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INTRODUCTION

This contribution aims to shed some light on the **second transition**, i.e. the one that takes place after obtaining a diploma of the Upper secondary degree and which includes the processes of insertion into the labour market or into tertiary education level.

Preceding research has pointed out some characteristics specific to the second transition, namely the evolution of the flows towards labour or tertiary education level, the spreading out in time of the insertion into labour or else the strongly determining effects of the diploma itself on the choices of orientation (Davaud, Mouad, & Rastoldo, 2010 ; Keller, Hupka-Brunner, & Meyer, 2010 ; Scharenberg *et al.*, 2014).

More recently, transition has been viewed with the notion of path in mind ; this perspective takes the succession or the imbrication of education segments into account, as well as professional experience, periods of inactivity or unemployment. Post-obligatory paths are thus very varied and differ obviously from those prescribed by educational systems (Bachmann Hunziker, Leuenberger Zanetta, Mouad, & Rastoldo, 2013 ; Cattaneo, Donati, & Galeandro, 2009 ; Mouad & Rastoldo, 2016 ; Pollien & Bonoli, 2012).

Given the fact that the transition into active life rarely corresponds to a direct switch from education to labour (Bachmann Hunziker, Leuenberger Zanetta, Mouad, & Rastoldo, to be published), our objective is to examine more precisely the way the professional world gradually enters the life of young people. The analyzed data comes from a survey about Upper secondary orientation (EOS-study).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Which forms can the reported professional experiences of young people take?
- What is the extent of the professional experiences and their interweaving with other occupations?
- How do young people who have entered the professional world perceive their situation and which difficulties did they have to face?

METHOD

The data of the EOS-study has been taken in the Canton de Vaud in January 2015 amongst 6258 secondary II certified young people (Federal Baccalaureate, Federal Specialised and Vocational Baccalaureates, General Culture Diploma, Federal VET Diploma and Certificate, University Aptitude Test).

An online survey provided precise information about the situation (mainly about the present state of either further education, work or unemployment) of these young people 18 months after they had obtained their diploma, the different modes of transition towards this situation (direct or indirect, and what kind of activities in case of indirect transition), its evaluation, the planned activities one year later, and their vocational perspectives.

The rate of answers amounts to 58.2%

Table 1: Description of the population

	Population (sample*)	Respondents	Females	French native speakers	Swiss nationality	Age
	N	N	%	%	%	Average
Federal Baccalaureate	1345*	912	57.4	85.1	85	18.9
Federal Vocational Baccalaureate	1024	622	51	90.4	87.8	21.3
Federal Specialised Baccalaureate	290	184	78.3	83.2	85.9	20.5
Federal VET Diploma	2400*	1177	47.3	85.6	78.3	22.6
General Culture Diploma	829	483	62.7	77.1	82.5	19.5
Federal VET Certificate	294	131	31.9	71	58	23.1
University Aptitude Test	76	41	55.3	100	90.2	23.2
Total	6258	3550	52.9	84.3	81.9	20.9

RESULTS

First observation

Variety of professional experiences

Four types of professional experiences are mainly described by young people. Work is the most frequent; more than half of the young people say that they were employed at any given moment during the 3 years after they obtained their diploma.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES	
Employment	53.5%
Relatively stable professional experience in which the young is bound by contract with his employer or else he is himself the company director	
Job	14.1%
More unstable professional experience, in time as well as in the bond between employee and employer	
Training courses	7.2%
Time limited professional experience which has generally the function to introduce a candidate to a particular professional area and to assess his potential abilities	
Professional practice during the formation	8.5%
Professional experience as an essential component of vocational training	

The other activities mentioned by the young people are: other forms of training, military or civil service, learning a language abroad, search for employment or for a traineeship, trips and the fact to stay at home for different reasons.

Second observation

Diversity of professional experiences in post secondary II paths

The analysis of the imbrications of the different professional experiences with the other occupations in the three years after obtaining the diploma show 4 types of paths:

N=2277 26.9%	Constant professional experiences in the course of the path Succession or intertwining of different professional activities but, in 15.5% of the cases, there is a stabilized insertion in employment
N=1091 12.90%	Consequent professional experiences in the course of the path Succession or intertwining of different professional experiences during 2 years in the three which followed the obtaining of the diploma, albeit the presence of other activities
N=1032 12.20%	Limited professional experiences in the course of the path Succession or intertwining of different professional experiences during 1 year in the three which followed the obtaining of the diploma, albeit the presence of other activities
N=1579 18.6%	Absence of professional experience in the course of the path No professional activity was mentioned

Around 30% of the young people are not taken into consideration in these paths either because of lacking data or because of expressed uncertainties about their professional future.

