

The National and European Qualifications Frameworks: a New Jerusalem?

The Spanish evidences

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Thessaloniki, October 5 & 6.

NQF vs EQF

- One of the EU's goals for the European VET's policy is to create a European Qualification Framework (EQF) based on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
- National and the European authorities try to establish a “norm” for the “good matches” searching to introduce more transparency in the labour market functioning as a tool to combat the incertitude characterising our economies and societies.
- The European Authorities encourages the states to develop their own National Qualification Framework as the basis of the European Qualifications Framework. Both, national and European frameworks are theoretically supported by the adequationist approach.

Part I:

Goals and theoretical framework of NQF & EQF.



Between main NQFs goals

- **Provide “Norms of regulation” for the match between qualifications and jobs in the Labour Market.**

(They are a diversity between NQFs concerning the importance of this aspect - Raffe 2009).

- *“i) moving from a supply-led approach to education and training to one that takes better account of demand;*
- *(ii) improving the coherence of a particular national qualifications system through connecting the different parts and making the whole more transparent to the users;*
- *(iii) making the components of individual qualifications more “portable” and so encouraging progression;*
- *(iv) providing a framework within which an individual’s formal or informal learning can be recognised and accredited (for the purposes of study, training employment, mobility, etc.), and finally*
- *(v) providing a basis for the exchange, credit transfer and recognition of qualifications between different countries.”*

Young & Gordon (2007: 439)





The theoretical framework supporting QF

- The “adequationist” standpoint
 - “Adequationist” paradigm is based on a stylised conception of the labour market based on the assumptions of perfect information and the agents’ rational behaviour.
 - Based on the normative hypothesis of the *correspondence* between *training level/speciality* and *employment level/speciality* (optimal situation) and then advocates that the dynamics of the labour market tend to favour it.
- Norms of regulation & normative matching: the QF expect to play the role of a “regulation norm” in the Labour Market.
 - We need norms to prevent or reduce the conflicts and to reduce the uncertainty.
 - But norms need to have: legitimacy (not equivalent to legality) , legibility and operativeness

Part II:

The Spanish evidences

(about all non-university graduates)

Based NQF Catalogue applied to current youngsters occupations (ETEFIL Survey)

Spanish evidences (1): works the youngsters in the adequate place?

Speciality Adequation	Level Adequation			Total
	Adequate	Not Adequate	Uncertain adequation	
Adequate	55.879	30486	363	86.728
	15,5	8,5	0,1	24,1
Not Adequate	69930	60511	3157	133.598
	19,5	16,6	0,9	37,2
Uncertain adequation	68295	67.519	3310	139.124
	19,0	18,8	0,9	38,7
Total	194.104	158.516	6.830	359.450
	54,0	44,1	1,9	100,0

Spanish evidences (2): normative adequation versus subjective adequation.

Normative adequation	Subjective adequation			
	Below my training/qualification	Adequated to my training/qualification	Above my training/qualification	Total
Level yes, speciality yes	12.2 (6,437)	82.8 (44,014)	5.1 (2,689)	100 (53,170)
Level not or uncertain, speciality yes	18.6 (4,875)	76.8 (19,795)	4.3 (1,107)	100 (25,777)
Level yes, speciality not or uncertain	26.1 (35,860)	70.8 (97,176)	3.1 (4,206)	100 (137,242)
Level not, speciality not or uncertain	26.2 (34,726)	70.2 (92,890)	3.6 (4,731)	100 (132,347)
TOTAL	23.5 (81,898)	72.8 (253,875)	3.7 (12,733)	100 (348,506)

Source: Elaborated by the authors on the basis of the ETEFIL Survey.

