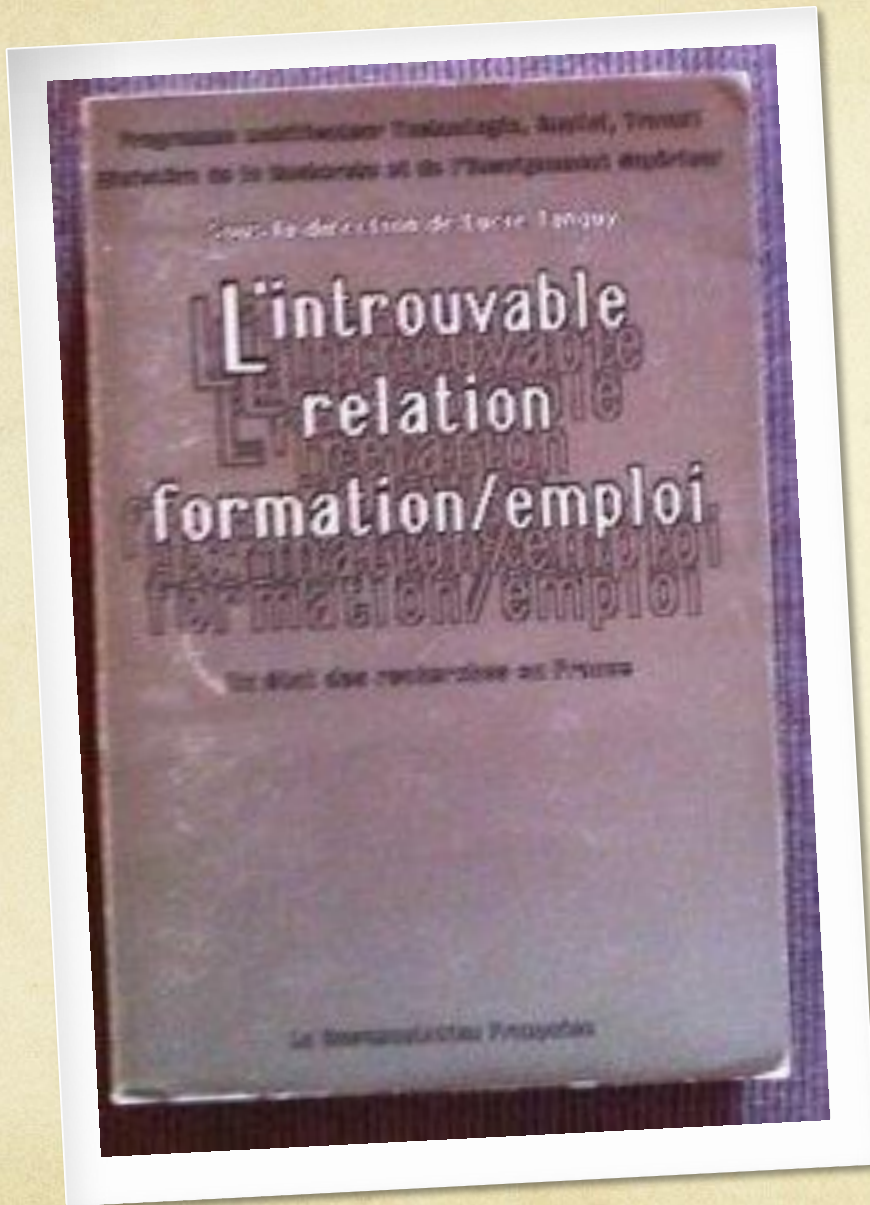
## **Which** themes and issues have PhDs explored?

- Psychological factors affecting transitions; the concept of employability; identity dynamics; social mobility and professional and family trajectories; interactions between graduates, employers and academics (...)
- Generic conclusions: social visibility contrasts with few studies; higher satisfaction and less unemployment than expected; but profound changes are taking place at the moment...



## ? Future Research Questions ?

- Master and PhD graduates will be questioned more systematically ?
- Looking at the particular case of adults/mature students ?
- Analyzing strategies developed by students and graduates to enhance employability ?
- Reflecting on ways of organizing teaching and learning in HE ?
- Connections between academic success and professional



## ? Future Research Developments ?

One fundamental challenge regarding the nature of the links between higher education and work/employment:

- ? Adjustment ?
- ? Interdependence?
- ? Regulation?

**Muito obrigado!**

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