Rate of people concerned with stabilized employment

Less than 3%	Between 6 – 12.5%	More than 15.1%
Federal Baccalaureate Federal Specialised Baccalaureate University Aptitude Test General Culture Diploma	Federal Vocational Baccalaureate Federal VET Certificate	Federal VET Diploma

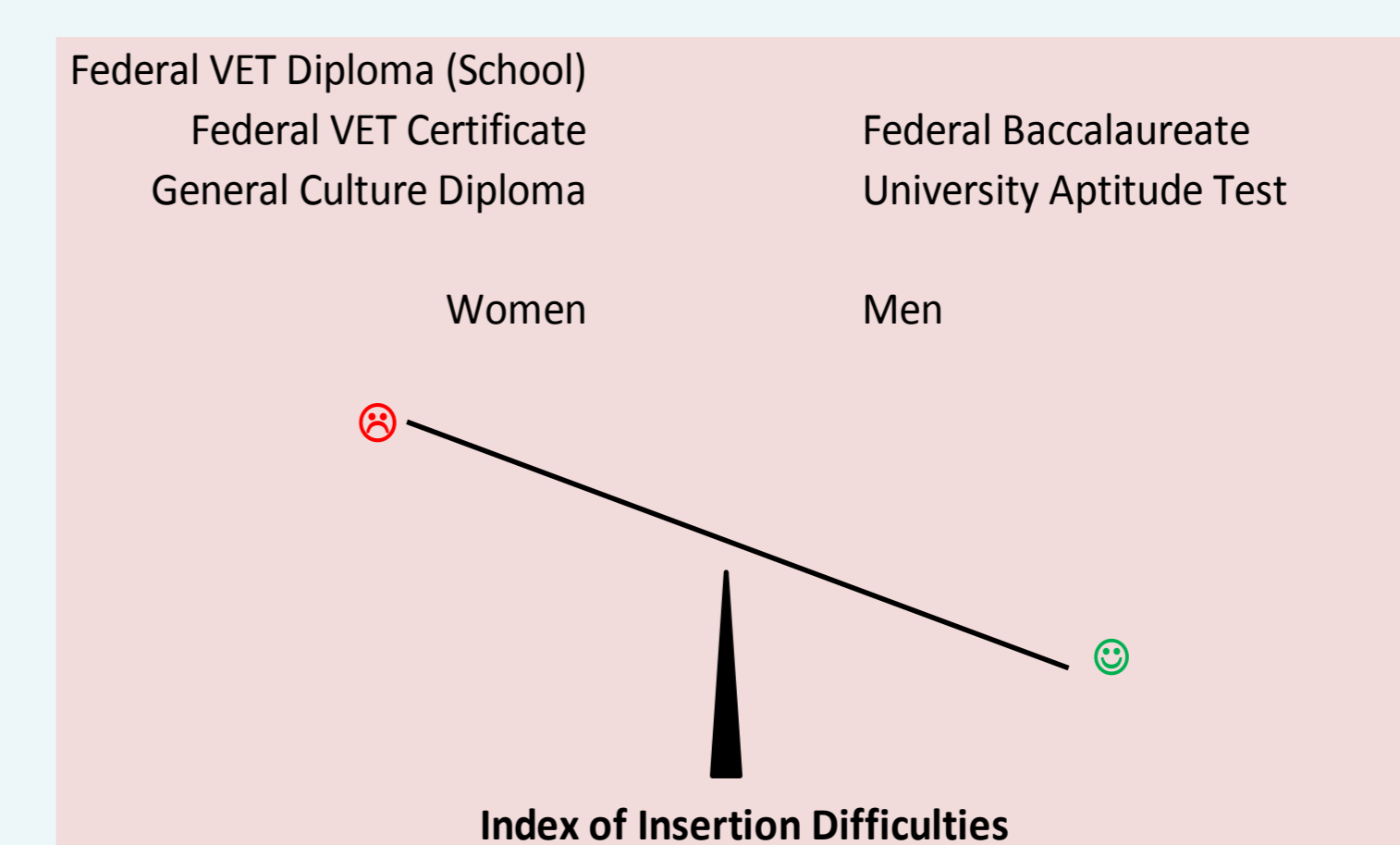
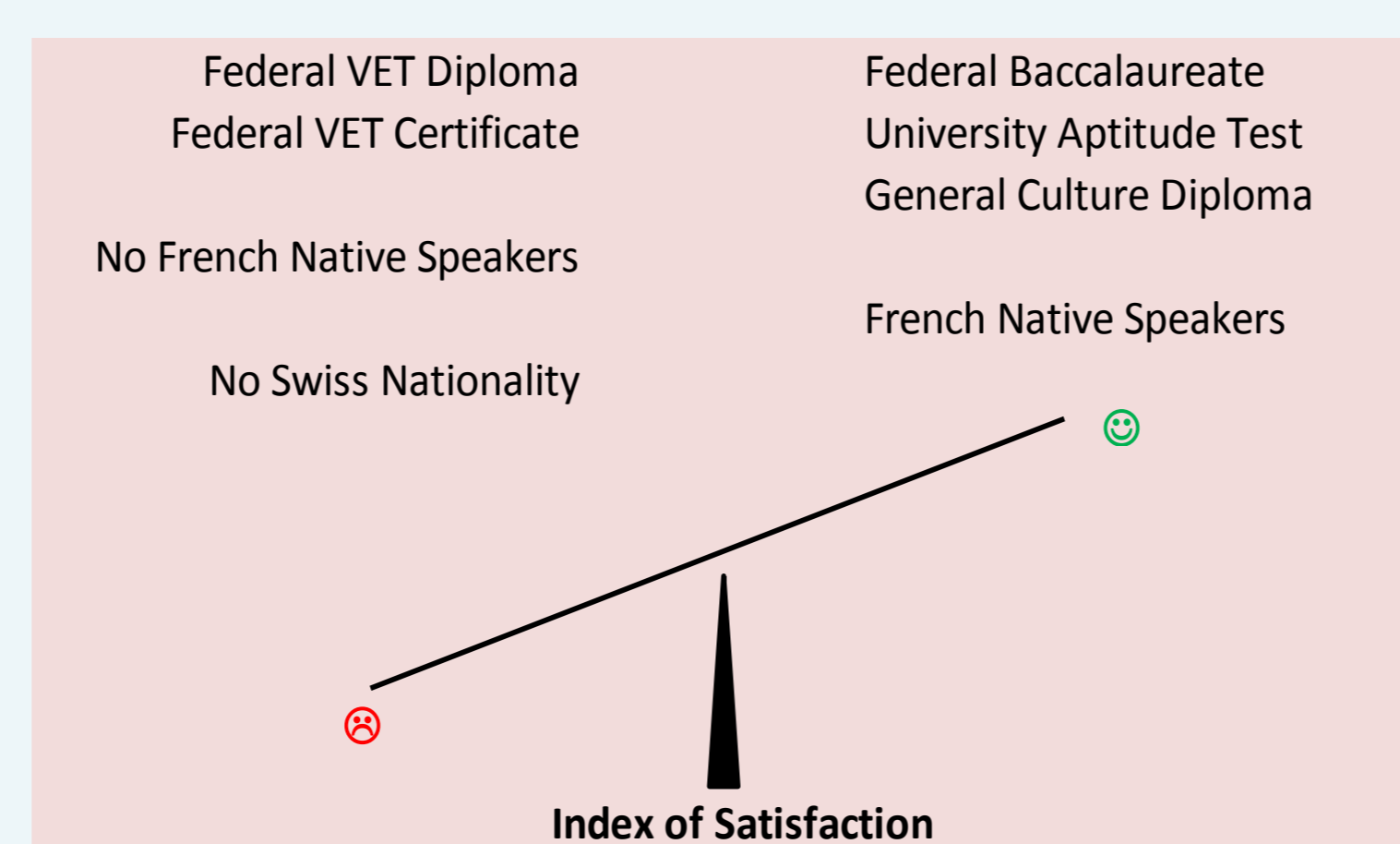
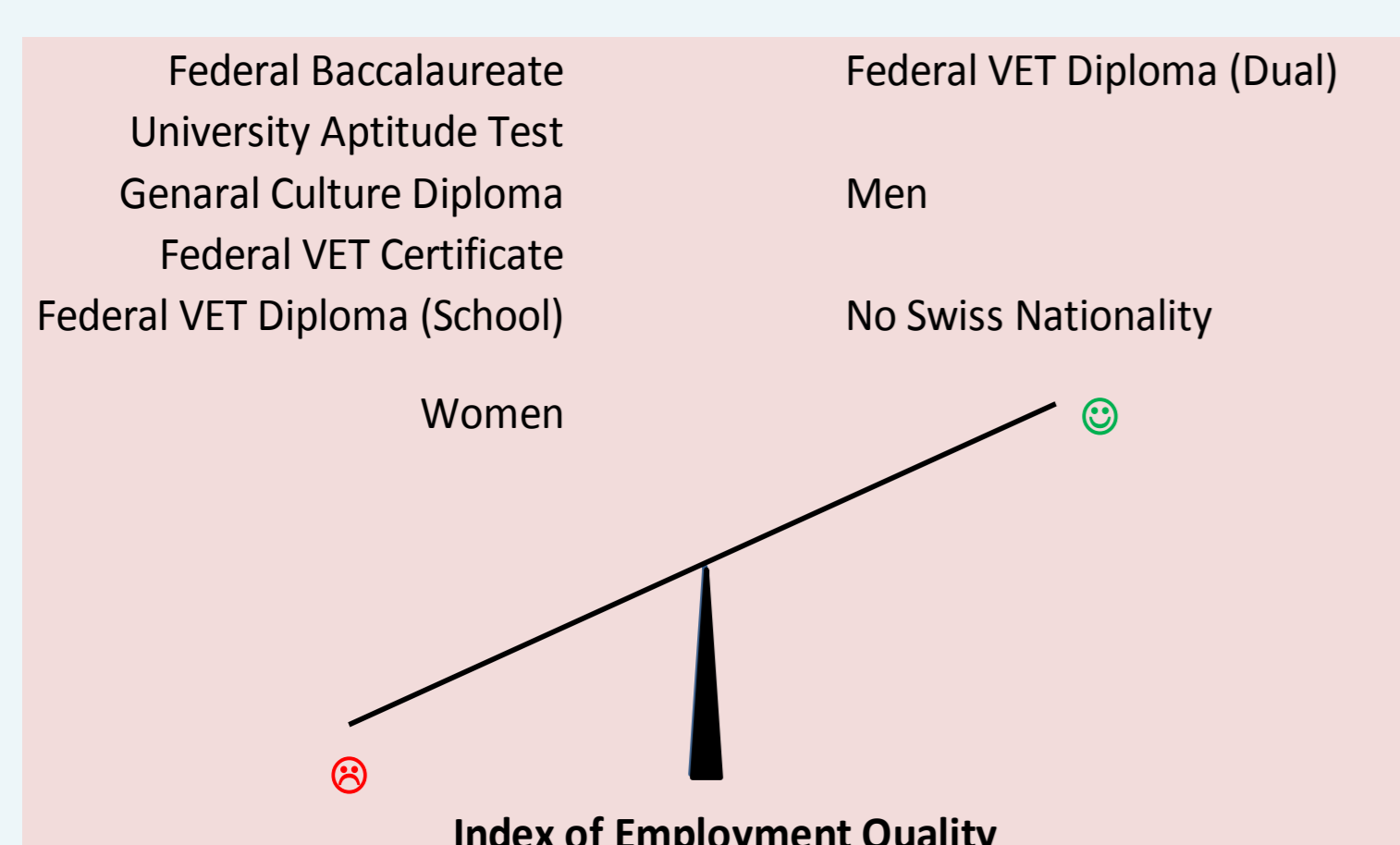
Third observation