Spanish evidences (3): relationship between normative adequation and monthly income (only full-time employees)

Normative adequation	Monthly income				
	Less than 750 Euros	Between 750 and 999 Euros	1,000 Euros and more	DK/D A	Total
Level yes, Speciality yes	29.5 (12,927)	42.8 (18,783)	23.6 (10,348)	4.1 (1,829)	100 (43,877)
Level not or uncertain, speciality yes	24.8 (5,237)	45.6 (9,642)	25.2 (5,332)	4.3 (918)	100 (21,129)
Level yes, speciality not or uncertain	32.2 (33,455)	40.6 (42,200)	23.5 (24,393)	3.6 (3,695)	100 (103,743)
Level not, speciality not or uncertain	29.0 (30,500)	42.7 (44,966)	23.8 (25,024)	4.5 (4,726)	100 (105,216)
TOTAL	30.0 (82,119)	42.2 (115,591)	23.8 (65,097)	4.1 (11,168)	100 (272,975)

Source: Elaboration by the authors on the basis of the ETEFIL Survey.

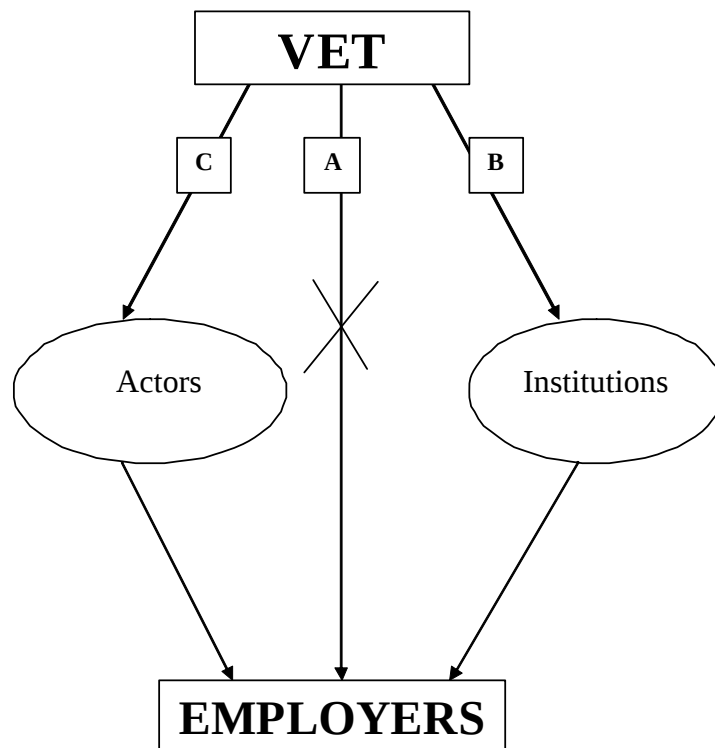
Part III:

Conclusions, suggestions and recommendations

Conclusions:

- The model of “normative matchings” only depicts a small portion of the actual behaviours of the labour market. Considering all non-university working youngsters, the “normative adequation” hardly surpasses 15% of the matchings.
- The norm established in the National Catalogue of Qualifications is not a good indicator of the quality of labour insertion. Neither in salary terms nor in terms of the subjective perception.
- The “normative” model does not depict the relationship between training and employment for the whole of the labour market, but it does for a part of it. In view of the results, we should not look for “the model” that is an alternative to the normative one, but to take into consideration the different models that exist at the same time.
- **It's not the “promised land” where the VET qualifications and the employers needs match up.**

For a new model considering the interfaces between VET and the employers' needs: B + C



Some recommendations:

- **Firstly**, to create the norm on the basis of information regarding people's productive skills in a less reductive way than academic certificates (Thévenot, 1997). Formal education is just a part of youngsters competences' source. To do this, **the approach based on skills offers an appropriate theoretical and methodological framework.**
- **Secondly**, to define coordination norms on the basis of acknowledging the coexistence of different matching models, including the “normative” one, and, based on the empirical observation of a reality that involves the behaviour of agents and institutions in **different areas and segments of the market. Including the sub- frameworks relationship.**
- **Thirdly**, to base therefore the definition of the norms on the observation of reality and not on technocratic constructions.

