

## Has temporary agency work negative effect on well-being?

Over recent decades many workers have been employed with a temporary agency contract. Little is known about the effect of this status on job conditions and workers' well-being over time. The current study focused on a sample of Portuguese temporary agency workers and examined the impact of stable (maintaining this temporary status), upward (obtaining a direct contract) and downward (remaining unemployed) contract trajectories.

Our results suggest mixed support that gaining a direct contract is related to an expected increase in favorable job conditions in contrast with maintaining a temporary agency contract. In line with the psychological concept of job insecurity concerning the continuation of one's job, those that obtain a direct contract gain employment with lower job insecurity in contrast to workers who maintain a temporary agency contract.

However, contrary to our hypothesis, neither job control nor perceived organizational support changed due to workers' contract type over time. Thus, we observed that change in contract did not imply a change for a better job. Over recent years, Portugal has registered a high level of unemployment (2012 = 15.5 and 2013 = 16.2 %), and we may assume that the workers who were given the opportunity to gain a direct contract with more job security took this opportunity regardless of whether the job offered better conditions. These findings challenge the segmentation's approach and its deterministic view on employment contracts and confirm that job conditions are independent of contracts.

Temporary agency work effects on workers' well-being have also received mix support from our results. Contrary to our expectations, both upward and same trajectories show similar workplace well-being evolution. However, we may consider that this evolution occurs for different reasons. Although upward workers decrease job insecurity which should have positive effects on their workplace well-being the unchanged of job characteristics, should buffer this positive effect and lead to the stability of the levels of workplace well-being. For those who maintain their temporary status, we may consider that they maintained self-efficacy beliefs, hope, optimism and resilience that they would obtain a direct contract as was their wish, which contributed toward maintaining their well-being. The high levels of unemployment may also reinforce the vulnerability of temporary agency workers as they avoid showing poor well-being because they depend on the client organization to obtain a less insecure contract. Thus, maintaining a temporary contract despite the concomitant requirement to maintain a situation of undesirable job insecurity does not have consequences in workplace and general well-being.

As for the general well-being results, as expected, unemployment was observed to have a negative effect on satisfaction with life. Corroborating the deprivation theory of unemployment, we further observed that temporary agency workers who remain unemployed register a decrease in their satisfaction with life.

***Maria José Chambel, Silvia Lopes e Josilene Batista***  
*Faculdade de Psicologia, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal*

## **Publication**

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Chambel MJ, Lopes S, Batista J

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