Professional situations are generally good and perceived as satisfactory. But difficulties of professional insertion still possible!

Objective characteristics of employment	
Full time employment (or almost)	83.9% ☺
Desired employment rate	91.6% ☺
Unlimited duration of contract	91.4% ☺
Qualified employment, with responsibilities or being his own boss	91.4% ☺
Qualifications acquired during the vocational training or studies are in line with the employment	83.2% ☺
Matching employment - vocational training or studies	71.9% ☹

Subjective perception of employment	
Positive evaluation of salary	58.7% ☹
Positive evaluation of the nature of the tasks	88.7% ☺
Positive evaluation of career perspectives	73.8% ☹
Positive evaluation of work schedule	77.9% ☹
Trust in professional future	90.6% ☺

Difficulties in getting an employment	
More than 3 months needed to find an employment	33% ☹
Presence of periods of unemployment or of searching for an employment	27.9% ☹
Total length of unemployment higher than 6 months	17.5% ☹



X
Diploma
Gender
Nationality
Language

DISCUSSION

Professional experiences play an important part in post secondary II paths, which indicates that young people tend to get closer to the professional world; however, at this stage, employment is not the central element in their life. They are indeed still closely concerned with training since 56% claim to have got more education at one time during the three years after they obtained their diploma.

The variety of the professional experiences and their multiple imbrications with other activities shed light on the complexity of post secondary II paths, but also on the diversity assumed by these experiences: obligation in order to gain access to a higher school, saving money for future studies, support to the orientation process, conservation of a contact with the professional world or necessity to support oneself financially during one's studies, acquiring experience for a future professional insertion, etc.

Stabilized professional situations are objectively better, but they are also less satisfactory and they generate more insertion difficulties for young people who went through a professional path rather than a general one. Thus, although professional diplomas seem to be recognized on the labour market, the existence of a certain level of dissatisfaction questions us about the expectations of young people in relation with the professional world.

Thus, being aged on average between 21 to 24 years old, the majority of the holders of an Upper secondary II diploma in the Canton de Vaud can still be considered in transition.

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